

## Don't blame us for living longer – we're putting more into Britain than we take out!

It's about time that we hit back hard against that unholy alliance of politicians and economists who claim that older people are a burden on the country because we are part of an ageing population, pushing up the cost of pensions and health care to unaffordable limits.

This is the dangerous line trotted out by our Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) – a quango created to advise Chancellor George Osborne – and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which apparently takes no account of the economic benefits contributed to the economy by older people. It's dangerous because it places our generation against our younger families.

**David McCullough**, the new head of the WRVS which has some 48,000 social care volunteers, said: ***"When the NHS was founded half the population didn't reach 65. Now we are living much longer, this is something that is a triumph rather than a disaster"***.

The WRVS produced a powerful in-depth report - barely reported in the national press - which found that in 2010, the over 65s through their taxes, spending power, provision of social care and the value of their volunteering, made a contribution of at least £40 billion to the UK economy. We helped the country financially through our spending money, bequests to organisations, gifts and donations to worthy causes – and invested savings.

Britain has some six million unpaid carers and Carers UK in a 2011 report said this was saving the government an average £18,473 a year for each of them – a total of £119bn. ***Here in Enfield, there are over 29,000 people living in the borough who provide unpaid care for their family, friends or neighbours. Based on the above calculation that means they are saving the government approximately £473 million a year.***

***Also in Enfield there are 2,695 volunteers – including many Forum members – who have so far received the 100 hours a year LBE volunteering award and the scheme is still running and saving the council and government even more money. And there are countless more unpaid volunteers in local schools, hospitals and voluntary groups beaver away week after week.***

There are some **822** carers in Enfield who freely give more than 50 hours care a week, 2,850 carers provide care for 20-49 hours per week and the remaining 16,641 carers do so for under 20 hours per week. 11% of carers say they suffer from poor health because of their caring role, which is never noted by those eager to denigrate older people.

The WRVS estimates that by 2030 the positive net contribution of the over 65s will grow from the current £40 billion to £77 billion, because people will remain healthier for longer and thus creating more opportunities to work longer, pay taxes and increase volunteering.

About 5.6 million people receiving the basic state pension pay income tax yet this is never mentioned. In fact, for them the recent £5.30 a week increase was reduced to £4.24 after tax was deducted. And well over one million pensioners are higher rate taxpayers – all putting money back into the Treasury coffers.

**Dot Gibson**, general secretary of the National Pensioners Convention, says that we all need to start appreciating the contribution older people make to society. ***"The figures show that after the state has paid pensioners, for example, in pensions and bus passes, they are still making a net contribution of £40 billion."***

***"Many carry out voluntary and charity work of some kind, while others care for their grandchildren or their spouses, families and each other. The state does not do that. Old people are making a massive contribution to society that is too often hidden."***

Every year more older people are getting involved in community organisations, taking on formal volunteering roles that are estimated to save the economy at least £10 billion a year.

**Alan Walker**, professor of social policy at Sheffield University and director of the New Dynamics of Ageing says: ***"It is time that British society caught up with the remarkable changes taking place among the older population, by creating the possibility for active and healthy ageing to be the norm."***

***"Age is still invariably associated with decline. Look at the adjectives used to describe ageing – retired, dependent, redundant. That kind of term implies that older people are on the sidelines, somehow useless."***

In fact, more over 65s are working than ever before – and paying their taxes. In the last ten years the number in work has shot up by 358,000 - from 418,000 to 776,000 - according to the Office of National Statistics. Commenting on the figures, the Spectator magazine said the idea that over-65s are a burden on the young does not stand up to scrutiny

***"The changing nature of the British workforce has not just meant Polish plumbers, but also British pensioners behind the tills of Tesco. Indeed, many employers prefer to hire pensioners because they can be relied upon to turn up on time and don't turn their noses up at work."***

One in eight women now work past the age of 70, while one in ten men do the same. Despite these facts and figures we have the OBR issuing reports that produce press headlines warning of tough times ahead to pay for an ageing population and Britain faces an era of austerity as it grows old. The Washington-based IMF tells its 180 plus member countries to act now to reduce the huge cost of ageing populations which for the UK would mean public debt rising by £750 billion.

***Our answer must be to show the positive contribution we are making every day. We are the first generation of older people to be healthier, more active, more independent, better educated and skilled than any previous over 50s generation. Without us Britain would be a lot poorer and it's time this was more widely recognised."***

*Monty Meth*

# Budget mugging gets a mauling

When **Chancellor George Osborne** woke on the morning after the budget he hardly expected to see headlines from the normally government-friendly press such as:-

**5m pensioners robbed in the budget** – Daily Express

**“Granny tax” hits 5m pensioners – Osborne scraps age-related allowance worth £285 a year** - Daily Telegraph

**Osborne picks the pockets of pensioners – four million elderly will pay bill for Chancellor's tax giveaway** - Daily Mail

The big losers from the budget are the estimated 4.4 million pensioners with incomes of between £10,500 and £28,000 who will find their age-related tax allowances frozen or axed. The hardest hit will be those turning 65 next year, who will lose **£323** a year. By squeezing an extra **£3.3bn** in tax from pensioners, the chancellor is ensuring that those earning more than **£150,000** a year can see their tax drop next April from 50% to 45% giving them an extra **£10,000** windfall.

If linking the pension age with the rise in life expectancy is adopted by the government, and if life expectancy continues to rise at its present rate, someone aged 37 now will not receive a state retirement pension until aged 70; someone aged 21 will get their pension at 75 and a child born today will have to wait until they are 80. Raising the state pension age is also linked to the age at which future pensioners will become entitled to the winter fuel allowance, concessionary travel and other age-related benefits.

Britain's biggest pensioner organisation, the **National Pensioners Convention (NPC)** has criticised the recent Budget announcements for failing to address the serious concerns of Britain's 11m older people. It has left them bruised on pensions, tax allowances, retirement age and care.

There has been considerable comment in the media that pensioners have previously emerged relatively unscathed from the government's austerity drive. This ill-informed assertion clearly fails to recognise the changes that have already had an impact on the country's older population, such as:

- A cut in the winter fuel allowance of **£100** for the over 80s and **£50** for those under 80, at a time when fuel bills are rising and every

year over 25,000 older people die from cold related illnesses

- A change in the indexation of state and other pensions from the Retail Price Index to the usually lower Consumer Price Index, which over time will compound the loss of income
- A state pension that for decades has been one of the least adequate in Europe and result in 1 in 4 older people, living below the official poverty line, whilst millions more struggle on incomes that are just above
- Changes to housing and disability benefits, which will reduce the quality of life for those affected

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: “The proposal to merge the basic and second state pensions into a single £140 a week payment is a classic case of smoke and mirrors – given that someone could retire today and get a combined basic and second state pension of £150 a week.

***“In reality there will be no extra money to raise Britain's scandalously low state pension – just a different way of packaging the payment. Not only that, but it will also create a two-tier pension system with existing pensioners still having to struggle with a complicated means-tested system that leaves one in four older people in poverty.*”**

***“The Chancellor's pledge to cut welfare payments by £10bn over the next few years will also worry millions of pensioners who may think their bus passes and winter fuel allowances might be under threat and the long-awaited social care white paper is being delayed, without any explanation. The money the chancellor is giving away in tax breaks for the richest in society would fund a National Care Service for all those in need.”***

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) is backing a new online petition started by pensioner Arthur Streatfield, from Bath, calling on the government to reverse its decision to freeze the age related personal tax allowances for the over 65s from April 2013. The petition can be seen at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/31778>.

***\* Dot Gibson will be the guest speaker at the Forum's AGM, Tuesday May 29 at 10.30am at the Civic Centre.***

## Random round-up

### Christmas stamps discount

For the first time in its 172-year history, The Royal Mail can now set its own stamp prices and boy, did it do so with a vengeance. First class stamp now up 33% to 60p and second class up 39% to 50p – and they can increase prices as often and by how much they like in future.

The one saving grace is that anyone receiving pension credit, incapacity benefit or employment or support allowance will be entitled to buy stamps at the old price this Christmas. This means-tested stamp scheme is scheduled to start on November 6 and will last until the final first class posting date for Christmas.

### CPI/RPI rebuff

The government's decision to switch the inflation index of future pension increases from the Retail Prices Index (RPI) to the lower Consumer Prices Index (CPI) – in breach of pre-general election promises – has again been upheld by the High Court which rejected an appeal against an earlier judicial review judgement.

There's an outside chance that the issue will be taken to the final stage of a Supreme Court appeal. The judges claim that CPI is a valid measurement of inflation – and the government can choose whichever it deems suitable at any given time. Meanwhile, the Office of Budget Responsibility has reported that on average the gap between the two measures is now likely to increase by 1.4% a year, which will aggregate into a substantial loss of pension.

For example, had this year's rise been linked to the Retail Price Index it would have been £5.70 a week for a single pensioner on a full pension

rather than £5.30. Over a year this is a cut of £20.80 – now multiply that by your pension years and see how much you will lose.

In November, the National Pensioners Convention will be jointly organising a one-day conference to decide the next stages in the campaign to restore RPI as the inflation index.

### Water bills up

Thames Water bills are due to rise by an average 6.7% despite the hosepipe ban, taking the annual bill to about £376, says Ofwat, the water regulator. Anyone living in a house with more bedrooms than people living there is being advised to consider getting a free water meter – so you'll only pay for what you use. Only about 30% of homes now have a meter.

### Family incomes fall

Families were hit by a bigger fall in their disposable income in 2011 than in any other year since 1977, says the Office for National Statistics. The average family saw their income drop 1.2% last year compared with 2010 – the largest annual drop for 35 years. Since records began in 1948, disposable income has only dropped in eight of the years over this period.

### Losing out

Savers are losing more than £36 billion a year as inflation erodes any interest earned by their savings and current accounts, according to research by UHY Hacker Young, the accountants. More than £110 billion is currently deposited in accounts that yield no interest, the firm says.

# John's Jottings



## Out of touch.....or contempt?

***"Contempt: The action of contemning or despising; the holding or treating of as little account, or as vile and worthless;***

***the mental attitude in which a thing is so considered."* - Oxford English Dictionary.**

Has David Cameron ever been in ASDA? Has he looked at the wine shelves and seen that around a third of the space is devoted to wine at three bottles for £10? Does he realise that this means the most popular price per bottle of wine in our local shops is £3.33?

Mr Cameron's proposal that a minimum price should be set at 40p for a unit of alcohol will result in some of ASDA's most popular wines increasing in price by nearly £1. To a multi-millionaire like the Prime Minister £1 is nothing, but to many older people, struggling on diminishing incomes, the odd £1 here and there means the difference between having and not having an occasional little luxury.

Mr Clegg is unwilling to allow his family fortune to be revealed to Parliament. However, the press have shown his wife, who is a senior partner in a law firm, is likely to have earnings of around £1m. His family own a 20 room Swiss ski chalet and a large estate in the South West of France with a 10 bedroom chalet. In summary: Mr Clegg is not short of a bob or two.

Mr Clegg is obsessed with windmills, a completely uneconomic way of generating energy. He would clearly not miss the £5 or £6 per week which it is likely to cost the average family as electricity bills are increased to subsidise his windmills. But £5 or £6 a week is very serious money to some of our older people stuck on incomes which have not increased in line with the cost of living for years.

In pursuing their political hobby horses Cameron and Clegg are showing themselves to hold low income pensioners as of no account whatsoever. Worse, these particular policies are little more than tokenism which will have no serious impact. Cameron's alcohol policy seems to be based on the anecdote about drinkers that: ***"they get tanked up at home before they go out"***.

No evidence has been produced that ***"they"*** get tanked up on ASDA wine. If the Prime Minister were serious about disruptive late night drinking he would reintroduce 10.30pm closing as the norm, to which few exceptions would be given.

As Britain sinks into relative insignificance as a global power compared with China, India, Brazil and other developing countries our carbon emissions become unimportant as an influence on climate change. Clegg's ambition to make Britain a leader in the move to greenery only makes sense if other countries follow our lead.

As with Cameron's pet scheme there is no evidence that the plot will work. By unilaterally adopting expensive energy we might even eliminate our influence at the negotiating table. We will certainly drive abroad potential investments in high energy using industries.

So, we have our self-satisfied political leaders imposing policies, which will not hurt them personally, seemingly based on no evidence better than bar room gossip and wishful thinking. Unfortunately, they either do not know or do not care that these policies will hit some members of the community very hard indeed. Is it ignorance? Is it contempt for the least well off? What it certainly is not is Government by the people for the people.

John Ball  
Chair

# Renewal time is here again

First the good news. In the two months since the last Newsletter, I have welcomed one new member who joined for ten years; another gave the Forum a donation of £100 and eight people – including one couple - have become life members bringing the total number of ***"lifers"*** up to 86!

We also welcomed a new affiliate - the Enfield Art Circle with 200 members. They have monthly meetings and arrange exhibitions of members' work in textiles, ceramics, paintings and sculpture. **Call 01992 622680 for membership details.**

This is, of course, the busiest time of the year for the Forum as we urge people to renew their Forum membership and hopefully for two years at least to reduce the admin. work this entails. Our aim and task at the moment is to keep as many of the 4336 members we currently have as paid up members.

So if you still haven't got a valid membership card please contact the office asap so as to make sure you do not lose out on the many activities we are planning. The Leisure Centres, with the discounts they offer to Forum members, are obviously a strong incentive and our Social Committee's activities are a strong second in keeping us a force to be reckoned with in the borough. You do have to live in Enfield to enjoy the discount at the leisure centres, but only if you pay the annual membership fee.

Another reminder, our year starts on the 1st April and you can join up to the 31st October and your membership will expire 31st March the following year.

If you join after 1st November, your membership will expire 31st March the year after the next year. Hope that is clear and you will understand that we cannot physically deal with a membership year starting from the actual date you join.

Now the bad news. You will have seen in the press that postage rates went up alarmingly on April 30 with a new minimum postal rate of 50p. You don't need me to tell you that this will put a strain on all charities. We aim to send out this Newsletter six times a year – that's £3 of your membership fee gone straight away leaving very little for all our other expenses, including having an office with two part-time paid staff.

So I fear that an increase in our fee cannot be long delayed. I hope that you see this as an added incentive to sign up for at least two years – or more if you can. Lastly, I must apologise to those members who had to pay a postal surcharge for the last Newsletter – we're taking steps to hopefully avoid a repeat.

My usual thanks to one and all.

Joyce Pullen  
Membership Secretary

## The Forum mission statement

*Supporting older people in Enfield to remain independent and healthy, reducing isolation, fostering inclusion, community cohesion and working towards reducing the numbers of elderly people living in poverty*



## FORUM Meetings

### CIVIC CENTRE MEETINGS (Silver Street)

**Tuesday 29 May - 10am for 10.15 start**

**Forum Annual General Meeting** followed by guest speaker General Secretary of the National Pensioners Convention **Dot Gibson**.

See page 13 for details about the AGM.

**Tuesday 26 June - 10am for 10.15 start**

**Conference room, Civic Centre (please note)**  
**Keith Dunmore, Head of Audiology at Chase Farm/ Barnet Hospitals** discusses *'hearing loss among older people and the looming threat from private sector competition'*.

### EAST OF THE BOROUGH MEETINGS

**Thursday 17 May 10am for 10.30 start**

Millfield House, Silver Street, Edmonton

**Forum trustee, Vincent Konyeaso** talks about *"Nigeria and the challenges facing the country"*.

**Monday 18 June 10am start**

**Falls Awareness Day at Edmonton Leisure Centre**

This event replaces the normal June talk at Millfield House, and gives members the opportunity to have a day out at the Leisure Centre and learn about opportunities in the Borough aimed at helping us stay fitter by sampling different activities. **See page 13 for details and how to register.**

### SKINNERS COURT MEETINGS

**Tuesday 15 May 10am for 10.30 start**

Skinnners Court, 1 Pellipar Close, Fox Lane  
Forum member, Sylvia Coombs and a missionary for 17 years, talks about *'life in the Solomon Islands'*.

**Tuesday 19 June 10am for 10.30 start**

**Tristan Brice**, from the NHS, gives *'an update on the significant improvements there have been in dealing with stroke victims and plans for the future'*.

## Dugdale advice drop-in expands

Starting on April 11, the Forum's free and confidential advice surgery has been advertised in the local press for 12 weeks thanks to a grant from the Old Enfield Charitable Trust.

And the team of advisers will be expanded to include the Health Trainer Service offering information, advice and practical support to help people achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Our Health Trainer Service is rated amongst the top 10 in the UK. Between September and December 2011 the health trainers worked with 455 people and supported 77% of them to achieve their healthy living goals. Currently they are working with 388 people, 88% of whom have achieved their health living goals.

The advice surgery is open every Monday morning from 10am to 12noon. Here you will find free 15-minute legal advice by solicitors Stennett and Stennett; a fully-trained retired Inspector of Taxes; a Citizens Advice Bureau adviser and an LBE officer who can help with council tax, housing benefit, attendance allowance and pension queries. The team includes Enfield Council's jobs broker who can guide you on where to look for jobs and help with your CV etc.

All in pleasant, relaxed surroundings. Just drop-in with your enquiry. Or, if you are in the vicinity, pop in for a cup of tea and a chat. We'd love to see you. Call the Over 50s Forum office for further details 020 8807 2076

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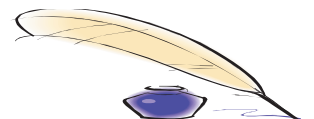
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### £50 Stennett & Stennett voucher!

Present this advert to receive **£50 off our services**. Offer is limited to one voucher per matter and available to **Enfield Over 50s Forum members only**.



# Always look on the bright side

Here are some dating adverts from the "Villages"- read by the retirement community in the sunshine state of Florida.

**You can say what you want about Florida, but you never hear of anyone retiring and moving north. Who says seniors don't have a sense of humour?**

## Long term commitment:

Recent widow who has just buried fourth husband, and am looking for someone to round out a six-unit plot. Dizziness, fainting, shortness of breath not a problem.

## Foxy lady:

Sexy, fashion-conscious blue-haired beauty, 80's, slim, 5'4' (used to be 5'6') searching for sharp-looking, sharp-dressing companion. Matching white shoes and belt a plus.

## Serenity now:

I am into solitude, long walks, sunrises, the ocean, yoga and meditation. If you are the silent type, let's get together, take our hearing aids out and enjoy quiet times.

## Mint condition

Male, 1932 model, high mileage, good condition, some hair, many new parts including hip, knee, cornea, valves. Isn't in running condition, but walks well.

## Yet more Tommy Cooper one – liners:

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly. They lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving once and for all that you can't have your kayak and heat it.

Man goes to the doctor, with a strawberry growing out of his head. Doc says **'I'll give you some cream to put on it.'**

I can't stop singing 'The Green, Green Grass of Home'. Doc says: **'That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome.'** I ask: "Is it common?" **'It's not unusual.'**

A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet. 'My dog is cross-eyed, is there anything you can do for him?' **'Well,'** said the vet, **'let's have a look at him.'** So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then he checks his teeth. Finally, he says, **'I'm going to have to put him down.'** 'What? Because he's cross-eyed?' **'No, because he's really heavy'**

Guy goes into the doctor's. 'Doc, I've got a cricket ball stuck up my bottom.' **'How's that?'** 'Don't you start.'

What do you call a fish with no eyes? A fsh.

**So I was getting into my car, and this bloke says to me 'Can you give me a lift?'** I said **'Sure, you look great, the world's your oyster, go for it.'**

Apparently, 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. There are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum or my Dad, or my older brother Colin, or my younger brother Ho-Cha-Chu. But I think it's Colin.

Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, and the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off.

**'You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen. It said, 'Parking Fine.' So that was nice.'**

A man walked into the doctor's, he said, 'I've hurt my arm in several places.' The doctor said, **'Well don't go there any more'**

## Sexist

A boy went up to his father and asked: "Dad, where did my intelligence come from?" The father replied: **"Well son, you must have got it from your mother because I still have mine."**

## One from Michael Winner (Sunday Times)

Morry was involved in a motorway pile-up. When he wakes up in hospital the doctor says: "You'll be fine Mr Cohen, but sad to say your willy was chopped off in the wreck and we couldn't find it. You've got £9,000 insurance compensation. We can build you a new one for £1,000 an inch. You'd better discuss with your wife what size she'd prefer." Next day, the doc asks ; "What's the decision". Morry says: **"We're having granite worktops."**

## One from Sir Terry Wogan

After many years of marriage, a wife calls her husband from the kitchen: "Come down quickly Bert and make passionate love to me" He did as he as told and then asked: **"And what all that about"** Rosie. "Oh the egg-timers broken", she replied.

## You wish

I boarded an aircraft at Heathrow Airport for New York and settling in, I noticed a very beautiful lady heading straight toward my seat and bingo – she took the seat right beside me.

"Hello", I blurted out, "Business trip or vacation?"

She turned, smiled enchantingly and said, **"Business. I'm going to the annual nymphomaniac convention in the United States."**

I swallowed hard. Here was the most gorgeous woman I had ever seen sitting next to me, and she was going to a meeting for Nymphomaniacs! Struggling to maintain my composure, I calmly asked, "What's your business role at this convention?" **"Lecturer,"** she responded. **"I use my experience to debunk some popular myths about sexuality."**

"Really", I smiled, "what myths are those?"

**"one popular myth is that African-American men are the most well endowed when, in fact, it's the native American Indian who is most likely to possess that trait. Another popular myth is that French men are the best lovers, when actually it is the men of Greek descent. We have also found that the best potential lovers in all categories are the Irish."**

Suddenly the woman became uncomfortable and blushed.

**"I'm sorry,"** she said. **"I really shouldn't be discussing this with you. I don't even know your name!"**

"Tonto," I said. **"Tonto Papadopoulos, but my friends call me Paddy."**

## To all our intelligent friends

**See if you can discover what these words have in common.**

1. Banana
2. Dresser
3. Grammar
4. Potato
5. Revive
6. Uneven
7. Assess

**Have you already given up?**

**Give it another try.....**

**Look at each word carefully.**

You'll kick yourself when you discover the answer on the back page.

## Sayings to remember.....

Any idiot can face a crisis –it's day to day living that wears you out – **Anton Checkov**

One way to get the most out of life is to look upon it as an adventure – **author William Feather (1889-1981)**

**Published by Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum.**

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# It's our NHS and our future

Strong concerns about the medium and long-term consequences of the Health & Social Care Bill prompted your Forum to invite the Chief Executive of Enfield Primary Care Trust (PCT), Sarah Thompson, the shadow chair of the Enfield Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Dr Alpesh Patel, and Denise Tyrell, representing NHS North Central London (NCL) to our packed February meeting.

More than 1,000 amendments had to be made in Parliament by the government to its own original, but obviously poorly drafted Bill. – and a further 374 changes were made in the Lords' before it finally became law on March 27 in the teeth of opposition from virtually all the medical professional bodies.

A last-minute survey conducted by the BBC found that while 12% of family doctors agreed that GP-led commissioning – the buying and planning of services at a local level – would improve patient care, some 55% of GPs disagreed and 33% did not know whether or not it would. Asked about the role of private-for-profit companies in the NHS, 87% said it would be greater.

In addition, more than 162,000 signatures were sent on an epetition to Parliament, submitted by Dr Kailash Chand, chair of Thameside and Glossop NHS, urging MPs to “**kill the Bill**” but it was not debated – and there were many more petitions submitted from all over the country. The “**drop the health bill**” petition, for example, was signed by 178,950 people.

Here in Enfield, on 28 March Dr Alpesh Patel was designated lead of the CCG, which will be responsible for commissioning local health services and our local PCT will be absorbed into the NCL cluster comprising Enfield, Barnet, Haringey, Camden and Islington by April 2013.

While one part of government is promoting so-called “localism” ultimately there will be just three such clusters covering the NHS for the whole of London. So the days when we could make representations on your behalf to the local NHS management based at Cockfosters are fast coming to an end.

Against this background of change, the February Forum meeting put a series of questions to our guests and here we share them and the answers. You can judge how reassuring they are.

## Question

The government claims that £65 billion will be given to GPs to fund local services. How much will Enfield receive and how does it compare with our present funding and will it reduce the £70 - £80 million underfunding we suffer compared to other London boroughs.

## Answer

Sarah Thompson: Currently the PCT gets £480 million for all health needs, the CCG's budget will be 50% of that. My job is to work with Dr Patel to bring Enfield PCT back to financial balance by April 2013.

## Follow-up question

We understand that your funding is actually going down so how will services to patients improve?

## Answer

Dr Patel: There is a formula applied and some argue that it is not adequate, but it is set in stone. *Forum members expressed scepticism at this point.*

## Question

If Enfield CCG is going to get 50% of the money received there will be a problem. What do you really think is going to happen?

## Answer

Sarah Thompson: People like me are motivated to offer good quality service to our public. Clinicians working with managers will provide a better balance and complementary set of skills.

Dr Patel: There is a financial challenge. Hopefully we have the experience so that we may be able to be more cost effective and spend better.

## Question

Have you and the CCG, all working doctors, the time, energy and expertise to commission NHS services recognising that you will have to choose between the NHS and any qualified provider (AQP) ?

## Answer

Dr Patel: The process by which the GP represents you locally was election followed by selection based on competencies. CAPITA are helping us to develop those skills.

## Follow-up question

How much is CAPITA, a private company, being paid and how long is their contract for?

Dr Patel: We need external support and NCL is employing CAPITA on our behalf.

*Members of the Forum noted that this is money taken from the NHS budget.*

## Question

There's a lot of talk of patients having more power and involvement as a result of the changes, can you say how this will be seen or exercised?

## Answer

Sarah Thompson: There is to be a patient representative on the CCG. There will be checks and balances to ensure patients are engaged.

## Question

The hearing service is the first to be identified as being suitable for Any Qualified Provider (AQP), so will Boots or Specsavers have to provide the same level of after-care as the Chase Farm audiology unit which has an open clinic every day of the week?

## Answer

Dr Patel: We are obliged to go through the procurement arrangements. We must go through procurement's quality and finance criteria. I think the CCG will have to apply national policy.

## Question

The press statement issued about the new primary care strategy was noticeable for its complete absence of involvement of patients, the public or organisations like the Forum. Is this going to be corrected?

## Answer

Sarah Thompson: There are two lay members on the PCT at the moment. With the demise of the PCT we are obliged to retain them until 2013 when a process of recruitment will commence.

Dr Patel added that the CCG at the moment is not doing very well in trying to reach out to ensure public involvement. To succeed, stakeholder involvement, engagement and agreement were needed.

## Question

How are you going to engage with the Over 50s Forum. You need our support?

## Answer

Sarah Thompson: You could contribute by being the Patient Representative

Dr Patel: We definitely want to work with the Forum.

## Question

Who do we go to if we receive unfair treatment?

## Answer

Dr Patel: The GP practice as well as the NHS Commissioning Board or for hospitals - PALS – patient advisory liaison service.

## Question

If you are introducing on-line appointments how will you ensure older patients who are not on-line do not lose out?

## Answer

Dr Patel: On-line appointments are an addition to what we already have, not a replacement.

## Question

How do you incentivise GPs to do what you want as they will not be employed directly by the NHS?

## Answer

Dr Patel: In terms of what they deliver for patients there are parameters across London to see how they are working, checks and balances. There will be incentives for IT and other funding.

*Vivien Giladi*



# Hasty step on slippery slope to a privatised health service,

the Enfield Gazette and Advertiser printed the following column on April 4 by Forum president Monty Meth

*"Apologists for the government's health "reforms" keep telling us they will improve patient care and any services provided by private companies will be the best, not the cheapest.*

*Lansley's Law - which nobody voted for and virtually all the medical bodies oppose - only came in eight days ago (March 27) but is now being implemented with a vengeance.*

*Our local out-of-hours (OOH) GP services are already up for grabs. Competitive bids have to be in by 30 April. The tender documents I've seen clearly state the winner will be the one offering "the most economical advantageous price."*

## Is that not gobbledegook for "cheapest" Mr Lansley?

NHS bosses will decide the winner by June and from next January we'll have a new phone 111 service for urgent medical advice when your surgery is closed.

Right now patients with the 58 Enfield surgeries can get clinical advice over the phone direct from a qualified nurse or GP from 6.30pm to 8am every night and 24 hours at weekends by calling Barndoc 03000 333 777 based in Cockfosters.

This service has been running for 16 years but is now in jeopardy because Lansley rules that this OOH service must be opened up to competition from any qualified provider.

So in future we'll call 111 and get a **"call handler"** based anywhere in the country who will check the NHS Pathways computer script to decide how best to handle the call.

## How does this improve the patient care we now enjoy Mr Lansley?

***Among the bidders for our OOH GP services are corporate, private-for-profit giants such as Serco, Capita, Virgin (through their Harmoni Assura subsidiary) - all seeing the chance of a quick buck from opening up our NHS to competition.***

Patient satisfaction with the present OOH GP service is excellent so why the haste to change?

Be warned: We're now on the slippery road to privatising our NHS.

## Health snippets

### Dementia boost

Prime Minister David Cameron and Health Secretary Andrew Lansley say they want to make the UK a world leader in tackling dementia. This includes looking at new ways to identify dementia early so it is easier to manage and easier to live with; more than doubling overall funding for dementia research to over £66 million by 2015; and raising awareness to make communities and businesses dementia friendly.

### Fewer NHS nurses

Official figures from the NHS workforce census show there are almost 3,500 fewer nurses working in the service than in 2010. Dr Peter Carter, Royal College of Nursing chief executive said the loss of qualified nurses was **"incredibly worrying"**. He said: **"Despite the rhetoric we know that front-line jobs are not being protected and NHS trusts must stop making cuts in a quick-fix attempt to save money."**

### Open wide

Don't skip your dental appointments, says the American Heart Association after studying the oral health habits of 100,000 people over a seven year period. They found that frequent professional cleaning reduced the risk of heart attacks by 24% and that of a stroke by 13%. Having your teeth scraped and cleaned **at least once a year** helps to reduce inflammation that can lead to these conditions.

### Cancer screening life-saver

Breast cancer screening should continue because it does save lives. Dutch researchers say that mammogram screening reduced the death rate from breast cancer by 16% in 2008, compared with no programme. Women in Holland are screened aged between 50 and 75 every two years, while in Britain screening is every three years. Following Scandinavian studies claiming that screening made little "detectable impact," the Dept of Health has ordered an independent review of the £96 million screening programme.

## New alcohol research in Enfield

The London Regional Public Health Group has commissioned research in every London borough which shows that 72% of Londoners were either very concerned or quite concerned about alcohol related crime and violence and 48% had concerns about long-term health issues linked to their own consumption of alcohol.

It is estimated that 2.4 million Londoners are drinking harmful amounts of alcohol and a further 300,000 are alcohol dependent. In 2009/2010 there were over 127,000 alcohol related hospital admissions in London. Alcohol is linked to mouth cancer, stroke, high blood pressure and breast cancer as well as liver disease.

The survey shows that some 28% of Enfield residents never drink and that 6% drink daily. This compares to the London averages of 28.3% who never drink and 7.5% who drink daily.

Average weekly spend in Enfield on alcohol was £9.70 for males and £6.40 for females (compared to a London average of £12.20 and £5.50). However, in those aged 50+ average spend was much lower at approximately £4.60 per week.

Interestingly, the more people drank the less concerned they were about health effects and those who never drank at all were those most concerned about the number of outlets selling alcohol.

The NHS recommends that:

- \* Men should not regularly drink more than 3 to 4 units of alcohol a day
- \* Women should not regularly drink more than 2 to 3 units of alcohol a day
- \* Regularly means drinking these amounts every or most days of the week.

A unit is a small glass of wine or half-pint of normal-strength beer.

If you are concerned about alcohol issues, Compass, the Enfield Drug and Alcohol Service is based at Forest Primary Care Centre, 308a Hertford Road on the second floor. They can be contacted on 020 8344 3180 or at [www.compass-uk.org](http://www.compass-uk.org).

Drop-in assessments are run on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10.30 am and 3.30 pm. Alternatively Drinkline 0800 917 8282

## Barnet Hospital mini-stroke unit wins gold

The TIA (Transient Ischaemic Attack) service at Barnet Hospital has been awarded Gold accreditation. This was presented by the Cardiovascular and Stroke Network and local commissioners, in recognition of the team providing the highest quality of service to patients. It also makes Barnet the first Trust in the North Central London NHS sector to be accredited with this standard.

A transient ischaemic attack is often referred to as a mini-stroke. It is caused by a loss of blood flow to either a region of the brain, spinal cord, or retina that does not result in tissue death. Patients with TIA are at high risk of developing a full blown stroke in the following days. Rapid investigation of patients with TIA reduces the risk of this happening.

## Countdown to new era at leisure centres

Work on developments at Albany and Southgate Leisure Centres are well underway with both centres at the stage where the steelworks, roofing and some walls have gone up on the re-building parts of the projects.

At Albany, the old area of changing rooms is now a shell with a new configured changing area being developed which will be totally new. The reception/foyer area has been opened up totally allowing for the totally new designed reception desk to go in and surrounding areas to be re-decorated.

The building is scheduled to be fully completed in July. There will be a grand opening weekend and it is hoped that at some stage along with this opening we will be in a position to launch our new Over 50s activities programme.

At Southgate, the demolished building has revealed the real extent of the re-building of the new leisure centre. The steelworks have gone in and you are able to see where some of the rooms / areas will be on the ground floor at the front of the new building. The car park has had some new markings laid out although we do appreciate that parking is not as it will be once the work has progressed further.

The building is scheduled to be fully completed in August/September with another grand opening weekend and a launch of the Southgate Over 50s activity programme. Regular updates on progress are provided at both Albany and Southgate Leisure Centres.

### Concession Card

We would like to remind all Over 50s Forum members that you can still get our great value Concession Card - or to non-members if over 60 for the reduced price of £8 per year - saving £12 on the normal price. The concession card enables you to use a wide range of activities with a 50% reduction. This includes the Over 50s activity days currently at Edmonton and Southbury.

For full details of the concession card for Over 50s Forum members and the full membership corporate rates please simply drop into one of the Fusion Lifestyle leisure centres and speak with reception.

### Free swims from Fusion

The Arnos Pool Free Swim details are as follows:

Every -Tuesday 11.30am - 12.30pm and  
Thursday 2.30pm - 3.30pm

(FREE SWIM for Over 50s Forum members & over 60s with existing FREE swim card)

## Play with words

She was engaged to a boyfriend with a wooden leg but broke it off.

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.

He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

Every calendar's days are numbered.

A lot of money is tainted - It taint yours and it taint mine.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

He had a photographic memory that was never developed.

A plateau is a high form of flattery.

Once you've seen one shopping centre, you've seen a mall.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.

Acupuncture is a jab well done.

## Fiona's food facts

Hello readers! My name is Fiona O'Leary. I am one of the senior dietitians working for Enfield Community Services, based at St Michaels site in Enfield. I may be known to some of you already, as a speaker over the years at many of the Enfield Over 50s Forum events. I was very excited to be asked to write this new column in your newsletter.

I hope to use it to give practical healthy eating advice, enabling you to look after your health. The main message that I want to get across is that eating should be one of our main pleasures. We don't just eat because we are hungry. We eat when we are happy or sad, to celebrate and to cheer ourselves up. Food is one of the best medicines we have.

Healthy eating doesn't have to be complicated, expensive or boring. If you think of your food intake over an average week or month, rather than at each individual mealtime or day, it is easier to see if you have a balanced diet.

Most people now understand that we need 5-a-day of fruit and vegetables. Then add two or three portions of milk and dairy foods for strong bones and teeth. Protein foods such as meat, fish eggs and beans are important for general good health and strength. Carbohydrates such as potatoes, bread, pasta rice and crackers at each mealtime give us energy. If you've managed this, then the treat foods with fat and sugar, such as cakes and biscuits will make your mouth water.

Finally, fluids - we need 6-8 cups or glasses a day, strong tea and coffee don't count. Try not to have tea with your main meals as it may inhibit iron absorption. As we get older, our sense of thirst becomes less acute, so make drinking regularly a habit, as you may not feel thirsty, but being properly hydrated will increase your concentration and memory.

In future columns I will write more about heart health, eating well on a budget, diabetes and poor appetite, to name a few topics.

## Forum – now on Facebook

My very first trip with the Enfield Over 50s Forum was to the Floriade in Holland which took place over Easter. There was so much to see that I ended up taking well over a hundred photos. When I got back I loaded them onto my computer and decided to put them on my facebook page so that friends and relatives could see them.

I then thought it would be great if anyone who had been on the trip – or indeed anyone in the Forum who wanted to see the sort of trips available, could also view them. This led me, with a prompt from Olivia Goodfellow to setting up an Enfield Over 50s Forum group on Facebook and putting a link to my photos on the group page. Olivia was the first to join the group and has also put a link to her photos – not just of this trip but also to the White Water Rafting trip and to the Ayr Valley.

The Forum page has been set up so that anyone can view the Group and who's in it, but posts can only be seen by members. This way, members can leave posts and comments and view each other's photos. It may also encourage people to join the Forum if they can see comments and photos of the various activities on offer.

Anyone interested in joining the Group can do so by going online and signing up to Facebook. Once you have joined Facebook all you have to do is to put Enfield Over 50s Forum in the search and follow the instructions to join up.

*Chris Gooch*



# European Union Twin Town Over 50s Project

**O**lder people from Enfield's twin towns in France, Germany and Greece agree that in dealing with health and other issues affecting the quality of life of our ageing populations there is a lot we can learn from best practices in each other's countries. This was one of the outcomes of the two year project which was lead and initiated in 2010 by the Enfield Over 50s Forum.

The project, funded by the European Commission, involved older people's groups from the twinned towns of Courbevoie, Gladbeck, Halandri and Enfield. Each group produced a profile describing the demographics of their respective communities and the care and support services older people received. Three conferences were organised to discuss the findings from the study. The first in **Courbevoie in 2010**, the second in **Strasbourg in 2011** – which included meetings with key Members of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Ageing and a visit to the EU Parliament.



**In Strasbourg with MEPs Kinga Gonz (Hungary) & Claude Moraes (UK)**

Enfield, **Christiana During**, at which **Cllr Doug Taylor**, Leader of the Council, gave a welcoming address attended by large number of cabinet members and directors of services, indicating the importance of this conference.

**The chief purpose of the conference was to further recommendations which delegates had raised with MEPs in Strasbourg in October 2011 and to use the European Union Year of Active Ageing to maintain the momentum. Issues of importance are the prevention of ill health, treatment of stroke including aftercare and concerns surrounding dementia, its early diagnosis and treatment, and the desire to involve people in decisions relating to their care.**

Further sessions were led by **Dr Shahed Ahmed**, Enfield's director of public health, **Moirra Fraser** from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, **Simone Olds** from the Stroke Association and **Dr Julia Botsford** from Dementia UK. Of course simultaneous translation was essential, much of which was undertaken by the UK members – who says that our language skills are poor!

In the final section of the conference, which was attended by representatives from the Over 50s Forum, **Jean Lambert MEP** was welcomed, together with **Ray James**, Enfield's director of adult social care. Jean assured delegates that she would promote our concepts and would push forward with developments in the European Union to enhance the situation for senior citizens particularly in the field of development of services for those suffering from dementia.



**Forum's steering group at the Strasbourg European Parliament**

**Ray James** was impressed by what he had heard and will take the views of conference members into account when developing his programmes. The conference was hard work but there was some fun involved as one aspect of twinning arrangements is the promotion of understanding between European partners. Our German colleagues were treated to a delightful tour of Capel Manor gardens and both the French and German delegations had an opportunity to visit parts of Enfield.

On the final day of the conference both delegations were able to visit healthcare facilities for older citizens in Enfield.

The conference was a tremendous success and we are proud to have forged a good relationship with our friends from France and Germany and hope that we have made some progress in promoting developments for older citizens in Europe.

At a post conference meeting the groups were in unanimous agreement that they should seek to extend the project and to focus on best practice in leading healthy lifestyles and the prevention of ill health. Further it was agreed that either Gladbeck or Courbevoie should take the lead in seeking support for the project from the EU.

Finally thanks must go to the two exceptional officers from Enfield Council **Eleanor Hunter** and **Felicity Margaret Cox**, whose organisational skills are second to none and whose enthusiasm and charm have supported the project from the outset. For fuller details about the project see the website [www.eur50plus.org](http://www.eur50plus.org)

*Christine Whetstone*



**Jean Lambert Green Party MEP at the Dugdale Centre**



**Final session at the Dugdale Centre**

**Monday 14 May** Falcons, planes and planting at Biggleswade: Join us on this day trip to the Old Warden Park where you can enjoy guided tours of the Shuttleworth collection of vintage planes and machines, a guided tour of the Swiss Garden. Lunch in the restaurant and then a falconry experience, looking at 200 birds of prey and enjoy a flying display to round off the day. There are just 10 places left.

For a booking form and further details, please contact Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email [oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com](mailto:oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com)

**Sunday 20 May** 10 days sightseeing in beautiful Prague is being organised by an international federation to which we are affiliated. Coach trips to Dresden, the Carlsbad spa and ancient Butna Hora along with entertainment on several evenings and a river cruise are included. Access to private rooms in the old town hall and Parliament buildings along with a civic reception are privileges not available to ordinary tourists.

Full board and all entertainments are included in the price of 500 Euros, about £420. Cost of flight to Prague is the only non-included item. For further information please contact Jean Mittins, 020 8367 2102 e mail; [mercia1211@talktalk.net](mailto:mercia1211@talktalk.net)

**Wednesday 30 May** Celebrate HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a Picnic for Forum members. Join us at 12.30pm at the beautiful Myddleton House in Enfield, for a bring and share style picnic to celebrate this historic event.

Live music, sing-along, raffle and optional guided tours of the house. For further details and to book your spot, please contact Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email [oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com](mailto:oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com).

**Saturday 2 June** Come to Southgate Beaumont's Diamond Jubilee Garden Party at 15, Cannon Hill, Southgate 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. free entry, entertainment, face painting, refreshments and much more. For information please phone 020 8882 9222.

**Wednesday 6 June.** Visit the British Postal Museum and Archive at Debdon. Leave Enfield Town Station mid morning. This is a free-dom pass trip total cost is £3.00

Highlights include a fleet of postal service vehicles illustrating the long history of moving the mail and over 50 pillar boxes of different types and designs. Visitors will enjoy two 30-minute curator-led tours, separated by a break and complimentary refreshments. This tour involves a lot of walking and standing and may not be suitable for some people. Numbers are limited, so to book a place contact John Peach on 020 8360 2338.

**Tuesday 12 June Lunch at 12.30.** Join us for lunch at the new fish and chip restaurant – fish&chips@. London Road (formerly The Norfolk). There will be a choice of starters followed by a choice of main course and either tea or coffee. Cost £12.50 per person. To book and select your choices, please contact Jean Mittins on 020 8367 2102 or email [mercia1211@talktalk.net](mailto:mercia1211@talktalk.net).

**Tuesday 3 July** Summer lovin disco!! Plus delicious hot and cold buffet supper! By popular demand we are expanding to a beach themed, sun kissed evening of sunny music from all the decades, to get you moving and shaking all over!!

Time – 7.30pm-11.30pm (yes an hour longer than normal) Enfield North Conservative Club, Baker Street. £15 per person-bar available. Get out those summer clothes, retro fashions very welcome. Contact Olivia for your tickets on 020 8447 8841 or email [oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com](mailto:oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com)

**Thursday 6 September.** Come to the wonderful Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey. The cost is £11.00 and this includes entrance and either a Military Track Tour or a Land Train tour. There is free parking, picnic tables, a cafe, exhibitions and wild life and free tea and coffee. Meet at the cafe at The Royal Gunpowder Mills at 11.00 a.m. Details from Lorraine Murray 020 8805 3506 [lorraineofenfield@yahoo.co](mailto:lorraineofenfield@yahoo.co)

**Wednesday 12 September** 3 pm. Singing in the Rain matinee at the Palace Theatre.

Special group rate of £30 per person. Limited tickets. Travel together from Southgate. To book your ticket and for further information, call Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email [oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com](mailto:oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com).

With all the charm, romance, comedy and tinsel town glamour of one of the world's best-loved films, Jonathan Church's brand new production features a glorious score including the classics Good Morning, Make 'em Laugh, Moses Supposes and the legendary Singin' in the Rain. With stylish, soaring choreography sumptuous set design, Singin' in the Rain showers you with everything you could ever want in a hit West End musical! Hailed by the critics as the ultimate feel-good show.

**Saturday 15 September** at 2.30pm. Following the phenomenal success of "South Pacific" last year, the Barbican is presenting Opera North's exciting production of that evergreen favourite Rogers and Hammerstein's "Carousel". There are only a few tickets left so hurry!! Gallery tickets are £24 (includes an admin. charge). For more information and to book contact Irene by email at [poosticks@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:poosticks@blueyonder.co.uk) or phone 020 8363 8175.

**Saturday 29 September** Day Trip to Le Touquet, France. Travelling by Davian executive coach (with toilet and DVD) via Eurotunnel. Le Touquet is the jewel French seaside resort, named "Paris Plage" for its fashionable shopping boulevards and miles of golden sands. An opportunity to visit the Saturday market at "Place du Marche" to buy fresh French farm produce then relax in the many bars and restaurants. Cost £45 To confirm your place please contact: Roy Barrows on 020 8360 8561 Once confirmed, please send your cheque for £45 with a stamped address envelope and include the following details: full name, date of birth and passport number to Roy Barrows, 72 Broadfield Avenue, London N21 1AH

**Thursday 4 October** Come and visit one of England's grandest stately homes, Audley End House. including a tour of the house, the recently restored historic stables and gardens. Cost £24.00, coach leaves Enfield Town Argos/Lidl at 9.30.a.m. Depart for home at 4.30.p.m. To book a place contact Lorraine Murray 020 8805 3506 [lorraineofenfield@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lorraineofenfield@yahoo.co.uk) English Heritage members very welcome.

## Winchmore String Orchestra

### Concert of English Music

14 July 2012 at 7.30pm

Winchmore Hill Methodist Church

Green Lanes N13 4EP

Conductor: Philip Gibson: Soloist: Nils Klöfver guitar

#### Programme:

Ireland – Concertino Pastorale: Brouwer – Beatlerianas  
Grainger – Mock Morris: Avison – Concerto in E minor  
Delius – Late Swallows: Elgar – Introduction and Allegro

**Tickets: At the door £9.00, Concessions £7.50.**

**In advance £8.00, Concessions £6.50, Children free.**

Contact: Email: [joan\\_bayliss@talktalk.net](mailto:joan_bayliss@talktalk.net) or call 020 8882 0351  
[www.winchmorestrings.co.uk](http://www.winchmorestrings.co.uk)

## Art Circle's 80th Annual Exhibition

Saturday 14th July - Saturday 11th August Enfield

Capel Manor Horticultural College, Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield EN1 4RQ.

Members' paintings and drawings plus textiles, ceramic and sculpture. Most items for sale. Free entry. Open daily 10 - 5 (closes 1pm on 11 Aug). Parking on site. Disabled access. Cafeteria. Gardens accessible. All welcome.

Contact: Organiser 020 8360 1423 [www.enfieldartcircle.org](http://www.enfieldartcircle.org)

**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.



## Social news round-up

### Forum goes Dutch

A chance conversation between two Forum members who met for the first time on our highly successful Easter trip organised by Roy Barrows, to the Floriade 2012 – the world horticultural expo in Venlo, Holland – found that they had both been in the South Pacific's Solomon Islands in 1979.

Vic Sullivan had been sent there by the UK government to tutor local government employees and Sylvia Coombs spent 17 years in the country as a missionary. And here they were 350 miles from Enfield exchanging reminiscences!

They were among more than 30 Forum members who had a 4-day, 1,000 mile trip through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany which included visits to historic Aachen and through the Eifel Forest to the resort town of Monschau where the half-timbered houses have been unchanged for 300 years.

### Angling club

We have had our first fishing session of the season out at Wil-lowside where our anglers caught 112 fish. We are planning more trips as the weather improves and we also have social evenings at pubs or restaurant. If you would like to have a go or want to return to a past interest, contact Sue Scott on 020 8368 0861 or [scotsf48@hotmail.com](mailto:scotsf48@hotmail.com).

### First timers thanks

We've had letters from two of the 30-strong party that made a Freedom Pass trip to the National Army Museum to see the special Warhorse exhibition. It was Rob Walker's first outing with us and in thanking Roy Barrows for organising it, he says he found the trip **"enjoyable, sociable and informative."** It was also Jane Rolin's first outing with the Forum and she wrote: **"I came on my own and found everyone very friendly and welcoming"** – and that's what makes our Forum something special!

### Book club news

The dates for the next two months are as follows:

Wednesday 16 May - The 19th Wife by David Evershoff

Thursday 14 June - Alone in Berlin by Hans Fallada

Meeting at Enfield Library at 10 am. For details please contact Sue Scott on 020 8368 0861 or email [scotsf48@hotmail.com](mailto:scotsf48@hotmail.com)

### Loose women

Lorraine Murray sent a donation of £33 to the Forum following a visit to the Loose Women TV show.

### Saturday with the Legion

We've received an open invite from the Royal British at Holtwhites Hill, Trinity Street, Enfield - buses 191 W9 - to join Legion members on any Saturday night and enjoy reasonably priced drinks with live entertainment and dancing. You will remember we have had some successful parties here in the past. All this for £2 per person at Reception and if you decide you like it you may consider joining. So pop along and have a really good night. Further details from the Club Secretary Maria Hamer 020 8363 1054.

## Poets' corner

**Over 50s Forum Poetry Group meetings at Enfield Town Library community room on Thursdays between 10.30am and 12 noon with arranged themes as follows:**

### lows:

17 May Best Regrets -Judy Klimt

21 June Favourite Poems - Ruth Hanchett

Recently joined group members Pete and Christine Padwick led the April meeting on the appropriate theme of "Fools" and by moving from Oakwood library we can now accommodate more people.

David Oliver

## THE ALEXANDER OSTEOPATHIC CLINIC STRUCTURAL OSTEOPATHY CRANIAL OSTEOPATHY FOOT PAIN CLINIC



OSTEOPATHY IS NOT JUST FOR  
BACKS!!

It is a very effective way of treating almost all your aches and pains, so if you have any questions about your problem, or to book an appointment phone 020 8373 0435

Conditions treated include:

Arthritic pain	Hip and knee pain	Disc prolapses
Leg pain	Foot problems	Frozen shoulder
Headaches	Muscular aches and pains	

For further information visit the clinic website at  
[www.north-london-osteopaths.co.uk](http://www.north-london-osteopaths.co.uk)

## Did you know?

**Knitting has similar positive effects on the brain as  
Mindful Meditation.**

**Positive therapeutic benefits of Group Knitting**



- Enhanced sense of wellbeing and confidence
- Helps with life changing events, divorce, bereavement, redundancy, depression, illness, stress, chronic pain etc.
- Meet new people
- Knit for charity
- Share skills with others

**Where:** Oakwood Library 185-187 Bramley Road, London N14 4XA

**When:** Third Monday of every month - 3.00 to 5.00 p.m.

**Next meetings:** Monday May 21 & June 18.

Bring your own materials and refreshments.

Contact: [maureen-jackson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:maureen-jackson@tiscali.co.uk) 020 8360 7019

## Call Barndoc on 03000 333 777

Barndoc provides out-of-hours GP cover using local doctors and nurses. They are available from 6.30pm to 8am every night and 24 hours at weekends and bank holidays. They can provide telephone clinical advice, and based on your clinical need, may arrange for you to see a doctor or nurse at one of their bases or in your own home. Barndoc is NOT an emergency service. If you believe your condition is a medical emergency such as a heart attack or stroke, you must call 999 immediately.

## Celebrating 100 years of Winchmore Hill

To celebrate the centenary publication of 'Winchmore Hill - Memories of a Lost Village' by the writer and artist Henrietta Cresswell, <http://www.n21.net/> the online community website, is promoting the N21 Festival in the heart of Winchmore Hill, which will take place from 16 – 23 June 2012.

The N21 Festival will recreate the **'Fancy Fair' that was famously held on the Green in the 1850s**, uniting the local residents who **'flocked en masse'** to the colourful, band playing event. Then, all monies raised from the many stalls that lined the Green was spent on building the first national school in the area, now known as St Paul's Primary School. Today, all proceeds from the non-profit grand event will be donated to local charities.

Details on [www.Facebook.com/N21festival](http://www.Facebook.com/N21festival) and Twitter

@N21Festival.

For more press information, please contact Niki Ploutarhou at [ngeorg@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ngeorg@blueyonder.co.uk) or 07867785079.



## Dying Matters: let's talk about it, plan for it and then get on with living

Join us at:

**The Dugdale Centre**  
Thomas Hardy House  
39 London Road  
Enfield  
Middlesex EN2 6DS

Drop in to see us  
between **10am - 4pm**  
**Wednesday 16 May 2012.**

There will be a variety of  
stalls offering information,  
advice and support.



[www.enfield.gov.uk](http://www.enfield.gov.uk)

**ENFIELD**  
Council

## Wine & Cheese reception

**Monday 28 May Civic Centre Conference Room 6 - 8 pm**  
**Admission Free**

*We are holding a special eve of AGM gathering to say a special thank you to our many volunteers - and to appeal to the many other Forum members who have some spare time and would like to help the Forum in the wide range of activities it carries out to make life better for Enfield's over 50s.*

The Forum continues to expand, we have more than **4,300 members and over 70 affiliated organisations**. All these members need attention and we rely largely on volunteers to spread the workload and service our growing membership. Like all other voluntary organisations we could use more help in a variety of ways.

So at the same time as we thank our existing band of volunteers, we'd like to ask everyone with a little spare time to come and meet the Forum's officers. For example: We're looking for someone with health and safety experience to ensure the Forum operates within the law.

Joyce Pullen, our diligent membership secretary deals with a couple of thousand renewals, or new applications, every year. An extra volunteer or two could help her maintain this important service to members.

Fund-raising is another important function to keep the Forum viable. At present it has largely been undertaken by our Secretary who has been extremely successful, but as the Forum expands the workload gets bigger, help from an experienced fund raiser or a keen, imaginative individual would be greatly appreciated.

All our affiliates know Peter Smith and the efficient work he does every other month hand delivering our Newsletter. We now distribute some 8,500 copies and if you could undertake to deliver copies in your area this would be very helpful. Newsletter writing, layout and design is a major job which takes some days. Volunteers with experience could help with the work.

The Forum campaigns on national and local issues. Writing letters, getting signatures on a petition, lobbying politicians and taking part in demonstrations are amongst the activities. All campaigns are increasingly likely to succeed if more people take part. You could help either by taking the lead on a particular issue or lending support to an ongoing issue by joining in with one of the activities listed above.

With our extensive social programme it would be of real value for a member to help with its administration and support the committee who do such a great job.

Support in keeping the website up to date and producing our eNews would enhance the quality of service we give by improving the content and timeliness of the service.

The office has a small computer network to enable staff and volunteers to share access to databases. If you have experience with computers or small networks you could make a valuable contribution by ensuring smooth running.

***Our office at Millfield House is open 9.30 - 1.30pm five days a week but with holidays and periodic sickness leave we need to rely on volunteers to keep the show on the road. Ideally, we'd like to open from 9.30 to 4.30 every day but this needs a properly organised volunteers rota. The tasks may involve answering the phone and dealing with members face to face. If you are able to give a few hours either weekly or when need arises this could be a rewarding way of helping others in a friendly office environment.***

Whether you are already one of our band of volunteers - or can offer us time in the future, we ask you to contact the Forum office and tell us you'll be coming to the wine and cheese reception in the Civic Centre on Monday 28 May between 6 and 8 in the evening when we can answer questions and give you more details. Contact the office 020 8807 2076.



**Forum volunteers stuffing our newsletters**

## Sayings to remember

I get up, drink my usual four coffees, have a look at the obituaries in The Times and if I'm not in them, I'll get on with the day's work – **Sir Patrick Moore**, astronomer, describes his morning routine.

Marriage is the alliance of two people, one of whom never remembers a birthday, and the other who never forgets them – **Ogden Nash**.

Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare – **Japanese proverb**.

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

## Forum Annual General Meeting

This year the AGM will take place on Tuesday 29 May 2012 at the Civic Centre, Silver Street, when the Annual Report and accounts will be presented. The President of the National Pensioners Convention, Dot Gibson will be our guest speaker.

**Any members interested in standing for the Forum's Executive Committee and wanting to discuss the opportunities should contact the secretary via the Forum Office and request a nomination form.**

020 8807 2076 or [info@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk](mailto:info@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk)

## Falls Awareness Day – Monday June 18

Edmonton Leisure Centre, Edmonton Green, Opp. Edmonton Green station.

**Registration from 9.30 am**

We may be living longer and healthier lives than ever before, but too many of us are having falls and being admitted to local hospitals with fractured hips – 600 a year at Barnet and Chase Farm hospitals alone. Many of these falls are avoidable.

You can hear more about what you can do to keep fit and well through the information and advice sessions, the workshops and activities we are planning for our Falls Awareness Day. Admission is free but you must book your place by calling the Forum office 020 8807 2076.

**Falls are not a natural part of getting older. Many can be prevented by ourselves.**

## Olympics Ambassadors Nos. 2 & 3

Forum members **Dave Young** and **Tony Farahar** will join our former Chair Irene Richards as London Ambassadors for the London Olympic Games opening in July. **Dave**, being a true Londoner – he was born in Finsbury in 1937, thought he was in the right age group to welcome overseas visitors to our capital city.

He moved to Edmonton when he retired about 10 years ago and recently joined other Forum members on their white water rafting experience. He says he'd like to get more involved, **"but I am doing so much at the moment - cycling, bowls at Jubilee Park and also some gardening for a disabled lady, table tennis, plus attending Walthamstow Trades Club for leisure and dancing and the odd game of darts."**

**"As you will gather for a pensioner I do quite a lot. I would like to add that you and your team are doing a wonderful job. Keep up the good work. Now that I have been chosen as an Ambassador, I am really looking forward to it."**

**Tony Farahar** has also been successful in the selection to become a London Ambassador and will be in Flying Squad City Zone 2. He says he's looking forward to the challenges ahead. Tony signs himself as: **'Newsletter Stuffer'** for the last 4 years!

### Local leaders needed

Forum executive member **Adeyinka Popoola** is a member of the Advocates Group for the London Olympics and he is anxious to spread the message that people can now sign up to become Local Leaders to celebrate the London 2012 Games in our local communities.

London 2012 provides Local Leaders with ideas and tools to bring their friends, family and communities together to help make the most of the Games by creating celebrations around the Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relays, the 12 week UK-wide London 2012 Festival, or the Olympic and Paralympic sports action.

People can sign up to be a Local Leader at [www.london2012.com/](http://www.london2012.com/) and can start to play an active part in preparing their community for international attention when the Olympic Torch arrives in the UK.

**'Garden for the Games'** provides Local Leaders with hints and tips from gardening experts, including Blue Peter Gardener Chris Collins and Local Leader & gardening expert Philip Turvill, on how to plant seeds that will turn window boxes down your street red, white and blue, or to 'grow gold' by planting marigolds along the Olympic Torch route.

Once the Olympic Torch Flame arrives in the UK on 18 May, Local Leaders are provided with ideas and tools to help bring the community together to welcome the Flame to their area. Communities can celebrate their local heroes by lining the streets and showing what makes their local area special for the 70-day UK-wide Relay.

**On 27 July**, the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games will be watched by over a billion people around the world, and Local Leaders will be given invitation cards, recipe tips, party sheets and more, to help them theme their venue for the screening of the event whether it is in a village hall or living room.

**August 4 is Super Saturday** - the day when the most medals are awarded during the Olympic Games. Local Leaders will have access to recipe ideas to help host barbeques and a day of activity in their homes, gardens and community centres.

For the Paralympic Torch Relay, Local Leaders can help celebrate the national flame lightings in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales by lighting up every corner of the UK with a lantern. Local Leaders will be able to access hints and tips on how to take part in a lantern procession and decorate lanterns with good luck messages for their local Paralympic athlete.

Finally, for the last day of the Paralympic Games on 9 September, Local Leaders will be provided with ideas to bring together friends, family and neighbours for a Sunday get-together to see out an unforgettable summer in style. By signing up at [www.london2012.com/localleaders](http://www.london2012.com/localleaders), Local Leaders will get access to London 2012 branding, posters and toolkits.

Whether the Local Leader invites three friends or their whole community, London 2012 will provide them with the tools to make their celebration one to remember and create opportunities for people across the UK to join in. They will also be able to put their celebration events on the London 2012 Join In listings website, giving local community celebrations exposure on what will be one of the most visited websites in the world this year.

**Seb Coe**, LOCOG Chair, said: **'Local Leaders are brilliant organisers in every community around the country and play an active role in celebrating national events at a local level. Through this programme, Local Leaders will help provide opportunities for everyone around the UK to join in with the London 2012 Games.'**

**Contacts:** For further information please visit the website at [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com). Find out the latest from London 2012 HQ on our blog <http://www.london2012.com/blog> or follow us on Twitter <http://www.twitter.com/london2012>



## New day hospice in Enfield

To reach out to a greater number of people, the North London Hospice is currently building a new day centre at Barrowell Green, off Green Lanes, which is due to open this summer. The main aim in building a second centre of excellence is to keep patients out of hospital and at home with their families in comfortable surroundings for as long as possible.



### *Artist's impression of the new Hospice*

The North London Hospice helps people to live with a terminal illness and offers support to their families, friends and carers. It is very much about helping people make the most of the time they have left and controlling their pain and symptoms.

It has cared for the people of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey since 1984 and offers the following services: A 17 bed in-patient unit providing 24hr nursing and medical care, community teams visiting people at home, a bereavement service for patients' families and carers. Palliative Care Support Services provide a period of practical nursing care in the home for those who wish to spend their final days there.

North London Hospice care is given free of charge. It is a registered charity receiving only a small proportion of its funding from the NHS and relies on donations and legacies to help raise the £6million that is needed every year for its care to continue.

If you would like to help North London Hospice through volunteering or fundraising please contact Natalie on 020 8446 2288 or [ngordon@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:ngordon@northlondonhospice.co.uk)

North London Hospice, 47 Woodside Avenue, London N12 8TT

[www.northlondonhospice.org](http://www.northlondonhospice.org) Your donations make our work possible.

*Natalie Gordon*

## Are you paying too much tax?

For several months, I have been giving free tax advice as part of the Forum's Monday morning advice sessions at the Dugdale Centre. Almost everyone who has approached me has at some time recently paid more tax than they should have or not received a repayment they were entitled to and in most cases they were totally unaware of it.

Additionally, I have been able to reassure people that they will not have to pay tax in relation to transactions that they had undertaken that they thought would lead to liabilities of as much as £35,000.

Three examples of cases that I have advised on will give a flavour of what can be achieved. The first was a retired teacher who had paid too much tax in previous years. I explained to her what she should do to get the tax back, which she followed and received a refund of several hundred pounds, which was enough for her to treat her husband and herself to a long weekend "City Break" in a European city.

The second was a pensioner, who was still working, and on checking his tax position I found that he had paid over £1,000 too much tax in a previous year and was still paying too much tax. Based on my advice, he can now claim the overpaid tax back and at the same time get his position on a correct footing for the future.

The third case was someone who had sold a property at a substantial capital gain, I was able to advise him about Capital Gains Tax reliefs that he qualified for which when claimed will mean that instead of paying over £30,000 in CGT he will not have to pay anything at all.

About myself, I am a retired Tax Inspector, who is now operating as a part time tax consultant. My charges are lower than most advisors because I have no office and therefore very low overheads.

If you would like my help, I can be contacted by telephone on 020 8886 6921(h)/ 0795 898 7870(mob.), or by email at [taxhelpfromjeff@gmail.com](mailto:taxhelpfromjeff@gmail.com).

Everyone should pay the tax that is due from them, but it is wrong for them to pay more than is due and HMRC will not always advise you if you have paid too much. I look forward to hearing from you!

*Jeff Rodin*

## Support Enfield Market & the Forum

This issue of the Newsletter has been funded by the Old Enfield Charitable Trust. They have given the Forum a grant of **£3,000** to help pay for the printing and postage of one issue and also meet the cost of **advertising our Monday morning Dugdale advice sessions in the local press.**

Too few people know that the net income from the car park, along with that of the market in the centre of Enfield Town, is used to make grants to needy residents in the **Ancient Parish of Enfield.**

As well as education grants and general grants, which help with household needs and school uniforms, the Trust also gives grants to local community organisations, such as our Over 50s Forum.

**Enfield market is in the centre of Enfield Town and has a history of more than 700 years. The market offers a wide variety of produce**

**from quality greengrocers and butchers to household items, phone accessories, jewellery and fashion.**

The Old Enfield Charitable Trust runs the market on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From Sunday to Wednesday the Market Place is run by the Trust as a car park, which has an attendant on duty all day with prices that are competitive with other surrounding car parks.

Community Grants support many local causes, which range from tents for local scout groups to arts and crafts materials and musical instruments for children's groups.

**The Old Enfield Charitable Trust was also pleased to be able to help towards the cost of publishing this Over 50s Forum newsletter.**



# New police commander for Enfield

The Forum will be inviting **Chief Superintendent Jane Johnson**, the newly appointed Borough Commander for Enfield Police, to a Civic Centre meeting later in the year.

Meanwhile we've received the following message:

***"I'm proud to have joined a successful borough where crime is reducing through strong partner relationships. I know that local people are concerned about youth crime and violence and the prevalence of gangs. I believe our role as the police is primarily about enforcement whilst working***

***with and influencing partnership delivery. I'm committed to reducing crime as our first priority by being responsive and getting things right first time."***

Chief Supt Johnson joins Enfield from Territorial Policing's Operation Target where she has worked for the last six months on the Met's renewed crackdown on crime against people and property in London leading to significant, long term reductions.

**She has extensive experience of borough policing, having served at Kensington & Chelsea, Islington and Camden.**

## Top ten tips to beat burglars

While the chances are statistically low, we know that being burgled can be a distressing experience. While we are taking action to target and arrest those responsible, we remind home owners to take some simple measures which can further reduce the chance of them becoming a victim of burglary.

**Most burglaries tend to be opportunistic rather than planned.** So if your home does not look secure, seems unlivid in, or provides unobserved access, it could be at risk. Understanding what burglars look for when choosing their target will help you identify weak spots in your home's security. Our 10 Top Tips:

- Mark or etch your property with your postcode, house or flat number or the first three letters of your house name.
- Register items with a serial number at: [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)
- Never leave a spare key concealed anywhere near the front door - burglars know all the hiding places
- Prevent letterbox burglaries by storing keys away from the front door
- Do not label your house keys in case you lose them and they fall into the wrong hands.
- Make it look as though your house is occupied:
- Install timers which switch lights or radios on and off automatically.
- Have a neighbour or friend pop round to clear your letter box or doorstep.
- Encourage a neighbour to park on your drive.
- If going out after dark, draw the curtains, leave some lights on and a radio playing.

If you are away for extended periods:

- Cancel the delivery of milk and newspapers
- Disconnect the telephone answering machine, or re-word your greeting message to give the impression that you are only temporarily unable to answer.

- Enlist the help of a neighbour, friend or relative to keep a regular eye on your property and keep the front door clear of deliveries.
- If you are prepared to leave a key with a willing neighbour/relative, ask for curtains to be drawn and lights to be put on at night. If snow is on the ground a few footprints will make the house appear inhabited.
- Check your insurance policy. Some insurance policies for contents don't cover you if you are away for more than 30 days.
- Set your burglar alarm. If you do not have an alarm, consider investing a few pounds in a dummy alarm box. It may well deter the opportunist thief.

## Remember: Remove the Opportunity - Prevent the Burglary

Total Policing is the Met's commitment to be on the streets and in your communities to catch offenders, prevent crime and support victims. We are here for London, working with you to make our capital safer.

**For further crime prevention advice, call Enfield Police on 020 8345-1102 or visit [www.met.police.uk/crimeprevention/burglary](http://www.met.police.uk/crimeprevention/burglary)**

## Would you leave £200 on your dashboard?

Enfield Police ask, **"Would you leave £200 cash on your dashboard?"** Because that is exactly what you are doing when you leave Satellite Navigation units on display in your car. Enfield Police are warning vehicle owners that the increasing amount of satellite navigation systems in cars and vans has provided a new and enticing target for thieves.

Vehicle crime historically rises at this time of year as criminals go on the look out for belongings left on show in vehicles. With the majority of vehicle crime being carried out by opportunists, Enfield Police are urging motorists not to become complacent and not to leave anything of value on display.

Remove all property from display when you leave your vehicle for however long - either take it with you or lock it out of sight.

**For further crime prevention advice call Enfield Police on 020 8345-1102.**

## Think that you may be paying too much tax?

Jeff Rodin, Tax Consultant will use his 40 year's experience working as a tax inspector to help you  
Call  
0208 886 6921/0795 8987 870  
or email  
[taxhelpfromjeff@gmail.com](mailto:taxhelpfromjeff@gmail.com)

## Subscription Renewals

### Reminder

If your address label on the envelope containing this newsletter arrived and had a line stating:

**Due 31 March 2012**

We regret that we will not send further newsletters until you renew your membership .

## Spitting ban is backed

The spitting ban petition sponsored by the Forum was accepted unanimously at the March council meeting. Some councillors wanted even stronger fines imposed than the £80 we proposed. It has now gone to the Department of Communities and Local Government where other councils including Glasgow, Belfast, Harrow and Doncaster have expressed an interest in introducing a similar by-law

Our petition with more than 4,000 signatories – well over the 2,750 required – was presented by Forum president Monty Meth. Addressing councillors he said:

***"This ban spitting campaign is a natural extension of the case we made to the last administration to spend more money on repairing defective pavements – which they did. and councillor Neville was always very helpful in supporting our advocacy of the community toilet scheme.***

***"Both schemes are being maintained by the current administration and with the spitting ban we will make our shopping centres cleaner and even more attractive to both older and younger people with families".***

### HOLTWHITES BOWLS CLUB

Holtwhites Hill, Enfield

Why not try some gentle exercise in a sociable environment? Bowls is a competitive but friendly game enjoyed by many. We welcome new members and will be running coaching sessions on Saturday mornings at 10.00am, starting on 5 May 2012.

Please ring Rod Smith on 020 8366 3281 or Pat Walker on 020 8245 6305 for more information.

## Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum

**Join the Over 50s Forum Now**

(I/We/My Club) wish(es) to apply for membership of the Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum. Enclosed is a payment of (£7.00 individual membership; £10.50 for couples; £17.50 for Clubs). (Delete as appropriate). Cheques should be made payable to **Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum**. You can 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.

Surname :	Title(Mr, Mrs, Ms):
First Name(s) :	
Organisation* :	
Address :	
Post Code :	Age:
Tel. Number :	
Email :	

\* ☐ ignore if joining as an individual or a couple.

As a registered charity the Forum can collect gift aid on donations and subscriptions made by you provided you pay income tax. If you agree to the Forum recovering gift aid tick this box:- ☐ and sign the declaration below.

I want the Forum (a) to reclaim tax on all donations/subscriptions I have made to the Forum since February 2008 and on all future donations/subscriptions I make until I notify the Forum otherwise and (b) I pay sufficient income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to the amount to be reclaimed (currently 28p for every £1).

Name in CAPITALS \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this application form to:  
 Joyce Pullen, Membership Secretary  
 Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum, Millfield House, Silver Street, N18 1PJ  
 Tel: 020 8807 2076 (9.30am - 12.30pm Mon-Fri)  
 email: info@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

## Dithering with Dilnot

Easter has come and gone and the promised White Paper on the government's reaction to the Dilnot report on long-term care has yet to see the light of day. Nor has anything been heard about the all-party talks endeavouring to get agreement of the main political parties about who should pay for care in our old age.

There's universal agreement that the present system is unfair, so in 2010 the government asked economist Andrew Dilnot to come up with a new plan, which he did last summer. Since then there's been a blackout. While the talking goes on behind closed doors, increasing numbers of older people are unable to care for themselves.

The government is now promising a White Paper outlining its plans to deal with the crippling costs of care, but any legislation will almost certainly be put off until after the next general election in 2015. Every year thousands of people are forced to sell their homes to pay for care home fees.

While the talking goes on about the cost of care in retirement, the National Pensioners' Convention has won wide support for a new code of conduct to guarantee in the words of the Daily Telegraph ***"that pensioners in care systems are treated with dignity and allowed to speak for themselves."***

The dignity code has now been endorsed by the care minister **Paul Burstow** and the shadow minister **Liz Kendall** and in a letter to the Daily Telegraph they say: ***"Many older people have seen their basic human dignity undermined – they have been treated as objects rather than people."***

***"In extreme cases there have been instances of abuse and neglect, but there are many examples of older people being spoken about as if they were not there, deprived of basic privacy or denied respect for their hygiene or personal appearance."***

***"At times people have been refused treatment on grounds of age, while others have been subject to unnecessary medication or restraints. This has to stop."***

***"We are supporting the launch of the National Pensioners Convention's Dignity Code, which aims to uphold the rights and maintain the personal dignity of older people – ensuring the health, safety and well-being of those who are less able to care for themselves".***

In addition to Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary, other signatories to the Telegraph letter include Dr Peter Carter, chief executive Royal College of Nursing, Baroness Greengross, Commissioner, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Lord Stewart Sutherland, chair, Royal Commission on Long Term Care, Gary Fitzgerald, chief executive, Action on Elder Abuse, Michelle Mitchell, charity director, Age UK and Dame Jo Williams, Chair, Care Quality Commission.

Members of the public are being urged to support this campaign by signing the online petition at: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/27050>. Copies of the Dignity Code can be obtained from the NPC office 020 7383 0388.

### Answer to word puzzle:

No, it is not even that the listed words all have at least two double letters. In all of the words listed, if you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word, and then spell the word backwards, it will be the same word.

**Did you figure it out? No?**

Then send to more people and stump them as well.

**Then, you'll feel better too.**

*Olivia Goodfellow*