

1960s

ELOPWC celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1966. It was noted in the annual report that the work then being carried out benefited a different generation from the one helped in the 1940s. It was also observed that the definition of an "old" person had changed since the early days of ELOPWC, reflecting improving health and growing life expectancy.

The 1960s was a period when the ELOPWC both continued to expand its existing services and activities, and open ground breaking day centres for older people.

CONCESSIONARY FARES

1964 Travel Concessions Act made it possible for local authorities to grant reduced fares for elderly persons travelling on any vehicles run by these authorities. Shortly afterwards, concessionary fares were introduced in Edinburgh making it easier for older people to take advantage of the activities offered by ELOPWC in their neighbourhood or elsewhere.



The number of visits made to people in their own home, retirement home, hospital or hostel continued to rise, reaching around 17,000 in total by the late 60s. Eighteen hospitals and nine retirement homes were regularly visited. A novel means of reaching out to those who would benefit from visits was used in 1963. State pension cards issued to 55,000 people in the city invited them to inform the local authority if they wanted a visit. Their names were passed to the ELOPWC's visiting officer and contact was made with 150 new people through this route.

Entertainment continued to be provided, with one special event held each month. Reduced price tickets were provided for performances at the Lyceum and the inmates at Saughton Prison laid on a concert one year for folk. Many older people enjoyed holidays organised by ELOPWC and car drive outings were also introduced for small parties.



By the late 60s, 55 clubs were in place across the city. Funding came from the proceeds of bring and buy sales and coffee mornings and members' contributions. The clubs had around 3,500 members who typically would spend two and half hours there on each visit. Most clubs closed in the summer months and many members would continue their friendships on the city's bowling greens. The number of occupational classes grew to 55. The subjects included handicrafts, pottery, dressmaking and sewing, millinery, drawing, painting and design.



HOME HELPS

Home Helps 1968 legislation made the provision of a home help service a duty of local authorities. Paid care workers started to visit older and disabled people in their homes and carry out support for day to day living, such as cleaning and laundry.



The opening of Lamb's House in 1961 as an old people's day centre was a huge step forward. 728 people enrolled at the outset and by the mid sixties this figure had soared to 1,750. 150 voluntary workers were engaged at the beginning and this number increased to 250 within a few years. In the late sixties around 500 people per day were attending on Tuesday and Wednesday, and 200-300 on other days. A new hall was built attached to the House which could accommodate 300 people.



A range of services were provided from the early days, including laundry, hairdressing, physiotherapy, cinema shows, and bathing; as well as lunches, social activities and entertainment. Doctors, almoners, health visitors and local authorities referred people to the House so they could use its services. The House reached out to the handicapped in the community and mini buses were provided to bring in some of these folk so they too could enjoy what was on offer to others.

Lamb's House was seen as a ground breaking venture in social welfare and was visited by representatives from many other voluntary bodies and local authorities from all over GB to learn from its success. Visitors also came from Germany. Also, the House started to provide training for voluntary workers from other organisations.



Lamb's House was managed by Margaret Bayne. In 1968, she was declared Scotswoman of the Year.

The next big step was the opening of Dalry House as a further day centre in 196. The building was gifted by the Episcopalian Church. The opening was a welcome development in a part of the city with many crowded tenements. Membership quickly rose to around 2,000 people. It provided services similar to those offered by Lamb's House. An impressive 100 lunches were served daily.

The acquisition and renovation of both Lamb's House and Dalry House was made possible by generous donations from many sources. The council covered nearly half of the costs at Dalry House.

THE ROYAL CONNECTION CONTINUES

The Queen Mother officially opened Lamb's House on 18 October 1961. 900 people were in attendance and 300 enjoyed a tea party to celebrate the occasion. The Queen and Prince Philip officially opened Dalry House on 17 October 1967.



Margaret Tudor House doubled as the HQ for ELOPWC and as a day centre, and expanded the facilities which it offered. A bathing service was offered three days a week. A television room and a library were added. On a chilly day, someone could comfortably spend all day in the building reading the papers, chatting to others, and watching the latest television programmes.



The very cold winter of 1962/63 led to the creation of the coal and comforts fund which received funding from Scottish and Newcastle Breweries. The extreme weather put many older people at risk and the fund paid for coal, blankets, hot water bottles and other items. The fund was retained in later years to provide assistance when needed during periods when temperatures dropped to dangerously low levels. 1,000 parcels were distributed in the winter of 1965/66.



Old People's Homes Limited changed its portfolio during the period. The Manor Place home was closed and residents were moved to the newly acquired Strathearn House. Tornaveen House was also purchased, so increasing the number of people enjoying retirement in the organisation's care to 61. In 1969, Old People's Homes Limited was merged as a single legal entity with ELOPWC. It was judged that this merger would provide financial benefits. The combined entity used ELOPWC as its name. Reverend Selby Wright stood down as chair in 1968 after twelve years service. He was succeeded by Mr Norman Murchison.

Towards the end of the period, plans started to be made for a day centre in Stockbridge and fund raising efforts were put in place to enable this to become a reality.