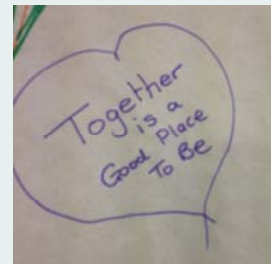
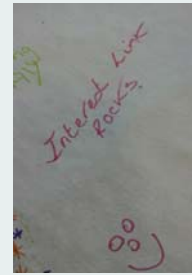
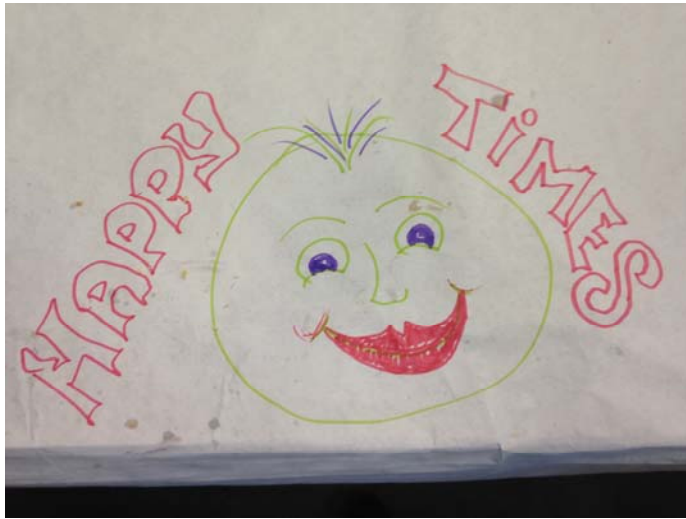


2006-2016



# A FRIENDSHIP GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

It began in 2006 with 50 people turning up to Langlee Community Centre in Galashiels to find out all about the first ever Interest Link Friendship Day.

Ten years later the event has continued to grow and in November 2016 the level of excitement and interest has grown to 86. As well as

the chance to meet up with old friends, and make new friends, the annual celebration offers people the chance to learn new skills, take home some gifts and chat & chill over a beautifully prepared lunch.

Whatever it is, the Friendship Day is an ever growing success.

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# FRIENDSHIPS



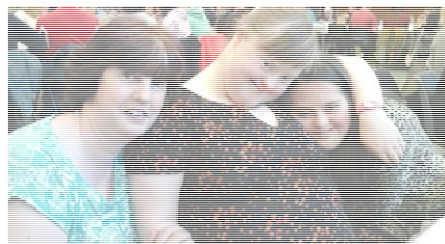
Helen and Mary were paired together for the day, but got along like old friends.

Helen said: "I really enjoyed being with Mary and she put me at ease." While Mary added: "I am glad to have met Helen and to have helped her be part of the whole event."



Tom and Stuart from Peebles: Tom: "It is always good fun coming here. I find it all very interesting and I love to see everyone enjoying themselves. It is a good day, a lovely day I recognise faces and I also take the chance to speak to others. It is also a chance to celebrate what we do in Peebles and a chance to realise that you are not working in isolation. There are whole groups of people all working equally as hard doing the same thing."

Stuart added: "I have been for coming roughly five years. I really enjoyed coming into the hall this morning, everyone is here for a good time. I was certainly nervous the first year I came here but it has improved every year but the first time I came here was also great."



Megan, Lauder: "I think this is my sixth year here. I really look forward to this event. I meet people I know and also make new friends. The drama was a whole load of fun. I can have a daft time and have fun while being around people I feel safe with."

*Megan (centre) is pictured with Sandra from Selkirk (left) and Stephanie from St. Boswells.*



Bernadette: This is my fourth time coming here it is something I really look forward too. There are always so many lovely people here and I really enjoyed making the Christmas decorations."

**An event is only a success if it enjoyed by the people it is set up for. Here we learn what some of the participants thought of the event. Many have been attending for years, now that is a huge endorsement!!**

# FRIENDSHIPS

Lucy Porteous from Kelso – been coming here now for four years and it really is a lot of fun. It has been brilliant each time I have been here. People are prepared to go for it. I like meeting people. The activities are a lot of fun and I also chatting to new friends."

Nan and Christine have been close friends for many years and the Friendship Day is certainly an annual highlight. Nan said: "I really enjoy coming here, the activities of offer are a lot of fun. The people who take the workshops are a lot of fun."

Christine added: "Nan is great and you can really see her smiling when she takes part in an event like this. She is able to be herself and able to try out things she may not normally have the opportunity to enjoy."



Aileen: "This is my first time. I loved the drama class it was amazing and Oli was amazing. When I walked in here I immediately felt welcome and I am so glad that I came along. It is something I will definitely be looking out for next year. I am really happy in here today, I have made new friends and will be back next year."



Jennifer, Galashiels: "I have been coming each year since it started I have only missed it twice when I have either been ill or on holiday. It gets better and better each year. We meet people from the other groups across the Scottish Borders and it is just a nice friendly, easy day. The workshops were just great fun, I will go home tonight in a really good mood because I have had such a great time."



Daniel: "This is my second time, and it is even better than last year. I really enjoyed the drama sessions. It has been great to see some people who I met for the first time last year and also nice to make new friends."







## A DAY OF CELEBRATION

They travelled from all corners of the Scottish Borders to be part of an extra special day.

Some had seen the Friendship Day grow from its inception ten years ago, others were sampling the day of delights for the first time. But everyone was made equally welcome and there really was something for everyone.

Just before 10am the car park at Langlee quickly began to fill up, and the silence was shattered by a wave of excitement. Old friends catching sight of each other, debutants getting caught up in the moment.

The massive hall at the Langlee complex also played its part in making everyone feel right at home. And it was quite a sight to see so many people in the same place at the same time.

Stephanie offered everyone a special anniversary welcome, while Oli did what he does best in getting everyone in the mood, before the three workshops got underway. On offer was Frantic Festive Fun, Festive Christmas Crafts and Debbie's Christmas Goodies and the trio of activities were extremely well received by all. Each room was a buzz of excitement. The motto of the event was participate in as much or as little as you want. But it was clear that everyone was up for everything and everyone lapped it up.

While most people were immersed in the activities, behind the scenes the coordinators and the Fleming family were transforming the main hall into the lunch venue, The quality of food on offer was matched by the volume of chatter and Langlee was

loud in a lovely way. The tables had been decorated with paper tablecloths for a good reason and everyone was encouraged to write or draw their impression of the Friendship Day. The results were simply breath-taking and a true testament to the high regards in which the event is held.

The tenth anniversary lunch wouldn't have been complete without a celebratory cake and sing-song. The cake, was cut by Project Coordinator Andrew Findlay who also presented a slideshow of photo's from the day and from events held by the various groups throughout the Scottish Borders. Everyone was glued to the presentation, and while some people quickly covered their eyes as they spotted themselves on the big screen, truth be told they were quite rightly bursting with pride. Not only chuffed with seeing themselves but also when they spotted many of their Friendship Day friends. The sheer size of the Interest Link family was on display and it was just magic.

As the cake was cut and dispersed the final act of a fabulous day was handed over to Oli who organised a mass drama event. It hit the spot as did the challenge to everyone to make their way round the hall and high five each and every one.

The day came to a close with everyone feeling so much closer. Most left with an armful of goodies and a host of creations and memories.

A ten-year creation that become bigger and better and something that the creators can be rightly proud of.

**2006-2016**

**10th anniversary  
celebrations**



# WORKSHOPS

## Debbie's Christmas Goodies



Debbie Laurie attended the Friendship Day for the very first day to present her workshop. The Christmas Goodies theme certainly went down a treat - some participants were just as enthusiastic about eating some of the creation as they were making them. Debbie said: "I had heard a great deal about the event and it certainly lived up to my expectations. Each workshop proved to be a hive of activity and everyone certainly joined in. It was an absolute delight to see so many people participating and enjoying the chance to be creative. It is an event I would certainly like to be part of again in the future."

## Frantic Festive Fun

Oli Bisset is a whirlwind of excitement and enthusiasm and his energy quickly rubbed off on everyone else. Many knew Oli from previous years, but he quickly put complete strangers at ease. His support and encouragement, coupled with tremendous creativity brought people right out of their shell and made the drama sessions a real highlight.

Oli said: "This is one of my favourite events of the year. Everyone really gets into each session and I have to confess I also get a great deal out of it. To see the ideas people come up with is brilliant. And everyone is given the opportunity to express themselves in an open fun environment."

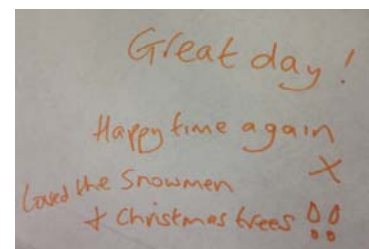


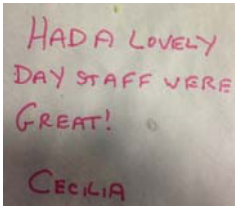
## Festive Christmas Crafts

There is nothing better than an opportunity to get your hands covered in some glue, some paint and be creative. And the participants in Hayley Murfin's Christmas Crafts workshop certainly had an absolute ball. Hayley is no stranger to the Friendship Day and she certainly knew what were the perfect ingredients to make for a perfect day.

Participants were able to indulge their creativity amongst friends and the chatter in the room showed that Hayley hit the spot.

Speaking after the morning workshops Hayley said: "I really enjoy these workshops. We have a great deal of talent and just as importantly people simply enjoying themselves."





# THE CO-ORDINATORS

They are the women who brought the Friendship Day to life. And there is little doubt that the event has been a complete triumph.

Here is how they all feel about the success.

**Val Reilly** said: "We have seen an array of service users attend the event over the years and I always feel so nice when I see new people come along for the first time. I have been encouraged by all the people who attend.

There is such a buzz at the event from all involved, from all corners of the Scottish Borders. They all seem to take so much away from the day, I also feel we hit the right note with the workshops on offer.

**Stephanie** was heavily pregnant at the first ever Friendship Day with her first daughter. She recalled the excitement of developing the opportunity to work together. She said: "We were aware as four branches that we were working on a satellite basis. So to be able to have a day where we could all have fun and socialise together was brilliant and very much the ethos of Interest Link. It was a great idea but we then had to come up with a venue and deal with the logistics of it all. But it quickly snowballed from there. It



has been fun deciding what activities to put on offer.

**Kate** has seen the Friendship Day unfold from both sides and loves it. She said: "For many years I was coming to this as a volunteer and able to support service users to enjoy the day. It has always been an event that has given me a great deal of enjoyment but I was also able to see the enjoyment it has given to others."

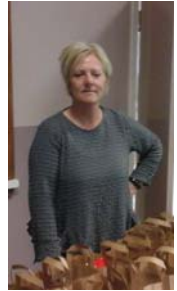
She added: "This year I have been part of the organisational side and it really has been an eye opener. It is a well oiled machine and we have a team who all know their roles very well. They are confident but also very aware.



To see everyone come through the doors this morning and to even appreciate what it takes just to get everyone to Langlee is incredible."

**Mary** has been involved from the start and reflected on the initial discussions that helped launch the project. "I can remember us all enjoying a real sense of excitement at being able to create something big, together. But it was also the chance

to bring everyone together and for the volunteers and service users to enjoy meeting each other. We all felt the idea could work but we had to get our head round things logistically. I find it hard to believe we have been going for ten years and it has been nice to be here today with people who have been



here every year and some for the first time."

**Judy** is also part of the fabric of the event and she certainly knows how to make things tick,

She said: "We are able to call on people to run workshops each year, some regulars,



some different. It is also nice to see friends meet each other in a completely different setting. It is a tremendous day for all."

# A DECADE OF DELIGHT

It was over ten years ago when the idea of holding a Friendship Day was put to Project Co-ordinator Andrew Findlay by the four Interest Link area co-ordinators.

Andrew had so much faith in the skills and foresight of his team that he immediately gave the event the green light and has never looked back.

Reflecting back Andrew said: "The co-ordinators keep working on this event each year and it keeps getting bigger and better. It is an event I really look forward to each year as it symbolises everything that Interest Link stands for."



He added: "I spend many hours working behind the scenes on fund-raising and management, but an event like this allows me the opportunity to see how the money is spent. It also allows me the chance to meet people who I sometimes don't get to see from year to year."

An event of the Langlee magnitude also brings it home just the sheer scale of the Interest Link footprint across the Scottish Borders.



It is something not lost on the Project Co-ordinator, Andrew enthused: "It is humbling to see the incredible number of people we support right across the region, this is done through a variety of groups but also through one-to-one support. I take so much from the day and it really brings it home to me all what we manage to achieve as an organisation."

## A kind and thoughtful family

The Fleming family certainly give their all for Interest Link.

Susan, Neil and daughter Caitlin all play their part to ensure everyone has a nice time at the annual Friendship Day.

Susan first became involved with Interest Link back in 1998 and has been a stalwart ever since. She was unable to attend the first Friendship get-together as she was busy working on a stall at another event in Duns! But she has been a rock ever since, and her contribution towards the lunch segment of the day cannot be underestimated. Susan said: "The food plays a huge part in the social aspect of the day. I always find it so nice to hear everyone chatting away."



Husband Neil also gets a great buzz listening to the excited chatter on the way to Langlee as he drives the Berwickshire minibus to Langlee. He added: "The chat on the bus is priceless, everyone is always so excited on the way and often sound asleep on the way home. It is a big day for everyone and I am proud to be part of it."

And the family support continues through daughter Caitlin who just loves the whole event, she said: "I like to see everything unfold on the day. I became involved as a volunteer through one of the IL youth groups. To now see the entire Friendship Day come together is brilliant and something of a success story."

Many families could easily choose to do other things on a Saturday, but it is to the Fleming's credit that they give up their time so faithfully to ensure others have a really good time. What a kind and thoughtful thing to do!

We are grateful to all the funders who made the Friendship Day possible, including:

