

The Last ANC – A goodbye to some old friends and a hello to our New National Chairman.



Contents

National Chairman's Column;
Editor's Column;
The long awaited Frogette story;
Brean 2006;
"I saw a mouse!" "Where?" "There, in the,...
toaster!!!";
Like to get to know Howie Jones well;

Come On You Barnet Boys!;
Another Plus Wedding;
Look-Alike Competition;
A "Biggles" Tale;
SADY: out of this world!;
National Treasure Hunt Results;
Other Forthcoming Events 2006: DIDCOT PLUS

The National Chairman's Column

After returning home from the National Conference in April I felt tired, but mildly exhilarated! Seriously though, I do feel a heavier responsibility than I did before the Conference, now I'm the first National Chairman of the new Plus! And I also set myself the task of promoting recruitment and expansion of Plus. However I also feel that we had a glimpse into the future of Plus at the Conference;

- Gary S showed that enthusiasm and exuberance can make a difference
- Clare Jones, Sheffield Plus showed us that there is a market for Plus amongst the young
- Geoff and Lis Buller, Lincs Quest, second Plus Group showed that there is a market for Plus amongst those over the age of 35.
- North Thames and Chilterns Area showed that friendliness is key
- Northern Area showed that Development can take place with few hands to help
- East Anglia Area showed that Training benefits Plus and individuals
- London and South East Area showed the value of sound financial management
- Midland Area showed us that any crisis can be weathered
- Southern Area showed us that new ideas can come from the most unlikely sources

There were so many people to thank, I hope we included everyone, if not, then here's a special thank you for those we missed.

At the June National meeting we appointed Kirsty van Lieshout as Publicity Officer, she has big plans to publicize Plus which I hope everyone will get involved with. We also re-appointed Dave Filer as National Activities Officer, I know this isn't a Constitutional post, nevertheless the NEC felt the need for the post to co-ordinate activities and help with procedures for organising events for Plus nationally. Sadly no Training Officer was appointed, nor Internet Co-ordinator, though Mark Hewson stood in at the meeting.

Between now and the end of the year there are many exciting events planned, especially those for members nationally; there's the Kings Lynn Group Summer Do which includes the National Rounders competition, the Milton Keynes MAD weekend which includes the National Karting organised by So'ton Friends (Plus) Group, Northern Area's NEAT weekend in Sheffield which includes a new National

Pool tournament and of course WASH in November.

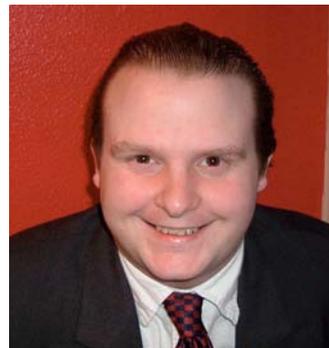
At the June NEC meeting a small group led by National Publicity Officer, Kirsty van Lieshout was set up to create a new image for Plus, including a new logo, the group's ideas will be presented to the July NEC meeting and launched nationally in September. Many opportunities for publicity are presented by the changes to Plus!

The first week in October is National New Members Week, lets start planning and publicizing for it now, there are plenty of great events at Group, Area and National scales to promote to prospective new members and then by October lets sign up as many new members for WASH as possible and surpass the WASH 300 target.

John A Smith
National Chairman

Editor's Column

Well quite a few interesting things have happened since I originally decided to stand for Plus News Editor. I have attended my first ever NEC, only my second ANC and first in which I had to make a speech. I don't know how well it came across, but it couldn't have been too bad because here I am writing this first column. The general consensus from the ANC was that despite all the emotional speeches about the closure of the building and goodbyes to Christine, speech of weekend from Gary Hillingdon winners of group Also a congratulations to Mark Hawkins for picking up the best magazine award (again) and to my own area, NTaC for picking up the best area award – well done Tracey, Lucy and the rest of the NTaC committee.



Secondly an apology for the lateness of this publication, I had originally planned for it to be published last month, but my study where I edit it, has for the last three weeks due to the lovely hot weather (nothing to complain about) has made it feel like a sauna and so I have only dared venture into it in

small doses. But as the cliché has it, better late than never.

Lastly, bare in mind, please that this is my first edition of Plus News and therefore I apologise if there are any mistakes on problems with it. Ian Crawshaw's editorial boots are large to fill and I hope I will improve with following editions.

Plus News resides on our website www.18plus.org.uk under the link to Plus News. If you do have access to the Internet and are reading it this way, please consider printing off some copies and distributing them around your group – Plus News normally prints from eight to twelve pages.

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Contributions to this issue have come from Iain Parkes, Lucy Smith, John Smith, Richard Mahaffey, Kirsty van Lieshout, Adrian Barnard, Laura Rowe, Terry "Biggles" Drake and Tina Bunyan

As many of you will know if you have attended at least one of the many National Plus events over recent years, the Frogettes have become an integral part of the federation. But how did this female-only fringe group come about and what do they hope to achieve? I commissioned the founder member and ringleader, Kirsty van Lieshout (So'ton Friends) to tell more to the uninitiated... (That's enough-Ed).

The long awaited Frogette story

Demi-god Drink mix and his Jester had jumbled something up. It looked strangely green, tasted like nature and made you feel like you had eaten a stuffed animal after 6 pints... They decided that The Frog was born. Lethal, but by no means deadly...

They came into Plusworld and spread the word, shared the love and basically bought anyone who was remotely interested in free booze, a Frog.

They converted one after the other and let their disciples do the rest.

It was one of those dreary not yet spring evenings when I got my true calling (Brean 2005). Frogette Thirsty was born; who as the name suggests could never drink enough.

Frogette Spiky fell in love with the Jester, but needed a bit more oomph to her drink and turboed it up. You can imagine what those two were up to while perfecting the perfect drink...

Frogette Party kept losing her voice, but managed to convert two others while on holiday. She is the most faithful Frogette - trust her to convince the rest of the world!

Frogette Alcy started drinking at a very young age and became hooked on Frogs because of mega-stress caused by the ANC 2005 chairman. She does always leave a bit of blood in her alcohol system though.

Frogette Smashy killed her very first Frog by smashing it hard into the floor. She was quickly forgiven when she downed her second Frog in almost one go;)

Frogette Spilly also suffers from the same (family) condition as Smashy and has difficulty holding her Frog straight up... But she does have the tendency to spread the love / Frog around!



So when the Frogettes found out that there was a Rock Star theme at Brean 2006, they decided to let Plusworld know of their existence - loud and clear!

Most Plussers had never heard about the all girl rock band, but they definitely know now who we are! And although most of us definitely can't sing - the one thing we can do is DRINK!

Frogs Forever!

x Thirsty x

Frog Recipe:

1 bottle WKD Blue

1 bottle Smirnoff Ice Red

1 bottle Bacardi Breezer Orange

Turbo:

Add three shots of blue Aftershock

No watering down with ice!!!

Super Turbo (and deadly):

Add shots of Aftershock blue, red and white

We will send for the paramedics...

Kirsty van Lieshout, So'ton Friends.

For me,

Brean 2006 started a long time before the actual weekend.... Shortly after WASH 2005, I found myself in a privileged position of being able to watch the preparations, effort and sheer hard work that goes on behind the scenes to make all large scale events work. For those of you who have yet to run anything larger than a group night event, let me tell you right now that a hell of a lot of effort goes into making these events run smoothly, It isn't a case of take some bookings and talk to some bands and then lie back and wait for the applause!!!! My hat is permanently off to Adam, Kirsty and the rest of the Brean Team!!!

On the Wednesday before Brean, I found myself hurtling towards Southampton on route to Brean Sands (Not the most direct route!) I was travelling with Adam to meet up with Kirsty to sort out a few last minute bits and pieces (and also to provide her with transport to Brean!)

Visited So'ton Friends on their group night and had a really good evening with them! Nice to chat with their latest potential new member – bit too late to get him to Brean though!

Thursday morning found us folding, stapling and cutting the Booklets for Brean – I am sure that it was an omen that the first set of covers had “Brean 2007” on! Still a minor problem easily solved!

Got to Brean about 8PM on Thursday – This “perk” of an extra night is just about the only extra that the organisers gained – a good nights sleep before the hoards arrived! It was quite strange walking around Tesco without meeting any other plussers (I am sure that those people who turned up on Friday made up for it though!) A quiet night in watching DVDs and talking over a few minor issues!

The first plussers turned up just after midday on Friday – 3 hours before the scheduled start of the weekend – nice to see people so eager to “Get the Party Going”! So they were sent to the bar!

I helped out with the booking in process (ended up doing about 5 hours worth!) handing lanyards out to the eager multitudes. It was nice (if a little hectic!) meeting so many of you in so short a time frame! Friday night was great, the hours flew by and more than a few pints were supped as friends from around the Federation renewed old ties and made new ones (you know who you are!) I vaguely remember a caravan party afterwards.

Saturday morning found the So'ton Friends Caravan enjoying a full English breakfast before getting onto the Real Ale Trip to Bristol, Getting there was a bit eventful – it's the hedges I feel sorry for! It was nice having the freedom to wander around Bristol for a few hours, having a meal and feeling so welcome as I floated between different groups of Plussers! Before we knew it we were back on the coach heading for the cider barn for some free samples and quite a bit of a shopping spree (The chilli cheese blew my mind!) Having a hundred and twenty (ish!) Plussers turning up all at once had given the family run business a bit of concern – but I think that everyone of us enjoyed the experience (and the cider!!!!) We arrived back at Brean an hour later, Had just enough time to eat dinner before getting ready for the evening's excitement. The illusionist was fun and most of the audience seemed enthralled by his assistant and his performance! After a performance that seemed to be over quite quickly (but watching the video afterwards showed he had been on stage for a long time!) it was the turn of the first band of the weekend – Breeze, WOW is all that needs to be said about this 5 piece band who kept the dance floor filled for most of the night – their lively mix of party classics and infectious dance tunes really made everyone's night! They were on for quite a session and seemed to be really enjoying themselves (Always a good sign of a band that connects with its audience!) The evening entertainment drew to a close with the clocks going forward! A couple of quiet parties later on and then bed around 4am.

Sunday arrived around 11am for this intrepid reporter – a nice cooked breakfast really hit the spot! Went on to the alternative venue (RJ's) around midday and watched the linedancers in action before the quiz by Tim and Debs, the boozy bingo, the Karaoke/talentless show finishing off by becoming a magicians glamorous assistant for 10 minutes (was it really that short a time span...) Had to rush off to cook the evening meal for the organisers and Sot'on

Friends (Toad in the hole has never been so eagerly consumed!!) Got to the bar around 8pm and the rest of the evening just went by in a rush. People seemed to enjoy "Spectrum" the band for Sunday night almost as much as they did breeze on Saturday! I enjoyed the great atmosphere and had a fantastic dance session later! Finally, to the sounds of "always look on the brightside of life" the official evening came to an end, although a few of us went in search of another party! At the only party I was aware of, we spun the bottle and answered some quite suggestive questions.... Although it turned quite Zen like later on when questions about pyjamas and lions in the Serengeti came to the fore...All in all an excellent weekend with 160 of my closest friends.

Iain Parkes, Leamington Spa

"I saw a mouse!" "Where?" "There, in the... toaster!!!"

Southern Area outdoor pursuit w/e at the *Dinas Hoggus* camping barn was most enjoyable from the rugged scenery to the planned activities, the flora and fauna, especially the fauna. The journey up saw us drop behind the smaller vehicle in the convoy, enough such that two other totally unrelated parties minimum decided to total their holidays in between us on route and thus the others enjoyed a good hour and a half in the local before we arrived.

The new tent tore on stressing the poles into their ground rings, so that's going back! The sheep looked on with interest, the 'townies' staying in the tent had great concerns they might be savaged overnight! Shouldn't laugh really though – there was a lack of insect life in the sleeping area 'cos the arachnids were doing a good job!... I slept in the car, ostensibly to keep an eye out for the straggler of the party whom will not find it in the dark.

Communication in the valleys doesn't exist as in there is no mobile signal anywhere. This proved very unfortunate for our very late arrival as in

00:50 Saturday morning. I saw the car stop, but by the time I got to the bottom of the lane he'd moved off, it was him too as he related times to us somewhat later in the morning when he arrived proper.

Toast was skipped in the morning when a mouse was found,... nibbling the crumbs in the toaster. Given that the mouse escaped, flaming rodent launching was off the menu so the main event for the day was a trip to Hadrian's wall, you can see why the Romans really left, it rained a lot, (and I'll bet they had mice in their toasters). We'd miss-timed the trip too, the next day they were doing re-enactments there, oh well. The local pub was popular Saturday evening, as in standing room only and laughter when enquiries as to food availability were made, so the last guy in, and hence 'the sober one' got by popular vote to stink his car out with Indian take away for the evening. We rounded the evening off with 'Shrek 2' and 'Aliens Extended Edition' on the 9" screen.

Sunday saw 'Go Ape',... for those who could find it [job offer, lift to events, must be competent navigator,... (I'm in so much trouble)] So we phoned through – (yes the lake areas have signal), the booking details to those who had made it and spent our time 'steaming' around the lake on a diesel boat! (the steamers retain their outer boiler casings and fancy funnels, but are in fact diesels). The aquatic world was also visited, one may as well be under water in the dry as in the wet, - the weather was again rather blustery and the take-aways saw another good nights takings from Plus. Who knows what the mice are into, today toasters, tomorrow the microwave! –(hey I've just thought of another rodent sport!)

Monday arrived and my car keys vanished, people will only look so hard through baggage on sodden ground in the rain, unsurprisingly no-one had seen them. I blame the mice! Baggage was shuffled around, passengers exchanged and all departed, bar us! Thanks to all for staying longer than planned and the extra lifts back.

New Plus News

After considerable 'negotiation' (that's a diplomatic word for it!) with more than one recovery firm with which top quality cover is maintained, one agreed it'd drop the £2 / mile charge for lost keys but not the off road recovery, though I've yet to be billed for that still, if it's coming. The keys were located in other luggage the next morning, house living rooms being more suited to emptying bags than sodden mud (that's a, diplomatic word for it!) covered ground.

Adrian Barnard

Like to get to know Howie Jones well



On 4th May, six of us from Barnet Plus went to see Howard Jones Live at the Millfield Theatre in Enfield. He was very famous in the 80s. His most popular songs include "Like to Get to Know You Well" and "New Song." I really love his music, its Brilliant!!! He has a great voice and he is still really good for his age. The music is kind of dance but a bit slow and there are a lot of synthesisers.

He still has that 80s' magic touch.

Anyway where was I? Oh yeah, The Gig! Well it was more of a show, a bit like *An audience with Howard Jones*. It was very good and seemed somewhat personal. He was only doing one night there. It was Brilliant. Although it was all done in acoustic style. I like acoustic, as it sounds really good! We were right in the front! So we had a Brilliant view! At the interval I

went and bought a CD of him playing live in Acoustic America. Its Brilliant! I also bought a big original 80's poster of him. I asked the girl who was selling his merchandise, if at the end would it be possible to meet the man himself: Howie. She said, "yes, ok he is coming out at the end to meet his fans anyway." So I thought 'cool!'. I was well excited and told the others. Anyway we watched the rest of the gig and we sang along to all our old favourites, It was Brilliant! It was so funny when he was singing, "No One is to Blame." Halfway though he started singing, "Twist and shout!" And we all joined in, it was great! Then it was time to finish. After he left the stage we started to shout more and a few minutes later he came out again! He finished it off with his most famous number, "New Song", which I absolutely love.

I'll tell you what was funny was when Howie was singing that song; and there's a bit in the song that goes "Don't crack up, bend your brain, throw off your mental chains do, do, do." I sang really loud "Do, do, do" everyone started laughing and when that bit came up in the song again we all sang it!

Anyway the gig ended and everyone hurried to get out of the Theatre except for us six, as we knew that Howie was coming out at the end to meet his fans! So we waited patiently for him to come and about ten minutes had passed he then emerged, we all got into a small queue and then he started signing our CD's. I got my big 80s poster signed by him instead!

We also had our photos taken with him. Here is a photo Lorraine and I with Howie – The man himself!



Laura, Howie and Lorraine at the Millfield Theatre, Edmonton 4th May 2006.

Laura Rowe, Barnet Plus

Come On You Barnet Boys!

On a rainy Saturday in May, a few of us went down to Slough for the area football. We made up an all boys team for the five a- side! Stuey was our goalie. Manoj, Ollie, Richard Parker, and not forgetting our newest recruit Mark Holt. I must say I was somewhat surprised when the Barnet boys got into action. They scrubbed up quite nicely. We all enjoyed cheering them on. It went something like this, "Come on You Barnet Boys!" I thought our boys did rather well in coming second. With a bit more training they could be top of the Plus club League. The after show party was also fantastic a day/evening not to be missed!

Here Are A few photos of the club League:



Laura Rowe, Barnet Plus

Another Plus Wedding

Solihull members Jamie Woodbridge & Caroline Gould became husband & wife on 13 May 2006 at The Renaissance Hotel, Solihull in front of family and many Plus friends. The happy couple jetted off to Cyprus the following day for a two-week honeymoon. We wish them all the best for their future, from all at Solihull Plus.



Look-Alike Competition

If you know two or more members who you think look like each other or somebody famous then please send me a photo but remember to ask permission of the person (or people) in question.



Firstly here are Russell Carpenter (Hillingdon) and Peter Illingworth (Barnet) (Suggested by Laura Rowe (again) (Barnet)).

Then along the next few years I served the group on various committee positions, as I wanted to give

A "Biggles" Tale

Some 18 Years ago I joined my local 18 Plus Group as it was then - Lichfield.

I joined as many of my friends from school and college had gone on to university - and more education was not for me or so I thought.

After a short period of joining this lively, energetic and fun social group I was elected chairman - apparently it was because I never shut up and always had something to say.

something back to the group which had given me a social life again.

From group I went onto Regional committee and then Area and also had a stint as a National Projects officer.

Gaining friends from all over the country seemed the norm. Meeting up at the various events like Caister, Wash, Lakeside Adventure and the ANC and then later on JAC, Brean yet again. Wash to discuss how others were recruiting, running their groups and what weird and wonderful competitions and charity events they were staging.

During my time on the various committees I became close to the girls in the office. Maddy and Christine, as it was, were just a phone call away. They always had the time to help me and advise me on a particular issue to do with constitution and standing orders or give me the name and contact details of someone in the Federation who had been there and done that and would be more than willing to help Biggles with this particular task.

Christine and I started the federation at the same time and I think it was this that brought us together and so we became friends and not just staff and group member. My stays at Nicholson house were always fun, always something to look forward to, always an opportunity to catch up with Christine, Maddy and later on Sue and I was always made to feel so welcome.

The tireless and positive support the girls gave I think is only known by a few - HG's, National Chairmen and some of the NEC. This organisation will be a poorer one without that lovely Gloucester accent....."Hello 18 Plus."

The ladies in the office have always worked exceptionally hard for the benefit of this organisation and so I was thrilled when we gave them honorary Life membership.

To my friends Christine and Sue congratulations on your award and thank you for friendship and dedicated support over many years.

To the NEC - well done on the nominating of these two faithful employees you got it right
To the delegates present at the last ANC you made the right decision in voting for them to receive this award.

Finally I would also like to thank the NEC for awarding me an excellence award. To say I am still in shock over it is an understatement. Those of you that know me, will know I am never lost for words but I was and am on this occasion. It is truly an honour to be given this award and I would like to say a heartfelt thank you once again

***Terry "Biggles" Drake,
Lichfield member
Midland Area Administrator, acting treasurer and
honourary life member.***

SADY: out of this world!

Well, now I know what SADY is short for: Sadist! I attended both the walks available and my blisters have blisters and I ended up putting salt on my chips to counteract the leg cramps having gotten through 4ltrs of diet coke on route.

I got to talk plasmas, condensed matter physics and the ultimate meaning of the universe during the weekend, while my driver attempted to prove matter can travel faster than light!... nice! The pleasing sights and different rock formations on the walks were balanced by the 'free freefall' experience on the peaks. The wind was constant, causing a lean of approaching 10 degrees. Looking into the valley watching the clouds race through and having your cheeks attempting to leave your skeletal structure let alone your long departed baseball cap is akin to parachuting!

The BBQ was nice, that of which had been saved for us! Thanks guys, it was nice. The walk along the waterfalls the next day was very pleasant too and a little shadier and cooler, very contrasting. The pub food was excellent, I'm given to understand the chef surpassed the skills of its management however. The quiz was a tight run affair with our team winning a number of rounds and picking all the wrong numbers for prizes! The evening's band was very good. The comedian,... is unlikely to survive the jongleurs circuit.

The weather was fantastic all weekend though the 'light' rain on the Monday morning to wash the tree sap off the tents was a little misplaced - as indeed was my tent, with waterproofing tree sap gluing it together on a permanent basis now. The views at night were picturesque too. The valleys and dales stretched off to the horizon framed by large silhouetted trees, with a golden full moon illuminating the scene the first night and a lower silver, more clear cut moon illuminating the second night. Northwards also saw a relatively blue sky at this time of year,... Do you sometimes get the impression I'm on another planet?

Adrian Bernard

National Treasure Hunt Results - Saturday 8th July 2006

A congratulation to all teams who took part. A special thanks to Coventry for most distant group to turn up. There were 10 teams who took part consisting of 57 people. All teams got back in time and it was a very close result. They all did very well at the photo round (young Mr Grace drafted this report). Thanks to Adrian for doing the booking in, working out the prizes and giving them out (and to Andy W for his assistance). I hope everyone picked up their prizes and shared them out. Well done to Barnet, who scored maximum in both the photo and the bonus rounds; to Coventry - sorry there were two possible answers to one question.

Results: Barnet A: 88; Crawley: 86; South Bucks: 85; Hawog B: 85; Hounslow, Hillingdon & Litchfield: 83; Barnet B: 82; Coventry, Barking & Dagenham & Romford: 82; Barkingside: 78; Redbridge & Romford: 74; Hawog A: 70.

From Brian Graham main organiser of National Treasure Hunt 2006. Well done Brian.

Tina Bunyan.

Other Forthcoming Events 2006

DIDCOT PLUS - SUMMER- AUTUMN PROGRAMME 2006

AUGUST

Thu 3 rd	Group Night
Sat 5 th	Andover 24hr stay awake camp out
Sun 6 th	Andover 24hr stay awake camp out
Thu 10 th	Group Night
Sat 12 th	Canal cruise, fish 'n' chip supper / Aunt Sally
Sun 13 th	Punting
Thu 17 th	Group Night
Sat 19 th	Abingdon BBQ
Sun 20 th	Witney walk it off!
Thu 24 th	Group Night
Sat 26 th	Oxford monopoly board pub crawl
Sun 27 th	Recovery! – completing the board this time!
Mon 28 th	Games afternoon
Thu 31 st	Group night

SEPTEMBER

Sat 2 nd	National Karting – Milton Keynes w/e
Sun 3 rd	Grounded Skydiving / Snow Dome – MK w/e
Thu 7 th	Group Night
Sat 9 th	Stevenage Skool Disco
Sun 10 th	Publicity day
Thu 14 th	Group Night
Fri 15 th	National Cyprus Holiday
Sat 16 th	DVD evening
Sun 17 th	Badminton / Bowling
Thu 21 st	Group Night Cyprus Holiday WRC
Sat 23 rd	National Cyprus Holiday - return
Sun 24 th	Full Thrust!
Thu 28 th	Group Night Cyprus Holiday WRC - return
Sat 30 th	Pub Quiz

More information on these and other events may be found on the World Wide Web at www.18plus.org.uk

Richard Mahaffey edits the New Plus News. Please email articles, programmes and comments to me at plusnews@18plus.org.uk or rj_mahaffey@hotmail.com or send to 17 Stag Lane, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire WD3 5HP. Please note that pictures can only be used if sent electronically and are of sufficiently high quality. The articles herein do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Editor, New Plus News/National Publications Officer or the National Federation of Plus Areas of Great Britain.