

HORNSEY PENSIONERS

www.hornseypag.org.uk

Hornsey Pensioners Action Group serves pensioners within Hornsey & Wood Green and other neighbouring parliamentary constituencies

September 2020 – Bulletin 6

Report of protest at Alexandra Palace July 30th

'Don't Switch Us Off'



It is now nearly a month since the withdrawal of the concessionary TV licence for those over 75. 3.7 million UK pensioners over 75 now have to pay for their TV licence from 1st August; only those over 75s on Pension Credit will get the free TV licence.

Members of the Hornsey Pensioners Action Group and Haringey Over 50's Forum held a protest on July 30th saying 'Don't Switch Us Off'. We chose to protest outside of the BBC TV Tower at Alexandra Palace. After all, the blue plaque celebrates the inauguration of the world's first regular BBC TV High Definition Service on November 2nd 1936.

We protested that the government has broken its contract with pensioners. The concessionary licence is one of a range of universal pensioners benefits, awarded to offset the sad fact that the risk of poverty among UK older people ranked 4th out of 27 EU countries, caused by our state pension remaining the least adequate in Europe.

The cost of the concession must be met by the government, not the BBC. It was the earlier Conservative government led by Theresa May that imposed responsibility for meeting the cost upon the BBC. The National Pensioners Convention demands that Boris Johnson takes back responsibility and reinstates the concessionary licence.

The pandemic is not over; television is essential for isolated older people. We must keep the concession and make sure that the BBC is funded adequately.



Have you applied for Pension Credit?

See the August Bulletin: Call the Pension Credit claim line on 0800 99 1234.

The article that was published on August 20th used the NPC poster. If you did not get 'The Broadway' that week, our article can be downloaded from the website www.hornseypag.org.uk

'Loneliness in Lockdown': the August 25th online Zoom Seminar was organised by London & South East TUC Pensioners' Network, with speaker Dr Jenny Groarke, Lecturer in Health Psychology, Queen's University Belfast.

Janet has a copy of Dr Groarke's PowerPoint presentation. Her research with subjects aged 18-87 during Lockdown investigated the prevalence of loneliness and what helped reduce loneliness. The study revealed that loneliness reduced with age. 3% of those over 65 were classified as lonely, compared with 41% aged 18-24.

A Cashless Society- Another effect of COVID-19?

To avoid contact with COVID-19, we are advised to wash our hands after handling coins or notes. This is sensible, but some vendors want us to use contactless cards, or to pay by bank transfer, even for train tickets.

Is this the future? Will there be consequences? Are there some people that cannot use bank cards, and should we campaign to safeguard currency in the form of coins and notes?

The New Normal



The message is clear: 'Take Care!'

Coronavirus is still with us, and we are right to be worried. Few of us have confidence in the efficiency of tracking, tracing and isolating new cases, especially when these are asymptomatic. Then there are pressures to lift lockdown to help the economy, to keep people in work. It is particularly difficult for those in poorly paid insecure jobs, or have no job at all and the government offers them little help, even when told to self-isolate.

Also, all of us, especially younger people, yearn for the company of friends and relatives. Some of us live alone. We wonder how long this will go on and now we must cope with colder weather.

We cannot expect a vaccine to be available this winter, so we have to adjust to the 'New Normal'. We must continue with precautions: hand washing, masks and social distancing.

Recall last November when we watched out for the Office of National Statistics (ONS) announcement of the number of excess winter deaths (EWD) for the previous winter. These are mainly older people dying from cold related illnesses. See www.ons.gov.uk. The situation is now complicated; COVID-19 deaths for older people can be related to underlying conditions, and there will be patients who are not infected with COVID-19, who become at greater risk while NHS services are under strain.

Each November, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) reports the number of Excess Winter Deaths (EWD) for the previous winter. On November 27th, it was announced that for the winter of 2018-2019, the number of excess winter deaths (EWD) was 23,200. It had been worse for the year before at 50,100. These are mostly for those aged over 65, mainly from respiratory diseases and women aged over 85 predominate. The Office of National Statistics cannot specify causes for these excess deaths. We can only guess that contributing factors are fuel poverty, poorly insulated homes, and an underfunded NHS struggling to cope with winter illnesses.

This November, we are unlikely to be able to process from Trafalgar Square to Downing Street as we did on November 27th 2019. It was a nasty wet day!

Free Online Wellbeing Workshops for Over 50s in Haringey

If you are new to zoom and need help getting in touch, contact Val for help.

Groundwork London and Haringey Reach and Connect are offering five **FREE** well-being workshops for all residents aged 50 and over. These will take place on-line every Wednesday in September.

The workshops will be delivered by a range of professionals and cover interesting topics that will help you stay fit, well and active.

1. **How to keep your mind healthy** - Wednesday 2nd September.
 2. **Food growing on a windowsill** - Wednesday 9th September.
 3. **Volunteering for older people** - Wednesday 16th September.
 4. **Stretch your way to fitness** - Wednesday 23rd September. (This session involves light exercise)
 5. **Becoming digitally savvy** - Wednesday 30th September.
- Sign up and attend to all five sessions to receive your goody pack and certificate of participation.
 - Limited places available, booking required **by 31st August 2020**.

To find out more and to register visit: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/five-ways-to-wellbeing-tickets-115870859861>

We hope you enjoy taking part!

Val Chaggar: Programme Manager Haringey Reach and Connect

- Email: val@reachandconnect.net

- Tel: 020 3196 1905

- Mobile: 07308 965835

We are awaiting news from Hornsey Church as to how and when we can hold our next live meeting

Two Generations

This letter was sent to Ann from Hayley Cannon. Please send comments; the committee will be in touch with Hayley.

My name is Hayley and I'm the Partnerships Director at Two Generations. I recently spoke with **Gordon Peters (Haringey Over 50's Forum)** and he suggested I reach out to you regarding the work we do. Two Generations are part of the social prescribing network and would love to connect with you to discuss how we are reducing isolation across the country. We've seen a big rise in enquiries recently in light of COVID-19, and would like to see if we could specifically help you in your area.

Two Generations is a community organisation that aims to address three key social issues:

- Reducing loneliness for older people.
- Increasing the independence of older people, delaying their entry into care and reducing dependence on the NHS and council run services.
- Reducing accommodation costs for younger people.

We do this through a Homeshare arrangement at no cost to GP's, the NHS, councils or the public purse. Younger people get to live in an area that they like for a much more affordable price, in return for offering companionship and a few hours a week of household chores for the older person (e.g. online shopping, gardening, helping book appointments). We have extensive COVID-19 protocols to manage the risk around new people being introduced and then living together. I have attached our brochure and a health professionals' information pack, and you can also find out more about us at our website: www.twogenerations.co.uk.

The matching can be both bespoke to communities and highly localised. For example, we recently matched a Syrian refugee who has won international recognition for his work in public health, and who loves cooking, with an older gentleman who wanted some meals cooked for him.

We're part of the national organisation, **Homeshare UK**; and perform a 5 stage vetting process on our younger people, including detailed applications, video interviews, Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks and referencing. We would be more than happy to answer any questions and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards, Hayley Cannon, Partnership Director.

For the booklet **Email:** hayley@twogenerations.co.uk or **Telephone:** 03333 4477 38

Lauritz suggests that we check out what support is available in Haringey. Visit: <http://www.haricare.haringey.gov.uk> and <https://www.bridgerenewaltrust.org.uk/haringey-service-directory>

The committee will approach councillors to ask how those who are not on email can access this information.

Travel Enquiries

Jacqueline Stevens has offered to answer any questions.

She is an Engagement Officer at Transport for London | City Planning | Local Communities & Partnerships

- **Mobile:** 0772 0995975 | **Email:** jacquelinestevens@tfl.gov.uk

Cash payments: Jacqueline reports that DLR stations do **not** now accept cash payments, except for those stations serving local hospitals.

New app, Tfl Go: This is available for Apple devices for help in planning journeys. You can download the app here: apps.apple.com/us/app or from tfl.gov.uk/go (Android is coming later.)

Removal of the under 18s free travel: As part of our funding agreement with Government, we were asked to bring forward proposals to temporarily suspend free travel for Under 18s. Tfl are discussing how the Government's requirement is to be implemented with the Department for Transport, Department for Education and London Councils.

Suspension of Freedom Pass concession during peak hours: This is to comply with social distancing. We must make sure that this is a temporary suspension.

War Stories 3 - Fred Howe



Many of us watched the BBC Two series, 'Britain's Greatest Generation'. The series highlighted the experiences of people from all social classes and walks of life, and included both combatants and workers. *It made me think of my own family.*

My brother Fred, who turned 100 in July 2019, was a non-combatant, but nevertheless found himself far from home in North Africa. Employed at Sheerness Dockyard as a qualified electrician, Fred's reserved work prevented his being called up, but he was a headstrong red-head and was tempted to take up a well-paid post as junior electrical officer on a ship – a Jamaica Planter. Merchant shipping casualties were high, so it was lucky he gave up that idea. Instead, he remained a Dockyard employee and accepted a placement in Alexandria in charge of the maintenance of ships' compasses, including gyro compasses.

Fred was given 2 to 3 days' notice to get his passport and book transport. Aged 23 he set off for Glasgow on November 5th 1942. A fellow passenger, a reverend gentleman, told him that this was his second attempt; he had been rescued after the earlier ship was sunk off the coast of Ireland. Reports were that an incoming convoy into Liverpool had suffered 60% loss of ships through U Boat action.

Fred's journey took 2 months. At first he was on a regular ship having his own cabin and he remembers crossing the date-line in rough seas.

The Cape was rounded and he transferred onto a troop ship at Durban, but now 5 to a cabin. After passing through the Suez Canal for Port Said, he reached Alexandria on December 31st 1942. At all stops he needed to find his own lodgings, and had the usual Dockyard pay with an overseas allowance.

In Alexandria, Fred had responsibility for the maintenance of compasses on all sorts of vessels. To reach the ships, a felucca, a dinghy with sails, had to be hired and the skipper paid. Magnetic compasses were housed in binnacles on deck in wood, well away from metal, whereas Gyro compasses work below deck and were safer from bombardment.

Alexandria is mentioned as the place for troops to relax and socialise, and Fred was certainly not idle. He studied, taking a postal course on electrical engineering technology. This gave him a promotion as second class draughtsman (clerical work) in the Drawing Office in preparation for his return.

He also found romance. In October 1944, Fred married a girl from a local family. He returned to Sheerness with both a wife and a 1 year old baby boy, worrying what his mother would say. But of course, she was overjoyed to welcome them. As a 5 year old sibling I remember that happy home-coming.

Unlike many of his peers, there was no sad ending for Fred. He went on to have 4 more children, and pursued a successful career as an innovative engineer.

Fred Howe is Janet Shapiro's brother.

He was 100 on July 30th 2019.



Key Contacts: Ann Anderson 020 8340 8335

Pamela Jefferys 020 8444 0732

Janet Shapiro 07804 936 139 (text) or janet.rmshapiro@gmail.com