

AUTUMN 2025



# SENIORITY

The Pathway of Life | Keep Moving | Advance Care Planning  
Steady As You Go Goes Inside



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## Can You Help?

You can help us reach more lonely and isolated seniors. Do you have time to volunteer a few hours of your time? Or are you able to make a donation? Call 04 499 6646 for more information.

Thank you to the lovely people who already helped us! We are still in need of a reliable car. Maybe you or someone you know can help?



\* Pictured on cover: Age Concern staff Ann and new Peer Leaders at a recent Steady As You Go training session.

## From the Editor

Kia ora,

We hope you enjoy this edition of Seniority. You may notice it has fewer pages than usual. This is because the cost of printing has increased a lot recently and we are getting less advertisers to help cover these costs. If you know of anyone who would like to advertise in our magazine, please email [comms@acwellington.org.nz](mailto:comms@acwellington.org.nz) or call 04 499 6646



**Stephen Opie**

Age Concern Wellington Region CEO

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# Steady As You Go Goes Inside



*At the invitation of the Department of Corrections, Age Concern has recently taken on a new challenge. Steady As You Go supremo Ann Dalziel started an exercise class for the older inmates at the Rimutaka Prison.*

Age Concern has established over 40 falls prevention exercise classes around the Wellington Region. These classes are designed to improve strength and balance and help prevent a fall by improving balance and leg strength, flexibility, general fitness, and wellbeing. The classes are also promoted as a great way to meet new people.

The classes are initially established by Ann, and after a few weeks a couple of the class participants become Peer Leaders and take over the class. At the Rimutaka Prison, social workers took over leading the class after Ann ran the first 10 or so classes.

Exercise and physical activity are important for all ages, but more particularly in older age groups as balance becomes a problem and falls can cause more serious injuries.

The programme at Rimutaka Prison is for the older members of that community.

Ann says going to prison was quite a different experience to the usual routine she follows in establishing a new class. She says it was an eerie feeling to have several doors close behind you when you first enter the establishment. Then there were a few rules that were new to her, like not wearing certain colours as they could be associated with the different gangs that some of the inmates might belong to.

Ann commented about her work: "I enjoy my job and find it interesting. Dealing with people, especially with Steady As You Go, is great. Each group is unique and seems to represent the area they live in." Ann feels the most important thing about the work is to have a great sense of humour and look for the lighter and brighter side of life – even on the inside.

# The Pathway of Life

Recently I read that volunteering can be a two-way street with both the recipient and the volunteer benefiting from such community activity. Visitor Service volunteer Sarah certainly agrees that she gets a lift from her weekly visit. She regards her time with Mike as being in a "haven of sanity" and their conversations are free from obligations, so they can range over a myriad of topics. The only topic that does not gel with Sarah is sport, which brings on glazed eyes if Mike starts on one of his favourite interests! He has a passion for sport, particularly cricket and soccer, and played tennis and squash in his youth.

Sarah was working from home during the Covid restrictions and still does two days a week. She found that working from home allows time for other activities like volunteering. As she has no elderly relatives in the Wellington area, she picked Age Concern and offered to become a visitor. She was introduced to Mike in 2022 and has been visiting him once a week for an hour ever since, with hardly any missed weeks. Both look forward to the weekly visit and chat, and agree that theirs has been an ideal match, or as Sarah says, "I just think we are the golden pair."

Mike is a retired telecommunications engineer who worked for Standard Telephone and Cables in the UK and Ireland before being transferred to New Zealand in 1972 to manage the start-up of a new system that he was familiar with. The original project was for one year, but Mike was then made an offer he could not refuse. After tidying up his affairs in the UK he settled back here and enjoyed getting to know the country over the following decades.

It was after an illness curtailed his independence that a hospital social worker



put his name forward to Age Concern. The process of matching him to a new volunteer took a while, but he remains particularly impressed with the kindness of Age Concern staff and the excellent skill that went into the plan that Sarah might be a good visitor for him.

They obviously share a mutual respect and enjoy discussing their lives, including their pasts and interests, and a shared interest in music. There is no set agenda and, as Sarah explains, they just tend to start up from where they left off the previous week. Conversation flows easily. They talk about their careers, the countries they have visited, and their shared backgrounds including both growing up in small villages – though across the world from each other and with a decade or two's difference. "How things have changed" frequently comes up, they say.

They also discuss what Sarah describes as "the pathway of life, where it takes you, and how you wouldn't have initially predicted that something was going to be permanent, but

you just don't know all these things in life." Then there are their experiences with health issues, including Mike's stroke and its impact on his life.

Mike says he was a bit depressed after his stroke and he appreciates that Sarah encouraged him to get moving, to be positive and to accept the fact that, "hey, you've just got to get on." So, he now does Steady As You Go exercises and is moving around more. And he looks forward to Sarah's visits.

The conversation highlights the importance of companionship and mutual support in their visits, and the value of the Age Concern visiting programme.

**MICK CALDER**  
Office Support Volunteer



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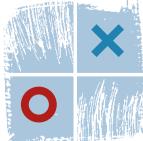
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# Alan Howat – A man who knows what he wants

*On first meeting Alan Howat, you quickly get the sense that this is a man who knows what he wants. A bit further down the track, you realise that he not only knows what he wants, but he probably has a well-developed plan to achieve his goal and that he can envision the outcome before he even starts. He also has a remarkable memory for names and places and proves it by recalling the name of his first teacher at primary school.*

Alan says he is a retired self-employed contract builder, but as he shows off the alterations made to the family home of 37 years, you discover that he has more skills than a Swiss Army knife. He can turn his hand to welding, motor mechanics, brick laying, painting, and wallpaper hanging. In his spare time, he has done a bit of boatbuilding, fishing, diving, deer hunting, motorcycling, cycling, and occasionally walking.

He added a second storey to the house in Epuni soon after he and his wife Diane moved in from their first house in Stokes Valley, and fitted out the interior of course. The garage was dilapidated to the extent that Alan thought he could push it over, so that was replaced. Then came the paling fencing, brick surrounds for the low Buxus hedges, a brick outdoor pizza oven, plus rejuvenating at least three boats, culminating in the current Haines Hunter with the Chrysler motor being replaced by a Chevrolet V6 with all the trimmings. You name it, Alan is likely to have done it and can probably tell an anecdote about it.

Alan always knew he wanted to be a builder so, along with a lot of his mates he quit high school after the fourth form (Year 10 these

days) and started his apprenticeship with Cemac, which specialised in commercial interior fitouts for offices, shops and hospitality businesses. In his view he had the best career in the world as it was work that required precision and skill, and at the end of the day, he could admire the job he had done.

After learning all he could at Cemac, Alan decided to branch out on his own and built up a steady clientele in and around Wellington and the Hutt Valley. He stayed with interior fitouts but moved with the times and adapted to work with aluminium framing and fittings. His remarkable memory kicks in as he reels off the various building owners and the buildings he has worked on over the years.

All of this came to a grinding halt a couple of years ago. He was working on a job in Wellington and had just rung home to say that he would be on his way once he had finished drilling some more holes in the concrete wall for some brackets. As he recalls, "I was up the top of my ladder, drilling into concrete because some bracing stuff had to be done. I just moved a bit, the ladder slipped sideways, then I had a massive fall and smashed my head."

Details of his rescue are vague, but he woke up in Wellington Hospital with an enormous scar stitched into his skull. He had suffered a severe brain injury with massive bleeding putting pressure on his brain. The surgeon had opened the top of his skull to stem the bleeding and remove the clot. As Alan recalls, that was just the start of the journey to recovery.



He had trouble with his balance which made him think he was on a ship, and he could not walk down a corridor without colliding with the walls. His memory let him down occasionally and he had such a desire to get off the ship (out of hospital) that he was locked in.

A build-up of fluid in the skull was relieved by a spinal lumbar puncture operation to insert a shunt under local anaesthetic, which brought almost instant success. Two days later he completed an obstacle course weaving his way through a line of cones, rather than blundering into them as he had previously, and beat the physiotherapist's best time for standing on one leg.

He was moved to Hutt hospital and comments that the treatment in the Acute Brain Injury unit was superb, dealing with unprovoked flashbacks, and improving his cognitive skills – but he wasn't comfortable there and was still determined to get home. In typical fashion he planned his unofficial discharge by going down the fire escape and walking home. Unfortunately, Diane was not impressed, and

he was taken back to complete his sentence.

Alan's recovery continued with regular visits to ABI Rehabilitation and support from ACC, Brain Injury NZ and latterly from Age Concern Wellington Region (ACWR). Regaining his driver's license took a supreme effort as the tests were more rigorous than the usual ones for older people.

Being able to drive again increased his independence. He attended an ACWR Community Hub meeting at the Walter Nash Centre in Taita to listen to Cheryl, an ABI staffer, talk about brain injury recovery. He met up with Tania Fleming, the Age Concern Social Connection Coordinator for Hutt Valley.

It was through Tania, with some input from Diane, that he was teamed up with Will, a Companion Walking Service volunteer who cycles from Stokes Valley to Epuni to walk and chat with Alan down to Queensgate for coffee and more chat. Will is Dutch, a keen cyclist, with lots of tales to tell to match Alan's sagas, so there is plenty to chat about.

Alan admits he still has some way to go but the outlook is good, and he has taken up his tools again making planter boxes and putting the finishing touches on his Haines Hunter, among other things. The whole experience has made him more aware of the support he has been given, his lack of independence during recovery, and that there are people with disabilities that have a tougher time than him. But he still knows what he wants and will go after it with typical determination. Good on you, mate.

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**MICK CALDER**  
Office Support Volunteer

# Mobility and the Older Person

*As I wracked my brain for ideas about an article about Mobility, I was curious to see what AI (Artificial Intelligence) would offer. When I asked ChatGPT (an AI chatbot) to describe the importance of mobility for the older person, it quickly gave me a response.*

The main message was that maintaining your mobility as you gain wisdom, experience and years, means a better quality of life as you can participate in activities that you enjoy. There are both physical and mental health aspects to this better quality of life. Staying active ensures the maintenance of strength, balance, awareness and flexibility so reducing the chance of accidents or the possibility of falls. Keeping mobile also preserves mental health and reduces feelings of loneliness, isolation and depression. Being mobile means greater independence and the ability to get out and about, engage in hobbies or pastimes, and maintain social connections.

So, there you have it in a nutshell. But I found that unsatisfying. Where is the motivational message about getting out and doing things? What activities are the most suitable for older people to maintain or improve their mobility? How do you go about it?

It seems to me that the best idea would be to undertake activities that are not too strenuous, starting slowly and gradually increase the time and/or the difficulty. But you also need to ensure that you are going to enjoy it.

Walking is generally the go-to exercise if you are able. There is some debate as to whether the goal of 10,000 steps a day was a marketing gimmick for those selling smart watches and step counting gadgets, and maybe 5,000 is good enough. If you have problems with walking, aquarobics or



swimming are great alternatives with the water providing some form of support.

I have recently been inundated with messages about chair-based exercises or yoga (likely because of my online searches about mobility for this article), but this tends to be done in isolation. Perhaps a better option is to join with friends in group exercise classes like the Steady As You Go classes run by Age Concern. There is a schedule of the classes available at the back of this magazine.

Obviously, you must be realistic and safe about your abilities and limitations, and whatever you choose to do should be fun or enjoyable. In the long run it is better to be a bit mobile than not at all.

---

**MICK CALDER**  
Office Support Volunteer

\* Please be careful if you choose to use AI tools. It's particularly important not to share any personal information when using AI as the information can be reused.

## SUDOKU

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## ANSWER

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9	6	2	7	4	3	1	5	8



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## Advanced Care Planning 'Par Excellence'

*In September 2022, Age Concern Wellington Region launched an Advance Care Planning Service (ACP) designed to support seniors and their families through the often complex and sensitive process of planning for their future health care.*

In the more than two years since launch, we helped 362 people fill in their plans, with more than half of those filing their plan with their GP and local hospital.

This was a unique service, one not provided by any other agency across New Zealand. Sadly, the service was closed on the last day of 2024 due to it being defunded by the Government.

Kay Webster was appointed as Coordinator and spent the initial months establishing and designing this essential service. As it was a completely new service, standards and procedures needed to be developed from scratch, along with presentation materials and marketing collateral and messaging.

Awareness of the need to plan for end of life care has increased dramatically, with Kay visiting 74 events where she spoke to more than 1,550 seniors about Advance Care Planning. Her pastoral and nursing experience meant she had the perfect set of skills to connect with people from all walks of life, which has been key to the success of the service. Kay's focus has always been on creating meaningful, quality conversations that encourage individuals and families to think about end of life and make informed decisions about their future care.

"Even when an ACP isn't immediately completed, the conversations initiated often sparked valuable discussions within families, often leading to plans being created later,"

Kay explains.

Kay's work has also had significant benefits for the wider health system, contributing to cost savings and better outcomes for individuals and families. For example, many people who completed ACPS will be able to fulfil their wish to pass away at home rather than in a hospital, which not only saves costs but also provides comfort and dignity in their final days.

With the average cost of one night in hospital being \$1,200, this service has potentially saved the health system more than \$2.1m, assuming those with an ACP are much more likely to spend their last days at home than in hospital.

Age Concern Wellington Region CEO Stephen Opie said, "It has been very sad to close this service and farewell Kay. But we know the impact it has had on seniors across our Region and we are comforted by the knowledge that 362 people have worked on their personal plans with hundreds more learning about the process and being resourced to have their own conversation with loved ones."

For those wishing to know more about Advance Care Planning, resources are available for free at this website: [www.myacp.org.nz/](http://www.myacp.org.nz/)



# CROSSWORD

## Down

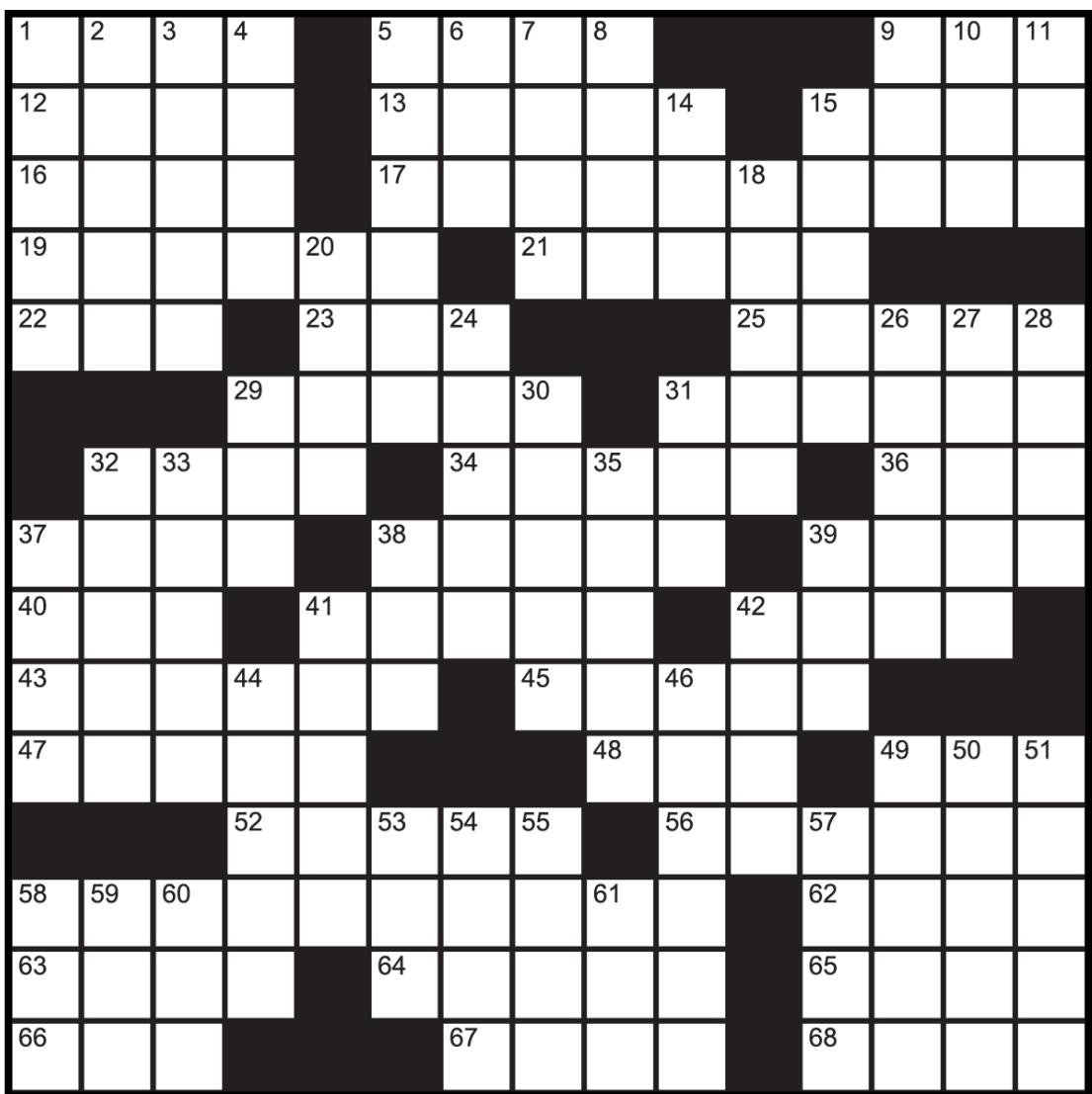
### Across

1 Asteroid discovered in 1898  
 5 Opinion  
 9 Blocker of "Bonanza"  
 12 It's tossed in a pub  
 13 Part of many stars' names  
 15 Nothing special  
 16 Educated guess  
 17 One who remains tucked in  
 19 They are fit for a queen  
 21 Script direction  
 22 Coal carrier  
 23 Actor Vallone of "The Italian Job"

25 The brainy bunch  
 29 House of the Seven Gables site  
 31 Pipe organ parts  
 32 Spill the beans  
 34 1953 Gregory Peck, Audrey Hepburn flick, "\_\_\_ Holiday"  
 36 Tree contents  
 37 Encounter  
 38 Latin Quarter locale  
 39 Prohibits  
 40 Clark's "Mogambo" co-star  
 41 Hang loose  
 42 Highlander's wear  
 43 Inferior

45 Drew in  
 47 Choir voices  
 48 Short report  
 49 Amniotic \_\_\_  
 52 Strike back  
 56 Acrimonious  
 58 Matinee idol, maybe  
 62 Not common  
 63 Capp of the comics  
 64 Wavelike design  
 65 Flower with a bulb  
 66 Lao-tzu principle  
 67 Promise  
 68 Proofer's mark

1 French cabaret singer Piaf  
 2 Dashboard feature  
 3 Companion of Artemis  
 4 Telephone button  
 5 Liege subject  
 6 "\_\_\_ say!"  
 7 Foil kin  
 8 A question of timing  
 9 Female rabbit  
 10 Simile's middle  
 11 Silent assent  
 14 On target  
 15 Rip up  
 18 Neighbor of Oman  
 20 Show horse  
 24 Not domesticated  
 26 Kind of spray  
 27 Viewpoint  
 28 Egyptian snakes  
 29 Test for US college admission  
 30 Fable finale  
 31 Father figures  
 32 Cut at an angle  
 33 Most trifling  
 35 Confusion  
 37 Powers of "Cyrano de Bergerac"  
 38 Via  
 39 Signal at Sotheby's  
 41 Change, as a clock  
 42 Visored cap  
 44 Repentant  
 46 Became a burglar  
 49 Commence  
 50 Home with a view  
 51 Summit  
 53 Money dispenser  
 54 Dog with a blue-black tongue  
 55 Threesome  
 57 Speaker of baseball  
 58 Bowler, for one  
 59 Bambi's aunt  
 60 Hubbub  
 61 Bobby of the Bruins



# Upcoming Events

## Seatoun Hub for Seniors

5 Mar, 2 Apr, 7 May, 4 Jun, 10.30 - 11.30am

## Upper Hutt Hub for Seniors

12 Mar, 9 Apr, 14 May, 11 Jun, 12pm

## Manners Street Coffee Group

27 Mar, 24 Apr, 29 May, 26 Jun, 10.30am

## Linden Hub for Seniors

11 Mar, 8 Apr, 13 May, 10 Jun, 1pm

## Omai Fa'atasi Pasifika Seniors, Hutt Valley

10 Apr, 15 May, 12 Jun, 10 Jul, 10am

## Omai Fa'atasi Pasifika Seniors, Porirua

4 & 18 Mar, 1 & 15 Apr, 6 & 20 May, 3 & 17 Jun, 10am

## Staying Safe course for older drivers

6 March Te Aro

19 Mar Upper Hutt

26 Mar Karori

22 Apr Kilbirnie

## Tea & Tech, and Scam Prevention

TBC

## Pukeahu Tours

25 Mar, 27 May, 29 Jul, 10 & 11.15am



# Services

## Visitor Service/Phone Friend Service

## Community Support

## Connect Programme

## Companion Walking Service

## Falls Prevention exercise classes

## Staying Safe courses for older drivers

## Technology and Scam Prevention

Read more about the impact our services are having in articles throughout this magazine.

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### CROSSWORD - ANSWER



## Steady As You Go Falls Prevention Exercise Classes

DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Monday	10 am	Seatoun Village Hall, w Forres Street, Seatoun
Monday	11 am	Quaker Meeting Rooms, 7 Moncrieff St, Mt Victoria
Tuesday	11 am	Koraunui Stokes Valley Hub, 184 Stokes Valley Rd, Stokes Valley
Tuesday	11 am	Wainuiomata Library, 1 Queen Street, Wainuiomata
Tuesday	11 am	Maidstone Park, 11 Railway Ave, Upper Hutt
Tuesday	12 pm	Newtown Community Centre, Corner of Rintoul and Colombo Streets, Newtown
Tuesday	1 pm	Vogelmorn Hall, Mornington Rd, Brooklyn
Tuesday	1 pm	Kilbirnie-Lyall Bay Community Centre, 56-58 Bay Road, Kilbirnie
Tuesday	1 pm	Johnsonville Uniting Church, 16 Dr Taylor Terrace, Johnsonville
Tuesday	1.30 pm	Walter Nash Centre, 20/22 Taine Street, Taita
Wednesday	9.30 am	Live Online Class, Zoom
Wednesday	12 pm	All Saints Church, Hataitai, 90 Hamilton Road, Hataitai
Wednesday	12 pm	Eastbourne Community Hall, Tuatoru St, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt
Wednesday	12.30 pm	Te Tūhunga Rau – Strathmore Community Centre, 108 Strathmore Ave, Strathmore Park
Wednesday	1.30 pm	Island Bay Community Centre, 137 The Parade, Island Bay
Thursday	1 pm	Koraunui Stokes Valley, 184 Stokes Valley Rd, Stokes Valley
Thursday	1 pm	Tawa Community Centre, 5 Cambridge Street, Tawa
Thursday	1.30 pm	Walter Nash Centre, 20/22 Taine Street, Taita
Friday	11 am	St Mary's Church Hall, 69D Discovery Drive, Whitby
Friday	1 pm	Loaves & Fishes, Wellington Cathedral of St Paul, 2 Hill Street, Thorndon

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