

HORNSEY PENSIONERS

www.hornseypag.org.uk

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

April 2021 - Bulletin 4



Daffodils in Priory Rd

We hope you have already sent off your **2021 census return!**

Don't forget to be ready to **vote on Thursday 6th May** for:

- ◇ Mayor of London- pink ballot paper
- ◇ Constituency member- yellow ballot paper
- ◇ London wide Assembly member- orange ballot paper

Members lost: Barbara Paul recently passed away and Esther Bhagundas late last year. Our thoughts are with their families and friends.

Pamela Jefferys' alert on the **sale of Mary Feilding Care Home, Highgate** where Hetty Bower, our founding member and Britain's oldest anti-war campaigner, died aged 108 in 2013. Some of the present residents of over 100 years old have 3 months to find a new home. See M.P. Catherine West's petition www.catherinewest.org.uk/save-mary-feilding-guild to halt the plans.

A Caring Future?

Social care under the microscope – summary of a recent zoom meeting

Gordon Peters outlined the social care crisis. Since 2010, cuts have meant 1.5 million people no longer receive home care, nor meals-on-wheels and 40% of the budget for social care has been cut in Haringey. Reducing preventative care meant even more problems in the future.

A better future is possible. Social care is less than 1% of GDP. Raising it to 2%, nearer the European average, would provide a much better service. Quite affordable if the government put their mind to it (less than Track and Trace!). The extra would allow the abolition of means-testing, improved salaries for carers and support for independent living.

His clinching argument was that economic benefits alone were three times this cost. Higher wages for carers spent locally would generate jobs, and good social services decrease the need for residential care.

Andrew Dobbie, Unison, said there were 1.5 million workers in Adult Social Care, many older women. One in four BAME women work in this sector. 70% are paid less than the Real Living Wage, 24% are on zero-hour contracts. The result - 30% turnover of staff in a year. Not good for the carers, nor for those they look after.

Judy Downey, Relatives and Residents Association, said care sector organisations, mostly private companies, often run by hedge funds, offer very limited staff training. For Judy, a national mandatory training scheme coupled with robust inspection would result in better care and a career structure for carers. The care sector had three times as many beds as the NHS. A national care service was required. Governments have often promised new plans for social care but have never delivered. The recent budget promised budget cuts for the NHS, a recipe to make things worse.

A daughter talked about care for her father, explaining, care for the profits of the care company outweighed the care for her father or his carers.

Sarah James, Cabinet Lead Adults & Health, Chair Health & Wellbeing Board, outlined the great difficulty caused by the reduced budgets and the challenges of COVID-19.

Mary Langan, Chair Severe & Complex Autism & Learning Disability Group (SCALD), spoke movingly of her own and others experiences of dealing with family members with a disability.

Peray Ahmet, Chair Haringey Overview & Scrutiny Committee, outlined the role of her committee in improving services.

Summary by Alan Morton of the 4th March meeting, set up by Hornsey and Wood Green CLP/ Haringey KONP.

Pension Payback?

The DWP announced at the start of March 2021 that they will be checking hundreds of thousands of pension records to see if people have been underpaid. This means that some married women, widows and those aged over 80 should get payments without having to take any action. But other groups, such as married women whose husband turned 65 before 17th March 2008 and women who divorced after pension age, will still need to contact the department if they want their pension to be reassessed.

Phone: **0800 731 0469** (expect long delays)
www.gov.uk/contact-pensions-service

Befriending Opportunities

Reach and Connect through **The Silver Line**. The only free, confidential helpline specifically for lonely and isolated older people. They are able to offer telephone friendship and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call: **020 3196 1905**

Opening Doors London

Would you Like to receive a regular phone call? Our telephone befriending service is free and open to LGBT+ people over 50.

Visit: befriending@openingdoorslondon.org.uk or
Call: **020 7239 0400**

Royal Mail Scam



Royal Mail has warned people to watch out for a parcel scam doing the rounds across the country.

The scams are circulating by text and email. They tell recipients to make payments to ensure their packages can get delivered.

The text states: "Royal mail: your package has a £2.99 shipping fee, to pay this now visit."

It then includes a seemingly legitimate Royal Mail website, but it is all a ruse, with phishers and scammers ready to pounce and siphon your details. Please be careful to avoid this scam.

The Haringey Support Fund

Help with basic living needs:

- ◇ items necessary for day to day living such as food and essential household items
- ◇ utilities including gas and electricity reconnection
- ◇ help with essential clothing and footwear (in exceptional circumstances)

Items to help you remain in your home or when moving into a new home:

- ◇ essential appliances and white goods such as a cooker, fridge, freezer or washing machine
- ◇ bedding, mattresses and some types of furniture
- ◇ cooking equipment, or other essential kitchen items

This applies to adult Haringey residents in receipt of qualifying benefits (or about to be) or on a low income, defined as £350 per week for a single person, or £500 as a family.

Contact Email: connectedcommunities@haringey.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8489 4431

Haringey website: www.Haringey.gov.uk/HaringeySupportFund



Crouch End Newspaper Seller Retires

After 42 years, Crouch End newspaper seller, Paul Saxton, is retiring. The 71-year-old has run the newspaper stall from a wooden cabin on Crouch End Broadway for 7 days a week since 1978. Waking at 3.15am and going to bed at 7.30pm he is a key fixture of the community. His father and grandfather also ran the stall.

Check out the **Lauderdale House website**

www.lauderdalehouse.org.uk

and find in its history section:
A childhood shelter from the Blitz
where Joy Wilmann revisits her childhood home.

'Profit-ization' of GP surgeries in N. London



In the formation of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948, family doctors, (dentists, opticians and pharmacists) stayed as self-employed professionals with a contract to the NHS to provide services but not so that patients did not pay directly. The family doctor, or General Practitioner (GP), was the point of contact for most patients. The GP could treat patients or refer them to other parts of the NHS for specialised care.

AT Medics was established in 2004 by six NHS GPs. They operated 49 GP surgeries across London, providing services to around 370,000 people, with 900 employees. The owners of the AT Medics company have now sold them to Operose Health Ltd, the UK arm of the large US healthcare insurance provider, Centene Corporation. Operose was set up in 2020 to bring together Centene's subsidiaries in the UK. Centene is now the largest single private provider of NHS care in England. Its main aim will be to create profit, not patient care.

At least six of these surgeries are in the North Central London area.

They include: In **Haringey**: St Ann's Road Surgery - **see photo of demonstration on the 19th of March**

The decision to hand over the running of the practices was taken, in what is considered a covert manner, by the North Central Commissioning Group (CCG) without local councils being informed. This is considered to be a disgraceful, underhand way to manage our NHS. We want such private health care OUT of our NHS.

What can be done? Information and Petition: <https://weownit.org.uk/act-now/stop-sell-49-gp-practices>

The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

Sent by Andrea Wersof in the Haringey Local area

When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light.

For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

War Story 8 - Memories of War By Elli Georgiadou



I was born, the youngest of four children, in November 1947 in the small Cypriot village of Sia (pronounced as Sha in the Greek Cypriot dialect). The village (of 200 inhabitants at the time) is nestled at the foot of the Troodos Mountain and is surrounded by olive groves and pine trees. There was no water other than water from the communal well, no electricity, no books, and no toys. We played imaginary games, we constructed our toys, and we listened to the stories our grandparents, parents, siblings, relatives, neighbours and of course, our primary school teachers told us.

A childhood spent in the village was full of responsibilities (children used to help both in the house (especially the girls), and in the fields, full of experiences and knowledge shared in the oral tradition.

A recent panoramic picture of the village

One of the earliest stories which live vividly in my memory is my mother's description of the homecoming of one of her two brothers from serving in the British army during WW2. They had no news whatsoever from them for over two years. Snippets of news about the total number of war casualties reached the village through workers who worked in town. The waiting was dreadful. It was rumoured that the war was over, and as the soldiers had not returned, they were presumed dead. In fact, my brother Menelaos, who was born in July 1945, was given his name (by my Uncle Menelaos' Wife) for this reason.



Elli, middle-front row with her family

One day in late 1945, one of my mother's brothers, Menelaos, returned to the village together with three other young men, also from the village. They served together in the British Empire Army in Italy. My mother ran up to him and held him in her arms, hugging him, kissing him and crying unstoppably. My grandmother stood in disbelief; "as a marble statue, unable to move or utter a single word or even able to cry until three days later". We were told many years later that the men did not like describing any of their war experiences.

Fortuitously, my uncle Andreas also survived the war. Many years later, he would regale us with many stories of war, often with much pomp and humour tinged with nostalgia. He was stationed as a sergeant in Egypt. He liked to tell us that when he was introduced to Field Marshal Montgomery, who apparently liked to get feedback not only from senior officers but also from lower-ranked officers, he (my uncle) was "told off by Montgomery for being too short"!

My primary school years were marked by the struggle for independence from the UK. Our neighbour, Odysseas, was an active partisan (operating with his team from the nearby mountains).

I remember the British tanks roaring into the village at any time in the middle of the night, crashing into our neighbour's house to see if he had turned up to see his wife. It was extremely frightening. There were frequent curfews and closedowns of schools. When I was in the third grade, we missed nearly half of our classes.

When I finished primary school in 1961, my uncle Lazaros and auntie Angeliki offered to take me to their house in town so that I could attend secondary school. At that time, the first signs of intercommunal strife between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots started as a result of the often employed divide-and-rule policy. In 1964, Turkey bombed Cyprus using napalm incendiary bombs. We heard on the news that the bombing took place precisely where my brother Michael was serving his military service. Without telephones or other ways of communication, apart from the occasional letter, my parents waited anxiously. They received a letter from Michael three weeks after the bombing. When I visited the village a month later, I was informed by my sister about the way our mother reacted. It was my mother's turn to be overcome by relief and emotion when my father (who could read and write as he had completed his primary school) read the letter to her as she (like most of the women) was illiterate.

When I finished secondary school, I found a job in a factory to try to save some money so that I could go abroad (most probably to Greece) for university studies. During that year, there was a military dictatorship in Greece and as a left-wing youth activist, I could not go to Greece, so I came to London in October 1967. There followed many other "wars" – this time not with weapons but with struggles for survival, including a horrendous road accident, the aftermath of which haunts me to this day.

In the summer of 1974, Cyprus was invaded by Turkey. At that time, I was in the UK, and for three months there were no flights or telephone lines. When I received a telegram from my brother simply stating "WE ARE ALL OK", it was my own turn to break down with relief. It was also the only time that, although I never drink alcohol, I got seriously drunk and was in a daze for three days.

During the invasion, as a family, we lost my very dear cousin Agis at the tender age of 16. Moreover, my father's two godsons went missing, one of whom returned after nearly a year of captivity, totally traumatised, while the other one is still missing.

The occupation of one-third of Cyprus (which continues to this day) resulted in considerable loss of life, displacement, and, sadly, in a de facto division. Such a tragedy for the island at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the island of beauty and love (Mother of Goddess Aphrodite), and which Homer referred to as *The Chalcoessa* (meaning the copper land).

Experiences of wars, especially experiences shared by people close to you, or experienced by yourself directly, are always haunting. I must confess that there have been other events in my life: good, exciting, creative and successful times but those are to be referred to, perhaps, at another time.

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