

Pensioners share stories for memory book

Over 60s at an Edinburgh retirement housing development have taken a step back into the past and shared their memories from the 1950s for a locally produced memory book.

Tenants from Bield's Gordon Court make up half of those who have contributed stories to the memory book, created by the Leith based Citadel Arts Group, as 10 tenants have had their stories included.



Alex Wilson (on the left) with his friends in West Bowling Green Road in the 50s.

The 83-page book, titled 'Remembering the Fifties: A Book of Living Memories', contains a variety of stories from local people's lives in the 1950s. Contributors have included a range of events from their pasts, including memories of going out dancing, the food they most enjoyed and stories of family life.

The book launch will be held on 27th September at Gordon Court, with Abbeyhill Primary School pupils being invited to

present their interpretations of the stories, to those who experienced them first hand.

All those who contributed to the memory book have been invited to attend the launch and will receive a copy of the book on the day.

Liz Hare, Director of the Citadel Arts Group, said: "It was a lovely project, we met some great people whilst doing it.

"This was our first time working with Bield on a project and I hope it won't be the last – it really was a lovely development. The staff were really supportive and friendly, they made the memory sessions with the tenants go so smoothly.

"This was our first time focusing on a specific era, and we thought the 50s was a very interesting time to focus on, with it being a post-war time period and things like national service still being in place, and it has ended up being our largest book yet.

"As everyone was different ages at the time, everything was talked about by those sharing stories, with some recalling the music of the era, some speaking about family memories and others talking about popular jobs of the time, or their first experiences of the dating world."

Tenants who participated in the stories thoroughly enjoyed the process and were more than happy to share memories from their past for the book.

Gordon Court tenant, Cathy Williamson, said: "It was great to re-live the happy times of the fifties, I really enjoyed all the shared memories."

Pupils from Abbeyhill Primary School were given a sneak peak of the book ahead of the launch, and have prepared their own interpretations of its stories, in the form of pictures and drawings, as well as short plays produced by the children. The

class will present their responses to the stories at the launch.

Citadel Arts Group have produced multiple memory books with people from Leith about various different topics, from ex-whalers to those who worked on Leith docks to a focus on the old Leith Hospital.

The arts group often produces plays based on the stories they are told and are currently in the creating one based on this most recent 50s themed book.

Liz added: "Laure Paterson is working on a play about all these stories. It's going to be called 'Moonshine on Leith'.

"We take the plays into local schools and retirement housing to present them. So this one will most likely be shown to the pupils at Abbeyhill. We'll take the play to Gordon Court as well, to let those involved see our interpretation of their memories.

"The play is the next stage of the production – the book really isn't the end of the story."

Visit the Citadel Arts Group website at www.citadelartsgroup.co.uk to find out more about ordering a copy of 'Remembering the Fifties: A Book of Living Memories'.

Gordon Court is a Bield development for those aged 60 and over who want to be able to retain their independence while having help on hand when needed.

Bield has been providing high-quality housing and related services for older people in Scotland for more than 40 years.

To find out more about Bield and its developments [Click here](#)