



**LinkLine**

**Autumn 24 edition**



## Trivia: What do you know about Halloween and Bonfire Night?

Why is October 31<sup>st</sup> the date of Halloween? Halloween is derived from an old Gaelic festival of Samhain, one of eight events staged annually, observed on November 1<sup>st</sup> when earth is about halfway between the autumnal equinox and mid-winter's day.

This signifies the end of the harvest season and the onset of winter (opposite: Beltane and May Day). Early literature says great gatherings and feasts marked Samhain when the ancient burial mounds were open, which were seen as portals to the Otherworld (souls of the dead). The boundary between our world and the Otherworld blurred, enabling reunion with souls, spirits and fairies. Samhain became a festival to commemorate the dead.



As the Celtic day began and ended at sunset, the celebrations began on the evening of October 31<sup>st</sup>. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Western Church endorsed All Saints Day on November 1<sup>st</sup> in keeping with traditions. Remember that some returning spirits were evil like witches, or scary like ghosts. Cue, you had to prepare for a fright. Lanterns carved out of pumpkins or turnips were made to ward off evil spirits. Similarly, for protection, people dressed up as scary characters (i.e. Dracula) to disguise themselves and blend in with the spirits.

## And now the Gunpowder Plot



What was the mission of the Gunpowder Plot? To blow up Houses of Parliament and kill James I.

What religion were the conspirators? Roman Catholic.

What's the purpose of the Gunpowder Plot? To overthrow Protestant government.

Who was the ringleader who organised the plot? Robert Catesby

The prime objective of the Gunpowder Plot was to overthrow England from the Protestant regime under King James I and government, ending their persecution of Roman Catholics, and then to replace the government with a Catholic leadership. How the plot was executed: conspirators rented a room in the cellars directly beneath Parliament. Barrels of gunpowder were smuggled over to the scene by Guy Fawkes who had expertise and stealth acquired from his time in the Spanish Army, hence Fawkes was the man to undertake the task, secretly to transfer the barrels into the cellar, go down there with a torch and ignite. If successful, Parliament would go up with an almighty blast. But no, Fawkes was caught by Sir Thomas Knyvet, a justice of the peace after Lord Monteagle received an anonymous letter in October warning him not to attend Parliament. The letter was passed onto Government, a key event in the unravelling of the Gunpowder Plot. Bonfires were lit to celebrate the nation and Kingdom saved from Catesby's treachery. Ever since we've had Bonfire Night.



# Groups and Activities At Pensioners Link, Leigh

**I/T Drop-in Group**  
10:00—12:00



**Coffee Club**



10:00—12:00

**Art and Crafts**

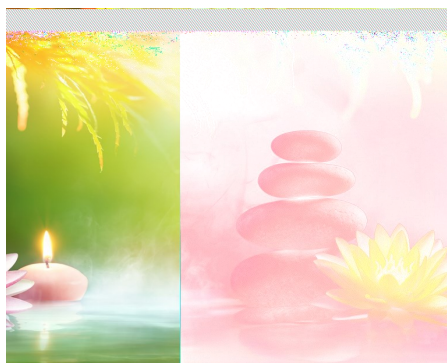


10:00 to 12:00

**Art Gang**



10:00—12:00



**Poetry Group**

*Poetry*

1:00—3:00

**Knit and crochet**



1:30— 3:30

**Movement & Balance**



1:00—1:45



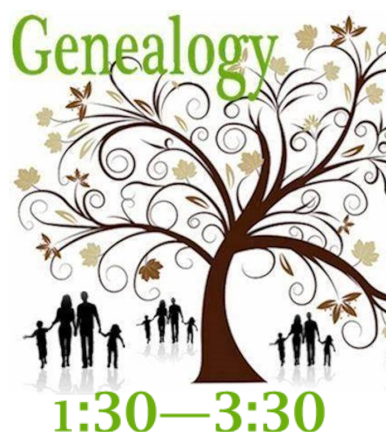
**Exercise Class**

11:00—12:00

1:00—2:00pm

**Coffee Mornings**

at Elmridge Court,  
Lowton  
meet fortnightly.  
Ring 01942  
261753 for details



1:30—3:30

**Coffee morning here — Fridays 10:00—12:00.**

Don't forget our **weekly** Walk and Talk Group, each Thursday 11-12.

For further details, contact  
Pensioners Link on 01942 261753

[www.pensionerslink.org.uk](http://www.pensionerslink.org.uk)



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Join our friendly  
walking group

Meeting  
weekly, each  
Thursday  
11:00—12:00



Meet at Pensioners Link,  
27 Charles Street, Leigh, WN7 1DB  
01942 261753

Followed by a brew and biscuits  
at Pensioners Link

## Who do you think you are?

Trace your ancestry here at Pensioners Link. Be surprised  
with from whom you may descend

A green poster for a 'Genealogy Class'. At the top left, there is a black silhouette of a tree branch with several heart-shaped leaves hanging from it. In the top right corner is the 'Wigan &amp; Leigh Pensioners Link' logo. The main text 'Wigan &amp; Leigh Pensioners Link' is in a small, black, sans-serif font, followed by 'Genealogy Class' in a large, black, serif font. Below the text is a circular collage of images: a document with 'CERTIFICATE' and 'MARRIAGE' visible, a black and white photograph of a group of people, and a photograph of a person in a military uniform. At the bottom left, the text 'Every Thursday' and '13:30 - 15:30' is written in a large, black, serif font. At the bottom right is a black silhouette of a family (a man, a woman, and two children) holding hands. At the very bottom, in a small, black, sans-serif font, is the address '27 Charles Street, Leigh, WN7 1DB' and the contact number 'Contact Number 01942 261753'.



# Anyone for duck-apple?

Use roast breasts of duck, dessert apple and calvados to make a delicious dish!



## Ingredients:

4 duck breasts, 1 tbsp vegetable oil, a knob of butter. 2 apples, cored, peeled and cut into thin slices. 100 ml of Calvados. 200 ml apple juice. 100 ml chicken stock. 1 tsp cornflour. Salt and pepper.

Serves 4

## Method to prepare:

From: Good Pair Days

- Season the duck breasts well with salt and pepper, score the skin, and fry for 5 minutes on each side. Remove from the pan and set aside to rest. In the same pan, add the butter and fry the apple slices for 4 minutes, until golden but not mushy. Set aside with the duck.
- Deglaze the pan with the calvados, and bring up to the boil until it has reduced by half. Add the stock and juice (reserving 1 tbsp of juice) and reduce by half again. Mix in the resting juices from the duck. Mix the tbsp of apple juice with the cornflour in a bowl, pour in a little of the hot juice from the pan, and mix until a smooth sauce is achieved. Stir this sauce into the pan, stir again until smooth, and bring to the boil to thicken.
- Return the apple slices to the pan, and simmer for a minute or two. Divide the apple between four plates, slice the rare duck breasts on the diagonal, and place on top. Drizzle with the sauce and serve.

## Pumpkin pie for dessert—an easy delicious pumpkin pie from simple ingredients

**For the pastry**—sweet shortcrust pastry case with 40g/1½oz crushed pecans mixed in

**For the pumpkin pie filling**—450g/1lb prepared weight pumpkin flesh, peeled and cut into 1 inch (2.5 cm) chunks. 2 large eggs plus 1 yolk (use the white for another dish). 75g/3oz soft dark brown sugar. 1 tsp ground cinnamon. Half a level teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg. Half a tsp ground allspice. ½ tsp of ground cloves, tsp ground ginger, 75 ml (10fl oz) double cream.

**Method to prepare**— Pre-heat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.

Use a sweet crust pastry case of 23cm (9 inch) in diameter and 4cm deep.

Bake the pastry case blind for 20 minutes. To make the filling, place the pumpkin chunks on a baking tray, cover with foil and roast until tender (20-30 minutes). Press the cooked pumpkin in a coarse sieve and to extract any excess water. Set aside to cool.

Blend in a food processor, or mash by hand into a purée. Lightly whisk the eggs and extra yolk together in a large bowl. Place the sugar, spices and the cream in a pan, bring to simmering point.

Whisk everything together. Next, pour it over the eggs and whisk it again briefly. Now add the pumpkin purée, while still whisking to combine everything thoroughly.

Reduce the oven temperature to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Pour the filling into your pastry case and bake for 35-40 minutes, in which time it will puff up round the edges.

Remove the pie from the oven and place the tin on a wire cooling rack. Serve warm or chilled (if chilled, store loosely, covered in foil in the fridge) with some chilled creme fraiche or whipped cream.

# Congratulations

## Local lass wins Gold at the Paris Olympics

### Great Britain's Keely Hodgkinson wins gold in the women's 800m final.

Keely, locally from Atherton, crossed the finish line ahead of Ethiopia's Tsige Duguma and Kenyan world champion Mary Moraa.



Keely said, "I have worked really hard for the last year, and you can see how much it meant to me when I crossed the line in first. I can't believe I have done it"

She now becomes the third British woman to win gold in the 800m race at the Olympics, following Ann Packer (Tokyo 1964) and Dame Kelly Holmes (Athens 2004).

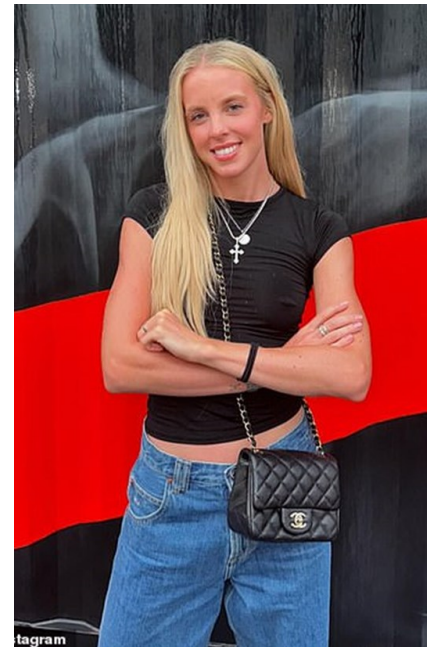
Keely Hodgkinson was born and raised in Atherton. As a child, Keely enjoyed swimming as well as running but became inspired to focus on athletics at the age of 10 after watching Jessica Ennis-Hill win gold in the heptathlon at London 2012.

Keely went to high school with England footballer Ella Toone and the two became good friends, learning a lot from each other about Olympic sports.

Keely went to her first Olympics in Tokyo aged 19, where she won a silver medal for Great Britain, breaking Dame Kelly Holmes' Olympic 800m record.

After this, she made a promise that she would win gold next time, and made that dream come true at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Now she has her sights set on breaking the women's 800m world record, which has been held by Czech athlete Jarmila Kratochvilova for the last 41 years.



Much of Leigh and Atherton were glued to the TV watching her on the big screen

It goes to show there is a wealth of talent within  
Wigan Borough covering a wide variety of outdoor sports



# What a fine success proved the Pensioners Link Garden Party

Thank you to everyone who attended our wonderful summer garden party. What a success. People turned out in their droves to observe a festival of music and entertainment from u3a, the local band and choir.

It was a good day out for the children present as they embraced the atmosphere too, and kept the tombola busy



People relax while they enjoy



The Ukulele Band

The Choir



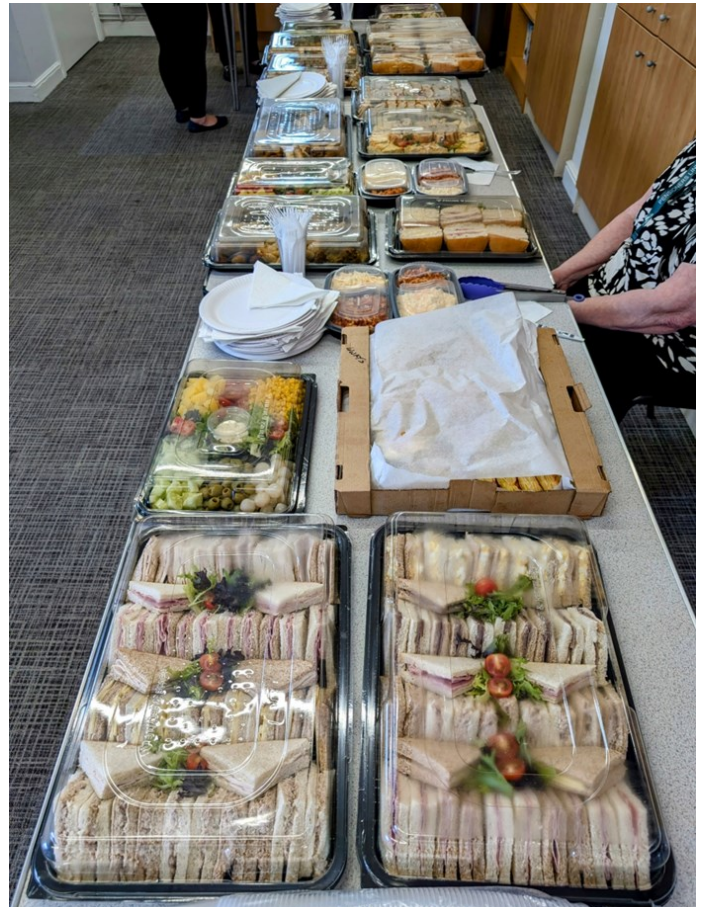


**Tombola stall.** With many wonderful surprises to be won.



**High-class buffet**

**Thanks and appreciation** to u3a, Ukulele Band and Leigh Community Choir for their show of entertainment and good old-fashioned songs performed to bring back happy memories of times gone by, enabling an excellent chance to reminisce. And to all staff and volunteers for their efforts to prepare, organise and run the Garden Party, Tombola and buffet.





Many thanks to The Arts and Craft Group who produced these wonderful art works



We have recent had a small exhibition of artwork created by our talented artist who attend the arts and crafts groups. There was a range of artwork on display, including portraits and landscapes.

There are a variety of groups activities that meet throughout the week.

Contact us to find out more:

01942 261 753



Twitter@pensionerslink



[www.facebook.com/pensionerslink](https://www.facebook.com/pensionerslink)

We would be delighted to hear from you.



## FREE TV LICENCE



If you are over 75, and you or your partner living at the same address receive Pension Credit, you are entitled to a free TV licence.

The process of application is simple:  
Call 0300 790 6117 or visit the TV Licensing Website [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/over75](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/over75)

If you are 74, you may apply for a short-term TV licence, which will last until you turn 75 by which point you should receive automatically, a free TV License.

## DRIVE CAREFULLY: Road safety advice for older drivers



1. Have regular eye tests—By having regular eye tests, you can ensure that their eyesight stays within the legal limit to drive and will make spotting hazards easier.
2. Check medications—Always seek advice from a doctor or medical professional if you are taking medicines which may impair your ability to drive, or if you notice a change in your ability to drive while on medication.
3. Inform the DVLA—There are certain medical conditions which you must inform the DVLA about by law. Among them are glaucoma in both eyes, strokes, heart conditions and certain forms of diabetes.

4. Remove distractions—if you have corrected hearing or vision, keeping the vehicle free from distraction is vitally important. To ensure full concentration on the road and potential hazards will often result in a calmer and safer drive.

5. Drive in good conditions—by planning your driving around good conditions (such as on clear, dry days) you can cut out some of the unnecessary risks of driving in snow, fog or slippery ice.

6. Keep your distance—Creating a 'safety bubble' of space around your vehicle will give you more time to prepare for unexpected hazards and can mitigate some loss in reaction times, to plan and carry out simple procedures such as stopping at a junction.

7. Voluntary driving appraisal—Having an independent older driver assessment can help to reinforce old driving skills. For many older drivers, a review of their driving results can give them a renewed sense of confidence to carry on driving safely for years to come.

Renew with confidence after 70 years of age—All UK driving licences expire when we reach 70, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have to stop driving at 70. You just need to renew your driving licence with the DVLA if you want to continue, and will need to renew it every 3 years from then.

One-to-one driving reviews can offer that extra level of confidence that you're making the right choice. You may wish to have an older driver assessment every three years ahead of licence renewal date.



# Our Annual General Meeting was held on 13 September

There's a lot of good we can take away from it!



We are pleased to report that it has been our busiest and most prosperous year for a long time. A warm thankyou goes to our hardworking, committed team of volunteers, trustees and staff who have done a lot the community. Client numbers have increased hugely across all our other core services. We work hard to maintain the high standard of service we provide. Pensioners Link celebrated its 36<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. What a truly remarkable milestone. Over the years there has been many a change and challenges. We are proud to have met these head on, keeping up the fantastic work.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers for their commitment to the cause. You work so hard to help others and we appreciate all that you do. Recruitment for volunteers has been excellent, we have welcomed many new faces to our team.

There was a sad note – we said goodbye to manager Paul Roughley this year. Paul decided to retire after 10 years of service. Paul has done an amazing job over the years to secure funding to provide for our valuable services. Paul will be missed by everyone. We wish Paul a long and happy retirement.

Kirsty Dainty was appointed new manager. Two new members of staff have been appointed in Ben (Homesafe coordinator) and Philippa (our new support worker). Both Philippa and Ben have settled well and are relishing their roles.

We are pleased to receive funds from the National Lottery Community Fund for the Books-and-More service, along with counselling, enabling us to increase the client number across the borough.

Homesafe – we are proud to have been working in partnership with Wigan Council and the NHS Foundation Trust of Wigan, Wrightington and Leigh over the past 7 years. This is instrumental in offering care and assurance to patients as they are discharged from hospital.



Time Limited Contact (TLC) scheme—Shopping service is provided for up to six visits for people aged 50 or over, who are going through challenging times. For example: discharge from hospital; practical difficulties resulting from the loss of a family member or friend; coping with new illness or disability; moving out. By providing low level support, the scheme aims to alleviate isolation and encourage independence.

A helping Hand—a shopping service that suits one's needs. Volunteers and staff alike will organise the shopping and bring it to your door. The service can be arranged once a week or fortnightly. A home visit is carried out before starting the service. **Note: this is a chargeable service**

Books & More—our volunteers deliver library books to isolated and vulnerable people who cannot access normal library services. This aim is to not only to deliver library books to readers, but to offer opportunity for a chat to help prevent isolation. Books take various print size and styles and audio to assist people with sight impairments. The volunteer can then provide help and support, identify other areas of need, or concerns that may have been raised. Client numbers have grown since the launch in 2019. From 2023 we were successful to secure funding from National Lottery Community Fun for Books & More.



# Volunteers needed



Are you passionate about improving the quality of life for Older People and want to make a meaningful difference in your community?

If the answer is yes, we would love to hear from you.

We have a range of flexible opportunities available.

**COME AND HAVE  
A CHAT WITH US**



01942 261753



[contact@pensionerslink.org.uk](mailto:contact@pensionerslink.org.uk)



[www.wiganandleighpensionerslink.org.uk](http://www.wiganandleighpensionerslink.org.uk)

