

Blether Tay-Gither – Storytelling in Dundee



From [Blether Tay-Gither](#) :

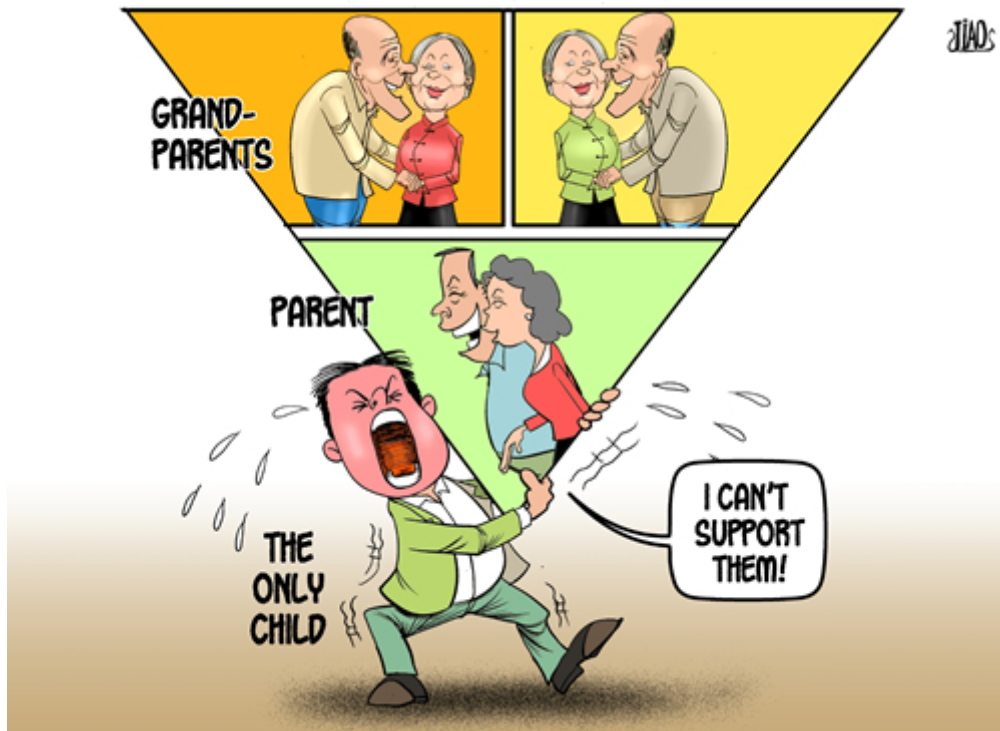
Our March Blether will be on Tuesday 28th March – at 7pm in Madigan's Food Emporium and Bookshop, Castle Street.

This meeting sees us celebrate 10 Years of storytelling in Dundee. Join us for stories and cake!

Special guest is Jess Smith.

Seats are limited so please let us know ASAP if you are coming by contacting e-mailing sheila@blethertaygither.co.uk or by phoning 01334 474836.

China's aging population will reach 255m by 2020



Inverted pyramid [By Jiao Haiyang/China.org.cn]

Chinese authorities are projecting the country's aged population (above 60 years old) will reach 255 million by 2020, but the provision of necessary healthcare and nursing will fall seriously short of requirements.

According to a plan for elderly healthcare in the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) jointly issued by 13 Chinese government departments including the National Health and Family Planning Commission and National Development and Reform Commission, the aging population will grow at an average rate of 6.4 million a year. By 2020, there will be 255 million elders, representing at least 17.8 percent of the entire Chinese population.

The planning document indicates there will be an increasing number of totally and partially disabled elders in the future. In 2015, the figure was 40.63 million, among whom 11.35 million had disability identity certificates.

However, China lags behind in elderly healthcare services and the growing population imposes worrying pressures on the system. In 2015, China had 453 elderly convalescent hospitals, 168 nursing homes and 65 nursing service stations to provide the much-needed medical care for the elderly.

Also in 2015, there were only 36,441, 11,180 and 316 staff members respectively in the specialist hospitals, nursing homes, and nursing stations.

Luo Qimin, a senior engineer who has been undertaking researches into elderly people's rehabilitation assistance devices for more than two decades, told 21st Century Business Herald that China has just made a start in dealing with aging issues, which are very complicated.

"The most urgent issue is the government should organize a really professional team on the national level, involving every aspect, including

medical care, rehabilitation, creation of environment suitable for the elderly, and policy-making, and treating the aging problem as a severe problem needing urgent resolution," he said.

The planning document proposes the concept of "growing old healthily," which means that to comprehensively and systematically intervene at an early stage of life in all elements that may influence health. This will create a favorable environment for living and nurture social support for elders' health, which can extend the life expectancy and maintain good health.

It also pointed out that China has not built a comprehensive and continuous service system yet to meet elders' various health demands.

Li Fen, a research director from Shanghai Healthcare Development Research Center, added that elderly people usually suffer from more than one disease including chronic conditions, so there is great need for close cooperation among various hospitals and medical care institutions and personnel, as well as in the technologies and medicines. Currently, there is no strong connection and interaction among different institutions and medical professionals.

[China to announce annual water-quality rankings](#)

Starting from this year, China will publish the annual rankings of cities with the best and poorest water quality, as the government moves to further increase transparency.

In addition, results of investigations into major or sensitive environmental emergencies, their impacts on the environment, and assessments of losses will also be made known to the public in line with the law, according to the central government's agendas for 2017 unveiled by the State Council.

Water quality has not drawn as much attention from the public as air quality, and the rankings will serve as a form of supervision over local governments, as well as motivate them to step up efforts to treat polluted water and improve water quality, said Peng Yingdeng, a Beijing-based researcher in urban environmental pollution control.

China still has a long way to go in the treatment of polluted and odorous water, Peng said, adding that the rankings will prompt cities that have done poorly in this regard to strive harder for improvements.

Corrupt Chinese fugitive repatriated from Zimbabwe

A retired Chinese tax official has been returned from Zimbabwe to China less than four months after he fled a corruption probe and hid in the southern African country.

It is Jiangsu Province's fastest repatriation of a corrupt fugitive, provincial anti-graft officials said.

Yang Xingfu, who retired as the deputy head of Local Taxation Bureau of Nantong City in 2015, fled to Zimbabwe last December, fearing a graft investigation.

Initial probes revealed evidence of Yang's abuse of power and acceptance of bribes in construction projects, corporate financing, and handling tax transfers since 2010 during his term of office.

The local procuratorate issued detention orders for Yang in January 2017. Learning he was in Zimbabwe, a law enforcement team was promptly assembled and dispatched, the officials said. Police in Zimbabwe held Yang and transferred him to the team in accordance with the law.

The case is still being investigated.

"The operation shows that there is no haven for corrupt officials abroad," said Yao Aishan, deputy head of the Jiangsu provincial procuratorate's anti-corruption bureau. "They won't escape punishment by the law, no matter where they flee."

Yao urged other fugitives on the run to turn themselves in to be considered for leniency.

China has stepped up efforts in international cooperation to hunt criminal fugitives. Operation "Sky Net," for example, repatriated 908 fugitives, including 122 officials, from over 70 countries or regions in 11 months last year.

Most fugitives have fled to developed countries, including Canada, the United States, and Australia, but a few have also taken refuge in Africa.

What should be the age to receive your

State pension?

We have received a couple of reports this week discussing the age at which people should be entitled to a State pension based on their NI contributions.

Current policy is to raise the age from 65 to 66 in 2020, and to 67 in 2028. As people live longer, so the cost of their pensions rises without a proportionate increase in their contributions over their working lives. Whilst the state retirement scheme is a pay as you go one, where each generation pays for its parents generation out of current NI payments, individual pension entitlement is still based on your past contribution record.

The Cridland report suggests raising the age to 69 between 2037 and 2039 and going higher thereafter. The Government Actuary suggests 69 by 2053-5, with another variant bringing in 69 as early as 2040.

The Report also raises the issue of whether after the end of this Parliament there should be some change to the triple lock. Currently the government is pledged to increase pensions each year by the highest of earnings, prices (CPI) or 2.5%. Dropping one or two of these requirements could make progressive savings to the total cost. In recent years the 2.5% minimum has meant pensioner incomes rising faster than incomes in work.

I would be interested in your thoughts on all this. There does seem to be a good case to say that as longevity rises there should be a proportionate rise in the pension age to keep some balance between an individual's contributions when working and their pension receipts. Allowing the triple lock has helped narrow the gap between pensioner incomes and working incomes. There is an issue in how much further people think that should go.