

25p protest goes on

Brian Jenkins, Labour MP for Tamworth, has written to congratulate the Forum on the campaigning work we have done to keep alive the scandal of the 25p Age Addition - paid at 80 - to the state pension, which has remained unchanged for 37 years.

The National Pensioners Convention - to which the Forum is affiliated - is urging the over 80s to send the 25p back to the Chancellor, in protest at the government's continued failure to substantially raise the basic state pension.

The call came on the day the state pension was increased by just £3.40 a week. But the additional 25p payment - first introduced in 1971 - is now seen by many older people as insulting and derisory.

Thirty seven years ago, the extra weekly payment for those aged 80 and over was set at 25p in line with the value of a bag of coal. At the time, it was considered a valuable addition to the weekly state pension of £5. Today, if it had risen relative to the state pension - it would be worth around £4.50 a week.

But over the years, its continued neglect has made it a symbol of discontent amongst Britain's elderly. Even pensions minister Mike O'Brien acknowledged in a parliamentary debate last year that the 25p payment was "an insult", after his mother had complained about it.

Joe Harris, NPC general secretary said: *"There are around 2.6m people aged 80 and over, and every week they receive this pathetic payment which rubs their noses in the fact that their state pension of £90.70 a week, is so pitifully low. Today, the age addition can't even buy a 27p second class stamp. I think sending 25p back to the Chancellor will show how angry pensioners really are."*

"This year represents the centenary of the state pension - yet 1 in 5 older people, particularly those older pensioners, are living below the official poverty line. The government has said it will restore the pension link to earnings in 2012, but by that time 3 million of today's pensioners will have already died. We need a decent state pension now, set at around £135 a week, which allows all older people to live in dignity in retirement."

Future FORUM Events

FORUM MEETINGS 2008 - Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield

* Please note the different start times

Tuesday 29 May 10am for 10.30 start

Social care funding - time for a change?

Steve Tall, LBE head of older people's services & **Lizzie McLennan**, policy officer Help the Aged.

Tuesday 24 June at 11am start

Peter Lewis, LBE director of education, children's services and leisure speaks on **Education - Yesterday and Today**

Tuesday 24 June at 10am for 10.30am start

John McGill, deputy director North London Strategic Alliance on a new vision for **North London** and how it will enhance its contribution to London's status as the world's greatest city.

COFFEE MORNINGS - Skinners Court

Mini-forum meetings starting at 10am

Third Tuesday in the month - Opposite the Fox pub car park in Pellipar Close, Palmers Green - Buses 329 and W9 to the Fox pub in Green Lanes or the 121 to the Triangle -150 yards from the Fox.

Tuesday 20 May at 10 am

Wills, probate, inheritance tax - expert advice and guidance with **June Addy** of Vanderpump & Sykes.

Tuesday 17 June at 10 am

Journey to Bhutan - a scenic picture eye-opener on the Himalayan Kingdom with **Anne and John**

Tuesday 15 July at 10am

Truck dangers and road safety

Chris Carey shows how to avoid the threat

The Forum expresses its grateful thanks to the Old Enfield Charitable Trust for generously funding the cost of producing and distributing this Newsletter.

Social care services.....



More older people to care for than ever before, help from the government or council gets tougher every year - 62% of councils - including Enfield - now set their eligibility criteria at 'substantial' or 'critical', ruling out thousands of people who fail the test. The result is that more people have to pay for private

assistance or they go without the help and support they need.

Fair access to care services will be the topic for discussion at our May Forum meeting and to start the debate we asked CLAUDE MORAES, our member of the European Parliament and co-President of the Parliament's all-party group on ageing, to explain the scale of the challenge ahead for Britain - and the rest of Europe.

The hardcore challenge is who will pay for and care for older people in the EU in coming years? At present there are wide differences in welfare provision between member states. Countries like Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK have better provision than others – but the debate in even these countries is fraught. Legal frameworks also differ widely – in Greece and Germany, the family is legally obliged to care financially for an older relative, whereas in Denmark the state takes more direct responsibility. The UK is typical of the grey area where there is an expectation that the family cares, but there is no legal requirement. Differences in policy responses can be illustrated by the UK, where devolution has produced a more state interventionist and popular framework for elder care in Scotland than next door in England.

There is an increasing division in Europe between those who can afford private care and those who have to rely on poor public provision - charity or family. How can EU countries begin to avert the crisis in care and how can they work together towards best practice? The first requirement is for all EU countries without exception, to make a significant

investment in care and support services for older people if they are to meet the needs of an ageing population and shortfalls in family care. The best practice on, for example, how new and often expensive medicines can be developed and made affordable will be typical of the way that research and development at EU level will become more important.

With 1 October marking the UN day of older people, the political debate within the EU around the ageing of Europe is beginning to match the unique position in which Europe finds itself as by far the most rapidly ageing of the world's continents. The scale of the challenge facing the EU is huge – by 2020 at least one quarter of the population will have reached their 60th birthday and the number aged 80 or over will increase by more than half. The so-called 'very old' is now the fastest growing category in the EU.

While Europeans are living longer and healthier lives than ever before, the sheer number and inevitability of reduced mobility and diseases associated with very old age require the most urgent response. Despite the clear demographic challenge, there is a strong argument that as legislators and policy makers we are still struggling with the enormity of the challenge which touches on issues as diverse as health care, disability, age discrimination, pensions, migration, social services, medical research, and the social and cultural aspects of abuse and respect for older people and their portrayal.

Despite many improvements, the lack of detailed information at EU level on the family, older people and care means that more information is urgently needed given the potential scale of our task. For example, we need to know how and why some member states are emphasising "care in the community" or the duties of the family over state and private sector care and what the implications are. One of the most difficult of all of these challenges is the health care of older people.

The family policy studies centre estimates that over 30 million older people suffer from some sort of disability today. But the truly acute challenge for carers, health services and,

0844 surgeries ordered to come clean

The 13 surgeries which have switched their telephone number to the higher cost 0844 numbers have been ordered to tell all their new and existing patients exactly what they will have to pay to telephone the surgery. Rob Lee, associate director of Enfield Primary Care Trust, has written to practice managers at the 13 offenders currently signed up to a contract for the use of the 0844 telephone system.

He says that the PCT needs to be satisfied that patients are fully aware of the telephone price tariff when they register and for contacting the surgery for those patients that are already registered.

The 13 surgeries have now been told to include the phone charges tariff in their practice leaflet and consider putting a poster in their waiting room and/or add the information to repeat prescriptions so that patients can decide whether they are happy to be charged above the national rate.

Forum Committee member Peter Smith tells us that at his surgery in Haringey patients were informed that they were to introduce an 0844 number. **"So I rang Haringey PCT's complaints manager and asked why they were allowing it to happen. He tried to fob me off by saying they did not have jurisdiction on GPs telephones. When I told him the Enfield PCT had now banned them he said he would look into it.**

Later he rang me back to say he had made enquiries and said I was right and he would be writing to all his GPs informing them that they were not to renew the 0844 contracts".

Patients at the 13 surgeries in Enfield on 0844 numbers should ensure that their GPs follow the PCT ruling and publicly disclose the charges - and they can also ask to whom the extra money paid by patients is going!

Note: GPs who fail to stop patients making unnecessary visits to hospital casualty departments may be fined, said Health Minister Lord Darzi, who is looking at proposals which could lead to doctors losing up to £1 billion.

.....the big challenge ahead

of course, everyone reading this article now, is the proportionate increase in the number of EU citizens who will suffer from conditions associated with age – dementia, arthritis and the increase in some cancers. For example, the current projections show that by 2020 there will be over three million people in the EU with senile dementia.

The implication for carers is significant. In the EU today, the family is still overwhelmingly the main source of care. Only about a third of older people with significant age-related problems such as lack of mobility go into institutional care. Within those average statistics are big differences in north and south Europe, where family help is much greater. Women are by far the main supporters of dependent older people in the EU with German studies showing three quarters of carers are women – themselves ageing rapidly as a category. Most alarming is the fact that across the EU, both north and south, no government has yet established adequate formal care assistance on the scale required.

But the challenges for carers do not stop there. For example the ‘traditional family’ is changing beyond all recognition – rising divorce alone reduces the care given to parents, and the help spouses give to each other. Migration can also have both positive and negative effects – younger migrants coming to the EU are currently disproportionately entering the health and care sectors. Net migration from new member states of young people can also reduce European families’ ability to care for relatives.

While these are primarily issues for national health systems, the multi-national pharmaceutical industry is increasingly engaged at EU level. For those who still argue that care of older people is not an EU wide concern, should on the UN day for older people understand how unique Europe now is in the world as our population ages faster than anywhere else in the world. This common cause should spur us towards sharing best practice and where possible, common solutions.

A comprehensive study from the AARP breaks new ground by exploring how the world’s leading economies in the G7 countries - UK, America, Germany, Italy, France, Canada and Japan -are responding to ageing workforces.

- o Ten years ago, 30% of the G7’s population was age 50 or older; however 10 years from now, the figure will be closer to 40%.
- o If workers age 50+ today leave the workforce all at once over the next five to 10 years, significant talent gaps seem certain in many of the G7 countries across a range of industries.
- o While organisations have studied issues and identified possible approaches for addressing the coming demographic shifts, the technique that appears to offer the most immediate impact on the talent gap is to increase the labour force participation rate of mature workers.
- o Canada, the UK and the US are better positioned than other G7 countries for the evolving environment, because of fewer demographic and labour market challenges and more supportive policies.
- o Among the employees surveyed, at least 60% of those 50+ in each G7 country view age discrimination as the primary barrier to securing new jobs, as opposed to only 38% of employees that view their employers as welcoming of older workers.
- o More than one-third of employees surveyed expect to continue working in some capacity after retirement, most likely part-time for new employers.
- o Only 30% of employees in the G7 countries believe that their employer has well-defined policies to encourage continued employment of mature workers.
- o Most employers are taking steps to position themselves for the increasing competition in talent, and some are pioneering new ways to create more inclusive working environments, such as rehiring retirees and offering more flexible work arrangements.

Claude Moraes

.. but many dispense better service

Nearly 40 of Enfield’s 60 GP surgeries are on their way to improving their opening hours for patients - 22 of them actually started doing so in April and 12 of them are now opening on a Saturday morning.

This breakthrough follows a Government initiative to get surgeries to provide a better service to patients - something the Forum has been advocating for many months since we found that only 16 surgeries in Enfield were open five days a week. More than 40 of them still retained the old-style half-day closing.

Because the recent GP contract gave more money while relieving them from being on duty and making calls out-of-hours, doctors are now being asked to extend their hours either before 8am or after 6.30pm.

They are not being allowed to open for an extra ten minutes or so, but have to open for a minimum 90 minutes, based on half an hour for each 1000 patients.

Practices with over 3000 patients must have at least 90-minute sessions. These sessions are for pre-bookable appointments and are coming into use before a new Directed Enhanced Service ruling is published by the Department of Health which will set a target that by the end of the year, half of all surgeries will be opening in the evenings or Saturday - and Enfield PCT is confident that the target will be more than met. We think patients should make sure that their surgery has an out-of-normal hours surgery which they may need at some time.



.....Olivia reports.....

Taster days take off

The Forum certainly put a spring in the steps of over 150 people, as they enjoyed the talks and activities on offer at the **Southbury** and

Edmonton leisure centres, held under the catchline **"Spring Forward for a Healthier Lifestyle"** to coincide with the clocks going forward. Both Centres were buzzing with people keen to try out the activities on offer and these included, aqua fit, gym tours, easy line exercises, short mat bowls, badminton, swimming, canoeing to name but a few.

Volunteers from the Forum registered the participants and thanks are due to Mary Bushter, Janet Scott, Andy Smith, Vera Kitchener, Christina May and Joyce Pullen.

Dr Zafar Iqbal broke away from his sports medicine work with Tottenham Hotspur, to speak about health and physical activity and gave strategies for even the least fit to think about. Kerrie Soares spoke about the bowel screening programme and made this sensitive subject very clear to all. Roy Barrows and Roger Biss explained how exercise had impacted on their lives and health, particularly in recent years and with a regular programme of physical activity.

Lunch was provided and then the activities kicked off. The enthusiasm shown by the participants was delightful to watch and catch on camera and in the positive comments written on the evaluation sheets. And Shirley Knowles wrote to me afterwards saying: *"This is just to thank you for the arrangements made for the taster day at Edmonton Leisure Centre. It was extremely interesting and I am definitely going to sign up for the Easy Line exercise. I'm afraid I couldn't go back to the hall at the end of the day, as I had to get home - the enthusiasm of the instructors was such that each taster session seemed to over run!"*

Marks and Spencer vouchers were the free prizes at the end of the day and as ever, we were generously sponsored by Warburton's the bakers, giving everyone the chance to go home with a couple of healthy loaves. The Primary Care Trust supported the two days yet again and our partnership with the PCT seems to be working well and attracting a lot more new users to the leisure centres - the aim to keep us all out of GP surgeries and hospital for as long as possible.

Discover Faversham - our summer trip to Kent

On Sunday 24 August, departing from the Civic Centre, Silver Street at 8.50am, we are taking a 48-seater coach to the historic town of Faversham in Kent. The day begins with morning coffee and then a guided tour of Faversham, which will last for one and a half-hours. We then return to the Shepherd Neame Brewery for a Brewers Platter lunch. At 2pm we have a guided tour of this oldest brewer of beer in the UK with tutored tastings of course!

We will leave the centre at 4pm to return to Enfield. Places are limited to 48 and as this will be a popular trip you are advised to book early to secure your place.

The cost of the trip including tour and lunch etc is £30 per person Cheques payable to Enfield Over 50s Forum and send to Olivia Goodfellow, Salisbury House, Bury Street West, Edmonton, N9 9LT.

Please note that this trip is not suitable for wheelchair users and there are steps which may be difficult for the less mobile - although a virtual tour would be available for those not able to complete the tour.

Incidentally, our Christmas trip to Luxembourg is now fully booked - a good seven months before we go. So I'm opening a waiting list for anyone still thinking about it.

More loose women.....

Back in February, 20 Forum members went yet again to the ITV studios to be part of the audience for the popular lunchtime chat show "Loose Women" The guest this time was the wonderfully talented opera singer Jonathan Ansell who had just released a new album of music from the films. After a lovely lunch in a nearby pub, the group was subjected to an hilarious warm up act and the laughs were maybe heard in Enfield?

Due to popular demand, I've been able to arrange another Forum trip to the ITV studios to be part of the audience for "Loose Women". This will take place on Monday 4 August. We will be having lunch first in the nearby Mulberry Bush pub which serves excellent food. Places are limited to 20 so for further details and to book your place-call me on 020 8447 8841 or email Olivia.g@virgin.net

.....and more Forum affiliates

Ruth Winston Centre in Palmers Green, which goes from strength to strength, is the latest organisation to join the Forum. Since extending the opening hours, more activity classes are being provided for the over 50s. Activities include, salsa, Latin American, Brazilian rhythm, country and line dancing, tai chi, pilates and yoga plus many recreational classes including, art, computer training, dressmaking and French conversation. A hairdressing and chiropody service is also provided.

Michelle, the centre manager, says anyone over 50 is welcome to visit and see for themselves what is on offer. Alternatively visit their website www.ruthwinstoncentre.co.uk

Edmonton Bowls club which meets in Church Street at the corner of the A10, has joined the Forum and invite Newsletter readers to their Club nights on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5.30pm -7.30pm from now to September. They are looking for new members to keep the club flourishing. If you would like more information, please contact Anna Nicholas on 020 8360 9462.

Probus Club of Enfield, whose members are men over the age 60 and who have retired from a PROfession or BUSi-ness (hence the name) has also affiliated to the Forum. The Club regularly meet on the third Tuesday in the month at the Trent Park Golf Club. The meeting is with lunch and a speaker (preferably a member) and in addition twice a year a lunch or dinner is arranged for wives/partners and widows to come with members and a possible affiliate?

I've had a lovely meeting speaking to the Bourne Women's Group at the Bourne Hill Methodist church. They have kindly donated £20 to Forum funds. Hopefully they will join as a group - what lovely ladies they are!

Olivia Goodfellow

Anyone fancy cycling?

Every Sunday morning I ride my new bike along the National Cycle Network in the Lee Valley Park, covering about 10 miles along the traffic-free, unpolluted river towpath.

I have approached the owners of Lee Valley Cycle hire at Stonebridge Lock, Tottenham, (www.lvcc.biz <<http://www.lvcc.biz>>) about introducing Forum members to take up this healthy form of exercise in a safe and clean air environment area of the Lee Valley Park.

They are willing to offer a group rate of £5-00 per person for two hours hire of their modern cycles and the use of their tearoom to relax and socialise after the ride. There is adequate car parking facilities and the site is easy to get to from the North Circular turn off to IKEA.

To prepare people for this beneficial healthy pursuit, I have spoken to one of the gym instructors at Southbury Leisure Centre who is willing to introduce Enfield Over 50s Forum to cycling by taking them on a short course of spinning exercises on the newly installed equipment there.

If you're interested in this venture, see me at Forum meetings or call me on 020 8360 8561 (weekdays).

Roy Barrows

Anyone for bowls

Summer's here, (well almost) and so you may like to pop along to Southgate Bowling Club, Alderman's Hill, Broomfield Park, Palmers Green, located by the boating lake with its own clubhouse and green, open every day from now to the end of September and they welcome new members.

Bowls is a healthy and fun form of gentle exercise, for gents and ladies alike, played in a friendly atmosphere. It can also be an extremely competitive sport! The club caters for all skill levels, from total beginners to experienced county players, so your bowling can be as "social", or as competitive as you like.

For a warm welcome, and details of your chance to try bowls and free coaching at the club's open days, please contact: Iain Walls 020 8367 0082, Ken Harris 020 8882 1647 or Michael Davis 020 8882 1872

But remember to take flat-soled shoes (e.g. trainers); they'll provide everything else! The coaching and open days are all completely free so you've nothing to lose?

15 hours to a better life?

Arthritis, ME, breathlessness, heart disease, asthma etc

If you suffer from any of these complaints, a two and a half hour self-management 6-week course could help you

- and it is **FREE**

Wednesday 4 June - and five Wednesdays thereafter at Holbrook House, Cockfosters Road

Wednesday 10 September and five Wednesdays thereafter at Forest Primary Care Centre 308a Hertford Road, Edmonton N9 7HD

Thursday 6 November and five Thursdays thereafter at Community House, 311 Fore Street Edmonton N9 0PZ

Further information and to register contact Julie Howes, programme coordinator, Enfield PCT 020 8370 8211

Police warn: don't get hooked

Following a number of burglaries recently in Enfield where a hooking device/fishing rod has been used by thieves to remove keys from inside the property to gain entry. Enfield Police are reminding people to keep keys away from the front door and in a safe and secure place.

Leaving keys close to the front door on hall tables, hooks or windowsills invites opportunists to use hooking devices through the letterbox to whisk away keys, so there's no sign of a break-in. The first indication that a suspect has gained entry to the premises is usually when the victim wakes up the following morning to find something missing, usually an empty space on the driveway.

Few people take the precaution of putting their keys in a safe place, so it doesn't take a burglar long to find them. So these are the police tips:

- * Always key-lock or bolt ALL external doors at night, simply lifting or 'throwing' the handle on a UPVC or other multi-locking door is not sufficient.
- * Keep your house and car keys out of sight and in a secure place away from external doors or windows - keep them with you when going to bed*
- * As part of a fire strategy, ensure that everyone in the household knows the location of keys.
- * Pick up your free KEY CODE window sticker from your local police station or Safer Neighbourhoods team.

Countdown to Olympics starts with Lee Valley festival

Come August, Beijing will hand over to London and for the next four years the Cultural Olympiad will be taking place - culminating with the Olympics and Paralympics in London 2012. To celebrate the beginning of the Olympiad and North London's rich cultural diversity, the Lee Valley Festival 2008 is being organised by the North London Strategic Alliance.

For four days in June, a series of high-profile cultural events and activities will take place in the Lee Valley:

Thursday 19 June: Business Opportunities and Business Readiness for 2012

Friday 20 June: The Cultural Olympiad: Engaging young people through arts and sports (London-wide conference)

Saturday 21 June: Tottenham Carnival and Festival, Tottenham High Road and Bruce Grove

Sunday 22 June: sports activities and circus/street theatre arts festival, Lee Valley Athletics Centre, Picketts Lock, Enfield. North London arts practitioners, community groups, businesses and voluntary-sector organisations are being asked to become involved by organising their own cultural events and activities during the four days.

Pensions: Let's Pester Parliament

Wednesday 22 October promises to see the biggest gathering of both today's and tomorrow's pensioners pressing MPs at the House of Commons to do more to help end the stigma of poverty pensions and that paltry 25p a week extra on reaching the age of 80.

Men and women of all ages and from all parts of the country will be there to mark the fact that it is exactly 100 years since Britain introduced old age pensions, but also to tell the politicians of all parties that the **"poor aged need help"**.

That was the headline on a pungent Voice of the Daily Mirror editorial on 15 April which said: "The shocking scale of pensioner poverty in Britain is a scar on our country.

The world's fourth largest economy should not tolerate more than half of its old folk living below the breadline.

We acknowledge the efforts the Labour government had made to lift more than a million pensioners out of poverty - even if it is through means-tested benefits.

We appreciate the multi-billion pound cost of restoring the link between pensions and earnings before 2012.

But millions of pensioners will die before that long-overdue reform comes into effect.

And they are more deserving of the huge amounts of cash that is now going on many eye-catching initiatives and government gimmicks.

These pensioners are the people who lived through the austerity years of post-war Britain and helped to build a new welfare state.

The same welfare state must not let them down now"

Pension trends (official)

The Office of National Statistics issued its report: Pension trends for 2005-6 which said that:

- * Half of all single pensioners had total annual pension income of less than £6,000
- * 62% of pensioner couples had total annual pension income of less than £10,000
- * 40% of pensioner couples, 55% of single men and 61% of single women pensioners had annual private pensions income of less than £1,000
- * Only 6% of pensioner couples had private pension income of £6,000 or more
- * Only 3% of single pensioner men and 1% of single women had private pension income of more than £6,000
- * There were 6.2 million pensioner households receiving state pension income and 4 million pension households receiving additional private pension payments in 2005/6.

Joe Harris, secretary of the National Pensioners' Convention was quoted in the Mirror saying: **"The country can afford to give older people £135 a week that goes up every year in line with wages"**. Using the means-tested Pension Credit, the minimum income guarantee is £124 a week.

What it was like 100 years ago

Before the Old Age Pensions Act was passed in 1908, those who could no longer work due to their age depended entirely on charity to survive. The 1908 Act was the first step taken by government to provide for old age. It was a means-tested, non-contributory state pension of five old shillings a week for men and women aged 70 and over.

It was, in its own way and in its time, the biggest single advance in social conditions and it eventually was the foundation and basis for the post-war creation of the National Insurance system and the Welfare State we know today. The big difference is that the 1908 Pensions Act was meant for what the Victorians called the **"deserving poor,"** an idea which lingers today in means-testing benefits, although pensions are paid to everyone who has contributed.

The first old age pensions were paid on January 1 1909 and the five shillings was equal to between 20% and 25 % of the average wage. It was means-tested and for every shilling the weekly income exceeded eight shillings and one penny, one shilling was deducted from the basic five shillings. Anyone with an income of more than 12 shillings and one penny would get no pension.

Compared with the first pension being equal to 25% of the average wage, today's pension is about 13% and declining because of the Thatcher government linking rises to price increases. The result is that over 3 million people are entitled to means-tested support - but only 2.7 million apply for it.

With the end of many occupational final salary pension schemes, retirees will face an uncertain future as their pension income will be more dependent on the vagaries of the stock market. Hence the importance of the need for a substantial state pension that will give everyone the ability to retire with dignity and financial security.

That is why the Forum is affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention which calls for the basic state pension to be raised above the official poverty level of £134 a week - equal to 60% of the average wage. We want this to be paid equally to all men and women and to be increased annually in line with earnings.

Age Concern Handy Persons Service

Can carry out a range of repairs and practical tasks, such as fixing hand rails, moving furniture, simple carpentry and home security, decorating, plumbing and electrical work.

Contact: 020 8375 4115

mark.abrams@ageconcernenfield.org.uk

Published by Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum.

Contact: Olivia Goodfellow, development Officer (Between 9-5pm)

Telephone: 020 8447 8841. E-mail: olivia.g@virgin.net

What should “grey market” shoppers expect?

“There is no margin for error on very low incomes. You balance everything tightly but as soon as you’re hit with an emergency you are in trouble” - Save the Children report: Robbing Peter to Pay Paul.

I recently attended an afternoon seminar at the BT Tower, organised by **“Engage”** a network set up by Help the Aged to enable companies to understand the **“grey market,”** help them develop an age positive approach to business so as to secure the much sought after **“silver pound”**.

I was one of a group of four people attending on behalf of their Forums – from Cambridge, Eastleigh in Hampshire and Sutton and we were hosted by Debbie Beale from Help the Aged. We were greatly outnumbered by the rest of the participants who came from some branch of business or commerce.

The speakers came from BT, B & Q, Marks & Spencer, and Help the Aged. BT addressed the question of new technology and how their innovations were directed to helping older less able people. They deliberately ignored their penal demand for £4.50 every time you pay a bill in defying their demand for direct debit payment.

B & Q, already recognised for its company policy of successfully employing older people, is launching a range of 450 products specifically designed with older people in mind. M & S didn’t directly address the issue, but talked more generally around working with customers, ethical trading and building a healthier nation in which older people would be engaged.

Their major consultation is with Women’s Institutes – not exactly my idea of talking to representative older people! David Sinclair of Help the Aged was the only speaker who really addressed the topic of the afternoon and found many businesses wanting.

The highlight of the afternoon was the opportunity to go up to Floor 34 of the BT tower. This was the famous revolving restaurant closed after a bomb scare in the 1970s. The views of London are amazing if disorientating due to the constant revolve and spectacular lightning flashes.

I think Help the Aged should be congratulated on the **“Engage”** initiative. That this event was, to my mind, less than successful is due more to business needing to clarify what its attitude is to providing services and goods to older people.

Do they know who we are and what our specific needs are apart from those we share with everyone else? Food prices are going up for everyone, but does everyone want “buy two get one free” deals? It is not only that the poor can’t afford them, but others don’t want to bulk buy three for the price of two. We just want one item at a low price. We should stand up more and tell the supermarkets what we feel - and **“Engage”** could provide the platform.

Irene Richards

Computer club vacancies

If you’ve a basic knowledge of computers and are over 60 you can join a very friendly, informal group that meets on Tuesdays from 10am to 12 noon at Delta CLC 296a Nightingale Road, Edmonton N9 8PT. Subscriptions are 50p per week, payable in advance. Contact Kathy Amed 020 8807 8687

Feeling the pinch?

Ramming home the points that Irene makes, Newcastle Building Society has issued a report, which claims that the cost of living for pensioners is rising at more than twice the level as everyone else. It’s estimated to go up by 7% for pensioners and 3% for the average family. This is because pensioners spend a higher proportion of their income on food and energy bills.

And if you don’t already know, official figures put food inflation at 6.6% over the past year. Milk, cheese and eggs are up 15.4% since January 2007, meat prices are 7.8% higher than a year ago and all the main energy companies have put up their gas and electricity prices - EON has announced a 15% increase for gas and a near 10% rise for electricity.

The Government’s official inflation rate went up just 2.2% in January, but this excludes mortgage payments and council tax. Add them back in and you get a figure of 4.4%, but even this still does not recognise that people with less of what the economists call “disposable income” spend a bigger proportion on food, gas, electricity and petrol which have all been rocketing in price - and they are not benefiting from lower prices on new home appliances, electronics or clothing etc.

When inflation figures are brought down because the price of new plasma flat-screen TV sets are halved it doesn’t help people on low incomes struggling to make ends meet. An average pensioner is estimated to spend 14% of their income on energy bills and 22% on food - and failure to take this into account in determining the state pension increase must affect the quality of life of many older people.

Instead of bailing out the banks, the Government should think about helping those caught in the new inflationary trap because it is estimated that food prices are now running six times higher than the official inflation rate. An average family’s monthly food bill for essentials is now estimated to be £1,200 higher than a year ago.

Bus pass muddle

Although our Freedom Pass gives us free travel on buses, tube, trams, DLR and train services in London - paid for by all London councils to enable older and disabled people to get out and about - the same Freedom Pass can be used on local bus services anywhere only in England if it has been renewed and has a 2010 expiry date.

Outside of London, the national bus scheme which became operative on 1 April, passes can only be used after 9.30am and before 11pm Monday to Friday and all day weekends and public holidays. However, they are not valid on tram, light rail, metro or train services outside of London.

The national scheme is being paid for by the Government, costing over £200 million a year, but there is no doubt that some councils are using the arrival of free travel for older people to withdraw some services and change the frequency of services, blaming it all on insufficient funding.

Long distance bus and coach services are not in the existing scheme but the muddle arises when some large areas like London, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands do have local rail travel included in the scheme.

In South Yorkshire, pensioners continue to have free travel on Sheffield trams, free travel on rail journeys in the South Yorkshire area, and free travel on direct unbroken outwards and return rail journeys between South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

Pensioners in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, we understand, have rail travel within their borders included with the bus pass scheme and the National Pensioners Convention thinks this should be the next objective for every area of Britain on the road to its aim of free nationwide travel on all public and local transport.

Your good morning smiles

Ski trips at 80

You've heard about people taking a SKI - Spending the Kids Inheritance - holiday - well, here's a new take from well-known writer Hunter Davies: He says: "I have a friend, Frankie, two years older than me who is a very keen skier. He's told me some amazing news. In Austria and Switzerland, ski passes are free for the over-80s. Isn't that great?, positive and life affirming?"

"Okay, so I don't ski, but that's not the point. When I get to 80, I'll definitely take it up. If just to save money"

- Sunday Times 9 March 2008

Tell the other half

A man was getting into the shower just as his wife is getting out of the bath, The doorbell rings, the wife quickly wraps herself in a towel and runs downstairs.

She opens the door to find the next door neighbour. "I'll give you £500 to drop that towel", says Bob.

She does, blushes and stands starkers while Bob looked her up and down, gave her a kiss on the cheek and put £500 in her hand.

Back upstairs, the husband enquires who was at the door.

Only Bob, she answers. "That's great, did he give you the £500 he owes me?"

Moral: Always share all critical information with your other half!

Teenagers

A Forum member went to buy some new shoes. He noticed a teenager sitting next to him with spiked hair in all different colours: green, red, orange, and blue. Our friend kept staring at him. The teenager looked up and found him staring every time. When the teenager had enough, he sarcastically asked: "What's the matter old man, never done anything wild in your life?"

In classic, matter of fact style, without batting an eyelid in response, he just said: "Got drunk once and had sex with a peacock. I was just wondering if you were my son."

Hello sailor

The following is the actual transcript of a radio conversation in October 1995, between a US Navy ship and the British authorities off the north coast of Scotland. The transcript was released by the MoD on 10/10/05.

British: *Please divert your course 15 degrees to the South to avoid collision.*

US Navy: *Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid collision*

British: *Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the South to avoid collision*

US Navy: *This is the Captain of US Navy ship USS Lincoln. I say again, divert your course.*

British: *Negative I say again divert your course.*

US Navy: *I am in command of the second largest ship in the U.S Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and various support vessels, We demand you change course or counter measures will be taken to ensure the safety of this ship.*

British: *We are a lighthouse. Now please P*SS off!*

Memory

Arthur is 90 years old. He's played golf every day since his retirement 25 years ago. One day he arrived home looking downcast. 'That's it', he tells his wife. 'I'm giving up golf. My eyesight has got so bad that once I've hit the ball I can't see where it goes.'

His wife sympathised and made him a cup of tea. As they sit down she says:

'Why don't you take my brother Bert with you and give it one more try'

'That's no good', sighs Arthur. 'Bert's a 103. He can't help'.

'He may be a 103', says the wife, 'but his eyesight is perfect.'

So the next day Arthur heads off to the golf course with his brother-in-law.

He tees up, takes an almighty swing and squints down the fairway. He turns to Bert. 'Did you see the ball?'

'Of course I did!'

'So where did it go?' asks Art

'Can't remember', replies Bert.

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Bowel cancer tests tops 5000

The Forum's campaign supporting the new NHS screening drive to reduce deaths from bowel cancer has been taken up by 5,434 people over the age of 60. It represents, however just 43% of the number of screening kits sent out, so there is clearly a gap that we ought to help close. The new NHS Bowel Cancer Screening programme began last December in Enfield to help identify and diagnose it at the earliest possible stage when treatment is more likely to be effective.

Bowel Cancer is the third most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the UK, with more than 16,000 people dying from it each year. However, the introduction of the new and important screening programme means that bowel cancer may now be caught at a much earlier stage.

Within the next two years, men and women aged 60-69 will, around their birth date, automatically receive their first invitation to participate in the screening programme. They will get a test kit through the post, which they are able to complete in the privacy of their homes, and then post back to the NHS laboratory.

The kit detects tiny amounts of blood in an individual's faeces/stool, which cannot normally be seen. While the test kit is unable to tell whether or not an individual has bowel cancer, it will indicate whether further investigation of a person's bowel is necessary. You will receive the results of your test within 14 days and any further information in the event that you have an abnormal test result. It is important to know that anyone over 70 may also participate by ringing free phone 0800 707 6060 to request a test kit.

So far, more than 10,000 test kits have been sent out to Enfield residents. Unfortunately however, the majority of people have not completed their test kit. The Forum is urging people to complete and return their kits as this could mean early diagnosis and treatment of bowel cancer, as well as the identification and easy removal of polyps which are not cancers but may develop into cancers over time.

If caught early, bowel cancer can be treated and cured! Look out for your home test kit...

For further information, please visit:

www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk

Random round-up

Thank you, ladies!

Olivia recently spoke about the Forum to a large group of ladies at the Mount Carmel Church. She was very warmly received and in addition, they donated £30 to Forum funds. Thanks ladies and we hope to have you on board soon as another affiliated group.

And thank you, Lidl

Forum Committee member Bill Thear showed great initiative in introducing the Forum to the new LiDL store in Cecil Road. As a result, the Forum was offered complementary items of our choice to the value of £50 which have been raffled for our funds. Thank you Bill and LiDL sales operations manager Stephen Hutchinson.

Fast-forward Fairtrade

The drive towards achieving official accreditation of Enfield as a Fairtrade borough is moving ahead with at least 59 retail outlets and 19 catering outlets now stocking two Fairtrade products or more. And there are some 35 places of worship in the borough including ten churches, a Hindu temple, a synagogue and a mosque serving Fairtrade products. Work is on-going to draw up a conclusive list of local workplaces serving Fairtrade tea and coffee - needed to meet the targets set by the Fairtrade Foundation before Enfield Council, having now passed a

resolution in support of Fairtrade, receives official recognition and accreditation.

Our Forum is one of the many organisations supporting Fairtrade, which ensures that farmers, growers and manufacturers in developing countries receive a decent price for their products and so helps to raise the standard and quality of life of their people

Enfield Arts Circle

Now celebrating its 75th anniversary, the Enfield Arts Circle enables those interested in the arts to meet for discussion, mutual encouragement and the sharing and development of skills and experience. Members meet for talks, practical sessions and demonstrations by established artists. A major exhibition of members' work - painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramic, textiles - is held each summer. There are related courses and classes tutored by Circle members. Other activities include painting days, excursions and social events.

The Arts Circle meets at 8pm on the second Thursday of most months of the year at St Andrew's Parish Centre, Silver Street, Enfield. Non-members very welcome (£2 per meeting including refreshments). Annual subscription (exhibiting and non-exhibiting members) £10. Membership Secretary: Tel 01992 622 680. www.enfieldartcircle.org

When I was young there was no respect for the young, and now that I am old there is no respect for the old. I seemed to have missed the coming and the going. The belief that youth is the happiest time of life is founded on a fallacy. The happiest person is the person who thinks the most interesting thoughts, and we grow happier as we grow older.

Roy Barrows

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Shopmobility scheme saved?

The Forum is hoping to see a plan to save the Enfield shopmobility scheme on the agenda of the Council's Cabinet meeting later in May, following discussions we have had with council officers about the need to retain the free scooter loan service for wheelchair users.

Forum members reading press reports of the closure plan had challenged councillors at area forum meetings, but were bluntly told that the service was too costly to run and there was little demand for it. One councillor even said it was being used by just three people. The issue, he claimed, was in the papers circulated with the council's budget consultation and there was no reprieve. In fact, Shopmobility was dismissed in just two lines with no mention of outright closure.

The closure decision was the easy option following the sale of a council property in Little Park Gardens, Enfield Town, (reputed to be for £900,000) on which stood the portakabin used by Shopmobility

Forum member Raymond Norris was rightly upset that there was no opportunity for shopmobility users to have a say and no chance for them to put forward money-saving ideas. We said this was a classic case of failure to consult with the people most affected by the council's decision.

We think that instead of councillors giving misleading answers defending an indefensible decision at area forum meetings, they should have been asking the right questions and putting forward suggestions to save the scheme. As a result of the outcry from voluntary groups like ourselves, the Council has had some 150 responses to a consultative letter and it is considering these replies before a report goes to Cabinet.

One solution is to run the scheme from the Civic Centre and Forum members have told us that they are prepared to pay either an annual membership fee for using the scooter, or pay per trip and they also feel that local traders might be prepared to help meet the cost of the scheme by advertising on the scooters, seen by many people in the town.

We hope that one of our suggestions - that the council should form a Shopmobility users' group - will help to find a permanent solution. We hope too that councillors will use their influence to stop any more "shoot first, talk later" decisions that affect older and disabled people. **Don't talk about us, without us, is our watchword.**

Out & About.....make a date

I'm delighted to report that we now have a "sharing the load" social sub-committee that will endeavour to come up with new ideas for a programme of activities some of which hopefully will appeal to you. We are, as always, open to your suggestions, particularly if you would also take on some responsibility for organising the event itself. I hope that doesn't deter you from making your views known and I hope too that you'll find something in this page to interest you.

Let's hear from you.

Roddy Beare (social secretary)

Friday, 16 May

Freedom Pass Day Trip to the Wallace Collection to see an unsurpassed collection of 18th century French paintings at Hertford House, Manchester Square, London W1.

This tour is restricted to 25 people and is not suitable for people with walking difficulties.

10.00am Start

Meet at Southgate tube station, change at Finsbury Park to the Victoria Line and alight at Oxford Circus. We then have a 25 minute walk to Manchester Square (behind Selfridges), planning to arrive for coffee at 11.15 in the Wallace courtyard brasserie.

12 noon - break for lunch at an Oxford Street cafe of your choice.

1.15pm Assemble at the Wallace Collection entrance hall for a private guided tour,

3.30pm Tour ends with optional afternoon tea or revisit some of the exhibits before returning home at your leisure.

Cost (non-refundable) £8 includes admission and guide gratuity

To book your place call Roy Barrows 020 8360 8561 (Monday-

Friday

Saturday 31 May

Another first for the Forum

Quiz Evening at St Paul's Church Hall, Church Hill, Winchmore Hill
Quiz Master: Forum member Des Hegarty

Tickets: £8 per person or book a table for 6 @ £42

Price includes a hot Shepherd's Pie supper, beans and French bread or vegetarian Quiche dish

Bring your own wine and soft drinks
To book your place call Roy Barrows 020 8360 8561 (Monday-Friday).

When your reservation is confirmed, send a cheque made payable to Enfield Over 50s Forum to: Roy Barrows, 72 Broadfields Avenue, London N21 1AH. A stamped addressed envelope for your tickets will be appreciated.

Wednesday 16 July

Coastal day trip to Aldeburgh & Southwold

Tickets £29 includes a three-course lunch

We have made this popular trip for the last two years. Last year people asked to go to Southwold first and have a little more time at Aldeburgh, so that is what we shall do. People also asked if we could have longer at the coast, so this year we shall leave Enfield at 7.30.a.m. and return from Aldeburgh at 5.00.pm.

We have also been able to book lunch at the completely refurbished Hotel Brudenell right on the front at Aldeburgh.

Timetable:

7.30am Depart Enfield Civic Centre.

10.30am Arrive Southwold for morning coffee and explore Southwold Pier and Town Centre.

12.30pm Depart Southwold for Aldeburgh and lunch at the Brudenell Hotel leaving lots of time to explore this beautiful and historic Suffolk seaside town

5.00pm Depart Aldeburgh arriving

to join us!

at Enfield Civic Centre approx. 8pm. We have one 50-seater coach, so it will be first come, first served. Send your cheques for £29 per person payable to Enfield Over 50s Forum with a SAE for your booking confirmation to Roddy Beare, 18 Lucerne Close, London N13 4QJ. There will be as little or as much walking on this trip as you want.

Sunday 24 August 2008

We are taking a 48-seater coach to the historic town of Faversham in Kent. See **page 4** Olivia's column for details.

Tuesday 16 September 2008

Visit the StateRooms at Buckingham Palace

Tickets £13.00 * Entry to State Rooms at 11am

Don't miss this opportunity to visit the StateRooms at Buckingham Palace which are only open to the public for two months each year. Visitors tour the 19 magnificent StateRooms that form the heart of the working palace and are used regularly by the Royal Family for official entertaining and State functions. A complimentary audio tour provides a lively introduction to centuries of royal history and the works of art on display.

For the first time ever, visitors will be able to see the spectacle of the Ballroom set up for a State Banquet.

To reserve your ticket contact:

Ros Keenaghan Monday to Friday
020 8363 3008

Friday September 26th

Visit the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

Treasures of the Royal Collection and a special exhibition 'Amazing Rare Things' - Tickets £7.00 - Entry to exhibition at 11am

The exhibition 'Amazing Rare Things' has been selected from the collections of the Royal Library by curators of the Royal Collection in collaboration with the distinguished naturalist and broadcaster Sir David Attenborough. Hear Sir David talk about some of his favourite

works on the complimentary audio tour.

The exhibition is shown alongside Treasures from the Royal Collection, some of the greatest works of art acquired by kings and queens over 500 years brought together from royal residences across the UK. To reserve tickets. Contact: Ros Keenaghan Monday - Friday 020 8363 3008

Wednesday 1 October

Jacky Pearce will lead a group to the Brick Lane Music Hall

To visit Britain's only working music hall for an afternoon of first class entertainment with some of the finest artists from around the country. If you have a good sense of humour and want a good time, then this is the venue for you. Brick Lane Music Hall is at 443, North Woolwich Road, London E16 2DA. Doors open 1.15pm; show starts 2pm - 4.45pm

So using the Freedom Pass we will need to meet at Southgate tube station at 11-15am for a prompt 11-30 departure by Piccadilly / Northern Line tube and Docklands Light Railway, making two changes en route to Pontoon Dock (an adventure in itself for some of us!). We're allowing approx. 2 hours for the journey, so plenty of time to have a chat and make new friends on the way, then to get settled ready for the entertainment. The music hall is a good 10 minutes flat walk from the station.

Tickets £22 per person, which includes a scrumptious afternoon tea during the interval. Places are strictly limited to 30. To reserve your seat contact Jacky by phone 020 8482 3575 or email jackypearce@blueyonder.co.uk. Then send your cheque payable to Enfield Over 50s Forum to Jacky Pearce 289 Ladysmith Road Enfield, EN1 3AG with a SAE for your tickets.

In the event of an emergency on the day and you are late or unable to attend please contact Jacky on

Poetry at Oakwood

*Silken, milky notes eased through a reed,
An octave apart, doubling orchestra lead,
Each note a gem, a jewel-like twirl,
Glenn Miller threads his 'String of Pearls.'*

Imagine sitting down and listening to Glenn Miller's orchestra playing that old favourite 'String of Pearls' as Forum member David Oliver read the above poem with the same title by Patricia Heppel. Or listening to a blackbird singing while he read this poem by Ian Russell:

*Clearly heard in Heaven above
Or is it just for us below?*

*The answer I would like to know,
How does he from his tiny throat
Produce so clear and pure a note?*

*As from up in yonder tree
He sings his joyful song to me.*

*A miracle of life is he
Giving thanks for being free.*

*I daily thank the Lord above,
For the blackbird's song of love.*

Along with about 18 others I went to the Community Room at the newly located Oakwood Library, in the shopping parade close to Oakwood Station, writes **Irene Richards**. It was the inaugural meeting of what we hope will become a regular poetry group. David Oliver, a published poet and Forum member, led the way discussing many ideas of what we mean by poetry varying from Chaucer to R.S. Thomas: ancient to modern you might say.

Then we were asked to contribute our own poems; and we had the delight and privilege of listening to the original work of at least seven people. All of which were much appreciated going through the gamut of emotions from humour to pathos. David rounded off a most enjoyable morning with a variety of readings and music.

We will be having further gatherings on **Thursday May 15** and **Thursday 19 June** at the same venue when we hope people will bring either an original poem they have written or one that has personal significance for them to share.

This group is yet another Forum initiative; an example of informal learning that goes on all the time in Forum activities and we would appreciate your support.

Venue: Oakwood library, Oakwood shopping parade. Buses 121, 307 or 377 to Oakwood tube station which is 3 minutes walk away.

The Forum would like to thank Cllr Paul McCannah, Cabinet member for Leisure & Culture, for his support in arranging the use of Oakwood Library's community room for this lifelong learning venture.

The next SSO concert will be at the Bourne Methodist Church, Southgate N.14. 7.30pm Saturday June 28 when the programme will be:

- The Italian Girl in Algiers - Overture Rossini
 - The Royal Fireworks Music - by Handel (arr. Mackerras)
 - Symphony 104 - 'The London' - by Haydn
- Concessionary tickets for Forum members £6 if purchased in advance. call 020 882 1303

Subs still good value

We've been told more than once that we could and should charge more for Forum membership, because of the work we do. The AGM held on 29 April agreed to increase the annual sub from £5 to £6 for individual members, to £9 for couples and £15 for clubs and organisations - still good value for money.

We're pleased to say that many people took advantage of the two-year offer and many others have paid £100 for life membership or £150 for couples as a financial gesture of support for the Forum. Coupled with people that have sent extra in donations, it all helps our cash flow while we seek further outside funding.

To secure this outside assistance it helps if we can show that our membership is solid and supportive. So we urge all those who haven't yet received new membership cards expiring in 2009 to look at their existing card and if necessary send off their renewal money as detailed above.



www.enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

Membership Application Form

Surname	
First Name(s)	
Organisation*	
Address	
Post Code	
Phone Number	
Email	

* Not applicable if joining as an individual or a couple.

(I/We/My Club) wish(es) to apply for membership of the Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum. Enclosed is a payment of (£6.00 individual membership; £9.00 for couples; £15.00 for Clubs). Cheques should be made payable to **Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum**. (Delete as appropriate). We invite members to register for two years at twice the above rates as this cuts down the administration burden. **Life membership is on offer at £100, £150 and £250** respectively for single, joint and club subscriptions.

How did you hear about the Forum or who introduced you?

Do you use Enfield Leisure Centres (yes/no) in which your membership card will be sent out asap.

The Forum encourages members to come forward and help in its administration, stuffing of envelopes, running of events, serving on sub-committees, representing the Forum on external bodies, advising and researching special interest areas, etc.. If you are interested in supporting us in this way please tick this box.

Also please indicate below if you have any special skills you are willing to use to support the Forum.

Donations

I am making the following donation to the Forum £..... to help defray running costs of the Forum. As a registered charity the Forum can collect gift aid on donations made. If you pay tax and have made a donation do you give us your permission to apply for gift aid on any donation made by you to the Forum(Yes/NO)

Signed

Please return this form to Joyce Pullen, Membership Secretary, Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum, Salisbury House, Bury Street West, N9 9LA, or hand in at a Forum Meeting. Please note that receipt of the bimonthly newsletter and membership card will indicate your subscription has been received and processed.

SSO Revitalised

By Peter Lewis, LBE director of education and leisure

I was pleased to be at the recent Southgate Symphony Orchestra (SSO) performance of "2 Perfect Fifths" (Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5 and Vaughan-Williams' 5th Symphony) at Bourne Methodist Church, Southgate. The new SSO conductor Adrian Brown has transformed the orchestra who gave a spirited and very professional performance of both pieces, in the case of the Beethoven with a young soloist called Jesse Beaumont at the piano. The church is a lovely, intimate venue which was packed to capacity – close on 200 people in this case.

Shortly after I arrived in Enfield in 2004 I was approached by Monty Meth to see what help the Council might give to make sure the Orchestra survived its then major problems – not the least of which were financial. Since then I have given quite a lot of support and encouragement to help improve the business effectiveness and viability of the orchestra. Fortunately, this has not involved the Council giving money since the advice and encouragement has been well received and acted on by Nicholas Cole and Bernard Frankel (treasurer and Secretary respectively).

Today the orchestra has a healthy financial position and a positive future. But that is worth nothing without artistic capital – something it now has in abundance by virtue of Adrian Brown as conductor and a loyal band of very good players whose number continues to grow. This latest concert will see me through to the next one on June 28 and something I look forward to with relish.

Finally, on the matter of finances, Adrian's ambitions for the repertoire mean hiring parts that can be very costly. The March concert had the benefit of a private sponsor that I found, who dedicated the concert to someone much admired. You could do the same – or, indeed, band together with two or three other people to sponsor the next performance and dedicate it. Something around £300 (which you can also Gift Aid to maximise the contribution) makes the difference between playing or not playing certain pieces. Think about it and see what you can do. Contact Bernard Frankel 020 8367 4688 if you're interested.

Ruth Winston House

Activities Centre welcomes you

Something for everyone over 50 living in Enfield

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Pop in and relax over a cup of tea/coffee or snack

at our DDA compliant Centre, 190 Green Lanes (Nr the Triangle), Palmers Green N13 5UE. Tel 020 8886 5346 for a brochure.

Volunteers always needed