

Plus News

BREAN

Spring 2009

2009



Brean
Great! Excellent!
Fantastic!
Brilliant!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Awards
- New National Chairman
- Christmas Parties
- WASH 25
- AGM 2009
- Web-site workshop
- And lots more!

The articles herein do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Editor, Plus News/National Publications Officer or the National Federation of Plus Areas of Great Britain.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

- John A Smith
- James Oliver
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- Adrian Barnard
- Corinna Teale
- Gerry Edwards
- Kirsty van Lieshout
- Nick Grant
- Kath Good



BOOK EARLY FOR BREAN 2009

“Pay Early & You Pay Less”

Blimey - you'd never believe it, but it is true . . . Our 'Pay Early and You Pay Less' scheme worked!!!

We'd thought that about fifteen of you would go for it . . . But sixty (!) of you forked out the whole sum in one swoop.

Thank you to the following Groups:

- Reading
- Abingdon
- Oxford
- Fareham
- Redbridge
- Barking & Dagenham
- King's Lynn
- Barnet
- Hillingdon
- Slough
- Solihull
- Coventry
- Lichfield

Thanks also to Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage who sent in their deposits on time!

Thanks to all the above, and to all those who booked in later, Brean was another fantastic weekend P A R T E Y !!!

More on page 4.

Highlights

The cover story inside this issue of Plus News is Brean 2009 a great weekend organised for Plus by Adam Redshaw. I had a great time at Brean except for the part where I borrowed Ian Crawshaw's birthday cigar to look like Clint Eastwood for the camera, the smoke made my eyes water!

The other main highlight of the early part of the year is the National Annual General meeting. This was your Editors last as National Chairman and so the Chairman's column this time is from the pen (keyboard) of Adrian Barnard our new National Chairman, next issue I hope to have a similar item on the new National Finance Officer, Mark Harrington.

Among the awards presented at the AGM was the Presidents Trophy for best Group presented to Southampton Friends. There's an article on their recruitment campaign which will give you an idea of what it takes to be awarded the Presidents Trophy.

A recent highlight for me was the Civic Reception given by my old friends, Lord Mayor Howard Middleton and Lady Mayoress, Colleen Middleton for the Bradford Plus Group (page 10).

Also included are some highlights from the latter part of 2008, Christmas parties held round the Areas and who could forget WASH 25 - what a fantastic anniversary event that was.

This issue of Plus News was quite difficult to put together as the writers out there haven't been submitting their stories to the various web-sites, instead people are posting lots of photos, while it is generally regarded that a picture is worth a thousand words, I would never the less appreciate some words for future issues of Plus News. Have a look at the last page for some ideas of forthcoming events to write about and send them to me at jas@anvil.uk.net or plusnews@18plus.org.uk

Innovative
entertainment at
Brean

Inside this issue of Plus News

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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN - ??? Questions Questions Questions ???

For this issue of Plus News I sent the new National Chairman, Adrian Barnard a number of questions to answer, hopefully next issue we'll hear from the new National Finance Officer, Mark Harrington and Adrian will write his own column from scratch - no pressure!

Which Plus Group did you attend first or join first and what happened

I first attended Abingdon Group. I arrived ahead of any members, the room was empty, the bar staff confirmed that the 18 Plus Group met there. The first three through the door saw me thinking to myself they must have meant the 18 Plus stone club! Sorry guys, you know who you are, but few others do. All night all I had was a couple of return hello's and a confirmation that this was the 18 Plus club. More and more people shuffled in and chatted in their groups, the event, a lecture about policing from the local police never arrived, a Capri driver shouted out "lets start a riot, that'll get their attendance!" And that was the club night. Why did I go back? Because you cannot judge anything on a first impression, you need to give it a chance.

What was your first inter-Group event and what happened

Think as I might I really can't remember for sure my first inter-Group event. Given it's semi lost in the mists of memory it might have been the attendance of Wokingham & Bracknell Group, a massive meeting with scores of members in a hotel cellar, the event was compiling a newspaper for the evening, kind of a fast and easy thing to do with 160 + members on the task for a couple of hours, I'm sure the current Editor would appreciate a staff like that today! ☺

What was your first Committee post, or the first help you gave to the Committee

After three months I was a general member with the responsibility of collecting subs. I also used the blackboard in the room to chalk up the nearby events and those requiring advance consideration and payments. Six months after that I was Group Chairman.

What is most memorable in your time in Plus

Every time I think 'that was it!' I think of another, PLUS has been responsible for providing me excellent experiences on a near daily basis that I have greatly enjoyed. So

given that there are literally thousands of weekend events I could choose I'm going to relate that to a best Group event, there are also many of those, but to pick one I'll say 'The Crystal Maze' at Abingdon Group many years ago with many well thought out hurried practical experiments the teams had to conquer to win, the amount of work that had gone into that for an evening event was highly commendable and very enjoyable.

What was your most embarrassing incident in Plus

Searching back some I guess it has to be the Hamsters stag do! (nick name). Having three packed police cars and a dog patrol arrive at once and a rapid cancellation of "The Black Maria it's a stag do not a riot" perhaps indicated that running the groom to be down after a half mile chase through town to tape him to the pillars outside three pubs at chucking out time might have been better considered. I must praise the police on that night though that they recognised the situation for the good natured disturbance it was in about a second and then refused to accept a three figure sum to slam the hamster in the cells for the night for disturbing the peace. None the less disturbing the constabulary like that takes them away from real incidents and cannot be condoned, so sorry about that one.

What is the best or your favourite thing in Plus

We had this question some time ago on the current Southern Area Committee, and I used to have a different answer to it, but these days I have adopted another answer from that meeting because it encompasses more of what I agree PLUS is about. What I like most about PLUS, any event run purely as a PLUS event is that you can let your guard down 100%, it's a great relaxation on life. I think it epitomises that you get to truly make a lot of trusted and responsible friends as well as the benefits of the security and enjoyment of the events you get in addition.

Why did you stand for National Office

From a personal point of view I like to see the overall strategic situation and where better than the theorised top of the hill so to speak. I'd like to think I bring an easy going attitude to the job, I'd never shoot the messenger, given we operate in the real world what you don't know can often very often be very detrimental, so listening to people, taking on points of view,

discussing everything and hopefully then coming out with a considered policy of benefit to all or at the very least most of our members has to be a prime goal.

What are your short term and longer term hopes for Plus

I was happy to finally hear the combined Area figures at this years National Annual General Meeting coming in at 498, the final figure I ever had collated as NFO under the old scheme was in the high 300's. So in the short term I'd like to see it continue to rise in its new structure. Long term I'm happy to see Quest Groups are now popping up around the Areas, currently they're mainly being run as 'associates' Groups to existing Groups. I'm heartened to see that the true Quest Groups are doing very well. At some point as Quest gets to be a large percentage of PLUS there will need to be some consideration of how that part of the organisation goes forwards as it currently relies for its 'political' side on PLUS and PLUS needs to remember that Quest is best placed to forward Quest, as does Quest.

What are your plans for Plus, what do you wish to achieve

Obviously the continued growth and improvement of what is a very professionally organised, value for money, active, voluntary organisation.

What Plus events in 2009 are you most looking forward to

All of them! I'm booked in for SADY and Centre Parcs already, when we get the skiing organised I'll obviously be booking on that, as a co-organiser, we're organising NGOOT then there's WASH, the Beach BBQ, just so may events. I have to admit that this year I made a decision to leave out both Cyprus holidays and the National holiday to Tenerife to allow for a little time to maintain my property, but I wish all of those attending those events well as they're well worth going on. Help the organisers out on all these events guys, book early, it gives the organisers something to work on and inspiration to actually do their best to better your experience.

I'm proud to be a PLUS member, so should you be, I look around and I see it trumping so many others in so many areas. Everyone wants to be in PLUS, they just don't know it. Tell them about it.

**Adrian Barnard
National Chairman**

BREAN 2009



Photos: Laura Rowe, Christine Ticehurst & Tim Drury

Top: "The Man From Funkle"

Middle: Paul with light sticks

Bottom: On the beach at Brean Sands

Left: "My Immortal"

Brean 2009

by James Oliver

Many thanks to Adam Redshaw who organized the Plus Spring Holiday to Brean Leisure Park this year. This year Plus had the very good weather and sunshine every day.

Most of the ninety plussers started to arrive at Brean from Friday afternoon, the traffic on the M5 for those travelling from the Midlands & North was light compared to other years.

Friday night was a chill out night listening to Gary Jay who again was providing the Disco for the weekend.

Chris Porter asked for Stairway to Heaven - the Rolf Harris cover which Gary Jay threatened to play at some point.

On Saturday morning it was up early for the Corinna & Richard Teale quiz which was won by a team from Anglia & South East Area, Solihull came a credible third.

In the afternoon it was "Garyoke" with Gary Jay.

For most it was a chance to visit Burham, or Weston to see what was left of the pier or visit any of the Cider farms in the area.

The Main Saturday night band was called My Immortal, a rock band based on the music

of Evanescence. The act members all came from the Birmingham area and this allowed male Plussers to get out their leathers for the night and the females to dress as Rock Chicks as Lichfield Group did.

On Sunday 20th March it was Mothers Day in the UK for the Plussers at Brean it was a case of nursing sore heads and seeing which caravan you had woken up in.

After breakfast which was either a cold breakfast or over to the venue for a cooked breakfast. Adam had organized a Tai Chi and Qigong demonstration which covered Plus to lunch time, then you could watch the Sunday movie which was Kung Fu Panda starring the vocal talents of Jack Black or go and explore Burham, Weston or Cheddar.

In the evening the main band was The Man from Funkle a five piece band from the Bristol area with the vocal talents of the lovely Gemma Saunders.

After Gary Jay had played the Yogi Bear song one more time for the benefit of Lisa Ward et al, it was time to find the traditional Brean parties which Hillingdon Group hosted this year.

All in all well done to Adam Redshaw for doing a very good job this year.

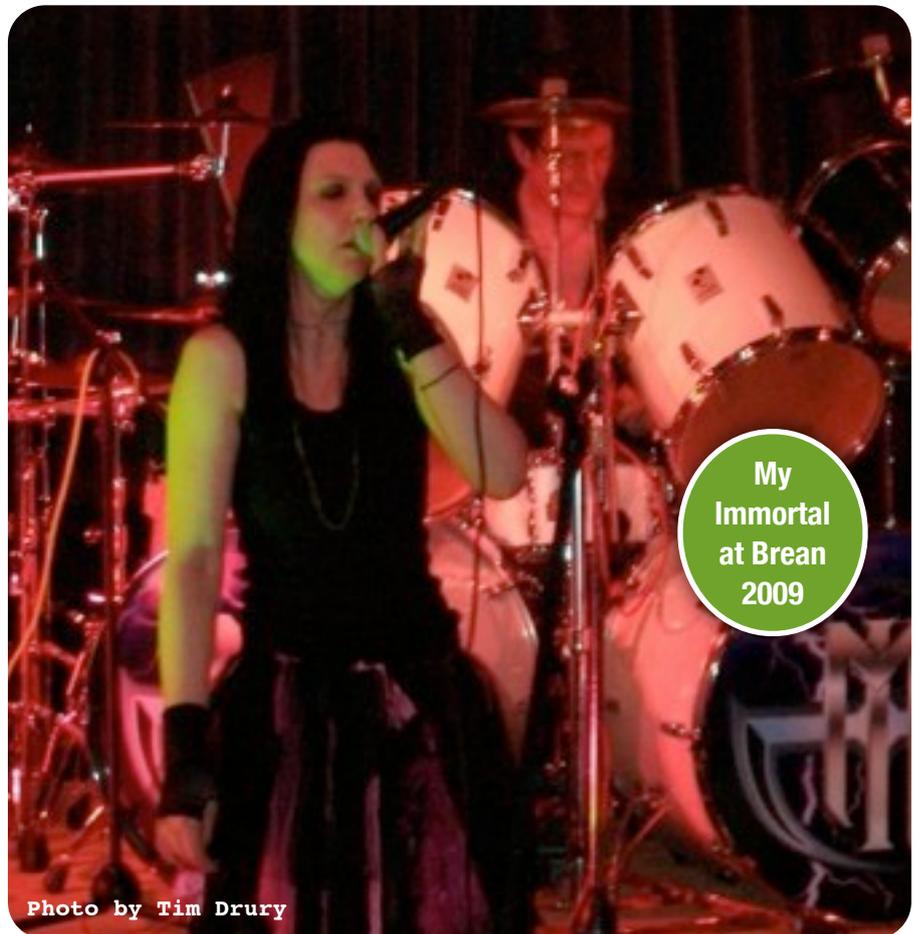


Photo by Tim Drury

BREAN 2009



Photos: John A Smith & Christine Ticehurst

Top: Caravan party

Middle: Nick preparing for the next party

Bottom: The venue in the venue - Dickies Bar

Left: Beer & caravans

Midland Area and East Anglia Area made a commitment to continue providing financial support for the Brean weekend in 2009 held on 20 - 22 March at Brean Leisure Park, Brean Sands, near Burnham on Sea and ably organised by Adam Redshaw.

Indoor events this year took place in Dickies Bar starting on Friday evening with the welcome Disco hosted by the weekends resident D.J. Gary Jay.

Saturday saw more fun in Dickies Bar with a quiz presented by Corinna Teale assisted by Richard.

Saturday evenings live entertainment was the new "Evanescence" cover band "My Immortal" with their heavy power chords and haunting vocals. The fancy dress theme was "Rock Chicks & Biker Boys!"

There was Karaoke on Sunday with notable performances from Pete Mann, Steve Sykes and Corinna Teal.

"The Man From Funkle" appeared on Sunday afternoon with a more middle of the road party set.

Ian Crawshaw celebrated his 40th birthday early at Hillingdon Group's caravan party with an eye watering cigar and spin the bottle until the early hours (after sun rise). At least one member (see photo) didn't make it through the night without falling asleep.

Brean 2009 Thanks Adam

Christine Ticehurst Kings Lynn Plus. I just thought I'd add my thanks to Adam for organising an excellent weekend again - it really was worth all the work and stress that I know went into it on your part!

Chris Page Kings Lynn Plus. Seconded, and I know the stress involved in organising such an extravaganza! Well done on such a smooth production in difficult circumstances. Enjoy your nervous breakdown - you've EARNED it!

Kath Good, Southern Area. Brean was a great weekend . . . you did a good job adam!

James Oliver, Solihull Plus. I wish to add my thanks to Adam Redshaw and the rest who made Brean 09 very enjoyable this year, The Quiz by Corinna and "Noggin" was very good with the Sunday night band excellent, also thanks to Adam for ordering the weather for Brean, Adam are you able to make sure the Sun comes out at SADY!

Steve Geary, Reading Plus, Well done Adam.

Iain Parkes, What a fantastic weekend that was.

**Caravans & Beer
That's Brean!**



Photo by Christine Ticehurst



AGM 2009

Photo by Mark Hewson



Scandal

Our 2009 Annual General meeting was hosted by Midland Area Plus and Northern Area Plus and held on February 21st at the County Hotel, Walsall.

The National Annual General Meeting (AGM) is where various topics were discussed and decided upon, it was also an opportunity for members to quiz the NEC GPC and National Project Officers. The National Officers were also elected and National Awards were presented.

I am sure the minutes of the NAGM will appear sometime soon . . . but in the meantime if you weren't there and are dying to know what happened (but were afraid to ask) . . . here are a brief summary of motions and election results;



Anglia & South East Area Motions

automatic increase in membership fee abolished - motion lost
 AGM not to be held in same Area two years running - motion lost

Southern Area Motions

Groups permitted to bring motions directly to NAGM - motion carried

Quest groups to have voting rights - motion lost

Midland Area Motions

Non-members allowed to attend National scale events - motion lost

North Thames & Chilterns Area Motions

Groups can choose own age ranges, maintain a Quest Group or admit members up to 36 - motion lost

Election results

National Chairman - Adrian Barnard
 National Finance Officer - Mark Harrington
 National Publications Officer - John Smith
 you missed a great AGM!!!

Kath Good

POST AGM Party

There was no Dinner arranged for Saturday evening this year, however Walsall has many nice pubs and restaurants that serve good food and the County Hotel, where Plus had the AGM serves very good food for a dinner.

After a hard days conference there was a great Party Night; The Disco for the evening was provided by D.J. Dan Smith, and the Band booked was Scandal who entertained Plus at SADY a couple of years ago. The National Plus awards and trophies were presented during the Party Night.

AGM AWARDS by Alison Jones

Congratulations to Midland Area. Thank you to Corinna, Richard, Erica and other Midland Area members for organising the AGM. Sorry Corinna for mucking up the timings of the awards part of the evening as we were late back from the meal, even though it was good for me as the new timing of the awards meant I had drunk enough to be able to announce the three awards on the microphone as sober I don't like talking on microphones.

I would strongly advise Midland Area that you do not actually drink from the Cobb Dual Purpose Two Pint Jug Mug, some Area going back some time actually polished the inside of the mug so it may not be that hygienic to drink from, unless you find a way to clean it well first.

Congratulations to all those who got awards, I will list the ones I remember, apologies if I have got some of these wrong: -

- Linda Street Spirit of Plus Award - Outgoing National Chairman - John Smith
- Best Group - Southampton Group, Runner Up Lincs Quest Group
- Best Area - Midland Area
- Charities Trophy - Lincs Quest Group
- Gold Trail Trophy - Slough Plus Group
- Treasurers Trophy - Katie Hawkins North Thames & Chilterns Area - (even though the actual trophy had not yet reappeared)
- Recruitment - Lincs Quest Group
- Best magazine - East Anglia Area "Angles"
- Training - East Anglia Area

I am sure if any of these are wrong someone will tell you the actual (as I was not that sober/awake at this time).



Photo by James Oliver

AGM Party



Photos by James Oliver

Top: Erica Knight receives Best Area presentation

Middle: Joseph Gurney receives Charles Padgham Training Award

Bottom: Scandal

AGM AWARDS by Gerry Edwards

Looking at those awards that I helped to judge at this year's National Annual General Meeting was the task set by the new National Publications Officer, giving a quick run down of the reasons while its still relatively fresh in my mind

The Presidents Trophy winner for best Group, Soton Friends had the edge over Lincs Quest in that they had achieved an awful lot in publicity and recruitment terms during 2008 and had increased their membership well. Lincs Quest were a very worthy runner up in that they had a terrific membership, 52 at the end of the year and had a very active programme. They only lost on a split vote!

The Cobb Duel Purpose Jug-Mug for best Area was a close run thing between East Anglia Area (now Anglia & South East Area) and Midland Area.

East Anglia Area were very strong in training and events although some Groups were losing membership too quickly. East Anglia Area had also done brilliantly by taking on Crawley and West Kent - a terrific achievement.

Midland Area were a very tight knit bunch with a strong Area spirit and had a number of Groups with a good membership. Plenty of activities in the Area and a very good atmosphere at all events.

The judges thought long and hard about this award and eventually felt that Midland Area had the edge in 2008.

The Linda Street Award - Absolutely no competition in this as John Smith stood out by a mile. Had I been at last year's AGM he would have won it then!

Gerry Edwards

Vice-President

Thanks

Thanks to all of those members that travelled to Walsall and attended the National Annual General Meeting and Party.

We had a fantastic time. The entertainment - Scandal went down a storm and Dan the DJ had all of us dancing til the very end.

Let's make 2010 even better. Thanks again

Corinna Teale

Sutton Plus

Web-Site Workshop 2009

Social Networking for the real world

On the Sunday morning following the National AGM the National Internet Co-ordinator, Richard Morton and the National Publicity Officer, Kirsty van Lieshout were to give a talk to those wishing to have a tour around the new Plus web-site; www.plusgroups.org.uk. This event was especially organised for you - courtesy of your own Area! Sadly they were unable to attend so the event was organised at short notice by Francis Wallington, Dave Filer and John Smith.

It's style was a workshop where we utilised the experience and knowledge of those attending to contribute to the Plus web-site and improve the facility. We catered for the person who is just a user and wanting to know more. Thanks to Janet Rintoul, Matthew Mole and Matthew Riley for their invaluable contribution to this section of the session.

By the end of the morning, we had built a team or network of interested people and Area Web Co-ordinators.

Participants want another session to build their knowledge and exchange ideas. Hopefully encouraging a team to grow will enable members to increase their knowledge and experience.

Running sessions following the National Annual General Meeting is beneficial for members in progressing projects and thus beneficial to the organisation as a whole.

Personally I found the event very rewarding, having little knowledge of constructing web-sites yet the skills of a trainer to encourage others to share their knowledge and experience. I am very grateful to Dave Filer for his assistance and energy.

Now it is up to the participants to take the ideas discussed forward and affect the web-site.

Francis Wallington

Since the Web-Site Workshop the following team has been set up:

Internet Co-ordinator John A Smith

Technical Co-ordinator Matthew Mole

Technical Consultants, Dave Filer, Robert Jones and Mark Hewson

Content Consultants, Christine Ticehurst and Phil Bettis.

Changes and updates to the web-site should start to appear shortly.

SOUTHAMPTON FRIENDS A "YOUNG" PLUS GROUP

Successful Publicity and Recruitment

Recruitment

At the beginning of 2007 six members of Southampton Friends broke away to form South Hampshire Quest. This was to ensure that Southampton Friends remained a "young" Plus Group. This left ten members of suitable age (18-35 years).

Although Southampton Friends and South Hampshire Quest shared an active calendar about 50% of Southampton Friends members didn't renew, for various reasons. This left attendance on a Club Night a disappointing turnout of three to five members of which two were fairly new to the Club when the break-away occurred.

By the end of 2007 there had been few enquiries, let alone potential new members visiting. The result was only three new members for the year, of which two did not become active within the Group.

Action Plan

The remaining five active members decided to actively promote the Club. Philippa was already Treasurer and Paula and Amanda joined the committee mid 2007, taking up the offices of Secretary and Publicity/Promotion, respectively.

Paula, Amanda and Philippa spent the beginning of 2008 promoting the club on the internet and producing publicity material in preparation for a publicity drive in April. They also made a commitment to each other along with Dave and Shelly to always support the Club Night as a group giving a "united front" to potential new members.

Paula and Amanda also shared the office of Events, they sourced information for what was happening in Southampton, joined mailing lists to keep up-dated and nosied-in on activities/events offered by other non Plus social/activity groups in the area.

They presented this information at Committee meetings and the calendar was re-structured with activities they wanted to do and were excited about. They also decided to limit the more expensive events to every couple of months.

With a committed committee, a great calendar of exciting and affordable events Southampton Friends became attractive to potential new members.

To help promote their numbers and the spirit of the Group to potential new members they joined in with the South Hampshire Quest Curry Night and in return South Hampshire Quest supported Southampton Friends' Play Away Club Cocktail Night.

Result

At the beginning of 2008 we had ten members of which five were active. During 2008, we received over 65 enquiries and now have nineteen members with many potential new members due to sign. We anticipate twentyfive members by the middle of 2009.

Our Christmas Meal on 13th December 2008 was attended by sixteen of our members, all but three were able to attend (one was at a work Christmas function, one was working, one was in Australia). This demonstrates that the current members of

Southampton Friends are active members enjoying the social opportunities available.

Recruitment has not been easy and has required the dedication of a small group of people.

Within Southampton there is/was competition from other Social Groups including, Club Amigos, Club Southampton, SPICE, Southampton IVC, Southampton Rotaract, Twisted Heels, Singles & Couples, and a Dining Group. Recently some of these groups have ceased, so we are proud of the fact that not only have we survived but we have grown and attracted new members.

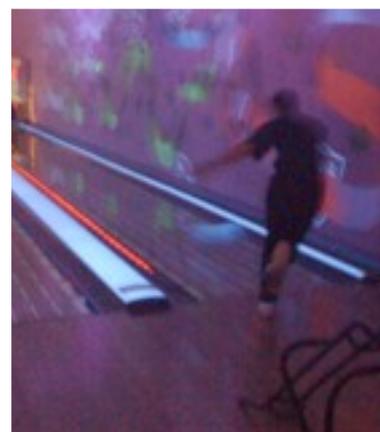
We are also pleased that South Hampshire Quest has also seen similar membership growth too.

Our recruitment prospects for 2009 are looking good. In January we had a flurry of fifteen new enquiries, mostly via the new Plus web-site, which is keeping us on our toes!

Retention

To encourage members to attend Club Nights we removed subs in April 2008. Subs were £1.00, or which 50p went to the Club and 50p went towards renewal of membership. However, collection of subs is tedious, old fashioned and may have been putting potential new members off. After all, we were meeting in a pub, why should we pay £1.00 to meet up and have a drink in a pub? If we had overheads of a hall then subs would be justified.

Southampton Friends



There was a murmur of discontent among some regular members of Club Night; why should members who regularly attend Club Nights financially support the Club by up to £26.00 more than members who only attended other week or weekend events. Thus, it was deemed unfair.

To correct the balance we removed the collection of subs and increased the membership fee by £5.00. We were concerned that we would be pricing ourselves too high, £35.00 for the year, but for a regular Club Night attendee this was actually a saving of up to £21.00.

We like to give back to our members as much as we can. We are encouraging new members to use their £5.00 voucher for an Area or National Event.

In December 2008 and the previous year the Club was also able to pay £5.00 towards each members Christmas Meal.

Due to the current economic climate and to encourage members to renew before the expiry of their membership we will be discussing (and hopefully passing) a Standing Order to provide an Early Bird Incentive, members will be notified six weeks before expiry of their membership and if they renew (completed membership form and payment) at least one week before the expiry date they will receive a £5.00 "Early Bird" discount rate.

Future Prospects

To date Southampton Friends has not been very active within Southern Area or Nationally this was because our energies were centered on improving our club at a local level first.

Now the foundations have been laid and we have clear strategies and protocols in

place for recruitment and retention we hope to spend more time expanding into the world of Plus and enjoying the opportunities available.

New Members

Eleven New members joined during 2008 and eight renewed making a total Membership of nineteen as of 31st December 2008.

The age range of new members joining during 2008 is as follows, the youngest is 22 and the oldest is 33, average age is 28.5 years.

In the first couple of months of 2009 Southampton Friends has seen rapid expansion with regards to enquiries and visits to our club night and events.

On average there have been fourteen to sixteen people, the lowest attendance so far was nine (when there was the snow) and our largest was twentyone. Luckily we have found a bar in Southampton that is willing to accommodate us and cordon off an area for us each week.

At our February Committee meeting we approved and have invited nine new members and anticipate to approve and invite a further six at our March Committee meeting. If all accept, our membership will increase to 35. Not bad for a Group that was floundering in 2007.

Successful Publicity

Other members may wish to hear of this good news and that it is possible to turn a Group around.

An additional point I would like to make is that publicity is actually cheap.

If a club wishes to attract new people it needs to advertise on as many free web-sites and facebook groups. I am concerned that

some members believe that expensive posters and banners will get new members through the door.

Last year we spent about £8.00 on publicity, this was to create postcards and business cards (these are more tactile than posters and easier to distribute) using Vistaprint when they had free offers on (only postage had to be paid for). It was one of our post cards that caught the eye of a reporter for the local Echo that resulted in an article about our club in the newspaper.

The more you put a club about the more interest it will generate.

What is expensive is time and that is the key element to successful publicity. And unfortunately time is a premium for many but we are reaping the benefits now and enjoying the efforts we put in all those months ago.

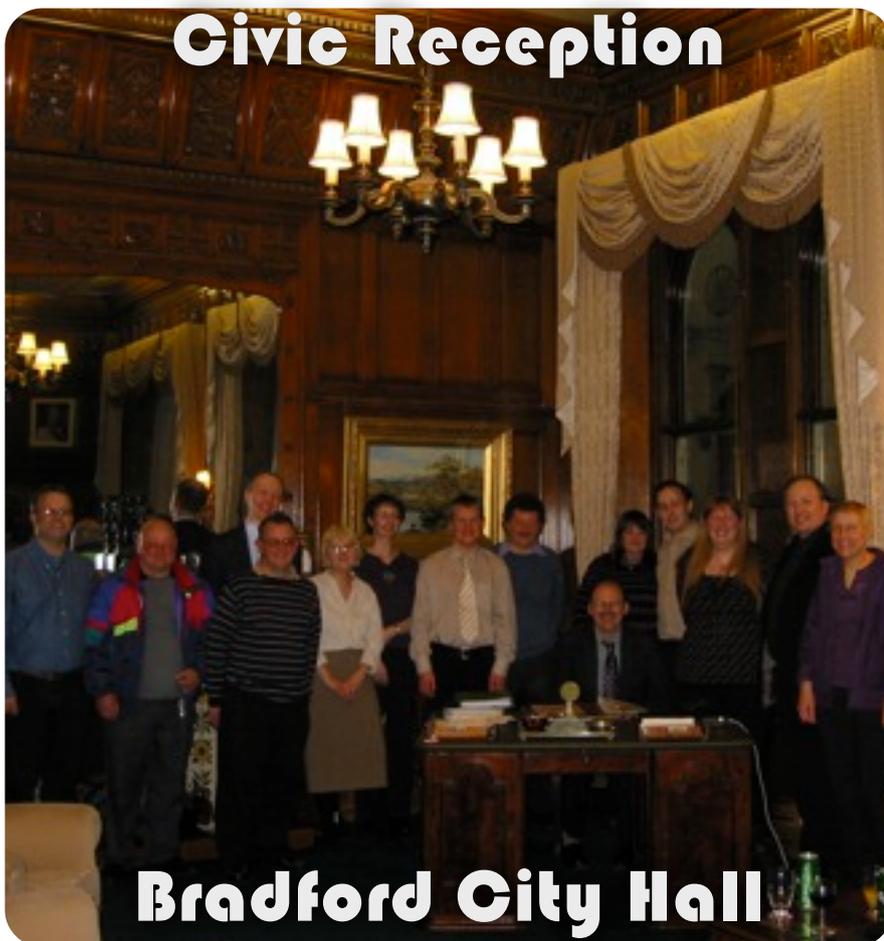
Our main objective now is to have a welcoming, relaxed club with a fun element, nothing more and nothing less.

Paula Oakley
Southampton Friends



Southampton Friends





Lord Mayor's Appeal

The Lord Mayor's Appeal
2008-2009
the Bradford Branch
of the
Alzheimer's Society



Bradford Plus & Quest Groups invited to City Hall

Bradford Plus and Bradford Quest members were invited to a special Civic Reception at Bradford City Hall by Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress Howard and Colleen Middleton.

Howard and Colleen are former Plus members; Colleen joined the Horsforth Group (now Leeds Plus) and Howard joined the Sheffield Group. The couple met through Plus and their first date was a Plus "School Sports Day". Both Howard and Colleen became Bradford Group members when they moved to Bradford.

Howard and Colleen were very active committee members at Group and Area levels, Howard was also active at National level as Area Chairman and also National Finance Officer.

Howard gave a tour of City Hall – In the Council Chambers Howard said that the Councillors are much better behaved at meetings than Plus members! He chairs four meetings in his year long term as Lord Mayor. He also said that when he was invited to a function for children he was always seen as a Pirate of The Caribbean in his three cornered hat and long red coat!

Colleen said if it hadn't been for Plus she and Howard wouldn't have met, one thing wouldn't have lead to another, and they wouldn't be Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, she said it was like a dream!

Like any Plus event there was a raffle and Colleen was as persuasive as she ever was at the many Plus events she sold raffle tickets at, this time the raffle was in aid of the Lord Mayor's Appeal for the Bradford Branch of the Alzheimer's Society.

Lord Mayor's Appeal
(extract from the Lord Mayor's web-site)

I have chosen as the Lord Mayor's Charity for 2008/09 the Bradford Branch of the Alzheimer's Society. This might be seen as an unusual choice. But the group are based in Bradford District and already have a track record of invaluable work over many years. Talking to people it is difficult to find anyone who does not know a family member or friend who has suffered the debilitating effects of dementia, frequently lasting over many years.

But I could not advocate the case for the Bradford Branch of the Alzheimer's Society better than by Ron Hamer, Chairman of the Bradford Branch, when he wrote asking that the group be considered as the charity supported by the Lord Mayor's Appeal in 2008/09.

"Unfortunately we are not a popular cause. We do not cater for small animals or small children. We don't deal with an illness that can be courageously battled against and overcome. We have instead people with what is often perceived as a mental illness." Here we have a group that is often overlooked, with a stigma attached to their disability, and an illness that people would rather not think about. We need to raise awareness of dementia and support the increasing number of people whose lives are touched by Alzheimer's"

The Alzheimer's Society Charity web site:
www.alzheimers.org.uk

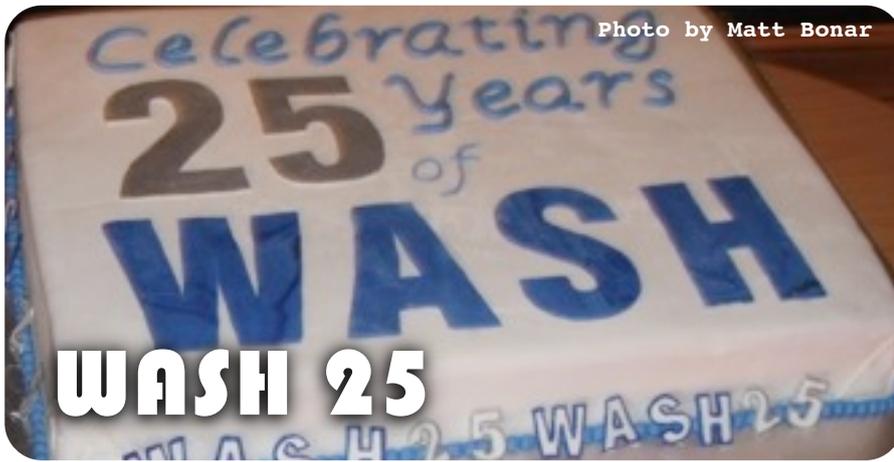


Photo by Matt Bonar



Photo by Mark Harrington

WASH 25 - by Kirsty van Lieshout

Friday afternoon we all met up at our shed for the weekend. All shopping was done and the cars were parked.

We started with a few bebies there and then after a nice bit of pizza, garlic bread, wedges (thanx to Rich) and some more bebies we got changed a little and set off to the venue.

It was great to see so many people there! We had a dance, a couple of bebies and decided that the bus stop was the best place for the latest gossip (even Mike took up passive smoking)!

I managed to offend at least one person that night - Someone tried to convince me that when men like Star Trek, women don't like them as they never had sex! Well, I love Star Trek and I do know a few men who like Star Trek, who have had sex before and sometimes even have to fight off the women! The guy changed his statement; only women in London don't like men who like Star Trek as these men never had sex. So, I thought to give him some advice (which he didn't seem to appreciate much); 'You've got to move, mate!'.

The band was impressive and we danced the night away until we got broomed out of the venue.

Saturday morningish saw the first full English to start us off nicely. We decided to go Clay Pigeon Shooting and it was great fun! The guys who were teaching us were hilarious as ever - random and hilarious. Weird to discover that they actually knew what they were talking about too, especially when Hannah was made into a pirate and suddenly hit loads of pigeons and even beat my score!

WASH 25
Extra special
weekend

Our Quiz Team was named 'Three Trekkies and a Virgin' and we managed to get not in the bottom! This was due to three lovely ladies who came to sleep at our table and dreamed up many right answers!

Back to the shed to finish our masks - bet that next year you will still find glitter everywhere in our van (and pint glass shatterings, but that is a different story). After a bit of grub, bebies and Iron Man we went to party in the venue. Mike and Rich looked great in their tuxes, Hannah scrubbed up very well and I was a Super Hero - all with masks and capes. Great times had by all - we definitely liked the firemen! We were so knackered, that we went back to the shed afterwards and all fell asleep. Well, it was about 2 am, so not too bad going.

Sunday we all dressed up again and visited the casino. In our cocktail dresses and a sophisticated glass of dry white, Hannah and I perched at the stud poker table and did quite well, (when we finally understood the game). Rich acted as our waiter (as he lost most of his monies on Blackjack and the bar). Unfortunately we lost our winning streak as a toilet break was needed and lost it all when we got back. Ah well, a few hours of gambling for only £2.50 is time and money well spend!!!

After dinner we decided to play our own Texas Hold 'em, where I lost my chips in rapid succession. It might have been due to the bottles of wine we polished off. And here I must say that we finally realised that we are getting older - getting changed again didn't hold that much appeal, so we stayed in for the night.



Photo by Matt Bonar



East of Java - Photo by Mark Hewson

Popcorn, Con Air, The Other Bollyn Girl and Sea Breeze Cocktails made our night!

On Monday morning the shower was the best and warmest one all weekend!! A little hungover with a massive left over breakfast in our bellies, we cleaned our shed for the weekend and cleared out.

Needless to say, we had a great weekend! We managed to drink quite a few litres, eat ourselves silly, met some great (new) people, caught up with friends from far, danced our feet until it hurt and are looking forward to the next!

More about WASH 2008

The Northern Area Plussers arrived at Searles before dark and were just about to get settled in our chalet when we were asked to change accommodation as our chalet had ramped access and was needed by a well known East Anglia Area member.

We soon got settled in our new chalet but later at the venue we heard from Leanne Browning (with the well known voice) that the ramp had been involved in a motor vehicle accident and was written off! (In reality the surveyor had declared it unsafe).

John Smith had written a WASH memories item for the programme where he stated that he had attended WASH since 1984

but actually it was 1985, OOPS! sorry about that. That's still a lot of WASH weekends!

In the foyer a WASH memories board had been put up full of photographs of previous years' WASH events, it was a great talking point with members gathering round and sharing their reminiscences.

An anniversary presentation took place in the main venue during the evening complete with speeches from Searles and Kings Lynn Plus members and WASH chairman Keith Israel, there was also a special cake cutting ceremony.

Towards the end of Sunday evening's festivities National Chairman John Smith gave a thank you speech to WASH committees past and present for a great event and to those members attending over the years creating that special Plus atmosphere. He also joked that maybe next year we may be able to afford Jonathan Ross & Russell Brand if they are still out of work following the controversy.

The lads from Sheffield Plus Group presented a cake to Kings Lynn Plus Group to celebrate the anniversary of WASH - this was quite touching as they are relative newcomers to WASH and Plus!

Rounding off the weekend was a chalet party (with karaoke) thrown by Kings Lynn Plus Group.

Blackjack gamblers



WASH 2008



Photos by John A Smith, Mark Harrington and Matthew Boner

Top: Foxx

Middle: Show Maddy Maddy

Bottom: Karaoke at Kings Lynn Group's chalet

Left: The gamblers

Christmas & New Year - Party Like US !!!

Yes folks! Its that time of year again!! or rather after! - Christmas and New Years Eve, (or should that be Winter Holidays?), when Plussers all over the Country celebrate with reveling and feasting!!!

Getting in quick on December 6th were the Southern Area as Abingdon Plus Group organised this year's Southern Area Christmas meal at the Old Orleans restaurant and bar in the city of dreaming spires, Oxford.

On December 13th members of East Anglia Area went up to London to do their Christmas shopping, and where better to go than the famous Harrods store in that oasis of haute couture calm within Britain's capital city, that byword for wealth, taste and discernment; Knightsbridge?



In the North Thames & Chilterns Area Hillingdon, Chiswick and Barnet Plus Groups together arranged a joint Christmas 'do' at The Fiddlers Italian Restaurant, Harrow on December 13th. The Christmas menu was described as "pretty good!" and there was a small dance floor and disco so the partying continued after the meal. (Photo - Lisa Howlett)

The Northern Area Plus Christmas Party was also on Saturday 13th December.

It was held in the function room of The Packhorse pub in Leeds. There was music, secret Santa (played by Steve Doggett of Bradford Group), a raffle, a buffet and games put on by the Groups.

Lincs Quest put on Pass the Parcel (with a difference), Leeds and Sheffield Groups put on Blackjack and Poker (but not as polished as at WASH 25!) and Bradford put on Shove Ha'penny. This was also the event where the Area's Linda Street Trophy was awarded, this year to Bradford Plus Group. (Photo - John A Smith)



Solihul Plus Group hosted this years Midland Area Christmas Dance, their third, at the Blossomfield Club on Saturday December 20th. Members of the Group provided a light buffet.

The Excalibur Roadshow provided the music and there was a raffle to raise funds for



the West Midlands County Air Ambulance, over £80.00 was raised. (Photo - Mark Hewson)



Lichfield Plus Group organised a New Years break in Wales at the Lynton House Hotel, Llandudno.

Abingdon Plus held a New Years Eve Party for members of the Southern Area at Southern Area Chairman Kath Good's place in Witney. "Bring food and drink to share - we'll provide the entertainment!" was the invitation.

West Midlands County Air Ambulance web site:

www.countyairambulance.org

Some facts about the West Midlands County Air Ambulance

The Charity operates three air ambulance helicopters covering an area of 8,000 square miles and eleven counties. This enables the paramedics to reach the furthest parts of the region within nineteen minutes and treat patients in the critical golden hour.

The County Air Ambulance carries out approximately 2,000 missions each year and has completed in excess of 21,000 missions since it commenced in 1991.

The charity relies on people and organisations like Plus to raise in excess of three million pounds every year to operate this valuable service.

CONGRATULATIONS

Awards, Births and media appearances



Richard Leach

Excellence Award Winner

Richard was first elected to the Area Committee in June 2005 with the intent of becoming Area Memberships Officer. However, right from the start he threw himself into much more than the bare minimum required for his role.

Richard essentially created the Area Magazine, "Angles" and has edited it for over three years (he received the Norbury Trophy in 2007 for his efforts).

Richard has consistently helped out organising and running Area events, whether this be in a lead or auxiliary role. For example, he was able to use his contacts gained as a member of Barking & Dagenham Plus to help stage the Area Live Band Night (2007), the annual RGT Tennis, Badminton and Pool

Competitions, and more. He co-runs the Area Quiz and routinely lends assistance to the organisers of countless other Area Activities.

Richard attended the Area Membership Officer Training course run by Dave Filer in 2006, and was elected as Area Treasurer and Memberships Officer in June 2006. One of Richard's own innovations was to make up New Member's Packs, each of which included a copy of the National DVD, for Groups to give to potential new members.

Richard has been one of the few Area Membership Officers to consistently send in up-to-date membership figures to National. Richard has always performed his duties in an efficient and exemplary manner.

Richard has helped as Development Treasurer for Chelmsford Plus. He has also participated in our "Group Parent Scheme" in which Area Committee members visit and keep in touch with the Groups in the Area. Richard is the Group Parent of Barkingside, Thurrock, and Brentwood Groups.

As an officer of Barking & Dagenham Plus – winner of the President's Award 2008 – Richard also finds the time somehow to organise Group events, which are enjoyed not just by his own Group but others in the Area.

Richard has now served three years in the role of Area Treasurer, which is the maximum allowed under the constitution. He is stepping down this year.

Richard's Excellence Award for recognition for his service to Anglia & South East Area, and Plus generally was presented at the National Annual General Meeting.



Joseph Gurney
Anglia & South East Area Chairman

Kirsty on Saturday

Sally Taylor



The local BBC Radio station found the advert on Gumtree for South Hampshire Quest and requested an interview. This took place on Saturday 10th January 2009.

Sally Taylor's fun, lively and sociable Saturday morning show on BBC Radio Solent was the perfect way to start the weekend for our very own former National Public Relations Officer and South Hampshire Quest (the 36 years plus young side of Plus) Chairman, Kirsty van Lieshout who was interviewed live.



Caroline & Jamie, Plus baby!

Solihull Plus would like to congratulate Solihull members Caroline and Jamie Woodbridge on the birth of their first child Lucy Emma Woodbridge who arrived just in time for Christmas.

Both mother and child are doing well. However they are getting used to some sleepless nights.

Charity Community Pages



Charity Beach Barbecue

Southern Area Charity Beach Barbecue

Dreaming of summer already?

You now have the opportunity to buy tickets to the Southern Area Charity Beach Barbecue held at Sandbanks, Poole.

This year the event is organised jointly by Abingdon, Thatcham and Soton Friends Plus Groups.

The event is to take place on the 20th of June starting with games, quizzes and competitions at 2 p.m. . . . with the barbecue being lit by 6 p.m.

Prices start at just £5.00 in advance and £8.00 on the day, all proceeds will go to the Oxford Children's Hospital.

Kath Good

Southern Area Chairman

sachairman@18plus.org.uk

**Our Charity:
Oxford Children's Hospital!**

Oxford Children's Hospital

The Children's Hospital opened its doors to patients in January, 2007. Children's services in Oxford, including those at the Radcliffe Infirmary (now closed), Churchill and main John Radcliffe Hospital have moved to this purpose-built facility. For the first time, this brings all children's services in Oxford together in one child and family-friendly environment.

Facilities from the atrium to the clinics and wards have been designed specifically for the welfare of children, teenagers and their families.

The hospital includes a spacious outpatients department next to a new children's radiology department and a paediatric assessment centre.

Children are treated here for a range of conditions including heart disease, chest disease, childhood cancer, neurological disorders and those requiring general or specialist surgery.

There is accommodation for parents to stay overnight, either next to their child's bed or in a dedicated parent/carers accommodation suite.

The integration of children's services will offer many benefits for patients. For example, all children having major surgery will be close to intensive care: parents of unwell children who previously had to travel between three sites for regular appointments will now only have to visit the one site.

Volunteers' Week 2009 - 25th Anniversary

Volunteers' Week is the UK's annual celebration of volunteers, it is co-ordinated in England by Volunteering England.

From the 1st to the 7th of June 2009, voluntary groups across the country hold events to recognise and reward their existing volunteers and to encourage others to consider getting involved.

Justin Davis Smith, Chief Executive of Volunteering England, said: "Volunteers' Week is the perfect opportunity to give volunteers the public profile they deserve. At Volunteering England we're very proud to be celebrating with the volunteers themselves and also those who manage and look after them to help maximise the impact of their efforts. This is the 25th annual

Volunteers' Week and I have every confidence that the passion and dynamism of the hundreds of participating groups around the country will make it the best yet!"

To help celebrate this year's 25th Volunteers' Week, Volunteering England will be working with a number of national charities and businesses to highlight the role volunteers play in our society.



Volunteers' Week web site:
www.volunteersweek.org.uk

Elaine - Race for Life

I'm taking part in Race for Life to raise money for Cancer Research UK and would really welcome your support.

Please take a moment to sponsor me. It's really easy - you can donate on-line by credit or debit card at the web address below.

All donations are secure and sent electronically to Cancer Research UK. If you are a UK tax payer, Cancer Research's partner justgiving will automatically reclaim at least 25% in Gift Aid on your donation at no cost to you - making it worth even more.

I have posted my link on to various e-mail lists and forums that I belong to, one of which is for 1980's band T'pau. I was astounded to receive a £50 sponsor from Ron Rogers who is one of the main band members and songwriters.

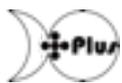
It is my first time doing the Race for Life but something tells me it won't be the last as I think charity work is addictive.

Please join me in supporting Race for Life and a fabulous cause!

Elaine Anderson
Rothwell Plus



Elaine's Fundraising web site:
www.raceforlifesporsorme.org/elaineanderson1973



Working towards the Platinum Standard

Platinum is a beautiful silvery-white precious metal and it is the symbol of the 70th anniversary. The Plus Platinum Standard logo is based upon the symbol from the realm of philosophical elemental alchemy representing the Moon and the Sun (it also looks a bit like a fish!). Platinum was revered for its endurance and represents determination, grit, and seeing our manifestations to completion making it an ideal symbol for the Platinum Standard Awards.

The awards scheme is open to all Plus Groups in the Federation including Second Tier (Quest) Groups. There are four levels of Platinum Standard Awards; Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. From time to time a Heroic Effort Award will also be presented.

The Platinum Standard is a very high standard, however the aim is not to penalise those Groups that do not achieve the Platinum

Standard but to recognise and reward success and effort.

Three Plus Groups have applied for Platinum Standard Awards, Southampton Friends Plus, Reading Plus and South Hampshire Quest; all three Groups currently have the status "Working Towards The Platinum Standard".

Reading Plus Group - "We feel we are a growing, successful Group which aspires to the aims of Plus and helps promote its values".

"As a Group we are growing. In 2007 we had nine members, we now have fourteen".

"Reading Plus is particularly successful at encouraging the involvement of younger and newer members".

Southampton Friends Plus Group - "We get a lot of feedback about how friendly and welcoming we are. Even the reporter from the Daily Echo newspaper said, a *charming set of*

people, who clearly go out of their way to make new people feel welcome".

"Southampton Friends is trying hard to become more involved with Southern Area and we hope to continue this in 2009".

South Hampshire Quest Group - "Our membership has grown from nine to twenty-four in the past twelve months and we are looking forward to attract more people this year".

"We believe that we offer a great service to the community by being who we are and the social lives we enhance".

In the next issue of Plus News will be a report on how the Groups did.



Platinum Standard



Results

National Badminton Competition

On Saturday 7th March over twenty members attended the annual Hit the shuttlecock competition known as the National Badminton Competition. The event was hosted by South Bucks Quest Group.

The winners of the National Badminton held in Maidenhead were: singles, Rob Buffman (have I got that name right?) of Dunstable Plus Group with Steve Sykes from Reading Plus taking second.

The doubles competition was won by Coventry Plus (Dave Filer & Pete Mann) and Serena took the women's singles.

The post Badminton party featured music from Adam Redshaw and the Excalibur Roadshow.

Nick Grant
South Bucks Quest

Photos by Tim Drury

National Press Competition

Lincs Quest take the lead

Lincs Quest Group are the first to enter the National Press competition, they have sent in two articles and twenty-seven calendar items, the articles cover the Groups awards presented at the National Annual General Meeting and the Groups latest programme of events.

The scoring system for this competition is yet to be finalised, but there will be points for a paid advert, a feature with a photo or photos, a feature with no photo, a single column article with no photo and Calendar / Whats On items.

A trophy will be awarded at the 2010 AGM to the highest scoring Group. Each Area has been asked to give a prize of £100 to the highest scoring Group in their Area. Rules and scoring will be issued soon. Please send all your press cuttings to John Smith.

Brean Quiz results

Adam Redshaw organized the Plus Spring Holiday to Brean Leisure Park this year.

Plus had very good weather and sunshine every day and the evening entertainment was excellent, however on Saturday morning it was up early for more fun in Dickies Bar with a quiz presented by Corinna & Richard Teale which was won by a team from Anglia & South East Area.

- 1st (90) Totally Crackers
- 2nd (71) Skiing Instructors
- 3rd (69) Solihul (Solihul Plus)
- 4th (65) Erica's Knights (Sutton Plus)
- 5th (64) Team D
- 6th (63) Dogs for Unity
- 7th (62) Barking & Dagenham Plus & Redbridge Plus
- 8th (60) Team X (Coventry Plus)
- 9th (56) University Challenged

Spring 2009

Plus News

The magazine of the National Federation of Plus Areas

AND FINALLY! FORTHCOMING PLUS EVENTS

Plus is known for generating it's own unique, special, and exciting atmosphere, no more so than at the many large scale events organised throughout the year.

Here is just a sample of some of the exciting events to come. More information on these and other events may be found on the World Wide Web at www.plusgroups.org.uk

SADY 2009

Back for the fifth year!! Join in the fun at Dalesbridge, Yorkshire on Friday June 12th to Monday June 15th 2009.

You get; BBQ with bucking bronco, resident D.J. Gary Jay (as seen at Breaan), Friday & Saturday entertainment, ramble (Geocaching in the Forest of Bowland), a day trip to Malham and real ale.



NGOOT (Now Get Out Of That)

The venue is booked for NGOOT this year. The dates are Friday 31st July 16:00 arrivals - Sunday 2nd August 17:00 departure.

NGOOT involves being part of a team to negotiate the various problems, tasks, quizzes and physical endurance tests placed in front of them.

Veterans will note that this event is approximately eighteen hours shorter than a number of previous ones. It means you may well get away with not taking the Monday off work. Getting there on the Friday would however be advantageous to your teams standing over the weekend. So please try and get there for around the arrival time.

The theme of the weekend will be the Oxford Monopoly board, will a copy of it help you? Marginally perhaps.

While breakfasts and a BBQ will be provided there's likely to be some pub visits that we don't cover.

We are limited to forty members, at four to a team making for a maximum of ten teams. Accommodation is in dormitories. Where is it? Hill End near Oxford. An SSSI site, so you'll have to behave and indeed most activities will be off-site.

Adrian Barnard



NEAT 2009 - Nottingham

Northern Area have started organising NEAT 2009 (October 3rd - 4th) and have chosen historic Nottingham as the location for their annual City Break.

The weekend will include on Saturday, the National Pool competition and the Dinner Dance with live music and on Sunday a Treasure Hunt.

WASH 2009

Following on from an amazing 25th birthday party celebration in 2008, Kings Lynn Plus Group look forward to seeing you all again in 2009 for another fun packed weekend in Hunstanton, Norfolk. (November 13 - 16).

What Do You Get? three nights: - top notch accommodation - Resident DJ - live evening entertainment and daytime activities possibly including; Quiz, Aqua Line Dancing, Laser Clay Pigeon Shooting, Karaoke and a Fancy dress theme night.



This issue of PLUS NEWS was edited by John A smith. Please e-mail articles, programmes and comments to plusnews@18plus.org.uk

The articles herein do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Editor, Plus News/National Publications Officer or the National Federation of Plus Areas of Great Britain.



www.plusgroups.org.uk

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