

HERE WE GO AGAIN

As another year opens we express the hope that this will be a happy, healthy and active 2005 for all our members, their families and friends. It certainly has all the makings of an eventful year for the Forum, judging by the range of your ideas and activities we are currently discussing.



And yet hanging over us is the impact of that most harrowing, inconceivable, distressing tidal earthquake which has shattered the lives of people throughout the world - people of all colours, races and religions were the victims of a tsunami, a word virtually unheard of until it brought the biggest single disaster of our lifetime.

The grim television coverage of the destruction of large parts of southern Asia has rallied support and aid for the tens of thousands of families torn apart by this awful catastrophe, showing once again that at times like this we are all part of a single human race in which none of us can claim immunity from such a savage act of nature.

We will all have our own thoughts at this time, but I'd like to think that

as a New Year opens our Forum can in its own small way help to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together in seeking to create a better life. That we should do that little bit more in helping each other in whatever way we think best because life is at the end of the day too short for all of us.

And one way to help is by coming forward - as you'll see in this Newsletter that Brian Wright and Peter Smith among others have done - to represent the Forum in endeavouring to protect and enhance the quality of life of older people in Enfield. And I can't think of a better New Year's resolution than that.

Monty Meth

Chair

Tax back on savings

The Inland Revenue now has a Tax-back Helpline 0845 077 6543 open from 8.am -10 pm seven days a week which can help you decide if you are eligible to get tax-free savings (as mentioned in our last newsletter).

Calls are charged at the local rate or you can phone a Registration Helpline 0845 980 0645 open 8.30 am -5pm Monday to Thursday and until 4.30pm on Friday, but to get your claim back-dated to 1998 / 99 it must be in by January 31 2005.

Banks and building societies normally automatically tax the interest on your savings at 20% but if you don't pay income tax or even if you pay tax at 10% you could be eligible for tax free savings - and you could claim back tax that you have paid for the last six years.

If you are aged 64 -74 and have an annual taxable income below £6830 or if you are 75 and over with an income below £6950 it will be worth making a Helpline call.

Forthcoming FORUM Events

Tuesday 25 January 2.15 pm

The new £100 million development work at Enfield Town and Edmonton Green.

Paul Humphreys, LBE head of corporate asset management and **Colin McQuiston**, head of St Modwen Properties asset management

Monday 21 February at 10.30 am

Helping older people to live independently - all you need to know about capital release schemes.

Martin Rudge, Home Improvement Trust

Dentistry and the NHS

Mayur Bhatta, Enfield PCT dental adviser

Tuesday 22 March at 11 am

Europe and Older People

Claude Moraes, Member of the all-party group on Ageing at the European Parliament.

Wednesday 30 March at 2.30 pm

Enfield's Health Improvement Action Plan - Road Safety for Drivers and Pedestrians

Kerry Reboul, Community Road Safety

Tuesday 26 April at 2.30 pm

Forum Annual General Meeting

Guest speaker: **Rev Nims Obunge**
Chief Executive Enfield Peace Alliance

NOTE

In 2005 the Forum will again meet at the Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield Town, but unfortunately we have not always been able to book the last Tuesday morning.

Crime Priorities Identified

Peter Smith represented the Forum at a meeting of the Enfield Crime Reduction Implementation Team (ECRIT) at which it was said that Enfield is the eighth safest Borough in London with a small cut in the number of recorded offences last year.

For some categories of crime Enfield has made significant reductions that are better than the national figures, but in three cases we were worse.

Violent crime was down 8% in Enfield, nationally it increased 12%.

There were 188 fewer victims of assault causing bodily harm, 173 fewer victims of harassment, domestic violence incidents were down 25% to 2,762, residential burglary was down 8%, non-residential burglary was down 14% and vehicle crime was down 3%.

On the other hand, street robbery was up 12% - about four crimes a day, theft was up 9% and criminal damage increased 6%. There were also 1,726 more cases of anti-social behaviour - a rise of 6.4%.

The meeting heard that some 40% of burglars arrested in Enfield were habitual drug users and predominantly white British males aged between 20 and 24 with dependent children and housing problems. A sample of those arrested reported spending an average of over £100 a day on drugs.

The crime survey of concerns and priorities felt by people in the Borough - in which the Forum participated - showed that during the day 84% of people felt very or fairly safe, while at night 73% felt not very safe or not at all safe.

The top six priorities identified for action are public reassurance, safer streets, communities, travel, children and young people, drugs and alcohol.

These priorities will shape the community safety strategy until 2008 which pledges to make our streets and public places safer by concentrating on individuals known to offend and on the anti-social behaviour hotspots in the Borough.

Wanted: Your WW2 Experiences

The National Pensioners Convention - to which the Forum is affiliated - is launching Voices from the Home Front, as part of its contribution to the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Voices from the Home Front is all about people's experiences in the factories, railways, offices, the air raids and separation of families - and their hopes for the post-war future.

Enfield with its famous Small Arms Factory and other enterprises contributing to the war effort has a special story to tell and if enough people are interested we will invite Dave Walsh, who is running the project for the NPC, to come to Enfield to meet and hear first hand the memories of our veterans.

If you have a WW2 story to tell please contact Olivia Goodfellow on 020 8447 8841 as soon as possible so that we can arrange a meeting with Dave Walsh.

Brian Wright's progress report: Fairer Charging for Home Care

I am pleased to represent the Forum on a working party which meets monthly with Council representatives to discuss fairer charging for home care. Under new Government guidelines, more people have free home care or pay less than previously and about 14% pay considerably more so that the Council can balance its books.

There are nearly 1,900 people in the Borough receiving home care and all of them are means-tested to determine how much they will pay towards the cost of the service. The client's contribution is determined by their Net Disposable Income (NDI) less certain allowances.

Enfield charges 100% of NDI or £13.65 p/hr whichever is the lesser. The result of this complicated formula

is that nearly 49% receive free home care, 11% pay the full cost of £13.65 an hour and the rest pay part of the cost according to income. Anyone, for example, with savings of £20,000 or more will pay the full charge.

Enfield's hourly charge is higher than that imposed by any other North London Borough and it is the only one that does not have a maximum weekly charge - resulting in one client paying £664 per week.

I have strongly urged the Council to revise their charges to be more in line with other London Boroughs and to set a reasonable maximum weekly charge. I and other representatives from Age Concern, Enfield Disability Action, Enfield Asian Welfare and the

Alzheimer's Society have many concerns, such as whether clients are being charged for services which should be paid for by the NHS.

There will be further meetings of the working party and we will all do our best to persuade the Council to address this and other matters to ensure that the principle of fair charging is not overthrown by a desire to balance the books, particularly as the London Borough of Camden provides a home care service that is free to all.

There will be a public forum for home care service users and their carers on Monday 31 January at St George's Parish Hall, 710 Hertford Road, EN3 6NR at 12 noon - 2.30 pm. Contact Natalie Cole Tel: 020 8379 4088 if you want to attend.

Visit our website/Join the Forum

www.enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

Everything you need to know about the Forum can be found on our website. You can even pick up an application to join there. Alternatively you can contact development officer Olivia Goodfellow 020 8447 8841.

REMINDER

The 25th January Forum meeting commences at 2.15 pm at the Civic Centre

.....Olivia Calling.....

Free Phone Calls for Forum

Two weeks before Christmas, I was with the 24 Forum members who had a wonderful trip to the Merrill Lynch offices in the City taking advantage of their generous offer of free phone calls anywhere in the world for up to 30 minutes for each person.

We were greeted by friendly faces and treated like royalty from the moment we entered the building until we were waved off on our luxury coach. The staff were so delightful and catered for all our needs at all times.

A welcome drink and biscuits were followed by the calls themselves. Forum members called a variety of countries including India, Cyprus, Australia, France, Germany, Spain, Guyana and USA. Some members experienced "conference calling" for the first time, where you can all talk at the same time as the voice of your relatives comes over on a loud-speaker, making it more like a typical conversation and enabling all parties to hear one another at the same time.

After the calls, a grand meal was provided with salmon, pasta, vegetables, lamb, vegan options and lovely puddings (and plenty of sherry and other beverages!) Father Christmas was waiting in the foyer to give out a goodie bag to all members, which contained a large selection of Christmas foods such as cake, coffee, tea, preserves, tipples of port and Baileys and much more.

Our friendly coach driver made sure that we travelled safely and it was altogether a magical experience which I know made all concerned very happy to be a part of the Forum and its purpose. Thank you to all who came for being such fun and I look forward to the next time!

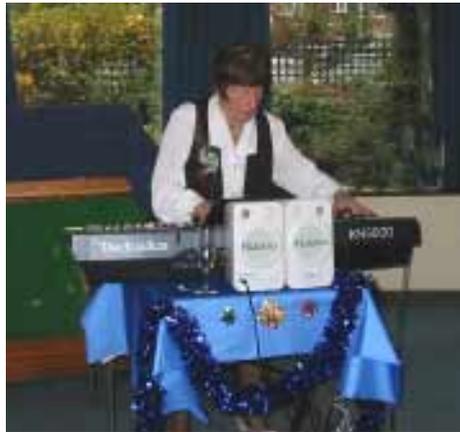
Walking, talking your way to fitness

Enfield Sports Development Team has organised local led walks in parks across the Borough on Tuesdays to Saturday. Why not walk, talk and live a more active life.

Full details: 020 8379 3762

....And Thank You to our Raffle Donors

Thanks to Anne Wood and Tony Watts we had a splendid Christmas buffet with more than 100 people enjoying the good food and company and the wonderful non-stop musical entertainment provided by Maisie Anderson.



Maisie rattling the keys

We've had a message from the Mayor, Councillor John Egan and his Mayoress wife Therese saying how much they look forward to coming again next year when they will be eligible as ordinary "over 50s". We, in turn, appreciated the Mayor staying right through to draw the many raffle prizes donated by members and friends of the Forum including:

Tony Kingsnorth from the Bush Hill Park Residents Association for the generous donation we used to buy a lovely festive hamper; **Waitrose**, Enfield Town, who donated chocolates and festive preserves; **Pearsons**, Enfield Town, for donating microwave cookware; **Café Punto** and **Abetone Italian Restaurants** in Winchmore Hill, both of whom gave vouchers for meals for two; and donations from Forum members - **Sheila Whetstone**, M&S vouchers -

Tony Watts, two Sekonda watches - **John Hennell**, a bottle of whisky - **Irene Frost**, a Boots voucher - and from **myself** a gift voucher for a back, neck and shoulders aromatherapy massage chosen by the Mayor as his raffle prize.

Finally our thanks too to **Irene Frost** for her zealous efforts in persuading local businesses to donate prizes for the raffle.

Have a happy and healthy 2005

Olivia Goodfellow

Public Toilets: still on the agenda

We are far from satisfied with the bland, complacent report on public toilets in the Borough that went to the Council Cabinet before Christmas. Frankly, we do not think it matched the needs of older people in the Borough, nor the improvements we were led to believe would be forthcoming.

We need to discuss whether the current Cabinet system is itself flawed when only members of the majority party discuss things behind closed doors and then present their findings to a Cabinet comprising the very same people.

Another example of this "democracy" was the Cabinet paper on a sports and physical activity strategy for the Borough which did not contain a single reference to the needs of older people. The Forum Chair was given five minutes to make our protest and some amendments may be made in the final 60-page document, but the fact is that neither the public toilets report nor the sports and physical activity report went to a scrutiny panel where members of the public can express their ideas.

We now know that the important Enfield Sports Advisory Council expressed strong reservations about a report which contained only sporadic, unconnected references to older people and are as disappointed as we are that our representations in the so-called consultation process were ignored.

We intend to re-open the public toilets issue when we receive a research report conducted by University College, London, with our members on the design of away from home toilets in town and city centres. We are not satisfied that you can walk all the way from Cockfosters to Southgate, or from Palmers Green to Wood Green without seeing a single public toilet.

The Forum now urgently needs a volunteer to lead the campaign for improved public toilets. You will get plenty of help, but we need somebody to take some responsibility. Volunteers please phone Olivia on 020 8447 8841

Enfield Home Library Service

Free delivery of books, CDs and videos to the door for those with mobility problems. Contact Stephany Lafferty on 01992 716010.

Get Fit for a Longer Life

This will be one of our key campaigning themes for 2005 and we make no apologies for continually hammering home the simple message too many people continue to ignore - that if they exercise more and eat less they have a better chance of living longer and having a better quality longer life as well.

Carrying excess weight can reduce life expectancy by more than nine years. It is also estimated that around 30,000 deaths a year from heart disease, diabetes and cancer are attributable to the effects of being overweight.

We are not just nagging people to change their lifestyles. We have been cooperating and negotiating with our Leisure Centres Trust to get more people to use their splendid facilities - and at prices that older people, the majority of whom are on fixed incomes, can afford.

We have already achieved a 50% cut in the price of the energy discount card - now £10 a year for people over 60 - valid for admission and membership across all ELCT centres. We now have a monthly swim pass valid any time and any day for £17 for over 60s.

We have established the all-day Wednesday sessions at Southbury and on Thursday at Edmonton Green offering swim, pilates, yoga, short mat bowls, sauna etc and lunch for £4.10.

It is hoped that a new set of charges - which are still subject to the approval of the Leisure Centres Trust and the Council - and starting in April will hopefully give us greater access to a range of health and fitness activities and so encourage more people to take up regular physical activity that will in turn give them better health in later life.

Among the proposed new charges are improved membership arrangements for the over 60s which, together with the existing Energy Discount Card, will make accessing Enfield's four Aspire Health and Fitness suites much more affordable.

In addition to the new charges we are also hoping to arrange a special deal on fitness membership for all members of the Forum and so bring the over 50s into the reduced price Fitness for a Longer Life campaign for the first time

The new charges and Forum membership deals will be announced more fully once they have been confirmed by the Leisure Centres Trust and the Council and we will let you know about them as soon as we can. In return, we have undertaken to do everything possible to increase the membership of the leisure centres, their income and cash flow to make them more viable and possibly less reliant on a Council subsidy.

We have argued that the leisure centres are a community asset that must be utilised to the full by offering facilities that older people can afford. If the above plan is agreed by the ELCT Board, it means that the Leisure Centres Trust has met our challenge head on. Now it is down to us to fulfil our side of the bargain by getting more people through their turnstiles.

This is not just in our own interest. It is in the interest of everyone who sees the leisure centres as an essential preventative service - helping to prevent older people declining prematurely into ill health and frailty.

Pension Credit gets a Boost

The Enfield Citizens Advice Bureaux bid for funds to employ a special project worker, in which the Forum were partners, has been successful. We will, therefore, be recruiting somebody from March to help us find more older people who for whatever reason are not applying for the Pension Credit, although their income is below the guaranteed £105 a week.

We have agreed to concentrate this work in the Edmonton - Enfield North areas where we are most likely to find potential claimants for whom English is their second language. We will be part of the steering group responsible for monitoring the progress of the project.

Meanwhile the Department of Work and Pensions says that over 300,000 of the poorest pensioners are now better off because of the Pension Credit. Since it was introduced in October 2003 some 332,000 people are for the first time getting a guaranteed £105 a week.

Among them are nearly 3,400 local people - 1,200 in Edmonton, 1,245 in Enfield North and 935 in Enfield Southgate. In total, there are now more than 13,600 local people getting a top-up to their State retirement pension - 5,075 in Edmonton, 4,620 in Enfield North and 3,925 in Enfield Southgate.

Peter's new post

Forum Committee member **Peter Shukla**, who is also secretary of the Enfield Pensioners Action Group, has been elected treasurer of the **National Pensioners Convention Greater London Region**, an umbrella organisation representing 92 organisations. Peter is also a member of the sub-committee appointed to amend their constitution. Congratulations Peter.

Tuberculosis in Enfield

A recent addition to the Forum's website is the full report given by Lynn Altass to the Forum in June 2004.

Lynn's presentation covered

- How is TB spread
- The symptoms and who gets TB
- What the timeframe of TB is
- TB in Enfield and notification rates
- Where people with TB live
- TB and ethnicity
- What Enfield Primary Care Trust is doing to support people with TB
- What London TB targets are and how the targets will be achieved
- TB treatment
- Preventative treatment and preventing the spread of infection



Lynn Altass talks to us about tuberculosis

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