

A close-up photograph of an elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair. She is smiling warmly, showing her teeth. Her right hand is resting against her cheek. She is wearing a patterned top with red, blue, and white floral designs. In the foreground, a blurred cookie is visible. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

# Time Together

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# Welcome

A very warm welcome to this first edition of our new magazine, *Time Together*. We will be sending this magazine to you several times a year and I very much hope you'll enjoy it.



Not only do we have a new magazine, the charity also has a new name. We are now called Re-engage, a name we've chosen to remind people of the importance of sharing time together, of re-engaging with each other, with other generations, and within our local communities.

At Re-engage, formerly Contact the Elderly, we are best known for our Sunday Contact Teas, and they will continue to be at the heart of what we do. There are now nearly 1,000 Contact Teas groups right across the UK, from the north of Scotland to the south of Cornwall and in many places in between. Every month, nearly 7,000 older guests come along with their volunteer drivers to share conversation, tea, ideas, memories, and plans. I want to thank each one of you for being part of that and for enriching the lives of those around you. Every one of our volunteers is delighted to have the chance to spend time with you.

Every time we send this magazine, we will also send you the Memo sheet so that you can let me know what you are thinking about. Please give feedback on your group, tell me what other activities you would like to see taking off in your area, or just let me know what's on your mind. There is an envelope provided, so don't hesitate to put the sheet in the post and there's no need to add a stamp.

I am looking forward to hearing from you via the Memo sheet – or you can email me or write to me at the charity's offices. The details are on the back of the magazine.

My very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meryl Davies".

Meryl Davies  
chief executive, Re-engage

## It's a double birthday celebration in Pembrokeshire

The 15 members of the Penuel Group in Roch, southwest Wales had two very special birthdays to celebrate in July: the group reached its second anniversary and Margaret Hopkins, its oldest member, celebrated her 99th birthday.

Margaret has had a very active and interesting life, and has been lucky enough to enjoy good health for most of the way. She was a school teacher, played hockey for Wales, loved her holidays, and was a keen walker well into her 80s.

Although she now suffers memory problems and has regular falls, Margaret often says how lovely it is to get out and to be with old friends at the Sunday tea parties. She is also very sociable and enjoys striking up conversations, meeting new people and hearing about their lives.

On the way to the teas, Margaret's driver says her memory problems are usually quite noticeable but the drive home is a different story because, "Margaret seems able to remember and to talk about so much more. It's really lovely to behold."

Margaret is a true inspiration to everyone within the group and clearly enjoys her special Sunday tea parties, meeting up and chatting with her friends.



## Art, culture and afternoon tea

The National Museum of Cardiff hosts three tea parties each year for local groups. The parties are hugely popular and well attended by our guests. The events are invariably themed around one of the museum's current exhibitions and include a specific presentation before a full on afternoon tea.

The most recent visit was linked to a Japanese art and design exhibition where guests were able to handle artefacts such as tea pots and bowls, as well as try on some genuine Japanese kimonos. Two of the guests, Doris and Erica couldn't wait to give it a go and were delighted when the curator asked for volunteers as you can see from their smiles.





# Sujata loves volunteering because ....

**“It’s just a very uplifting experience. To sit with the guests, to get an opportunity to talk with them, to learn from their wisdom and their experiences of life.”**

Sujata Setia has been hosting Sunday tea parties for the Dartford Re-engage group for almost 18 months and has become one of the charity’s biggest fans. She typically hosts around 12 people, for two to three hours, and always tries to do something a bit different to make it extra special.

For example: her last party fell on the same date as Friendship Day in India so she bought in a special cake and some guests joined her with a glass of wine to celebrate.

The parties have also led to some surprising personal experiences for Sujata, such as when she was asked by one lady to visit her home and photograph her cat. Sujata says the visit gave her a unique opportunity to learn much more about the lady’s perspective on life: “It was just the most incredible afternoon. The lady spoke with me for a very long time and we talked about how to wear make up, what brand of lipstick she buys, and about therapies to keep our skin looking young and supple. They were the sort of subjects you would discuss with a 20 or a 30 year old. It was a really heart-warming conversation.”

As a professional photographer, Sujata specialises in children and family shots and frequently travels internationally to coach aspiring photography students. But having started as a volunteer host, she says older couples are now one of her favourite subjects: “They allow you to find beauty in not just the youth of life but also the next and most crucial stage - growing old.”

Everyone is looking to get something different from volunteering but Sujata says all the volunteers are truly amazing because: “They are not doing it for anything else but the sheer love of the older people they are bringing into their own homes. It’s just incredible how pure and amazing this charity is.”

To see some of Sujata’s work please visit [www.butnaturalphotography.com](http://www.butnaturalphotography.com)



# Community Christmas

**Helping older people find a Christmas celebration close to home**



**Most people love the idea of Christmas, but not everyone gets to enjoy the day as much as they would like. In fact, for some people it can be a lonely time, when the days are short and the weather is damp.**

The whole idea behind Community Christmas is to make sure that older people have a place to go to celebrate the festive season. It is also to encourage people and organisations in the community to set up events where people can get together and share the joys of the season.

Whether it be tea and mince pies, a festive drink or a full Christmas dinner, there is room for all kinds of celebrations.

So that it is easy to find an activity near you, Community Christmas advertises information about Christmas-time events right across the UK. Community groups, charities, pubs, lunch clubs, and cafes all send us their details and we help to make sure that older people get to hear about the events. And if an older person needs help getting in touch with someone about an event on Christmas Day itself, then they can call the Re-engage office and we’ll help make the connection.



This year, we are working in partnership with national restaurant chain Prezzo to spread the word and we hope that a Community Christmas celebration will soon be part of many more people’s lives.

For more information about Christmas-time events in your area please visit: [www.reengage.org.uk/community-christmas](http://www.reengage.org.uk/community-christmas) or call 0800 716 543.

## John wins 2019 Marsh Award for Volunteering

John Gall from Nigg in Aberdeen has won a 2019 Marsh Award in recognition of his long-term volunteering with Re-engage.



John first got involved when a volunteer driver friend told him the charity was struggling to find a local co-ordinator to help set up a new group. Almost ten years on and John is now Aberdeen area organiser, arranging regular gatherings for around 70 guests across all 12 city groups and never missing an opportunity to promote the cause.

On hearing about his award John said: "I get great satisfaction from my volunteering as I know the good it does not only for the guests but also for the drivers. The award came as a pleasant surprise but I like to think it is for all the volunteers as it's a little awkward being singled out when there are so many people who make our Sunday afternoons happen."

## Why Aubrey decided to give volunteering a go

After a career in personnel, Aubrey Wood is unquestionably qualified as a people person which is a pre-requisite for any Re-engage volunteer. And when he retired almost a decade ago, he initially became involved as a volunteer relief driver for the Dundee group. But for the last five years or so he's been a regular chauffeur and a familiar, friendly face for a small core group of guests.



Aubrey says he looks forward to the monthly Sunday afternoon outings as much as the guests do and can thoroughly recommend it as a volunteering role: "It only involves perhaps three or four hours a month but I really get a lot of out of it and I think other drivers do too. Anyone who likes volunteering, who likes people, and who wants to get involved is probably going to enjoy this. They should just give it a go."

## Plan ahead for peace of mind

### The benefits of lasting power of attorney



"It's not easy to think about a time when you won't be able to make your own decisions, but it can help to be prepared". Hilary Cragg a Solicitor and Partner at Nash & Co Solicitors LLP helps explain why sorting out your affairs whilst you still can could make life easier for yourself and your relatives.

**There are two kinds of lasting power of attorney, one covers financial affairs and the other deals with health and social care decisions.**

**The financial power of attorney** allows someone to manage your affairs for you, and they can do anything that you could do with your assets, except to make large gifts. Your estate should be preserved for your benefit and managed in a relatively cautious manner, to ensure that it is preserved for as long as possible. The power of attorney can be used even if you retain mental capacity, and therefore could be used if you became physically frail and were unable to run your own errands.

**A lasting power of attorney for health and welfare** allows your attorney to make medical decisions and social care decisions. This power of attorney can only be used after you have lost capacity to make the relevant decision.

There is a question regarding life-sustaining treatment, and this allows you to authorise your attorney to make decisions regarding life-sustaining treatment, or not. Medical decisions include what treatment, such as surgery or drug therapies. Social care decisions include what you eat and what you wear, but very importantly where you live, which includes whether or not you go into a care home, and if so which one.

Creating lasting powers of attorney and giving clear directions to your attorney as to how you want your affairs managed empowers you to have some control over your future at a time when you might be very vulnerable, and ensures that your wishes and your priorities are respected.

For more information about power of attorney contact Hilary Cragg on 01752 827 047, or visit [gov.uk/power-ofattorney](http://gov.uk/power-ofattorney)



## Scotland now hosts 1,000 guests

Our 1,000th guest in Scotland milestone was reached when Doris, a former wages clerk from Perth, joined a group. Previously very active, she had found it increasingly difficult to get out and had been losing touch with friends. Delighted to become the 1,000th guest, her advice to anyone unsure about joining Re-engage is: “Just do it! If someone gets the chance to be a guest they should take it.”

### Re-engage

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