



Hands off universal benefits

David Cameron's promise to retain the "triple lock" protecting the state retirement pension for the life of the next parliament, means that both our main political parties are now guaranteeing to increase the basic rate pension by the highest of average earnings, average price increases or 2.5% until 2020.

While we thank our three Enfield Members of Parliament for supporting the Forum's campaign to retain the triple lock guarantee, the next 15 months will determine the fate of the other so-called pensioner benefits – the winter fuel allowance, free TV licences for the over 75s and the highly coveted concessionary travel pass.

Interestingly, The Times reported on January 6 that Mr Cameron was "minded" to renew the commitment he made in 2010 to ensure that all pensioners retained their benefits until 2015 - for the life of the next parliament.

There is clearly a battle going on inside the Cabinet with work and pensions minister Iain Duncan Smith leading the drive for pensioner benefits to be included in the tightly controlled welfare budget. It could lead to many benefits being means-tested to keep costs down as the pensioner numbers grow.

Labour has already said it will embark on the slippery slope of means-testing by removing the winter fuel allowance from pensioners with the highest income, although it is expected to raise less than £100 million a year for the Chancellor,

It is against this background when there is everything to fight for that 'Hands Off' a new nation-wide campaign has been launched defending the need for benefits such as the winter fuel payment and the bus pass.

The 'Hands Off' campaign, which has already been backed by some of the most influential older people's organisations in the UK, aims to safeguard benefits such as the winter fuel payment, bus pass, free prescriptions and TV licences after the 2015 general election.



Following comments made by the main political parties at Westminster indicating these benefits may be under threat, the campaign will emphasise their importance in achieving a decent standard of living for millions of pensioners across the UK, whilst also highlighting the costs and barriers associated with means-testing such benefits.

People of all ages are being encouraged to sign an online e-petition and to email their local MP via the campaign website at www.handsoff.org.uk. The 'Hands Off' campaign is being officially backed by the National Pensioners' Convention, Age Sector Platform in Northern Ireland, the Welsh Senate of Older People and the Scottish Seniors Alliance.

Dot Gibson from the National Pensioners' Convention said: **"The real reason why pensioners need additional benefits such as the winter fuel allowance and the free bus pass is because our state pension is so poor.**

"Yet despite this, every year older people add an extra £40bn to the economy in taxes, volunteering and unpaid caring. Universal benefits help to keep people active, independent, warm in their homes, healthy and involved in their communities.

"Removing universal benefits isn't about saving money or about stopping millionaires from getting a free ride on their local bus – it's about undermining the welfare state and the principle that services should be available to everyone in retirement.

"People who make these allegations seem to conveniently forget that many of today's pensioners experienced real hardship during the war years and all of us can remember the austerity of the post-war period. Universal benefits need to be defended not only for today's pensioners, but for the pensioners of tomorrow as well.

"Pensioners are tired of feeling like a burden on society; we make a huge contribution and that surely should be recognised," said Dot Gibson.

For more information on the campaign, visit www.handsoff.org.uk

To sign the petition visit www.handsoff.org.uk/e-petition

You can help by:

- Visiting the www.handsoff.org.uk website
- Signing the online e-petition
- Writing an e-mail or letter to your local MP
- Following the campaign on Twitter @supporthandsoff
- Pledging your organisation/group's official support for the campaign by emailing info@handsoff.org.uk
- Promoting the campaign amongst your family and friends (anyone of any age can support the campaign)

Monty Meth

Meetings not to be missed

Tuesday 25 March at 10am

Britain after the 2011 riots with David Lammy MP. This meeting will be held at the **Dugdale Centre**

Tuesday 29 April at 10am

Borough Police Commander Jane Johnson speaks at the **Civic Centre**, Silver Street, Enfield Town.

We gather at 10am for Your Shout – your chance to raise anything and hear reports from Forum executive members, followed at 10.30 by our guest speaker, and time for questions and discussion.

Must meetings

in Enfield Town

Tuesday 25 March 2014 (At the Dugdale Centre)

Britain after the 2011 riots with **David Lammy, MP for Tottenham**, where the disturbances started. Mr Lammy is a former Minister for Higher Education, and author of "Out of the ashes." Because the Civic Centre is unavailable, **please note** this meeting will be held at **the Dugdale Centre**, 39 London Road where it meets Cecil Road in Enfield Town EN2 6DS.

Tuesday 29 April at 10am (At the Civic Centre)

Borough Police Commander Jane Johnson talks about policing, crime and initiatives to make Enfield a safer place for all.

We gather at 10am for Your Shout – your chance to raise anything and hear reports from Forum executive members, followed at 10.30 by our guest speaker, and time for questions and discussion.

Palmers Green Mosque

Thursday 13 March at 10am

At the invitation of Forum member **Talat Shaikh** we have been invited to visit the Islamic Centre in Oakthorpe Road. During the visit there will be a presentation on **the Mosque's role and involvement with the local community**. The Muslim Community and Education Centre, Palmers Green Mosque, is a non-profit Charity Trust. The Trust's primary aim is to provide a place of worship, educational and social facilities. MCEC, 30 Oakthorpe Road, Palmers Green, London, N13 5JL. Oakthorpe Road is opposite Palmers Green Library served by Buses 121 and 329. Please phone the Forum office to advise them you will be attending. 020 8807 2076.

Millfield House, Silver Street N18 1PJ

Thursday 10 April 2014 – 7.30pm - 9.30pm (Note this is an evening meeting)

Dr Nicholas Bunnin from Oxford University discusses 'Philosophy and its importance and relevance to society today.'
Dr Bunnin was Professor in the China Institute, King's College London and the author of **'the Blackwell companion to philosophy.'**

Southgate Beaumont, 15 Cannon Hill, N14 7DJ

This is the Forum's new venue for meetings in the third week of the month. Note days and times may vary.

Tuesday 18 March at 10am for 10.30am start

Asha Khan of Citizens Advice Bureau will give an overview of **welfare reform and its impact on the local community**. The presentation looks at understanding debt, the consequences of non payment which introduces Magistrates and County Courts and the actions of bailiffs and debt collectors.

Tuesday 15 April at 10am for 10.30am start

Theodora Fehmi, principle of Theodora's Carden Design and Gardening, talks about gardening jobs for the spring, plants and planting, how to prolong blooming periods and the basics of garden design. **There will be ample time for you to put your questions to Theodora about maintenance and your garden problems.**

The Southgate Beaumont Care Community is the large care home at 15 Cannon Hill, N14 7DJ, diagonally opposite the Cherry Tree Pub. Buses 121, W6, 298, 299, nearest station Southgate Underground. There is ample car parking space.

Jan's Journal

Winter Fair was great

It was terrific to see so many people at our first Winter Fair in the ArtsZone on January 24. **Over 200 people attended**, many from the under-represented groups in the East of the Borough. We hope that the day was enjoyable and that the affiliated groups gained some more members. Along with the stalls we ran a series of displays and workshops.

Our thanks especially to:

- ❖ Michael Stennett from Stennett and Stennett who helped members plan for the future by talking through wills, powers of attorney and the Court of Protection. (*Stennett and Stennett, Solicitors and Estate Agents, 020 8920 3190, www.stennett-stennett.co.uk*)
- ❖ Winchmore Folk Dance Club for a wonderful display and the opportunity to join in with their dancing. (*Winchmore Folk Dance Club is looking for new members and can be contacted through Ms. Joyce Leedham: the leedhams@btinternet.com*).
- ❖ Sonia Tonge for putting participants through their paces with an exhilarating Zumba Gold Session. *Sonia Tonge is a licenced Zumba instructor 07957 971473 or sonia.tonge@gmail.com*
- ❖ Sylvia Brown who ran a gentle Circle Dance and Keep Fit session. (*Sylvia Brown is one of our affiliated members and runs both Circle Dance and Keep Fit session. Sylvia can be contacted on Sylvia@15riverview.org or phone 0208 366 2347*)
- ❖ Des Hegarty and Roy Barrows (Over 50s Forum) for their fun quiz session.
- ❖ Davina Rishi for her expert guidance on learning to play chess. (*Davina runs classes through Chess Bites 078909 556427*)
- ❖ All of our volunteers who gave so generously of their time and made the event possible.
- ❖ All of the affiliated groups who ran stalls.

My apologies to those few people who came along for the evening quiz session which had to be cancelled. We will be organising a full quiz evening soon, so please keep reading the newsletter. The day was funded by a grant from Awards for All. If we can get the funding for another event next year, we are looking at ways to improve and expand the Fair, so feel free to put your suggestions into the office.

We are gearing up now to the start of our new membership year which will involve the production and distribution of thousands of new membership cards, so please get your renewal form in as early as possible.

Happy Easter to all.

Jan Oliver Office and Development Manager

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NHS chiefs welcomed our health petition

If anyone doubted the wisdom of the Forum launching its **“Enfield needs more money”** for health services petition, then the decision was vindicated by the Chair of NHS England, Professor Sir Malcolm Grant CBE, who at the special grant allocation Board meeting in London on December 17 twice welcomed the petition’s concern registered by Enfield residents.

Signed by **6,286** people, the petition was presented by five members of the Forum’s executive committee; **Vivien Giladi, Tom Devine, Bill Mackay, Des Hegarty and Monty Meth**. The petition was preceded by a request from the NHS England chief financial officer Paul Baumann for a written statement supporting our claim that health services in Enfield have been seriously under-funded by successive governments for many years.

We urged the NHS Board to rectify this injustice so that the Clinical Commissioning Group have the resources they need. We pointed out the result of this funding starvation is that we knew of people waiting 12 months for a knee operation; and mental health patients waiting months for diagnosis and treatment.

We concluded our statement by saying that **“ten years ago the difference in life expectancy between women living in wards 4.5 miles apart was eight years. It is now 13 years and we regard this as a shocking indictment of the way Enfield has been discriminated against over the years.**

“You now have the chance to rectify this unfairness and ensure that our health professionals have the tools to do the job – providing high quality hospital and community health services and available to all, free at the point of need”.

NHS England then announced that Enfield will receive increased funding of 4.35% (some £7 million) above inflation in 2014-15 and 3.98% in 2015-16. So the Enfield CCG funding will grow from

£322,318,000 (2013-1014) to £336,327,000 (2014-2015) (plus 4.35%) and to £349,727,000 in 2015-2016 (plus 3.98 on previous year).

Dr Alpesh Patel, chair of the Enfield NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, said: **“The CCG welcomes the support of the Over 50s Forum – 6000 responses to the petition is a powerful demonstration of local support for the NHS.**

“Enfield CCG is pleased that NHS England’s new funding formula will result in an above-inflation increase in budget. Over the next two years we will continue with our plans to improve local health services and ensure that the services we commission are designed and delivered around the needs of patients and we welcome the feedback and involvement of the over 50s Forum.”

Although Enfield CCG is getting a £27 million increase over the next two years, it is still some £20 million below what our health professionals feel is needed locally. And Enfield Public Health, which has a separate funding stream, will see its funding rise from £12.961million in 2013-14 to £14.257 million in 2014-15.

Had the Forum been allowed to speak at the NHS Board meeting we would have argued against the government pegging total funding for the 221 CCGs nationwide to match inflation. The NHS Board was told that some CCGs were finding it impossible to live within their means and some were already in “financial distress.”

Of major importance to Enfield is the decision of NHS England promising to take a **“holistic approach”** to future funding by taking into account population increases, inequalities and areas of deprivation and ageing in a balanced way. How it will reconcile these pressures with funding increases pegged to inflation remains to be seen.

Council budget gets tougher

The first of the Forum’s 2014 monthly Civic Centre meetings was well-attended, discussion was stimulating, and the questions asked were well balanced and relevant which resulted in a good Q and A session. The good news conveyed by deputy council leader Achilleas Georgiou was that it is aimed to freeze council tax for the fifth year in a row.

And if the Greater London Authority approved a 1.3% reduction in the money it collects from local councils on February 14, Band D taxpayers could even see a £4 cut in the annual amount they pay.

A more efficient money-saving, street lighting system in Enfield has reduced energy consumption by 42%. Enfield also targeted council taxpayers with high arrears and the ability to pay which increased the collection of bad debts by over £1million, the highest in London.

We were told that money for the Community Toilet Scheme, strongly campaigned for by the Forum, will remain in place and that councillors are considering how they can maintain the Residents’ Priority Fund which has seen £5.6 million disbursed on local projects between all wards over the last four years.

While we were told that some £100 million a year is now spent on adult social care and that priority services had been kept running on a substantially reduced budget, the Forum was given early warning that tougher years lie ahead, following a 29% cut in government grants since 2010.

So we now come to the bad news. The government has changed grants, merged grants, made cuts, added new grants, changed business rates to make a cocktail of figures the result of which seems to be that Enfield has seen its government funding cut by about 8% for the coming financial year and these cuts will go on until 2018 at least.

At the same time the Council has faced a population explosion creating increased pressure to house people in temporary accommodation. And we were warned that some £30-£50 millions in savings will be needed in future years. This means the savings required will have to be higher than the grant cuts made by the government.

So the message is one of tighten your (seat) belts. It’s going to be a rocky ride.

Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum

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Why join the Forum?

“The Forum is the best local example of an organisation actively engaged with large numbers of local people from a wide range of communities. There is no other local organisation that is so much more influential than it was five or six years ago, and that is something to be proud of.”

Ray James, Enfield Council’s Director of Health, Housing & Social Care, speaking at the Dugdale Centre 5 July 2013.

Just think what a visit to Millfield has done for me!

How to make your money go further was topic at one of our recent Millfield House meetings. Members were invited to come along and share their successes in getting the best deals so having listened to people talking about their TalkTalk account, **Jean Mittins** decided to look into what she was paying for her TalkTalk package.

“Well, a quick phone call (not really quick) revealed that I was paying for something with features I never, ever use (and didn't know existed) and by changing to something cheaper I will be saving £10 a month. I now intend to look at all my other providers.”

So following on from her success with TalkTalk, she contacted EON – her electricity provider. Now read on:

“I was on their Age UK Fixed 1 Year V3 plan which ended on 16 December 2013 and they were going to move me to EON Energy Plan, their standard variable tariff. When I asked if this was the cheapest option for me, I was told that the V6 electric only plan would be more cost effective and I would save £7 per month, after taking into account the increase in electricity charges which would amount to £11 per month more for me.

“Apart from that, I have decided to cancel my Virgin Active gym membership (£60 a month) and I'm going to use Fusion's Southbury or Edmonton Green leisure centre.”

Other top tips include checking on savings accounts that may be paying as little as 0.05% when there are better paying accounts, albeit not very much higher. And this is the time of year when tax-free ISA accounts are heavily advertised. Watch especially when ISA accounts mature the offer being made to roll-over any investment.

Cheltenham and Gloucester building society were offering a paltry 0.20% when other banks/building societies were welcoming transfers and offering 1.80% for one year and 2.20% for a two-year investment.

.....and here's a warning

When renewing your Health Insurance Card

To renew my free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which can help with medical treatment expenses when abroad, I recently decided to do it on line. I looked at various sites and they all came up with a cost of £23.50p. I checked this out with my travel agent and he tried various sites and got the same result! I duly paid up and received my card seven days later.

I told my tale to Forum president Monty Meth and asked him when the charge was introduced. He then checked the phone number on the back of his EHIC and he told me it is still free! I was the innocent victim of business sharks operating on the internet.

So to renew the card FREE, you can go to the website www.nhs.uk/healthcardabroad and look down the list find one called **“official government where you can get your EHIC free.”**

Alternatively you can phone their new telephone number: 0300 330 1350 or the number on the back of your card could be 0191 218 1999. You can no longer get a form from the Post Office.

The EHIC advised me to contact my credit card company and they in turn gave me the phone number of the people that charged me £23.50 for the EHIC and which they claim was for a “handling charge.” My credit card company is now going to tackle them and see if they will give me my money back – otherwise I'm told I'll get a refund from them.

But what a lot of hassle I've had because I fell for an internet shark. There are dozens of unofficial websites, not just for EHIC cards, that make a similar **“handling charge”** for something that is free - so don't get caught like I did.

Although Google says that sites that charge extra for access to government services are free, it does little to post a warning. The Advertising Standards Authority could order these sharks to change their sites – it did order one to remove a crown symbol and the word **“official”** from a site conning passport applicants.

Eva Salisch

Freedom pass tightens up

The Freedom Pass scheme we enjoy is the best concessionary fares scheme in the country in its scope and the quality of transport it offers. Covering as it does, buses, tubes and overground trains. It gives some 47,000 Enfield pensioners and nearly 6,000 local disabled people free travel 24x7 on all Transport for London (TfL) services and after 9.30am on national rail services in Greater London.

The Freedom Pass will cost Enfield Council taxpayers a record £11,643,259 in the 2014 – 15 financial year – an increase of just over £1million since 2012-13 - due to more older people becoming eligible; greater usage being made of the pass and higher charges of some 4.16% imposed by TfL.

So it is understandable that London Councils which represents the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London should check on the 1.2 million Freedom Passes issued by all the boroughs to make sure they are being used by the right people.

A random survey carried out early last year to check whether people were still eligible to use the pass found that some 21,000 people had either moved out of London or had passed away – roughly equal to 650 people in Enfield - and each of the other boroughs.- **and their Freedom Passes were withdrawn from February 3.**

Anyone having their Freedom Pass wrongly withdrawn can call the special helpline 0845 275 7054 or email freedompassadmin@londoncouncils.gov.uk or visit the Freedom Pass website.



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Let's talk more about loneliness

With more and more people living alone, the issue of loneliness is becoming a greater social problem. A recent survey found that 30% of over 65s said they were either mildly or intensely lonely. But there are many organisations which are seeking to help.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has issued a resource pack to help individuals, groups, communities and neighbours take a closer look at – and reduce – loneliness. The Foundation carried out a three-year action research programme exploring and identifying what makes us feel lonely, where we live and work and what we can all do about it – personally and professionally.

The resulting resource pack includes ideas and actions to reduce loneliness, case studies from some of the people involved and guidance and tips for working with your community to reduce loneliness.

This resource pack brings together the lessons and experiences from the JRF programme and includes: seven free publication examples below:

Let's talk about loneliness <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/JRF_Loneliness_summary.pdf> – a four-page summary of ideas and actions to reduce loneliness, with infographics

<http://www.candoguide.org.uk/index.php>> – guidance and tips for negotiating community action; How you can reduce loneliness in your neighbourhood.

The Living Without Family (LWF) Network has set up a new website with the purpose of bringing together people who are living alone

and looking to connect with other people in similar circumstances. It is free to sign up and people of all ages are using the chat board. www.lwfnetwork.com

Become a volunteer

UK people gave 2.12bn hours of volunteer time last year. If they were being paid, that would be equal to 1.5 % of GDP. Those aged between 50 and 69 gave up, on average, the most hours of free time weekly, with those over 70 not far behind.

But, as Davis Smith of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, says: “volunteering brings much more than just economic benefits. It is really good for physical and mental well-being, especially for older people as it helps to keep them active, young and in good health.”

Older people tend to lose networks they built up through work or their children, and volunteering can be a great way of preventing loneliness. Many of us are pleased to be able to use the valuable life skills and expertise we have built up over the years to help others.

Our Forum is always looking out for volunteers to help out in the office or at events, so contact the office on 020 8807 2076

To find out more about other volunteering opportunities in Enfield, contact:

1) Enfield Voluntary Action (EVA) on 020 8373 6268 or visit www.enfieldva.org.uk

2) Enfield Council - visit <http://www.enfield.gov.uk/> and look for 'volunteering in Enfield' or call 020 8373 6348

Yvonne Mulder

Wills Week bargain hosted by S & S

Stennett & Stennett will be providing Forum members with another exclusive chance to draw up their family wills from Monday March 31 to Friday April 4 inclusive at a special low cost of £99 per person per basic will including VAT. Their usual price for preparing a basic will is £195 plus VAT. That's a remarkable saving of £135.

Despite government and industry attempts to boost awareness of the need to make a will, the number of people without a will has remained unchanged for the last five years. A survey by UnbiasedUK found that more than 29 million adults do not have a will.

So why is making a will so important? Too many people wrongly assume that any assets they leave behind – however small or large they may be – will automatically go to the right people if they die unexpectedly. They do not realise that under intestacy rules, without a will anything and everything left behind could pass to the family of the deceased, rather than their partner.

“Unmarried partners have no automatic right to each other's estate when they die and we have seen numerous cases where a partner has cohabited for many years, and then received nothing when their partner dies due to the intestacy rules.

“And even if you are married, not leaving a will can create havoc for those left behind in a family, especially if there are substantial assets such as a house. You could find that the surviving spouse gets only part of the estate because, if children are involved, the first £250,000 will go to the spouse outright,” said Michael Stennett.

A well drafted will lets you control how you want your assets distributed. It can save inheritance tax and avoid family disputes after you die. Equally important, making a will gives you peace of mind while you are living!

If you want to take advantage of this Wills Week offer you must contact Stennett & Stennett in advance to make an appointment. And you will need to provide proof of your Forum membership. Stennett & Stennett are based at 4 Winchmore Hill Road, just off Southgate Circus and opposite Marks and Spencer. Call them on 020 8920 3190.

Going cashless

London Mayor Boris Johnson plans to introduce a cashless fare system on all London's buses from the summer. 99 percent of bus passengers already pay for their journeys using Oyster, prepaid tickets, contactless payment cards or concessionary tickets. The latter group represents a third of passengers and includes children and young people, older and disabled people and the unemployed.

Paying with Oyster or a contactless payment card will, it is claimed, speed up boarding times at bus stops and reduce delays for all bus users. Research shows this change is also unlikely to affect tourists as the vast majority use a prepaid ticket, such as Oyster, to get around the capital.

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Always look on the bright side of life



Going home

I would like to share a personal experience about drinking and driving. Some of us may have had the odd brush with the law from time to time on the way home after a "social session" with friends. Well, two days ago I was out for an evening and had more than several beers followed by some rather nice red wine.

Although feeling jolly I still had the sense to know that I may be slightly over the limit. That's when I did something that I've never done before - I took a taxi.

Sure enough on the way home there was a police roadblock, but since I was in a cab they waved it past and I arrived home safely without incident.

This was a real surprise, as I had never driven a cab before, I don't know where I got it and now that it's in my garage I don't know what to do with it. So if you want to borrow it give me a call.

Wally Morgan

Prayer for Grandpa

Dear God, please send clothes for all those poor ladies on grandpa's new calendar. **Amen**

Special poem for seniors

The Golden Years!

A row of bottles on my shelf
Caused me to analyse myself.
One yellow pill I have to pop
Goes to my heart so it won't stop.
A little white one that I take
Goes to my hands so they won't shake.
The blue ones that I use a lot
Tell me I'm happy when I'm not.
The purple pill goes to my brain
And tells me that I have no pain.
The capsules tell me not to wheeze
Or cough or choke or even sneeze..
The red ones, smallest of them all
Go to my blood so I won't fall.
The orange ones, very big and bright
Prevent my leg cramps in the night.
Such an array of brilliant pills
Helping to cure all kinds of ills.
But what I'd really like to know.....
Is what tells each one where to go!

There's always a lot to be thankful for if you take time to look for it. For example: I am sitting here right now thinking how nice it is that wrinkles and fat don't hurt.

Embarrassed

The teacher asked her class to write down the type of work their fathers did. The children, very excitedly, scribbled their answers. One by one, the teacher asked each child to stand and describe the job.

There was much laughter and screaming, that is apart from little Tommy.

"Tommy, why do you look so sad?" asked the teacher.

Tommy slowly rose to his feet, and replied: "My Dad's a stripper in a gay bar."

The other children remained silent, as Tommy continued. "Sometimes, he doesn't come home, and my Mummy sits crying."

There were gasps around the classroom. The teacher acted quickly and dismissed the children, telling them to go out and play.

She then walked up to little Tommy, put her arm around his shoulders, and asked: "Is all that true, Tommy?"

"No, not at all Miss. He really plays cricket for England, but I was too embarrassed to say so."

English? It's a funny old language

After our lesson in **heteronyms** – words that sound the same but have different meanings in the last Newsletter – **Forum member Doreen Wheeler** sent us her homework examples.

Over *there* is *their* new car.

On holiday I said "I can see the sea".

"I like having you by my *side*" she *sighed*.

Red is a warning colour I have *read*.

I saw and *heard* a *herd* of bison stampeding

I *need* to *knead* the dough before cooking

"For goodness sake, the *four* of you please be quiet".

The *Knight* set off at *night* on his mission.

"Let's *flee*" said the *Flea* "before we get squashed".

"The *weight* of this bag is 8kg, *wait* until it is your turn to carry it".

I cannot *bear* the water this cold said the *bare* swimmer.

The *maid* made the *paste*, while the cook *paced* the floor.

"The Monarch *reigns supreme*" said the coachman as he handed the *reins* to his companion. "Seems the *rain*'s not going to stop tonight either".

The next lesson is Plurals

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,

But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.

One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,

Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,

Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,

Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?

If I speak of my foot and show you my feet, And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?

If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,

Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those,

Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,

And the plural of cat is cats, not cose

We speak of a brother and also of brethren,

But though we say mother, we never say methren.

Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,

But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!

Let's face it - English is a crazy language.

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger;

Neither apple nor pine in pineapple

English muffins weren't invented in England.

We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes,

We find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square,

And a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't finge,

Grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend?

If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them,

What do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Sometimes I think all the folks who grew up speaking English.

Should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane.

In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a recital?

We ship by truck but send cargo by ship.

We have noses that run and feet that smell.

We park in a driveway and drive in a parkway. And how can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same,

While a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language.

In which your house can burn up as it burns down,

In which you fill in a form by filling it out

And in which an alarm goes off by going on.

And in closing...

If Father is Pop, how come Mother's not Mop?

Stop smoking - and help others to stop too! **Over 70? - Then be clear on cancer**

Be nice to smokers!

Smoking is addictive and most smokers wish they had never started. Around a fifth of smokers have tried to stop and around a fifth try to stop three times a year. Even tobacco company lawyers have stated that they are in the business of selling an addictive drug. Fortunately, Enfield has a free Stop Smoking Service that has helped over 8,000 people to stop smoking. If you'd like to stop free call 0800 652 8405 or book online at <http://www.quitsmoking.uk.com>

Be nice to non-smokers!

Smoking is in decline and Enfield has a smoking prevalence lower than the London average. This is good for smokers, but also for children; children with parents who smoke are up to three times more likely to smoke themselves. For many children the best thing for their health would be for their parents to stop smoking. Most smokers begin smoking regularly before the age of 18.

Children learn from example and Enfield is therefore working to ensure as much as possible that children and young people do not see smoking as a normal thing that adults do.

This has already happened in many households with many people stopping smoking when they become pregnant and many others only smoking outside. Unfortunately children still know that a parent is smoking and many of the toxins associated with smoking are carried in on clothing.

Therefore, be nice to smokers but also support them to stop - and the service is free!

Glenn Stewart Assistant director, Public Health Enfield

Shingles: still a shambles

The story so far. Last year the national press reported a Department of Health press release under the headline: **"Shingles vaccine on offer for everyone in their seventies."** Our surgeries were sent leaflets headlined: Aged 70 -79 - don't let shingles become a burning issue.

Suddenly the rules changed and only people aged 70 OR 79 were offered the vaccine and all those aged in-between were excluded. The reason? A sudden vaccine shortage. So enterprising Forum executive member Tom Devine -who has twice had the painful shingles - wrote to the manufacturers and back came a letter saying: **"The supply of Zostavax has now been fully restored to the national shingles vaccination programme."**

Tom wrote to his local MP and to Mr Cameron who passed the buck to the Department of Health who in turn revealed to Tom that the government's own Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has recommended **"that everyone aged 70 TO 79 should be offered the shingles vaccine."**

The government is still hiding behind the **"availability of the vaccine"** argument to confine giving it only to people aged 70 or 79 on September 1 2013 - despite the advice of its own immunisation advisory committee that it should be offered to all in the 70-79 age group.

The Forum firmly believes the government's case is pure nonsense, devoid of rational comprehension. The age criterion laid down has nothing whatever to do with clinical need; it is simply a way of rationing health care. We have previously noted in this Newsletter that vaccination is available privately at a cost of £150.

The failure of the Government to provide adequate funding to enable the purchase of a sufficient stock of vaccine to meet clinical need is something the Forum will continue to raise with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Health and Wellbeing Board and all other avenues we can access.

And it would be helpful if some of our GPs and health professionals were to break their silence and expose the clinical absurdity of earmarking a treatment for such a narrow age group to cover up a cost-cutting exercise.

Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the chickenpox virus and affects 100,000 people each year in the UK, most of them aged over 50.

Latest research from Public Health England has revealed two shock facts: One in three breast cancers occur in women over 70. And the over 70s accounts for over half the deaths from the disease. So the Forum is supporting a new national campaign: Be Clear on Cancer that is targeting older women to increase diagnosis and cure.

Around 13,500 women in England are found to have breast cancer each year, but survival rates are lower for the over 70s than for younger women with late referrals often playing a significant role in what are unnecessary deaths.

Following much campaigning, the age at which women are notified that they are due for breast screening every three years has been extended from 70 to 73. Women over that age have to ask their GP for a breast screening appointment every three years and it is vital that they do so.

Two thirds of women over 70 wrongly think that women of all ages are equally likely to get breast cancer when, in fact, the chances of getting it increase with age.

The earlier breast cancer is spotted, the higher the chances of survival: more than 90% of those diagnosed in the earliest stages survive for at least five years.

Lack of awareness of symptoms other than a lump may be contributing to older women not seeking help. So don't assume you're past it or dismiss any symptoms as one more sign of ageing.

Don't delay, see your GP if you have any concerns. Look out for:

- * a lump in your breast or armpit
- * changes to the nipple
- * changes to the skin of your breast
- * changes in the shape or size
- * pain in the breast or armpit

Vivien Giladi

Volunteer wanted to help the Be Clear on Cancer campaign

- Diagnosed with breast cancer at 70 years of age or over
- Visited their doctor after noticing one of the key symptoms of breast cancer
- Received treatment on the NHS, and had a good experience with their care
- Been treated successfully and made a good recovery
- Happy to have their picture and story published/broadcast and preferably happy to speak to the media too.

If you meet the above criteria than please call the Forum office
020 8807 2076

Give us a break!

The National Osteoporosis Society (NOS) has launched a national Stop at One campaign aimed at all over-50s who have suffered a fracture but have not been to their GP for an osteoporosis assessment.

The idea is that people should not suffer repeated fractures when today's treatments have a good record for tackling bone fragility. By having an assessment, which includes checking medical and family history and maybe a scan to test bone density, we can find out if we have osteoporosis and then take action.

NOS and the Royal College of General Practitioners have launched a new website www.osteoporosis-resources.org.uk written by and for GPs, and more general information is available by calling NOS on 0845 450 0230 (9am-5pm weekdays).

Enfield tops London boroughs for excess winter deaths

In 2011/2012 Enfield was rated as the worst borough in London and among the worst 10% in the country in terms of the excess winter mortality index (EWMI). The actual number was 170 excess winter deaths, an increase of 14% compared with 2010/2011.

The Office for National Statistics explains that it is important to note that figures for local areas tend to be quite variable from one year to the next and there is no consistent pattern.

However, there is no room for complacency.

Keeping warm really can save your life!

Some people find it hard to see how being cold can be bad for your health. After all, most of us grew up in homes without central heating, double-glazing or insulation.

Well, the bad news is that not only is being cold the main cause of excess winter deaths, it also causes a massive spike in associated health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

Here is how it works: when we are cold, our blood thickens and our blood pressure rises – which is not a good thing for the vast majority

of people. And, to make it worse, as we get older, it gets harder for our bodies to detect how cold we are. We become less efficient at responding to, and recovering from, exposure to cold.

Some basic hints to make sure you are keeping warm enough:

- In the UK, 16 times more people die from cold in winter than from road accidents all year
- Making people's home warmer could save the NHS £1.36 billion a year
- In Yakutsk, Siberia, winter temperatures average -26°C but hardly anyone dies from cold

- Get room thermometers and keep your living room at 70°F (21°C) and your bedroom at 65°F (18°C)
- Wear several layers of thinner clothing, rather than bulky clothes, as the layers trap warm air close to the body
- Keep internal doors and windows closed and stop draughts under doors
- Eat properly - have at least one hot meal and a variety of hot drinks every day

Obviously, soaring food and fuel bills and badly insulated homes make it increasingly difficult for some people to follow this advice.

For many more ideas and help, visit www.spreadthewarmth.org.uk

or call Age UK on 0800 169 65 65 and ask them to send you their booklets Winter Wrapped Up and Recipes for a Warmer Winter.

Yvonne Mulder

How to stay healthy through exercise and diet

It's never too late to take up exercise and improve your health. Even if you do not start regular exercise until your sixties – or even later - you can still radically improve your chances of ageing healthily.

So says a new study from University College London after following the health of almost 3,500 people with an average age of 64 over an eight year period.

It showed that people who had just four years of sustained and frequent physical activity were seven times more likely to be ageing healthily compared with those who are constantly inactive.

And here are eight tips for a longer life drawn from other studies:

- Just one weekly session of yoga can help relieve the pain and psychological distress of patients with arthritis
- Four hours of light gardening a week is enough to lower the chance of developing kidney stones by nearly one third
- Eating a tomato a day can help beat depression
- Two glasses of red wine a day can halve the rate of bowel cancer
- A daily stroll can cut the risk of stroke by two thirds – though the 'stroll' needs to be between one and two hours
- Three coffees a day can cut risk of diabetes

- An apple a day may be as effective as taking statins in preventing heart attacks
- Exposure to sun can reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke

Take your pick of which ones you want to follow – and see the difference!

.....and exercise helps prevent dementia

In Britain, more than 800,000 people live with dementia, costing the nation £23 billion a year – more than cancer and heart disease combined. Research continues – although dementia has only a quarter of the resources which are directed towards cancer.

There is some good news that a recent study shows that the rate of dementia is not as high as has been previously predicted. The prevalence among over 65s is 6.5 % rather than the 8.3% expected. But numbers are still expected to double by 2050.

Research also shows that one of the main ways to reduce the chance of dementia is to take regular exercise. Eating well, staying slim, stopping smoking and cutting down on alcohol are all important, but exercise is by far the most important, according to a recent study from Cardiff University.

Yvonne Mulder

Over 50s choir takes off

The newly formed Over 50s Daytime Choir has had a terrific send-off with over 40 people registering to attend the first rehearsal on Monday, February 10. The choir now meets every Monday at the Mary Magdalene Church, Windmill Hill, at 11am and it is not too late to start singing with them.

It has been well established that singing in a choir is beneficial in exercising the lungs. Scientists say that a good burst of singing helps to release endorphins which make you feel exhilarated and, of course, it offers another chance to make new friends.

A recent study by Oxford psychologist Nick Stewart found that choir members reported a higher level of mental well-being than people who sang alone, or played a team sport. Singing in the shower may be uplifting, but being part of a choir gives you much more of the feel good factor.

Music was supplied to people as they arrived to register and pay their initial £5 for the first session. Simon Gilbert, the choir's highly experienced singer, stage performer and director, started in a gentle way with a simple explanation of some of the symbols the newcomers will encounter as they look at the music.

"We' started with some well-known songs that we know the choir would be comfortable with following our experience in establishing the excellent relationship we have with the Tuesday evening choir at Millfield Arts Centre which rehearses weekly at 7.00 pm.

But both choirs are still in great need of gentlemen. It is not too late to join either the Monday morning Over 50s choir or the Tuesday evening group. Just call Simon 020 8360 7386 or email him at simonletthepeoplesing.co.uk

Another year – another record

So another year starts and I must say it is going very well for the Forum. Just over 200 new members joined in January and 40 plus lapsed members returned. Perhaps it is a quest for weight loss after all that festive season excess. Whatever the reason, all are welcome. Roll on March so that I can hopefully report more good news

I hope to see many of you at our Celebration Evening for our 5,000th member on Friday April 11 when I'll be reporting we've reached a new record membership. You'll find further details of the event elsewhere in this issue.

I need now to remind many Newsletter readers of our renewal date of 1st April 2014. Increased costs – particularly for postage – compelled us to increase the membership fee this year to £8 per annum for an Individual, £12 pa for couples, £20 for affiliated groups.

Those of you who need to renew should have a Renewal Form included with this newsletter. We encourage you to join for multiple years, protecting you from any increases. You can, of course, take out life membership for £100 individual members and £150 for couples.

Further, new members living outside the Borough will not qualify for Fusion discounts at the leisure centres. Those with current Forum and Fusion membership will be allowed to retain their discounts.

I must say how much we appreciate those of you who pay before renewal – as some did at the very successful Winter Fair – because clearly it does ease the burden for me and volunteers at this time. Can I also remind you to check out our meetings schedule and social calendar because we have a great team organising both.

Once again we are making a plea for a volunteer to think about taking over the Membership Secretary role. In the last Newsletter I did suggest a couple would be ideal but not essential, so who will come forward for nomination at our AGM in May?

As always my thanks to those volunteers who help in all areas – not just mine – because without you we all know what would happen.

Joyce Pullen

Membership Secretary

Please note: if you have to cancel your place on a Forum social activity/trip, we will make every attempt to fill your place. If this is not possible you may lose your booking fee/deposit.

Disclaimer: The Enfield Over 50s Forum is not liable for any personal injury/accidents that may occur during any of its activities/events.

Knit & Natter

The Forum's two Knit and Natter groups which meet weekly at the Dugdale Centre, Enfield Town – formed on the initiative of Liz Gilbert – are going from strength to strength. The Wednesday morning group meets at 10.30 am and brings together between 15 and 20 people. The more recently formed Tuesday afternoon group gathers at 2.00pm and attracts a similar number. There is a voluntary contribution of 50p which goes to the Over 50s Forum. Liz Gilbert always arrives early at the Dugdale Centre and is on hand to help people with any knitting or crotchet problems they may have.

So we now have two flourishing Knit and Natter groups – a new social activity particularly appealing to anyone living alone – who would like to have a “natter” and a cuppa while making new friends and perhaps knitting at the same time for that new baby in the family or for a charity.

Remember Tuesdays 2.00-4.00 p.m.

Wednesday 10.30 - 12.30 p.m.

Co-ordinator Liz (020 8360 7386) looks forward to seeing you. Do please phone if you have any queries.

Beware women who read

A husband came home after several hours fishing and decides to take a nap. Although not familiar with the lake, his wife decided to take their boat out. She motors out a short distance, anchors, and reads her book.

Along comes a game warden in his boat. He pulls up alongside the woman and says:

“Good morning, Ma’am. What are you doing?”

“Reading a book,” she replies, (thinking, *“Isn’t that obvious?”*)

“You’re in a restricted fishing area,” he informs her.

“I’m sorry, officer, but I’m not fishing. I’m reading.”

“Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I’ll have to take you in and write you up.”

“For reading a book!” she replies.

“You’re in a restricted fishing area,” he repeats

“I’m sorry, officer, but I’m not fishing. I’m reading.”

“Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I’ll have to take you in and write you up.”

“If you do that, I’ll have to charge you with sexual assault,” says the woman.

“But I haven’t even touched you,” says the game warden.

“That’s true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment.”

“Have a nice day ma’am,” and he left.

The moral is: Never argue with a woman who reads. It’s likely she can also think.

Book Club

Our Forum Book Club members are also associated with the BBC world service book club and Guardian book club. They’ve been to the American Embassy to see and hear author John Grisham being interviewed about his first novel: A Time to Kill. Book Club co-ordinator Sue Scott says: “It was excellent and we were treated very hospitably by the embassy staff.”

The Book Club meets at the Enfield Town Library, Church Street

10am – 12 noon on

Wednesday March 19 discussing

Burnt Shadows by Kamilla Shamsie and

Wednesday April 16

The Childhood of Jesus by J M Coetzee

(not a religious book!)

Wednesday May 14th

Love Nina by Nina Stibbe

Further details from Sue Scott 020 8368

0861 or scottsf48@hotmail.com

Poetry group

Getting Older – the new collection of poems written by Forum members – has now been launched to wide acclaim. Award winning poet Dannie Abse CBE was sent a copy by poetry group member Judy Klimt who sent a message by return saying **“Your Poetry Group is certainly an accomplished one.”**

Five members of the poetry group were featured in a picture story in the Enfield Advertiser which quoted contributing poet Ruth Hanchett saying everyone has experienced changes in their life, regardless of their age. So the theme for the collection of poems does not say getting old, but getting older. It is a very carefully chosen title.

You can pick up a copy of Getting Older at any of our events priced £3.50 – or send a note and cheque for £4.10 to the Forum office if you want it posted.

Future meetings

Please note that due to the unavailability of our usual room at Enfield Town Library, the April meeting will be at Oakwood Library.

The Thursday 20 March meeting will be at the Enfield Town Library venue 10.30am -12 noon. Jill van der Knapp and Annmarie Nicholson lead on **Silence/sound.**

Thursday April 17 meeting 10.30-12.00 at Oakwood Library David Blake opens on: **Another diet.**

Group co-ordinator David Blake 01992 637829

Please Note: Sir Andrew Motion, the former poet laureate, will be giving a performance of his poetry – organised by the Enfield Poets group – **at the Dugdale Centre on Wednesday 19 March 7.30pm.** Call 020 8807 6680 for details.

Develop your IT skills - free **Keep fit and healthy this Spring**

Enfield's Library and Museum Service is offering Forum members two ways to develop their computer skills.

Firstly, Year 12 students from two local secondary schools will usually work, on a one to one basis, with our over-50s. Together, they will undertake a six-week programme called the LearnMyWay computer training package. The programme starts from using a mouse and keyboard to setting up email addresses and browsing the internet.

As confidence grows the Forum member can move on to other things such as shopping, booking their holiday online. The students get credited for their volunteer hours and at the end of each programme there is a small celebration.

We are trying to arrange these sessions in the John Jackson Library, Agricola Place (Bush Hill Park) and the Ridge Avenue Library and you would be working with Kingsmead and Edmonton County students respectively.

If you pass your name to the Forum office we will inform you when the next session will be later in the year.

Forum members preferring individual learning can book themselves in for a supported session at any Enfield library where a member of staff will introduce them to the LearnMyWay programme during a free one hour session.

The learner is then able to book subsequent sessions to work through the programme on their own and at their own pace. Everyone is entitled to one hour free PC use per day in any Enfield Library. However, if they require any further supported sessions there is a charge (£2.50 for concessions, £5 full price).

Fusion Lifestyles special over 50s activity sessions offer a full day at Albany, Edmonton, Southbury and Southgate leisure centres. Activities include swimming, gym, exercise classes, badminton, short matt bowls and much more.

In addition, it is a great way to meet new people and chat over a cup of tea or coffee or lunch. For full details just drop into one of the centres or come along and see for yourself:

Monday 9.30am-3.30pm - Edmonton Leisure Centre; Tuesday 9.30am-3.30pm - Southgate; Wednesday 9.30am-3.30pm - Southbury; and Thursday 9.30am-3.30pm - Albany Leisure Centre.

Fusion will be offering a great incentive during March to encourage our members to introduce someone new to one of our Choice memberships either monthly, annual normal and concessionary. Get a great rate for a great mate! No joining fee for them and a £5 gift voucher for you when you refer a mate.

Full details will be available in all centres and via our website and Facebook.

Edmonton new look almost complete

The new improved Edmonton Leisure Centre is almost complete with brand new reception and foyer area and all public areas fully re-decorated. Further internal signage and presentation improvements are also being made in all areas.

Forum members purchasing the Fusion concession card will pay £7.50 for the year - a reduction of 50p on last year and a great saving of £13.50 on the concession card paid by non-Forum members. To obtain this concession you must produce a valid Forum membership card and must be a resident of the London Borough of Enfield.

With the concession card:

Swimming costs £2, instead of £4

Gym sessions £3.85 instead of £7.70

Various classes (Yoga, Pilates etc.) £3.85

- non-concession £7.70, Sauna & steam

session £3.85 - non-concession £7.70 Over 50s activity day concession

£3.80 - non-concession £7.70

Until April the Enfield Over 50s Forum rate for new Direct Debit monthly membership giving access to all activities and on any day is **£42** - a saving of **£4** on the non-concession fee of £46 and there is no joining fee (**saving £35**).

Until April the Forum members rate for new annual 12 months membership with the same any time access and no £35 joining fee is **£420**, a saving of **£40** on the £460 charge for non-Forum members. Please note that as above this charge has been held for renewals for the rest of this year.

In addition Fusion also have the following new concession off-peak and peak-time charges: Monthly direct debit off-peak with Forum concession card (gym, swim, sauna, steam, studio 7 day booking and rackets) NRG card included **£29.00** Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Sat & Sun 12 noon -close. Without a concession card the charge for the same times is £39.00. Proof of current Forum membership is required for all concession card applications.

Please note:

Forum members living outside the Borough with existing Fusion membership will be allowed to retain their discounts when the renewal date is due. But if they allow their membership to lapse they will not be allowed to re-join at a discount.

Ruth Winston Centre - Treasurer Required



We are a charity based in Palmers Green looking for a Trustee/Treasurer to work with the Board of Trustees and oversee the Accounts Manager. You will need to be available for a few hours each month.

You must have good accountancy skills and ideally you will be a qualified accountant. You will be helping to maintain the accounting records and assisting to draft final accounts for audit using Sage Instant accounts programme.

An understanding of the Voluntary Sector and knowledge of the Charities Act is desirable.

For more information telephone Seeva on 0208 886 8936

Charity No. 1057968

www.ruthwinstoncentre.com

Company No. 3168660

Free confidential advice

Visit the Dugdale Centre (corner of London and Cecil Roads, Enfield Town)

Every Monday 10am to 12 noon

- An adviser from solicitors Stennett & Stennett
- CAB adviser Loraine Hopwood on benefits, debts etc
- Tax adviser Jeff Rodin (Mon March 24 & Mon April 28 only)
- Screening for hearing tests 1st Monday of the month – call the Forum office to make an appointment.
- LBE advice on council tax, housing benefit, pensions
- Jobs adviser Lorna Clark
- Health trainers advice on lifestyle

An Enfield Over 50s Forum initiative in partnership with Enfield Council.

News from the Met

Courier scams target people just like you

As a Police Community Support Officer in Enfield for nearly five years, I have visited several victims of so-called 'courier scams' and can assure you they hurt people just like you and me. They've been aware of various scams, offered advice to friends and joked that it couldn't happen to them since they weren't born yesterday.

However, the criminals are very good at what they do. They sound legitimate, seem to know your details and genuinely appear to want to help you following the misuse of your debit or credit card details.

They'll say they are from your bank or building society or possibly even the police. You may be asked to dial the number on the back of your bank card so you'll believe you're talking to a genuine bank employee. However, the original caller has not disconnected the line; they've just passed the phone to an accomplice. This second con-person then asks you to confirm several details including your PIN number and then instructs you that they will dispatch a courier to collect the bank card in question to enable them to carry out enquiries and issue a new card.

Shortly afterwards a courier will indeed arrive and now armed with your PIN information the criminals will withdraw cash and purchase expensive items at your expense. By the time you contact your bank you may have lost several thousand pounds.

Those that this has happen to have said:

"I can't believe I fell for it!" "It seemed so genuine" "Thinking about it makes me so angry" "She seemed to know so much about me" "He seemed so nice" "How could I have been so stupid"

These criminals exploit decent people's good nature, but the scam is easily foiled. The police or bank will never ask you to disclose your pin or send a courier to collect your card. If you do contact your bank ensure you have a dialling tone before dialling and if you are contacted under suspicious circumstances contact the police immediately on '101'.

Enfield police have been able to intercept couriers, prevent losses and even prosecute suspects. You can help by being polite but firm to suspicious callers from the outset. Together we can make this scam much less frequent and lucrative to criminals.

Mike Pearce

Dedicated ward officer for Haselbury.

Random round-up

Congratulations

Ray James, Enfield Council's director of health and social care, has been elected vice-president of the Association of directors of adult social services.

Revolving door

Over one in six NHS staff given redundancy pay-offs have been rehired by the health service in a "revolving door" that MPs on Parliament's health select committee have condemned as a waste of money. Figures given to MPs show that of 19,126 staff made redundant 3,261 have been re-employed in similar jobs or as consultants. The majority, 2,543 were rehired within a year - **The Times December 18 2013.**

No rest

There's 1.1 million over 65s still at work - 10% of the total - and 109,000 more than a year ago. Some 68% people aged 50 to 65 are also in work, the highest figure for this age group since records began in 1992.

Lovely lolly

The outgoing boss of the Johnnie Walker and Smirnoff drinks maker Diageo will walk away from his job with performance shares and options worth £36 million, reports the Daily Telegraph. Paul Walsh - already one of the highest paid executives in the FTSE index of companies - has a series of share and option awards and these future earnings come after he collected total pay and bonuses of £14.8 million which was £3.6million more than the previous year.

Less lolly

The rate of interest on premium bonds - which forms the prize fund - has been cut from 1.5% to 1.3%. National Savings and Investments has also reduced the odds for a bond to win in the monthly draw from one in 24,000 to one on 26,000 and has also cut the number of prizes below the £1million jackpot.

GARDENING CLUBS, SOCIETIES & SCHOOLS

TALKS/SEMINARS ON



'GARDENING SOLUTIONS'

- THE IMPORTANCE OF SOIL STRUCTURE
- CREATING HEALTHY GARDENS
- PRUNING
- FLOWERS IN YOUR GARDEN ALL YEAR ROUND
- PLANTS FOR SHADY GARDENS
- PLANTS FOR DRY GARDENS

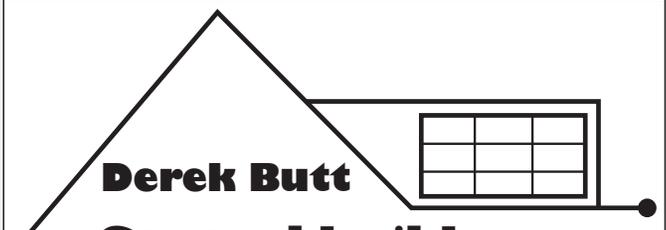
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 - ◆ Building maintenance and repairs

Contact me on: Home 01992 631814
 Mob 07939 036369
 e-mail derekbutt18@hotmail.com

John's jottings -- Holiday reflections



I am writing this in late January having just returned from the Forum's 1st Winter Fair. The crowd filled the Edmonton Arts Zone. Events from learning chess to Zumba dancing were full to capacity. Everyone was having a very good time. Perhaps the best reaction was from a member who said we should have a fair every month.

Given the efforts involved in organising and running the event a monthly fare is unlikely to happen, but a similar event next year seems more than possible. It is difficult to convey in words the general atmosphere of jollity and happiness which the event generated but it was real at the time. Tremendous thanks are due to Development Officer Jan who organised the event.

We must also be grateful to our office staff, the people who put on events, the people who manned the stalls and our volunteers who took tickets, helped with refreshments and generally ensured the smooth running of the event. Everyone should take pride in a brilliantly successful event. Thanks.

Whilst resting after the Zumba, people chatted about holidays and I thought of my experiences in the Far East. Singapore was a British colony until 1959. It was devastated and impoverished after the war. Now with a population of 5million, it is the third richest country in the world and a brilliant place to visit, especially around Christmas when the street decorations make Oxford St. seem positively dowdy.

The colonial influence remains in the numerous cricket clubs. What is not often realised about Singapore is the important influence the Beveridge Report had on its development. In the 1950s British

Government actuaries went to Singapore and imposed a pension scheme, known as the Singapore Provident Fund, into which all workers were forced to pay.

The money collected was and still is actually invested, primarily in housing and other infrastructure. The Fund started in 1955 and is still running today with contributions at 36% of earnings, between upper and lower limits. This has provided a constant source of funds for investment in improving the country; none of the stop-start developments which are all our pernicky Treasury allows.

The colonial administration had managed to impose on Singaporeans exactly what Beveridge proposed for Britain. Sadly, our Fund never had any money to invest as early contributions were used to pay pensions to heroes, widows benefits and other benefits for which the beneficiaries had made little or no financial contribution.

It seems highly likely that the constant flow of investment funds which the Singapore Provident Fund generated encouraged development of the fine infrastructure that the onetime colony now possesses. What is certain is that the ex-colony is now richer and has a far better infrastructure than the ex "Mother Country". Some credit must go to Beveridge and government actuaries who helped the process.

Hong Kong is another ex-colony which is thriving and has a higher average income than we do. Take a walk along Nathan Street and you will pass shop windows displaying diamond rings priced at over £1m. (British equivalent.) Unbelievable to anyone used to the discretion of jewellers in Bond Street or Hatton Garden where little of great value is on display until you get inside the shop.

Apparently, rich people from the rest of China travel to Hong Kong to pay cash for expensive jewellery which is seen as an investment.

By contrast, within a few miles of Nathan Street people appear to live in poverty on the waterfront. Falling down tin shacks with multiple occupancy are common.

Whilst we have nothing like the coexistence of vast riches and poverty which seems to be the case in Hong Kong, the cost of living and falling real incomes are issues of increasing importance here. Of course, a lot of the talk is just electioneering, which seems to have started rather early for an election in spring next year.

But there may be a real problem underlying the figures. Jobs seem increasingly to fall into two categories: firstly, well paid jobs which require high levels of education. Secondly, low paid jobs which require little training or education. The days when manufacturing, farming or mining offered good pay for millions of skilled or semi-skilled workers have largely disappeared, probably for good.

Skilled office work, such as that performed by secretaries has been automated. Local bank managers have been displaced by credit rating algorithms on computers. In America, inflation adjusted wages for the average worker have remained flat for four decades. In Britain and Germany there has hardly been an increase for a decade. Heaven alone knows what the future will bring, but it is doubtful if the pre-election proposals currently being offered will have a lasting impact

If the trend to hollowing out the middle jobs continues a massive increase in education and training is likely to be the only way to ensure continued growth and that a bigger share of the population reaps the benefits of growth. It is probably no coincidence that our ex-colonies, which have higher incomes than the UK, score far higher on OECD schools maths and reading tests than we do.

John Ball Chair

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Social Calendar

We hope you will appreciate these varied offerings which take us well into 2014. Others may be added as inspiration takes the social committee! All the meals that are offered support local and family run restaurants in our diverse Borough. We apologise for the cancellation of the visit to the Cartoon Museum on February 3. This is the first time we have had to cancel an event but it was unavoidable. You will see that we are planning two very special trips in 2015. For those of you who would consider going on either or both of these we are letting you know, well in advance, so you can budget for them.

If you have ideas about other events you would like to suggest and offer to organise, even on a one - off basis, do let us know. The Social Committee is an open and welcoming group. All suggestions will be seriously considered. There is a wealth of experience to support you, and you would be very welcome. You can contact Irene Richards on 020 8363 8175 or by email poosticks@blueyonder.co.uk

Saturday 15 March at 12.30 pm Lunch at the North Enfield Conservative Club, 278 Baker Street Enfield EN1 3LD - near The Hop Poles Pub- Buses W8 - 191 Parking available. Regulars will tell you that the food is worth getting all those Saturday jobs done early, so come along for a delicious three course lunch for £13 and chat with other Forum Members. This is a very popular venue so **ring Jacky Pearce NOW on 020 8482 3575.**

Thursday 27 March. City Walk. There is no charge for this walk around the eastern half of the City of London. You will see many of the City's prominent landmarks including the Tower of London, the Bank of England, Lloyds of London, Leadenhall Market etc. It will last approximately two hours and the route is mostly flat. Graham will provide some background history and facts. Meet at Tower Hill station at 10.50 for a prompt 11.00 departure or meet at Enfield Chase station at 09.45 to catch the 09.51 train to travel together to Tower Hill via Moorgate. For further information please **contact Graham Thomas on 020 8367 6360.**

Tuesday 25 March at 6-30 to 8-00 pm Wine Tasting Evening at Majestic Wine London Road, Enfield. Cost £2-50 to cover cheese and biscuits provided by Forum. To reserve your place **call Roy Barrows 0208 360 8561.**

Monday 7 April at 1-00 pm Lunch at Fish and Chips in London Road, Enfield. Starter and Main Course or Main Course and Dessert. Cost £8-00. Limited to 20 places. To reserve your place **call Roy Barrows 020 8360 8561.**

Friday 25 April at 7.30. Buffet Indian Meal in Edmonton at Kamal Chaudhry Indian Restaurant, 198-202 Fore Street, Edmonton, London, N18 2JD. Cost for buffet £12.99 plus drinks. Transport available for disabled members. To boo your place call the Forum office on **020 8807 2076 or email. info@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk**

Tuesday 6 May. Coach trip to the Cotswolds. Join the Forum on a day trip to this picturesque part of the country, when Spring should be well on the way to full bloom. The tour will include visits to Burford, Stowe on the Wold and Bourton on the Water. There will be adequate time to explore each of these three places and to get something to eat or drink. Graham will lead a short walking tour of Burford, if there is sufficient interest. The coach will depart from Lidl/Argos Enfield Town at 09.00 prompt and return at approximately 19.30. The price for this is £21.00. Please note that meals are not included. To book your place, and for further information please **contact Graham Thomas on 020 367 6360.**

Friday 9 May. Lunch in Ponders End at The Picture Palace, Lincoln Road, Enfield, EN3 4AQ (corner of Hertford Road). This is a Weatherspoons pub and food is traditional and very cheap. Two meals for £6.99 from the special menu or an average meal from other menus about £7.00 each. Disabled access and transport available for disabled members. To reserve your place telephone the Forum office on **020 8807 2076 or email. info@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk**

Wednesday 14 May Babinondas Greek Evening Forum Feast at 7.30pm Join us for a delectable meze supper at the ever-popular Babinondas restaurant on Green Lanes, Palmers Green. For just £22, this magnificent meal consists of loads of starters to share, fish course, meat course and fresh fruit platter. Or join us for lunch on **Sunday 25 May** Babinondas Greek Sunday lunch Feast at 1pm all the details as for the evening meze but at the weekend and in the daytime. To book for one or both meals, **contact Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com**

Tuesday 10 June. Thalassa Mediterranean fish lunch at 12.30pm Our second meal at this delectable eatery in Southgate. The two-course lunch menu has lots of choice, even if you prefer a non-fish or veggie option. Included in the £16 is your first drink of wine, beer or soft drink. **Or** make an evening of it on:

Tuesday 17 June Thalassa famous fish meze at 7.30pm Savour the best that the ocean has to offer with a wide selection of fish and seafood to keep you going all night long. A welcome glass of bubbly and coffee are included in the £25 price. "This is one of the best meals I have ever eaten and as healthy as well!!" To book **contact Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com**

Monday 25 June at 10-00 am. Day trip to Greenwich by River Bus and Tour of Royal Naval College, Chapel and Royal Observatory. Meet at Clipper River Service Booking Office situated opposite Embankment Station. For further information **call Roy Barrows on 020 8360-8651.**

Tuesday 1 July 2014 Brick Lane Music Hall - "seaside special" - £42-00. Meet Coach at Lidl/Argos Enfield Town 12-15pm sharp - Return approx. 6pm. Buckets and spades at the ready as we head for the summer with all the fun of a day at the seaside at Brick Lane Music Hall, without the sand in our toes!! A delicious afternoon tea will be included during the interval. To book the best deck chair by the sea - **Ring Jacky Pearce 020 8 482 3575.**

July 7-9 Cotswold Capers! Join us on this 3-day/2-night break to the heart of England village of Chipping Camden, as we explore the Cotswolds on foot and by coach. This trip is so varied as it includes one afternoon and one full day guided walking along the famous Cotswold Way, full breakfasts and evening meals, the famous Pudding Club evening at our hotel on one night, a visit to a traditional Cotswold pub and an amazing cultural mystery visit on our way home! The cost is approximately £250 per person, depending on the coach size and room requirements. Check out our superb www.threewayshotel.com, with its award-winning restaurant and tempting details about the Pudding Club. For a booking form and further details, please **contact Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com**

Thursday, 31 July - 2.15pm - Porgy & Bess - Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. A powerful story of love and betrayal, Porgy & Bess is celebrated as a landmark piece of American theatre. Tickets £21.50. For further information and to book please **contact Jean Mittins on 020 8367 2102 or email mercia1211@talktalk.net**

August 30th - 31st - Forum annual sailing weekend. All aboard - off we go again, sailing into The Solent!! Due to popular demand this will be the third time we have summer sailed from Southampton. Budding sailors can either come for just the Saturday or just the Sunday or stay on board for the whole weekend. We will be sailing to Portsmouth, Cowes, Lynton or Hamble, depending on tides and winds nearer the time. The cost is £55 for a day of sailing and £100 for the weekend. This includes all tuition, equipment and hot drinks. Meals and travel to Southampton from Waterloo are not included. This trip is only suitable for members able to balance and board the yacht independently BUT no previous sailing experience is necessary. For further information, please contact Olivia without delay, as there are limited places on board: **contact Olivia at oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com or 020 8447 8841.**

To see photos of our previous trips, have a look at the Forum Facebook page.

Social Events (cont)

Friday 12 September - Monday 15th September 2014. World War 1 Centenary Event: Two-day guided tour of the Somme Battlefield. Three nights bed and breakfast at Mercure Hotel in Arras.. Pick-up will be opposite Enfield Town Station. Channel Crossing by ferry. Cost Twin or Double room £279-00 per person. Cost Single room £ 354-00 per person. Optional Insurance £30-00 per person. Limited to 14 people. **To reserve your place call Roy Barrows 020 8360 8561.**

Thursday 18 September 2014 Dovercourt and Harwich lunch, music and dancing: Myra Terry Duo price held at £30!!! Book now - pay August. You asked us to repeat this very enjoyable day out so here it is - at the same price as last year! A leisurely drive to Harwich, with a comfort break en route. Enjoy the sights of the Old Town and the sea front. At noon we go on to the Cliffs Hotel, Dovercourt, where you'll be served a delicious two course lunch. In the afternoon there will be music and dancing by the infamous Myra Terry Duo. Tea and coffee will be provided during the afternoon. Licensed Bar available. Coach will leave Lidl/Argos Enfield Town 8-30am prompt, return 7-30pm approx. **Phone Jacky Pearce to reserve your place 020 8482 3575**

2015 - Advance Notice!!

March 19 -April 3 2015 Come to Cuba!!!

Join us on this very special Travelsphere 16 day escorted trip to the fascinating island of Cuba, with its natural beauty, vibrant culture and incredible history. The neon-green fields of the Vinales Valley, out-of-this-world scenery in the Sierra Maestra Mountains and Guardalavaca's sunbaked sands are just some of the highlights of this Cuban adventure. This holiday has 20 places available and costs from £2519 per person. For a booking form and further details about excursions, visa and single supplements, please contact **Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com**

November 5 -14 2015 India here we come!!! Beyond the Golden Triangle.

Ever more adventurous, how about this 10 day Forum trip in the autumn of 2015? Sun dappled forests with stalking tigers. Frenetic street bazaars, with sizzling food stalls. Imperial cities, with jewel-studded palaces. Discover India's intoxicating cultural cocktail on this soul-stirring 10 day tour with Travelsphere. The itinerary is too packed to describe in a few words, so contact Olivia for a booking form and for more information. The holiday cost is yet to be confirmed (as I have booked prior to brochure prices being finalised for 2015) but will be approximately £2000 per person. **Call Olivia 020 8447 8841 or email oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com**

Sayings to remember

It isn't what we say or think that defines us, but what we do - **Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility.**

Inequality - I loathe it with a passion.... so many people didn't achieve what they could because no one believed in them or gave them a chance or invested any time in them - **Steve McQueen, directed the film 12 Years a Slave.**

I have always been delighted at the prospect of a new day, a fresh try, one more start, with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning - **J B Priestley.**

Nobody owns anything but everyone is rich - for what greater wealth can there be than cheerfulness, peace of mind and freedom from anxiety - **Sir Thomas More, Utopia.**

Celebrate with us our 5,000th member

Wine and Cheese Evening

Friday April 11 2014 @ 7pm for 7.30

Enfield Civic Centre, Silver Street

John Dennis plays piano jazz standards

Singalong led by Simon Gilbert

Folk singer George Mitchell

Guest speaker: Rodney Bickerstaffe, former president of the National Pensioners' Convention

Tickets £5 available from the Forum office (includes drinks and refreshments)

Event sponsored by Vic Smith Beds of Winchmore Hill Road & Southbury Road who are offering up to 20% discount to Forum members on production of a valid membership card.

It's not just you getting old, so is your bed!

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Paid Too Much Tax?

I give 15 minute free tax advice as part of the Forum's Monday morning sessions at the Dugdale Centre. Almost everyone who has approached me has recently paid more tax than they should have or not received a repayment to which they were entitled.

As a retired Tax Inspector operating as a part time tax consultant I also offer a "tax health check" whereby I will examine an individual's financial circumstances and let them know if they are paying too much (or too little) tax for a fee starting at £20.

I am an accredited agent, able to act on behalf of taxpayers in their dealings with HMRC.

If you think you need help, contact me on 0208 886 6921(h), 0795 898 7870(mob), or by email at taxhelp-fromjeff@gmail.com.

Jeff Rodin



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March 10	-	Mandela – Long walk to Freedom
March 17	-	Inside Llewyn Davis
March 24	-	The Railway Man
March 31	-	Last Vegas
April 7	-	The Butler
April 14	-	12 Years a Slave
April 21	-	Nebraska
April 28	-	Dallas Buyers Club

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Affiliates' News

Southgate Symphony Orchestra

Concert in memory of Hans Engel, the orchestra's cellist for 20 years

Saturday April 5 at 7.30pm

Bourne Methodists Church, The Bourne, N14 6RS off Southgate Circus

Programme:

Barber of Seville Overture – Rossini

Cello concerto in E minor – Elgar

Award winning soloist: Ariana Kashefi

Symphony No.4 in E minor – Brahms

Tickets for Forum members £9 if purchased before the concert

Includes programme and refreshments.

Available from Monty Meth 020 8882 1303.

Enfield National Trust Association.

Evening meetings at the Grammar School, Market Place (entrance via Little Park Gardens and Wilford Close)

Meetings start at 7.45pm, Thursday March 13 : **"The Fantastic Falklands "** – Richard Revels, Thursday, April 10: **"Highlights of China "** – Margaret Deakin .

Afternoon meetings at Holtwhites Sports & Social club, Kirkland Drive, Holtwhites Hill, Enfield, meetings start at 2pm.

Wednesday March 19, **"The Ring of Fire"** – John Wallington & Anne Johnson; Wednesday, April 16 **"Shoplifting"** David Wass

Check our website; www.enta.btcc.co.uk

or ring Peter on 020 8363 1568

Selborne bowling club

Would like to invite you to join them at this really friendly club in Southgate. Learn to play bowls (coaching is free) and meet some new friends. It helps to keep you young! For more information, telephone Eric 07766 743 233 or Louis 07721 612 326

Holtwhites Bowls Club, Holtwhites Hill, Enfield

How about a new challenge for the New Year 2014! We are a friendly but competitive club and our members enjoy the game of bowls and also the sociable environment. We are looking to recruit new members and offer free coaching sessions to anyone interested.

Contact Rod Smith on 8366 3281 or Ian Cromar on 8363 9637 for more information.

The coaching commences on Saturday April 26 from 10.00 to 12.00 and the following Saturdays. We will be pleased to see you.

Enfield Croquet Club

Will be holding a FREE training course, open to anyone wishing to try the game, on Saturday 5,12,19 & 26 April 2014, 10.00-12.00.

All required equipment will be provided. Please wear flat-soled shoes.

Enfield Croquet Club is situated in Bush Hill Park adjacent to the tennis courts. The nearest park entrance is at the southern end of Cecil Avenue, Enfield, EN1 1PS.

To reserve a place on the training course please contact: Brian Dawes - Club Secretary, Phone: 020 8366 6005, Email: Gooner48@blueyonder.co.uk

For more information about the club please visit the club website at: www.enfieldcroquet.org.

Announcement

The Forum's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday May 27 at which all members will be eligible to vote and elect a new executive committee charged with managing the Forum's affairs.

All organisations need a regular transfusion of new blood, new ideas, new and younger people to come forward, be nominated and seconded, so that we can continue to play our part in protecting and improving the quality of life of older people in Enfield.

We are required to elect a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and an executive committee (existing office holders can be re-appointed). **Please contact the Forum office 020 8807 2076 for a nomination form.**