

Freedom Pass opens all hours

London Mayor Boris Johnson has kept his promise to match the pledge given by his predecessor, Ken Livingstone, that the Freedom Pass will be extended for all pensioners to 24 hours a day from 2 January 2009 on all buses, tube lines, Docklands Light Railway and London overground rail networks, such as the North London line.

In a letter to Forum member Peter Horsfall the Mayor says: **"All Freedom Pass holders will be automatically entitled to this concession and do not have to do anything in order to receive this entitlement"**. The letter goes on to say that the Mayor does not have the power to extend 24-hour use to the remaining overland networks in London which will continue to accept the Freedom pass at off-peak times.

However, the Mayor goes on to say that he **"intends to discuss this with the train operating companies when he meets with them and will encourage them to embrace it"** (the 24 hour Freedom Pass extension). These are the trains running from local stations into Liverpool Street and Moorgate.

The Mayor has also announced that 61 new, custom-built Dial-a-Ride minibuses are being introduced to improve door-to-door services for older and disabled Londoners. The new vehicles will cost Transport for London £3.9 million and it is hoped that more people will use the service as the older buses are phased out. Free Dial-a-Ride fares were introduced by the last Mayor, Ken Livingstone last January and around 50,000 people use the service making over a million journeys a year.

Future FORUM Events

FORUM MEETINGS 2009 - Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield

Tuesday 27 January 2009 10am for 10.30 start
Future Enfield: the shape of things to come with LBE assistant director, **Stephen Tapper**.

Tuesday 24 February 10am for 10.30 start
Primary Care – the new strategy for Enfield with **Dr Peter Barnes**, Medical Director, Enfield NHS Primary Care Trust.

Tuesday 31 March 10am for 10,30 start
Forty Hall its historic past and bright future with site manager **Gavin Williams**.

Tuesday 28 April 10am for 10,30 start
Forum AGM: New challenges - new opportunities.

****Skinners Court is opposite the Fox pub car park in Pellipar Close, Fox Lane, Palmers Green - Buses 329 and W6 to the Fox pub in Green Lanes or the 121 to the Triangle - 150 yards from the Fox**

COFFEE MORNINGS - Skinners Court ** Mini-forum meetings starting at 10am

Tuesday 20 January

Kick off 2009 by having your say on **Council tax and the LBE 2009/10 Budget** With councillor **Ertan Hurer**, LBE Cabinet member for finance and resources.

Tuesday 17 February

Liz Douglas launches the Forum's first free swapshop called: **Freecycling – recycling with a difference – what it is – how it works**.

Please bring something of use that you no longer want - anything from an unwanted gift to books, videos, cds, toys, garden tools, plants – literally anything. The idea is that someone else will take it home and you should find something that you would like from someone else. No money will exchange hands - just items. A bit like a bring and buy - but without the buy!

Tuesday 17 March

Registered osteopath **Jane Brennan** talks about **"Osteoporosis, bones and ageing"** and shows us a typical treatment.

Lovely Luxembourg Thanks Olivia

Olivia led a party of 45 Forum members last month for a long weekend trip to Luxembourg and Germany, to savour the Christmas atmosphere in this part of Europe. Despite the cold weather, after an amazing breakfast, we were all set to go on our first proper day. We had a guided tour of Luxembourg City by coach and this was a real insight into its history and financial development. We stopped for a while at the American cemetery and saw the grave of General Patten. After shopping in the City centre, we headed back to the hotel for dinner.

On day two, we headed for nearby Germany into the village of Remich, along the Moselle river and the town of Saarburg, where we boarded our boat for a river cruise and wine tasting! This was such fun and the wines were indeed delicious. On arrival back on land, we headed for the oldest town in Germany - Trier, which dates back to Roman times and is a world heritage site nowadays. The evening Christmas market was buzzing with visitors of all ages and the smells of sausages, hot wines, candles and toasted almonds was wonderful!

Our coach driver Colin was of the usual Crusader holiday excellent standard and made our trip most enjoyable. The food at the hotel was amazing, something for everyone and of a help yourself style. Forum members made friends really quickly and the atmosphere was charged with positivity, a real tonic just before the festive season.

A few anonymous comments from our travellers:

"Good hotel, good food, good company, repeat prescription please!"

"As 'newcomers' we were made to feel very welcome - well organised and enjoyable trip".

"An excellent first trip with the Forum - The introduction to Luxembourg was very interesting and informative. The final evening in Trier with a lively, colourful Christmas market was a real highlight and the help of a courteous and considerate coach driver ensured that everything went smoothly - thank you"

The Forum made a presentation to Olivia for her sterling work as our first part-time development officer at our best ever Christmas social. Our Chair, Monty Meth, said she would indeed be a hard act to follow. Her diligence in following through all the detailed activities and work of the Forum won her the respect of everyone who came into contact with her.



"There is no doubt in my mind that although we are all playing and working for the same team, Olivia's contribution has been outstanding in helping us take the giant strides forward, and we know she has put in many more hours on our behalf than her part-time post with the Forum provided", said Monty.

The good news is that Olivia is still with us as a Forum and social committee member and is already busy organising the end-of-year trip to Christmas markets abroad as well as the walking and cycling trip to Holland in September.

With "Danny's Disco" getting everyone in festive mood and a grand buffet, this was the best attended Christmas social, held this year at the Royal British Legion hall in Holtwhites Hill and we extend our thanks and congratulations to the splendid team that organised the event. The grand raffle raised over £200 and we record our grateful thanks to the following businesses for their generous support. Enfield Leisure Centres for 10 vouchers @£10 each, lunch for two at Samdan Turkish restaurant, The Green N21, meal for two at Pap's fish restaurant, Southgate N14, £15 voucher for Wades Hill Butchery, N21, £20 vouchers from Greggs, the bakers, toiletries gift from Boots the Chemist, £30.00 voucher from Enfieldian Coaches, three sets of vouchers for different shows from Millfield Theatre, bottle of Scotch and bottle of wine from the Dog and Duck pub, and a teddy bear from Parkview Pharmacy, Bramley Road.

PS. Olivia would like to express her thanks to all those members who have taken the time to call and give their appreciation for her input to the Forum over the last four and a half years. She says: ***"the sentiments have been lovely and really made me feel it has been a job well done - you can't beat working with people! Also, it is with great delight that I received a call from the committee, offering me a trip to Paris in the spring and I have accepted in the knowledge that the song "I love Paris in the springtime", must have been written for a reason - I'll let you know! Thank you so much***



With a special 20% discount for Forum Members

Millfield Theatre

presents on MARCH 28 @ 7.30pm

The humour of Gilbert & Sullivan

To book ring Box Office on 020 8807 6680 (Mon-Sat 10am-6pm) and quote **'OVER 50s FORUM'** to receive your discount on the normal ticket price of £14.

If you are interested in taking part in the show as the chorus, contact Claire Watts on 020 8887 7313 or claire.watts@enfield.gov.uk

www.millfieldartscentre.co.uk

Chair's Chat – New Year – New Horizons



Our Forum enters 2009 stronger numerically than ever before. We've passed the 2,700 mark of fully paid-up individual members, and we are now firmly on the road to that coveted 3,000 figure. Due to this expansion, the New Year will see us both moving to a new office at Millfield House, putting us in the heart of many community organisations, and having two part-time workers – a new development officer and an administrative

assistant manning the office in the mornings handling your requests and queries.

And equally important we are financially stable thanks in large part to the first quarterly tranche of our two-year grant from the City Bridge Trust, London's largest independent grant-maker, awarding £15 million a year to many projects benefiting the people of Greater London. Since it was established in 1996 the Trust has distributed over £35 million specifically for work with older people. The Trust's sole Trustee is the City of London Corporation, the local authority for the Square Mile.

And we are delighted to announce that Stennett & Stennett, a well – established firm of local solicitors, based at Winchmore Hill Road, opposite Marks & Spencer, will in large measure be meeting the rental of our new home at Millfield House. Michael and Elaine Stennett, a husband and wife partnership began in 1989 and now have a team of four solicitors and support staff.

The firm relocated to Southgate in 2005 and offers a professional and friendly service in property, family law, wills, probate, estate planning and nursing care fees funding. They will be celebrating their 20th year in business with us, particularly in giving specialist legal advice to people over 50 and they are looking forward to a prosperous relationship with the Forum. Stennett & Stennett will be advertising their varied legal services in each issue of the Forum newsletter and will be meeting us every month at our Civic Centre and Skinners Court meetings.

Time for me to step down

With the Forum now firmly established as a key voice of older people, its links with the local authority, police, and primary care trust well recognised, and with new and younger people hopefully ready to come forward to take more responsibility, this is the right time for me to step down and pass on the Chair's baton at our April AGM.

By then I will have served nine years as Chair and having seen the Forum grow in that time from a mere 70 members to its present strength, I feel this is an exciting and right time for new ideas, new energy, new faces to emerge to carry the Forum forward to still greater things.

Although I am now into my 80s, I still hope to be involved in some way, helping where I can to serve the Forum, because I firmly believe that we can be an even more important and representative group, being vigilant in defending and improving the quality of life of older people.

There are still far too many people outside our reach, living lonely lives with no immediate relatives and friends and we have to extend our hand of friendship, invite them to our meetings and social events, get them to join us in raising their voices in supporting our campaigns. This has been our winning formula and I hope this all-round approach continues in the years ahead.

In the course of being your Chair I have met some wonderful people, many of them nominating me to receive the MBE from H.M. The Queen for my service to older people in Enfield. It is a service I was proud to give, but whatever we have achieved has been by all of us – the Forum's officers, notably our secretary Tony Watts and the committee, the social committee and Forum members working as volunteers in other organisations.

I have constantly argued that we are not a closed shop. We have tried to welcome everyone irrespective of their political beliefs, race or religion so long as they want to work with us in a spirit of harmony and partnership to enhance the quality of life of all older citizens. So our forthcoming AGM is a great opportunity for new faces and a new team to come forward to take the Forum to still greater heights.

Monty Meth, Chair

Annual General Meeting Tuesday 28 April at the Civic Centre

This is your chance to have your say. The AGM is the place to let your officers and committee know what you think of the Forum's performance in the last year – and what you would like to see happen in the coming year.

It is your chance to nominate and elect the officers: chair, secretary, two vice-chairs, treasurer, social secretary and elect an executive committee of nine, making a total of 16 members. As elected officers of the charity the committee members are trustees the Forum.

Any Forum member can nominate another Forum member for the above posts – and you can also nominate yourself. Nobody is barred from coming forward to offer their help and leadership. Nomination forms and responsibilities of the various committee members are to be placed on our website. All you need do is make your nominations known to the secretary, Tony Watts, by Monday 13 April. You can e-mail him at tony_watts@blueyonder.co.uk or write c/o 35 Kingsley Road, London N13 5PJ.

Roll on to 3000! Poetry collection

Well, all you members out there, how was your Christmas and New Year? Have you, like me, put on extra pounds round the middle and desperate to see the back of it. How I wish I could be like some people who can eat and not put on weight. Oh well, there is always the Gym. I can tell from the applications, which I'm delighted to report, are still rolling in, that a lot of you are using the Leisure Centres so maybe I will see you there?

We've now reached 2,700 fully paid-up individual members which must put us in the top bracket of all the Forums in London and I'm particularly glad to see new groups joining the Forum, So a warm welcome to the following new affiliates:

The **Enfield Asian Welfare Association** which meets on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am – 3pm at 129-139 South Street, Ponders End where it aims to improve the quality of life of older Asian people, their families and carers to prevent their decline in mental and physical health. At the day care centre there are a range of programmes from yoga to gentle exercises or you can just meet for a chat. Contact Chetna Shah 020 8443 1107.

The **Cockfosters Probus Club**, which has joined the Forum. The club has 45 members in the age range 60-90+. All members are retired professional or business men - hence "Pro-Bus". They lunch together monthly at Hadley Wood Golf Club and twice yearly are joined by wives/partners and other guests.

And to the **Enfield Writers' Workshop** which meets Tuesdays and Fridays 8 - 10 pm at Salisbury House, Bury St. West, N9 and welcomes all writers and budding writers. Contact Eric Savage, 020 8367 3169. e-mail ecg.savage@virgin.net Tuesdays are writing evenings with tutor guidance and Fridays are reading evenings of work for sympathetic comment and advice. There is an interval for refreshments and chat at around 9pm.

The Workshop has been in existence over 35 years and welcomes all writers and budding writers. Unlock your creative talents; whatever you want to write: novels, short stories, poems, articles, autobiography, etc. The workshop can't guarantee publication but is strong on support and encouragement! Registration is £5 per annum and £3 each attendance.

Joyce Pullen

Membership Secretary



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First entries

The Forum's poetry group proposal to publish a collection of poems by its members has caught on and the first entries have been submitted. The Committee has agreed to add the £100 donation received from the Tranquillus masonic lodge to the £150 donated to the Forum by Joan Ryan MP to meet the cost of publication.

To encourage further budding poets, we are printing here one of the entries received on a seasonal theme fitting the cold spell we had in early December.

Snowtime Springtime

by Sara Davis

The Snow lies thinly on the ground
And all you hear is muffled sound
The barely covered branches sway
Towards a sky that's dull and grey.
Where once the river gently flowed
Looks now just like a snow clad road
Through the snow and grass are peeping
Daffodils that once were sleeping
Spreading word both far and near
"Although it's snowing Spring is here".

Entries for our poetry collection must be the copyright of a Forum member and if previously published must be submitted with the approval of the publication in which it appeared. **Please send your entries to David Oliver, 70A Lakenheath, London N14 4 4RP.**

The Poetry Group will meet every month during 2009 at Oakwood Library, Bramley Road, near Oakwood station from 10.30 am – 12 noon. Its next meeting is on Thursday 15 January when the theme will be "**The Sea**". So this is your chance to bring along your favourite poem to read and perhaps discuss. Poetry Group meetings will also take place on Thursday 12 February and Thursday 19 March at the same venue.

Perks of reaching 50 and heading upwards

- Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
- In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first.
- No one expects you to run-anywhere.
- People call at 9 pm and ask, did I wake you?
- People no longer view you as a hypochondriac.
- There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
- Things you buy now won't wear out.
- You can eat supper at 4 pm.
- You can live without sex but not your glasses.
- You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.
- You quit trying to hold your stomach in no matter who walks into the room.
- Your investment in health insurance is finally paying off.
- Your joints are more accurate than the weather service.
- Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.

.....Out & About.....

First from the past

In November we had our first and highly successful visit to a Turkish Restaurant. 50 Forum members filled the Samdan (means candelabra) restaurant, on Winchmore Hill Green. Our starters were a selection of cold dishes such as hummus, stuffed vine leaves, cracked wheat salad with peppers, parsley, spring onions and tomatoes - a really lovely variety of dips all accompanied by warm homemade flat bread.

The main courses were a choice of either chicken chunks or lamb chunks, cooked over charcoal with rice or chips and salad. Alternatively, a vegetarian moussaka was offered. The accompanying chilli and garlic sauces were delicious and cheeks began to glow-either from the chilli or the glasses of wine which many chose to have with their lunch.

We will certainly be returning to Samdan in 2009. Also in November we had a successful visit arranged by Bill Thear who took two mini-buses to the R.A.F. Museum at Hendon, one picking up disabled members en route. A most enjoyable day was had by everyone visiting as many sections of the museum as they wished.

By the time you read this newsletter we will have had our grand Christmas Social and two sell-out visits to the Southgate College Restaurant attended by some 70 Forum members.

Looking to the future.

Wednesday 7 January

2p.m. to 4p.m. Come along to the Southbury leisure centre, Southbury Road, and enjoy an English Barn Dance. Come on your own or with a partner, wear comfortable clothing and shoes. The caller Cyril Jones tells you what to do so come and enjoy yourself. Further details: Cyril Jones on 020 8360 1968 or email cyrdorjones@blueyonder.co.uk

Thursday 15 January

Poetry Group meeting at Oakwood Library, Bramley Road, near Oakwood station 10.30 am – 12 noon when the theme will be "The Sea". Please bring along your favourite poem to read and discuss. Further Poetry Group meetings will take place on Thursday 12 February and Thursday 19 March at

the same venue.

17 March - Visit to the Brick Lane Music Hall.

If you have already booked your place with Jackie then we are now able to offer you a choice of going by freedom pass or by coach. The coach seats will be on a first come first served basis. So to book your place or check if there may be any last minute places available ring Jackie on 020 8482 3575.

The coach will leave Lidl in Cecil Road, Enfield Town, at 12 noon and return at approx. 6.30p.m. The return coach fare is £6.00. So the total cost using your freedom pass will be £22.00. Total cost by coach is £28.00.

April 2009

We are planning to have a wine and cheese evening to hopefully celebrate our 3000th member. More information on the date and venue to follow.

10 September

Walking and cycling 5-day holiday organised by Travelsphere, to a natural beauty area of Central Holland. Travel by air-conditioned coach. Cost £349 includes four days half-board accommodation in a comfortable hotel, local guides for walks, cycles provided. The trip will conclude with an all-day optional visit to Amsterdam.

You can book your place with a £50 deposit or get the full brochure details from Olivia by calling 020 8447 8841 or e-mail olivia.g@virgin.net

* all cheques made out please to Enfield Over 50s Forum.

Looking also into the coming year we are planning:

A visit to Wembley Stadium, a Kew river trip, a return visit to the Albert Hall and the V.& A Museum. The London Eye and a river trip and a sightseeing trip around London on a DUCK!

We are always looking for ideas of where to go and what to see. So if you would like to come forward and organise a trip for the Forum, don't be shy put your ideas forward to me and the social committee. Just call Roddy on 020 8292 4324.

Voluntary work recognised Youth volunteers offer free garden help

Forum members were among the many volunteers attending the recent Enfield 100 Hour Volunteering Awards event where they received their certificate and badge from Joan Ryan MP, actress Lindsey Coulson and Spurs footballer Chris Gunter.

Our congratulations go to Jacky Keown, for her work with the Bullsmoor Residential Home, Liz Henthorn, a volunteer walk leader, Norma Chapman and Shirley Sandford for their work on behalf of Enfield & Southgate branch of the Workers' Educational Association.

We know there are many other Forum members working unsung in the community for at least 100 hours a year and we would like to encourage them to come forward, so that we can recommend them for recognition of their work. Just hand your names in at a Forum meeting or call Monty Meth 8882 1303.

Students from Enfield College and London University are among the young volunteers offering to help elderly residents keep their gardens tidy, which the police believe will help to deter vandals and burglars. Launched by Interfaith-Action, the safe garden project is a pilot scheme with three aims.

They are: to promote good relations between people from different faiths; increase understanding between young and elderly people; and reduce anti-social behaviour and crime. Interfaith-Action is seeking people over 60 with a disability particularly in the Ponders End, Brimsdown, Edmonton and Enfield Town areas to provide this free garden-tidy service.

All the volunteers are CRB (criminal records bureau) checked and supervised and will not be required to enter your house. A maximum of three volunteers will be allocated to each house for a fortnightly visit. Project manager Katherine Luckcock will come and talk with you about how the volunteers may help. Call her on 020 7482 4020.

Winning the winter flu battle

The latest news is that a severe bout of winter flu is on its way. But the **good news** is hopefully (fingers crossed) the efforts of Enfield Primary Care Trust with support of the Forum will have ensured that the majority of people aged 65 and over in Enfield have now had the flu jab. If flu does strike, most people will probably only need to take plenty of fluids and some simple remedy to lower the temperature and counter any aches and pains – whilst taking it easy for a few days.

The NHS flu jab campaign we helped to promote with the Primary Care Trust brought in a number of people who hadn't had the jab in previous years and we were often told how painless it was and free of side-effects. So we've got to strive to get that message across to the near 30 per cent of older people in Enfield who still turn down this chance of some protection against a flu attack.

A hitherto unknown reason to have the flu jab has recently been revealed by scientists at the Paris Descartes University. They have found that the flu vaccination reduces significantly the risk of travellers developing deep vein thrombosis and hence the dangerous blood clots that obstruct the lung. The flu jab is claimed to reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis by as much as 25 per cent in men and for women it is even greater.

Preparing for pandemic flu

Now what about the **not so good news**. Say the world was hit by a pandemic flu outbreak similar to that of the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak, which actually killed more than 25 million people worldwide. Fortunately, the most likely virus to cause a H5N1 has yet to evolve so that it can pass between humans. So the UK alert level remains low. There have been a few instances of H5NI in birds, but as long as it stays there we're fine.

Our local Primary Care Trust has been given the task of preparing for a pandemic – and the UK's state of preparedness is now said to be on a par with other comparable European countries. And so we asked Glenn Stewart, the NHS assistant director of public health to update Newsletter readers on the present position.

"A pandemic flu outbreak possibly occurs two or three times a century and is different from winter flu as there will be little immunity readily available in the community and a vaccine is unlikely to be available, certainly in the first few weeks of the outbreak. Consequently, many more people may become ill and there are likely to be more deaths.

Despite this, it is important to remember that the overwhelming majority of people who get flu recover without any input from healthcare services and that the best treatment is to go home, rest, keep warm and drink plenty of fluids. This is especially important during a pandemic outbreak when healthcare services are likely to be stretched. Self-care will be even more important.

During the pandemic, the PCT will be distributing anti-virals (tamiflu) to alleviate the symptoms of flu. This will be distributed via an NHS flu-line that will be activated when the pandemic is declared and only then will it be widely advertised and available.

People who have the symptoms, (or their friends / family on their behalf) will be able to ring the flu-line, when they will be asked about their symptoms and if they have flu, they will be given a Unique Reference Number (URN) which will be needed to pick up the anti-virals.

To ring the flu-line it is important that you KNOW YOUR NHS NUMBER. If you don't know your NHS number please ring the PCT on 020 8370 8219 and then keep it somewhere safe and handy.

Obviously, if someone has flu they may be too ill to collect their anti-virals so everyone is asked to identify at least two 'flu-friends' who will be able to collect anti-virals on their behalf. To collect the anti-virals the 'flu-friend' will need to know the URN and take identification to the anti-viral collection point. The locations of collection points will only be publicised if and when a pandemic flu is declared.

I should stress that these are only plans to be introduced when a pan-

Continued →

Fi ..the facts and figures

Fact No. 1

Enfield Primary Care Trust is currently spending £75.7 million a year on treating people who are overweight or have obesity problems. This figure is predicted to rise to £78.6 million in 2010 and £84.1 million in 2015 – unless we all do something about it.

Fact No. 2

The rates of obesity have doubled in the past 25 years with the greatest rate of increase being in the 55 - 64 age group.

Fact No. 3

Increasing fatness brings a range of associated illnesses including Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidaemia (high cholesterol), coronary artery disease and stroke, respiratory disorders, cancer, infertility, impotence, liver and gall bladder disease.

Fact No.4

Apart from the human costs of these diseases the financial cost to the NHS is significant; Obesity related problems cost the NHS £4.2 billion in 2007.to the Department of Health.

Fact No.5

If things continue at their current pace, the Government Office for Science warns that about 60 per cent of men, 50 per cent of women and 25 per cent of children will be obese by 2050.

Fact No.6

Enfield has the fifth highest level of obesity among children in London. 17.48 per cent of Enfield children are recorded as being obese – among the 32 primary care trusts in London, Enfield was ranked No.11 for the highest obesity rate in reception year.

Continued from column 2

demic flu outbreak is officially declared and I'm pleased that **David Oliver** already represents the Over 50s Forum on a special communications group we already have that is up and running. And I've no doubt we'll be looking to the Forum and other voluntary organisations to get our messages out to those more vulnerable and older people in the community who unfortunately are too often leading lonely and isolated lives"

Fighting the flab.....

Issues that should shock us into changing our lifestyle in 2009..

The solution seems so unbelievably simple: Stop eating as much and exercise more. Walk more often instead of taking the car. Obesity and being overweight is not something for the NHS and our GPs alone to tackle. Encouraging everyone to take part in exercise is a big part of the solution, making better and greater use of our leisure centres will also have a major impact on people's health.

Fighting the flab and having fun at the over 50s days at Edmonton Leisure Centre on Mondays, Southbury Leisure Centre on Wednesdays and Albany Leisure Centre on Fridays is a good way to start to be more active and playing a greater part in the local community.

Lastly, just imagine what new and better health services we could get for that £75 million currently being spent on treating overweight and obese people.

Among the candidates would be:

Increased numbers of GPs, district and school nurses, health visitors. Other parts of primary care - dentists, pharmacy, ophthalmologists could no doubt be expanded.

Screening for heart disease, diabetes, cancers, chlamydia (sexual health infections) could be extended. Sexual health services would be expanded.

End of Life care is an area that needs attention and no doubt would be expanded.

New and innovative schemes could be examined and with so much extra money available we doubt if there would be a service or population group that would not benefit in some way.

Watch your waist size

A large waistline can increase the risk of premature death for people who are not otherwise considered to be overweight, says a recent study involving more than 350,000 people in nine countries.

Men with waists measuring more than 47.2 inches were said to be more than twice as likely to die early than men with waists of less than 31.5 inches. The same was true for women with waistlines of more than 39.4 inches compared with those measuring 25.6 inches.

Professor Elio Riboli, from London's Imperial College said: *"We were surprised to see waist size having such a powerful effect on people's health and premature death. Accumulating excess fat around your middle can put your health at risk even if your weight is normal based on your body mass index scores."*

"If you have a large waist you probably need to increase the amount of exercise you do every day, avoid excess alcohol consumption and improve your diet."

The study also found that a body mass index (BMI) figure of 25.3 in men and 24.3 in women were associated with the lowest risk of death. Although the BMI figures have been used for years to determine whether people are overweight, scientists are now coming to the view that fat deposited between the hips and navel are a better indication of overall health than BMI.

Latest research shows that demand for super-sized menswear is growing as more people become overweight. Retailers have reported a 40 per cent increase in sales of men's clothes in sizes extra large and above in the last five years.

Poverty and old age contribute to obesity rise in Enfield

Commenting on a research study showing that Enfield had the fourth highest obesity rate in London, Dr Patrick Keating, chairman of Enfield's local medical committee, said: *"Enfield has a high elderly population - the national over-65 rate is 16 per cent and we are higher than that. As people get older they become less active and in some cases cannot walk so far. This becomes a vicious circle as the more obese they get, the less they exercise."*

"The relatively high poverty rate in Edmonton contributes to the problem. Poor people tend to eat food high in fat, which is maybe cheaper to buy than healthy food such as green beans and pulses."

Glenn Stewart, Primary Care Trust deputy director of public health, emphasised that growing levels of obesity were a nationwide problem - not just an Enfield matter and the solution lies in how the country responds to the need for changes in diet and exercise regimes.

"We need to change the culture of our everyday living. Too many people think that if they go anywhere, they have to be drive or be transported there. But in Holland a quarter of all trips by women aged 60 and over are on a bicycle. We need to encourage lifestyle changes like that".

.....and in China

All schools in China have recently been instructed to take their pupils for a jog every day to help boost their health - and patriotism!. Primary school pupils must run 1km (0.6 miles), junior school students 1.5km and senior students 2km. The Ministry of Education in China says that physical education plays an important role in moral education and plans to run the scheme up to the 60th anniversary of the Peoples Republic next year.

Expert help for long-term patients

This programme is for people with long term health conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, blood pressure, high cholesterol. It's a self - management course which runs for six weeks and each session lasts two and a half hours, and they are FREE. Courses are held across the borough and delivered by volunteer tutors who themselves have a long term health condition, and have been trained to deliver the programme.

It is designed to help people gain greater confidence in their ability to control symptoms and find new ways to reduce the negative effect their condition may have on their life. Course dates are:

Thursday 29 January to 5 March, 10.30 to 1.00pm at Community House, Fore Street, Edmonton.

Wednesday 6 May to 10 June, 1.30 - 4.00pm at Cedar House, St Michael's Primary Care Centre, Chase Side, Enfield.

Wednesday 7th October to 11 November, 1.30 - 4.00 at Christchurch Annexe, Chalk Lane, Cockfosters.

For further enquires, please call Jacqui Marshom on 020 8370 8210.

Blood tests made easier

We have been regularly discussing with the Primary Care Trust the need to improve blood test facilities to try and avoid the trek and often long nightmare wait at Chase Farm Hospital. We were shocked to hear that as many as one in ten patients do not keep their phlebotomy appointments. This could be because some GP surgeries do not offer any facilities at all, others only offer afternoon appointments, which is off-putting to say the least, if you have been fasting overnight.

To help make blood tests easier, any patient registered with an Enfield surgery can now book an appointment direct with the Forest Road or Evergreen primary care centres. This only applies to blood tests requested by your GP – not by a hospital. Appointments are available at Forest Road Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 1pm and at Evergreen just Tuesday and Thursday between 9am and 12.45. To make an appointment at Forest call 020 8344 3150 and Evergreen 020 8887 8300 ask for blood test booking service and make sure to take the form from your GP.

The first hour of each morning session at Forest is reserved for patients who have fasted or are having the glucose tolerance test. These tests are particularly crucial for older people as they help the early diagnosis of many illnesses. From the one blood test, several small samples are taken for different checks such as diabetes, cholesterol, prostate etc. The blood test results are then sent to your own GP within five to seven days – or the doctor can obtain them more urgently from the laboratory if required.

We appreciate that both Forest and Evergreen are in the Edmonton Green area, but there are good public transport links to both centres and we hope more people will take advantage of the services they offer – particularly if it helps reduce that 10 per cent of people not keeping appointments when the doctor has advised a blood test.

Your good morning smiles

“Growing old is great. It’s like getting drunk. Everyone around you gets better looking”, Billy Connolly

Last word on George

A man wanders up to the White House in Washington on a cold, sunny day in January. He tells the marine on duty: ***“I would like to go in and meet President Bush”***. ***“Sir”***, says the marine. ***“Mr Bush is no longer president and no longer resides here.”*** The man just says ***“OK”*** and walks away.

Next day the same man approaches the White House and says to the same marine. ***“Excuse me, but can I go in and meet president Bush?”*** The marine patiently gives the same answer. ***“Sir, as I said yesterday, Mr Bush is no longer president and no longer resides here”***. The same routine happens the next day and the next at which point the marine loses his rag. ***“I’ve told you not once but four times now that Mr Bush is no longer president and no longer lives here, don’t you understand?”***

“Oh, I understand OK,” says the man. ***“I just love hearing you say it.”***

Final say on nutrition.....

After an exhaustive review of the research literature, here’s the final word on nutrition and health.:

1. Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than we do.
2. Mexicans eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks
3. Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks
4. Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks
5. Germans drink beer and eat lots of sausages and suffer fewer heart attacks.
6. The French eat foie-gras, full fat cheese and drink red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks

Conclusion: ***Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.***

.....on the other hand

perhaps we should drink warm water,

The Chinese and Japanese drink hot tea with their meals, not cold water, maybe it is time we adopted their drinking habit while eating.

It is nice to have a cold drink after a meal. However, cold water will solidify the food you have just consumed. It will slow down digestion. Once this ‘sludge’ reacts with the acid, it will break down and be absorbed by the intestine faster than the solid food. It will line the intestine. Very soon, this will turn into fats. So perhaps it is best to drink hot soup or warm water after a meal.

Tips on heart attacks.....

Not every heart attack symptom is going to see the left arm hurting. Be aware of intense pain in the jaw line. You may never have the first chest pain during the course of a heart attack. Nausea and intense sweating are also common symptoms. 60% of people who have a heart attack while they are asleep do not wake up. Pain in the jaw can wake you from a sound sleep. Let’s be careful and be aware. The more we know, the better chance we could survive.

.....and scalds

If you burn or scald yourself at home, particularly with hot liquids, apply toothpaste generously to the burnt skin. It has a quick and proven ability to heal and remove pain—a tip from a totally reliable Forum member who was told this by a nurse and has found the toothpaste invaluable on two separate occasions—so keep a spare tube in your kitchen!

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Too many older people at home, alone and lonely

For the first time ever, more than a third of older people in the UK, including half of all women aged over 65, now live alone and new research from Help the Aged (**HtA**) has revealed that nearly a million say they are often or always lonely. With 2.5 million pensioners currently living below the poverty line **HtA** is also warning that older people living alone and struggling financially are most likely to experience severe loneliness.

New **HtA** research reveals that nearly half a million older people leave their house only once a week or less, and around 300,000 are effectively prisoners in their own homes as they need assistance to get out and about, but do not have anyone to help them on a regular basis.

Although for many it is an incredibly busy and sociable time, nearly one and a half million older people say they do not look forward to Christmas because they feel particularly lonely at that time of year.

Amy Swan, **HtA** policy manager for social inclusion said: *"It's such a tragic state of affairs when older people tell us that that the only person they see from week to week is the postman."*

"Isolation and loneliness are not inevitable side-effects of the ageing process, but the life events associated with older age can leave people vulnerable. Poverty, bereavement, far-flung families and failing health can all play a part, and while living alone is for some a preferred life choice, for others it can be one of the key risk factors leading to someone becoming isolated and also lonely, particularly for older people."

"Once the clocks go back and the nights draw in, older people can feel even more cut off from society, but we know that something as simple as getting out of the house to meet and chat with other people can have a lasting effect".

Winter deaths rise

Official figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) have revealed an increase in the number of pensioners dying during the winter months December to March. Last year's figure for this four month period was 25,300 extra deaths in England and Wales, compared with any other time of the year.

And the 2007/08 figures were seven per cent higher than the 23,740 in the same months for 2006/7. The ONS points out that in countries such as Finland, Denmark and Austria – countries which regularly experience below freezing temperatures – older people are more likely to stay healthy through the winter months than their British counterparts.

With fuel bills showing no sign of easing, the December - March winter death figures for 2008/9 are likely to show yet another jump as many pensioners are compelled to choose between heating or eating.

Confusing help for pensioners

"Pensioners are among the biggest winners from the Budget", said The Times, which once had a reputation as THE newspaper of record. So in their report of the November 24 pre-budget statement by Chancellor Alistair Darling they reported that the pension credit, which is the minimum income guaranteed to pensioners, will increase in April from £124 to £130 a week for individuals and from £189 to £198 for couples.

The Times went on to say: *"Every pensioners will also get a £60 one-off payment, rising to £120 for couples, to help pay for energy bills. In January the basic state pension for a single person will also rise from £90.70 to £95.25"*. And Harriet Harman, the Leader of the House of Commons, taking Prime Minister's questions on December 17 said: *"The extra Christmas bonus is important and bringing forward the increase in the state retirement pension to the beginning of the year is important."*

However, according to an official Treasury document, the £60 one-off payment is merely the equivalent of bringing forward the state pension increase from April to January - it doesn't mean it is bringing forward the actual date of the pension increase. So you will get the £60 in January and then in April the pension will rise by £4.55 a week (single) and £6.25 (couples). *"We couldn't bring the pension payment forward for administrative reasons"*, said the Treasury. *"So we're paying the £4.55 in advance for 13 weeks which covers the £60"*.

No doubt the media - and Miss Harman - were misled by the original announcement which does seem to be another case of the classic double counting technique that this government has excelled in to make it seem that there's more money than there really is coming to pensioners.

In addition to the above increases, we will still get the £10 Christmas bonus and there's an extra £100 million to help older people insulate their homes. Personal tax allowances will rise in April 2009 as follows: up to age 65 from £6035 to £6475, 65 -74 £9030 to £9490 and 75+ £9180 to £9640.

The National Pensioners Convention said the pre-budget report "is not going far enough, fast enough" to help end the recession in retirement felt by Britain's 11 million pensioners. "It is now widely accepted that pensioner inflation is double the official figures because older people spend a higher proportion of their income on those items with the fastest rising prices".

Pensioners, it is estimated, will fail to claim at least £5 billion this year – yes, £5 billion – that is rightfully theirs. In 2006-7, £2.8 billion in pension credit went unclaimed by 1.8 million over 60s. Another £770 million should have been paid in housing benefit and up to £1.5 billion in council tax rebates.

We intend trying to enlist the help of GPs to ask their elderly patients whether they are claiming their rights and we can all do more to alert friends, neighbours, Forum members on what is on offer. You can contact the joint pensions service and council's benefits team for full free and confidential advice on all your entitlements on 020 8899 3212.

Random Round-up

Poppy success

Peter Kingham, president of the Royal British Legion, Holtwhites Hill branch, has sent his profound thanks to the eight volunteers who came forward after he spoke at a Forum meeting and helped his branch raise more than £27,000 for the annual Poppy Day appeal. "They were not only a great help, but were a cheery group of people who enjoyed collecting quite an amount of money - and they asked us to call on them again next year", said Peter.

Congratulations

Forum member Bill Bossom has received the coveted special award for his outstanding contribution to the Enfield in Bloom campaign over many years. Bill has won the best commercial garden award no less than eight times and he looks after many flower beds in the Borough, such as those at Southgate Circus, Broad Walk and Hedge Lane.

Bill's phenomenal list of achievements includes creating the rose garden at Capel Manor, Millfield House and at various bowls clubs. He created the Enfield in Bloom rose called Preservation to mark the 60th anniversary of the Enfield Preservation Society. Forum members gave Bill a hearty round of applause at the November Civic Centre meeting.

Thanks

We sent our sincere appreciation to the Tranquillus Masonic Lodge for their £100 donation to our funds. The gift came through Forum member Michael Woodward who said how

impressed he was with the work we carry out and would like to support our efforts. We'd much appreciate if other Forum members with links to organisations with charitable funds would consider nominating us for a similar donation.

Missing something?

There are nine million deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. And there's another four million of us with loss of hearing and doing nothing about it. You can get a free hearing check by making a local rate call to 0845 600 5555. It is worth five minutes of your time to realise what words and sounds you may be missing. And our advice is see your GP and get referred to the audiology unit at Chase Farm - don't be tempted by the private hearing aid sharks!! One firm recently advertised the price of its hearing aid batteries - but then refused to give a price range for the actual hearing aid which we know can go up to £4,000!!

Intune with insurance

We've had favourable reports from Forum members who have dealt with Intune for car, travel and home insurance. Calls to them are free on 0800 022 3174 (car) 3175 (home) 3176 (travel). Intune is a new financial services company with no upper age limit and it is a subsidiary of Help the Aged. Lines are open 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 3pm on Saturday. Please quote "wqtu" when you call.

New Keep warm and well booklet

Enfield Council has published a new guide called 'Keep Warm and Comfortable'. It contains loads of information about keeping warm and healthy during the winter months. There is advice on how to lower your fuel bills, tips for keeping your home warm and a lot of useful information about claiming extra grants and benefits. The guide also explains where to get more advice and has telephone numbers and website addresses.

As the weather gets colder, it is important for people to keep warm at home. In cold weather, there may be a higher risk of stroke because if you get too cold, your blood thickens as the temperature drops. More pressure is put on your heart, and blood is pushed around at a faster rate to keep the body's temperature up. This means it is best to keep at least the room you are living and sleeping in at a comfortable level."

It is recommended the room temperature should be kept above 16°C (61°F). To help you know how warm your room is there are a limited number of free home thermometers available. Reduced mobility, low income and poor quality housing are just some of the factors which can increase vulnerability.

The council's booklet '**Keep Warm and Comfortable**' is free and worth keeping handy for useful tips on how to find out more information and help with paying fuel bills, keeping warm, keeping safe and even keeping finances in check."

Copies of '**Keep Warm and Comfortable**' are available from the Civic Centre, libraries and various community venues, or go online at www.enfield.gov.uk If you want a copy of the booklet or claim your FREE thermometer (while stocks last) please call the customer service centre on 020 8379 1000.

Vote Arnos Park - Enfield's hidden gem

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has launched a scheme to regenerate ten open spaces and Londoners are being given the chance to vote on which ones will get a £400,000 grant. 47 of London's parks, one of which is **Arnos Park**, have been selected as candidates for a cash boost to make them safer and more enjoyable.

If Enfield Council receives £400,000 for **Arnos Park** it will develop a newly located children's playground. The council will also be working to bring **Pymmes Brook** to life by working in partnership with the Environment Agency to make the waterway more attractive. This will be done by creating picnic areas, attracting new wildlife by selective planting, and generally making it easier for residents to enjoy the flowers, trees and wildlife by the waterway.

Work will also begin to restore the park's grand gateway. Lighting will also be installed across the park's main footpath, which links to Arnos Grove underground station. This will improve safety for all park users.

You can vote for Arnos Park by clicking on:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/parksvote/region/north/arnos.jsp>

or you can text "Parks" and your postcode to 62967 and

you can order a postal vote by calling 020 7983 4100.

Voting closes on Friday 30 January 2009. Please get all your family, friends and colleagues to vote as well!

This Newsletter is for general information only and is not intended to be advice to anyone. You are recommended to seek competent professional advice before doing anything based on the contents of this Newsletter.

Shopmobility needs support

There's still a dark financial cloud hanging over the Shopmobility service which gives people with limited mobility access to the shopping centres in Enfield Town and Edmonton. The scheme was only saved for a year at the eleventh hour and we see nothing in the council's 2009/10 budget consultation document to provide further funding.

So it is important to get the message out that the Shopmobility service is not just for registered disabled people. Anyone can use the service who is restricted by age, illness or accident, whether it is permanent or temporary. Powered scooters and wheelchairs are loaned for two hours to anyone who has difficulty getting around to shop.

The service is free and operates Monday to Friday from 9am –5pm from Enfield Civic Centre in Silver Street, in the town and from 9.30 –5pm Tuesday to Saturday from 4 Monmouth Road (behind Peacocks) at Edmonton Green.

Booking in advance is recommended by calling 020 379 1193 and although it may be possible to get a scooter without doing so, that depends on one being available. First time users are given help in using the scooter or wheelchair. You'll need to register and take two forms of identification giving your name and address with you on your first visit. Once registered you can take out a vehicle whenever you need one.



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Did you know?

Every month 50,000 people reach the age of 50 and the over 50 population is now estimated to be 20 million strong in the UK.

Monopoly was invented in America in 1934 and its makers estimate that 500 million people have played the game worldwide – the longest recorded game lasted 70 days!

More than 520,000 people have now received a free passport under the government scheme giving them to everyone born on or before 2 September 1929, in recognition of their efforts in the second world war.

There are 1,514 doors and 760 windows in Buckingham Palace and all the windows have to be cleaned every six weeks.

Isaac Newton invented the cat flap.

Windscreen wipers, laser printers and bulletproof vests were all invented by women.

The number of mobile phone users will this year outnumber non-users for the first time.

Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our ears and nose never stop growing.

11 out of the 12 men to have walked on the moon were in the Boy Scouts.

More good morning smiles

Corny corner

Q. How many teeth does a slug have?

A: 57,000 little teeth on their tongues which are similar to a rasp or a file

Q. How big was the largest pancake ever made?

A: It measured 15.01 metres wide and weighed 3 tonnes and was made (and eaten) in Rochdale in 1994.

Q. How many shoes did Imelda Marcos, wife of the former Philippines president have when she fled the country?

A: 1,060 pairs of shoes plus 35 mink coats, 508 gowns and 888 handbags.
Perhaps that explains the revolution - but don't call your wife Imelda when she comes home from a shopping trip!

Two kippers were having a chat. First kipper said: *"I hear they're going to ban smoking.*" Second kipper replied: *"That don't worry me, I'm already cured."*

Christmas crackers

Q. What is a duck's favourite dance

A. The quackstep

Q. Where does Thursday come before Wednesday?

A. In the dictionary

Q. What do you get if you cross an elephant with a mouse?

A. Great big holes in your skirting board

Q. Why do birds fly south in the winter?

A. Because it's too far to walk

Q. What fish is famous?

A. A starfish

New deal at leisure centres

Enfield Council is planning to introduce free swimming sessions for the over 60s and the under 16s in line with a Government-funded scheme under which LBE will receive more than £222,000. Signing up to both schemes will give the council an additional £65,000 in project development costs and it will be able to bid for a share of some £60 million to improve swimming pools throughout the country. Some 82 percent of local councils in England have now signed up to take part in this £140 million Government scheme.

The Forum obviously welcomes the scheme since it is part of our long-standing campaign to get more older people involved in healthy exercise to get fitter, lose weight and avoid for as long as possible the many ailments that coincide with the ageing process.

Enfield Leisure Centres is still in liquidation and to avoid any worsening of their financial situation, it is important that we encourage Forum members to retain their leisure centre membership by offering them a better deal than just the free swim under the Government scheme. So from the start of the year Forum members who either pay a monthly or annual fee will also be able to swim and use the poolside steam and sauna facilities.

They will also have access to the fitness suites in any of the leisure centres; have access to any fitness class such as pilates and yoga; be able to play table tennis and/or badminton once a day; have free entry to the over 50s days at Southbury and Edmonton leisure centres; and they will get discounts on any health and beauty treatment. None of this will be available to the **"free swim only"** customers.

Forum members signing up for the new deal will pay £30 a month by direct debit (normal charge £38) or £300 for 12 months (a saving of £80 on the fee for non-Forum members) Newsletter readers are urged to sign the questionnaire with this issue to help both the Forum and Enfield Leisure Centres provide the best deal in promoting healthier lifestyles among older people.

Sayings to remember

"If you can look back on your life with contentment, you have one of man's most precious gifts - a selective memory" - Jim Fiebig, author.

Notices from our affiliates

Workers Educational Association

WEA hold two hour weekly sessions at Enfield Baptist Church, Cecil Road, or the United Reformed Church in Fox Lane, N13. A daytime course: the Story of Prague starts on Friday, 16 January. The WEA course on Art in the Age of Reason continues at the beginning of the New Year and you can also further your interest in subjects as diverse as Relationships in Literature, The Byzantine Empire, Geological Wonders of the World, Characterising Traits in Music and Art and Architecture in Renaissance Italy.

For further information pick up a copy of our brochure in your local library or contact 020 8882 0615 or 020 8882 0207.

Enfield Diabetes Support Group

Monthly Tuesday evening meetings 7.30 - 9pm at the Diabetes Centre, Chase Farm Hospital. Further details call: Ruth Waxman 8360 4821 or David Petts 8245 0948.

Southgate Weld Lawn Tennis Club

Over 50s membership special offer – members wishing to play weekdays can join the Weld on the Walker Ground for 18 months until March 31 2010 for £75.

Membership includes:- no joining, no booking fee: Join player's circle on Mondays 11-1, and Fridays 11-1, Courts also free Wed morning and Fridays after 2 p.m. Discount on group coaching sessions (Saturdays). Free membership to British Tennis until 2012 – LTA newsletter Entry into the 2009 Club Wimbledon draw.

Any member wishing to join and also play on weekends and evenings - special offer of 18 months for £125- other membership categories available on request.

Contact Denise Ghandi on 8886-3632.

Ellenborough Table Tennis Club

Special sessions for over 50s, Monday & Tuesday 10am-12 noon, Thursday 1.30pm- 3.30pm. Based at Kimberley Gardens, a short walk from Enfield Town station.

Open to non-members at £2.50 per session. Details from **Sylvia Tyler tel: 01673 843655**. Friendly atmosphere, not too competitive, refreshments and bar.

Get Active in 2009 with Enfield Leisure Centres

Our all-inclusive Aspire membership now includes use of the sauna and steam facilities and racket sports such as badminton and table tennis. If you would like to take advantage of the special rates we provide for Over 50s Forum members then don't wait any longer.

For just £30 per month you can have unlimited use of the following activities at all Enfield Leisure Centres: Swimming, Fitness Gym, Fitness Classes, Sauna & Steam, Over 50s Activity Days, Racket Sports, Discounts on Health & Beauty Treatments.

All this if you take up the £30 monthly membership. Or get a bigger discount and pay in advance for 12 months at £300.

For further information on our Aspire memberships simply drop in to one of our centres and see a membership sales advisor or phone our membership line on 020 8245 5191.

Make 2009 a healthy and active year