



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

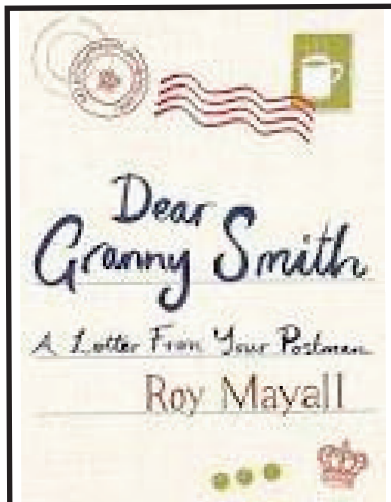
November 2018 Newsletter



Our picture shows members of National Pensioners Convention affiliates gathering opposite the Houses of Parliament for the lobby on Wednesday 24th October with the “**generations united**” theme. Thirteen members of IPF took part with our housing banner.

Sharon Hodgson MP (Shadow Health Minister) hosted the meeting in the House of Commons, Committee Room 14. She welcomed and addressed us alongside: Jack Dromey MP (Shadow Pensions Minister), Roger Mackenzie (Assistant General Secretary, Unison), Mark Serwotka (General Secretary, PCS and TUC President) and Dot Gibson (Deputy General Secretary NPC). Government Ministers turned down the NPC's invitation to address the meeting. There was spontaneous applause when speakers expressed the need for the generations to unite in opposition to the government's austerity measures and gave concrete examples to show that the division is not between young and old, but between rich and poor.

Unfortunately Christmas dinner at the Plough pub in Crews Hill was unavailable, and so we have made another arrangement available for 50 people in co-operation with Barnsbury Housing Association. We can assure you of a first-class meal in great surroundings and in good company! See below:



Chapter Four: “Time” - page 3

“Time is spending time on the things that matter, on the brief exchange of words that is the breath of life itself.”

To book your Christmas dinner, please send
£10 with your name, address and telephone number
AND whether you want the vegetarian option

To: IPF (Christmas), 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
(cheques payable to “IPF”)

There were two editions of the October newsletter — the first gave our members information about George's funeral and the second was circulated to councillors, GP surgeries, local charities and community groups with a report (reprinted below) of George's funeral.

We say farewell to George

When our coach full of members arrived at Islington Crematorium on Friday 28 September for George's funeral, the over 200 people, his family, friends, trade union brothers and sisters, Labour Party comrades — already standing in the sunshine — warmly greeted our banner and that of the National Pensioners Convention with spontaneous applause.

We know that George would have been moved and proud, because he was never an "individual"; he was a "team player", building solidarity in action, and these banners are a symbol of this.

The chapel was packed — many had to stand and the ceremony was relayed on speakers to those who could not get in.

George's coffin was carried into the chapel to the music of "The Red Flag" — George's own wish.

Watching and listening to the rendering of this Labour anthem at the end of the Labour Party conference two days before had reminded us of George and how much he would have wanted to be with those in that Liverpool hall! He understood to the core of his being that, like our banners, "The Red Flag expresses the solidarity of those who are together standing up for the common cause of equality and social justice.

The Celebrant, Andrew Pavlibeyi opened the ceremony and introduced those who gave the tributes: Dave Ward, General Secretary of the Communications Workers Union, Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, and Elaine Durack, George's daughter.

Together these tributes told the story of George's life in the war, at work, as a workers' representative, as an Islington Councillor, as chair of Islington Pensioners

Forum; the warmth and love mingled with determination and intransigence when it came to his principles; also George the ballroom dancer and the humour and extremely funny experiences shared with his family and friends.

George was looking forward to the future even when he knew that he himself had little time left! Jeremy movingly told us that when he said farewell on his last visit to the hospital, George responded with a smile and the clenched fist salute of solidarity.

Our committee will meet on 1st October without George. This is very hard for all of us. We have said "farewell" to him, but we will never forget him and we are determined to vigorously defend and develop his work to build Islington Pensioners Forum.

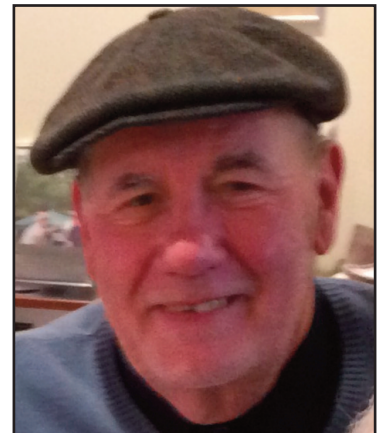
We are non-Party political and we are not, as an organisation, religious; our members have many political beliefs, many faiths and none. George never hid his secularity or that he was a Labour Party member, and everybody respected him for this, just as he respected all our members and always acted — as our masthead here says — so that IPF is the voice of Islington's older community.

The guidance from George's family for his funeral was "no flowers, but, if you wish, please donate to Islington Pensioners Forum in his name". We very much appreciate this and express our sincere thanks for this act of confidence in us.

NOTE: By 31st 31st October the sum received was £865. We will use this to best remember George and to carry forward his wishes.

BOB COLLINS — CHAIR OF ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

Following our 2017 annual general meeting, at George Durack's suggestion, Bob Collins became the joint chair of our Forum. He has now stepped into George's shoes and will be writing the monthly "Chairman's Notes" in the next and following issues of our newsletter. Bob is also an active member of the Communication Workers Union retired members' association and is engaged in many community activities in Islington. He has been chairing our meetings in the nine months of George's illness and we are very pleased that he is taking this leading role in our Forum.



Can anyone help me to staff the National Pensioners Convention stall at the Commonwealth Fair? It will be at Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall on Saturday 10th November. Our stall will be from 11.15 am until 4 pm but if you can help for a couple of ours during that time it would be great. I will be travelling from the IPF hall at 10 a.m. by bus (a 38 and then a 9 to Kensington High Street). Please contact me at home on 020 7226 7226. Many thanks, Dot

Dear Granny Smith : Chapter 4 — Time

Last month we published chapter three of Roy Mayall's book. He described the posties' happiness in the job and the speed of delivery, ending with: "It was almost as fast as email". . . and so to continue. . .

You ask me what has changed most about the job in the 30 years I've been here and I'll tell you. It is time.

We used to have time. Not just time for ourselves: time for other people too.

We call you "Granny Smith" and that nickname stems from the old days, because we were always there for Granny Smith. We had an idea of service. And if an old lady was worried about something, we'd listen. Sometimes we'd pick up the paper on the way round and we'd drop it off for her, or we'd run little errands for her if she was in need. We'd listen to her woes and her troubles and her joys and about what her grandchildren were up to and she'd offer us tea, and sometimes we'd accept it.

We were a lifeline for Granny Smith: someone she knew would be arriving that day. And you could set your watch by the postie then. Always on the same road at the same time. Always the same postie, the same familiar face, a part of the family almost. And sometimes she'd know us by name, or if not, by our nickname, which is the name everyone calls us, and which we have always borne with pride. "Postie".

So that's what you can call me now. "Postie". Everyone else does.

You see, this is what the new management at the Royal Mail don't get. They think we're a business in the market place, here to make money. And I have no objection to money or making it. But being a postie is so much more than this, so much more than Gordon Brown or Peter Mandelson or Adam Crozier, or any of the other penny-pinching pen-pushers in offices and behind desks, with their figures and their targets and their profit and loss accounts, can ever imagine. What they don't know is that we are a part of the very fabric of our national life, we are the thread that binds the nation together, weaving our way from door to door, not just bringing the news, but bringing stability and service, confidentiality, comfort, a familiar face, and time to listen when required.

Time, Peter Mandelson. Time. That's what you are stealing "Time is Money" you say, but I say "Time is Service". Time is listening. Time is being there, on time, so my customers know. Time is spending time on the things that matter, on the brief exchange of words that is the breath of life itself, sharing the air, shooting the breeze, enjoying the moment, taking a little time, before I pass on up the road and on my way.

How can you measure this?"

Granny Smith is everyone. Everyone is vulnerable in the end. Everyone is someone's mother or father or sister or brother or uncle or cousin. Everyone needs someone. But if you are alone and vulnerable, if your family has gone, or moved away, who do you have left? Just the postie. The postie bringing the mail.

I've seen it all in my time. There are some warden-assisted old persons' flats on my round. One day I came across an old lady who had fallen down. She's knocked her zimmer frame over and couldn't get up to ring the alarm. She'd been there for about twenty minutes when I found her. So helped her back up and into her flat and made her a cup of tea while she called the warden.

Another time I came to someone's door and I noticed it was ajar and the mail from the weekend was still on the mat. That worried me. I looked through the window and saw him there on the floor. I went in. I didn't have to force entry as the door was open. He was still breathing. I called an ambulance, covered him up with a coat, and then went and finished off delivering to the estate before the ambulance arrived. He died later that day.

Once I was there just after one of my customers had lost his wife. The neighbours came out and told me. He'd woken up that morning and when he turned to her she was dead. She'd died in her sleep. He used to come out every morning to collect his mail from a home-made mail box by the gate, always with a cheery greeting. He didn't come out for days after that, and then, when he did, he had tears in his eyes and I could do no more than say "I'm sorry".

But then later I could do more, you see. He kept getting letters addressed to his wife and he kept sending them back. I knew that this was distressing for him. So I spoke to him. "Do you want me to get rid of these letters for you?" I asked. "If you could. Yes please. I would be very grateful."

So whenever I saw a letter addressed to his wife, I would put it back in my bag. And then later, in the office. I would return it. And these days he's back to collecting his mail from his mail box with a wave and a few cheery words about the weather again.

You see, I know my customers and they know me and in the old days I had a little time for them too. I still do. I make time, though there's no time for just shooting the breeze any more. But if someone is in need. I will still do whatever I can to help.

It's only human.

GRENFELL by Eula Harrison : November 2017

As the Grenfell Fire Inquiry continues and we hear the sad and moving testimonies of those who escaped, of the family and friends of those who did not, of the firefighters and the community, we publish here Eula's poem. Let us never forget!

A candle blazed, in the west of our city.
Casting an eerie glow, in the night sky
Dreading something bad could happen,
By the people who lived there
Unexpectedly it seems to have combusted
While they were asleep in their beds,
The building was slowly smouldering,
Awaken from deep sleep,
By neighbours terrified screams.
And the heat from the burning building,
The name of this candle is "Grenfell".
Very grand, it stood before the blaze,
With its hidden secrets behind the gloss,
It ignited, as authorities refuse to listen,
To concerns voiced by the tenants.
Of blocked-up exits and broken-down lifts.
In that death-trap, there were no sprinklers,
No fire alarms, in a block of twenty-four floors.
The scent of this candle was horrid,
Not exotic as scented candles should be,
Casting off its toxic black smoke,
Stifling those trying, by all means to flee.,
Jumping through burning windows and doors,
The cladding on the other surface was blazing
Window frames, blinds, and curtains exploded,
Broken gas pipes, then added to the horror,
As the old, young, sick, or lame went tumbling,
Down unlit blocked staircase of "Grenfell"
Among flaming, debris crashing down,

On everyone's trying to save themselves.
This catastrophe never should have happened,
In this enlightened and modern city,
Where are the Authorities, the planners?
Where is their answer, what will it be,
How will they explain what really lies
At the heart of this terrible tragedy,
Will they explain how or why inferior materials
Was knowingly used, to erect a building.
In which families, would make their homes,
Babies were thrown out of windows for safety,
Some people jumped to escape the inferno,
Did any of those individuals survive?
No one knows, if they did nor not.
Will they repair the damaged building?
Or will it be taken down, leaving a hole,
With an everlasting flame as a memorial,
Will the area be made into a public park?
Will plaques and named "Grenfell Memorial Park"
With paving stones or covered in fake grass,
That would be easy for the authorities,
Trying to redeem themselves with gloss,
But how will the portrayers of this disaster,
Heal those suffering from the aftermath,
With life-changing scars, and those hidden,
Of the pains and loss buried in their hearts,
Those will be carried for the rest of their lives.
With sleepless nights, and days of anguish, these will
be the lasting legacy of "Grenfell".

Budget: "inadequate" and "temporary" on social care

The main issue of concern to many older people and their families in the budget is that of social care funding. Once again the Chancellor reiterated that the Green Paper on social care would be published shortly, but did not give any details.

Instead he announced an extra £650m for local councils to fund social care services for the coming year. In the small print however, £240m of that money has been

put aside for the NHS. This means that only £410m has been earmarked for social care – well short of the £2.35bn funding gap highlighted by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

The Budget has therefore been widely criticised by professionals and campaigners as being both "inadequate" and "temporary" in its approach to social care.

From NPC Budget Briefing

NPC PENSIONERS' PARLIAMENT

10 - 14 June 2019, Winter Gardens, Blackpool

Cost £250 — Pay a £10 deposit and spread the cost over the months

- Monday 10th June: a comfortable coach (with reclining seats and an on-board toilet) from Islington Town Hall, returning on 14th June.
- Bed, breakfast and evening meal at the friendly Gresham Hotel, which has a lift, a comfortable lounge and is very near the Winter Gardens.

cheques payable to "IPF" FORM ON BACK PAGE



“SHE ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT”

It started raining at 11 am and continued all day! Nevertheless a good time was had by all. Over 70 members of Islington Pensioners Forum, Highbury View residents, families and friends enjoyed a happy afternoon. Half took shelter in the tenants’ bungalow, and the rest, plus the band were in the gazebos.

At a time when there is so much news of the loneliness of many older people we were especially pleased to receive the following email:

“Mum commented on how well organized everything was and how plentiful and lovely the food. She also mentioned how calm and efficient the chef and all the helpers were. She absolutely loved it”.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PEOPLE

1st October is the International Day of Older People, but IPF decided that this year we would set up a stall at the Haringey Pensioners Action Group event on 9th October in the Tottenham and Wood Green Leisure Centre.

Our congratulations go to our neighbours for putting on such a successful event in the face of the austerity cuts; it shows that pensioners are taking a lead in the community!

It was good to see so many friends who we got to know at this year’s Pensioners’ Parliament among the hundreds of people who took part in this important day with stalls showing the work of many local charities, and Council services.



“WTW Jazz Band” from the community jazz workshop in Islington

NHS News : Pam Zinkin.

The news of the budget proclaimed that the NHS was the biggest winner. Is this true? What difference will it make?

It is true that the Chancellor is promising more money for the NHS — £20 billion — starting next year and rising to £20.5bn in 2023/24; but according to Charlesworth, a former head of public spending at the Treasury: “This money is for frontline NHS services”. It

excludes wider areas of vital health spending where funding is also desperately needed: Public health, workforce training and capital investment.

Charlesworth also pointed out that the fine print of the budget shows that NHS England’s budget will go up by 3.3% next year, which is less than the 3.6% that the prime minister promised in the summer.

THE SCANDAL OF ATTACKS ON THE WINDRUSH GENERATION

Luke Daniels, Chair of Caribbean Labour Solidarity spoke at our September meeting

He said that the way the Windrush generation and their families are treated reminded him of slavery! The whole ideology of racism is behind the Windrush scandal. People came to the UK thinking they were British. They worked in the NHS, on the buses and other services; then found themselves on the hit-list for deportation! Slavery ended, but the slaves were thrown out whilst compensation was paid to the slave owners. There should be reparations for slavery, starting with an apology. It is now important that pressure is kept up on the government over the Windrush scandal. Many of those who lost their rights to a job, pensions, a home and health care have died — others are now old and have “lost” many years.

**Caribbean Labour Solidarity meets on the first Sunday of the month at the IPF hall,
1a Providence Court, Providence Place, 12 noon to 2 pm**

INFORMATION

BINGO	This is suspended for the time being. We will keep you informed.
Lunch and a chat on Wednesdays	1 pm in the IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place N1 0RN
IT and Smart Phones on Wednesdays	3.30 p.m in the IPF Hall, address above
Thursday 15th November 10.30 a.m. at Islington Town Hall	Forum meeting : Speaker, Dave Ward, General Secretary CWU the post office delivery and telephone engineers union.

There is no Forum meeting in December.
The next Forum meeting after November (see above) is on Thursday 17 January 2019

ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE : ART AND SOCIAL GROUP : ISLINGTON
St. Mary's Church, Upper Street, London, N1 2TX
2 - 3.30 pm 18th November 2018, 16th December 2018 and 20th January 2019
To find out more: Sophie: sophwoolven@gmail.com

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM (membership £5 a year, cheques payable to IPF)
1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
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Charity Number: 1043081
Supported by Cripplegate Foundation, the Big Lottery and Islington Council
Office opens from 10.30 a.m.- 2.30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, but please call first.
Sign up for our online newsletter on our website: www.islingtonpensionersforum.org
Presidents: Jeremy Corbyn MP & Lord Smith of Finsbury
Chair: Bob Collins
Secretary: Dot Gibson **Assistant Secretary:** Annette Thomas **Treasurer:** Eric Hill
Committee members: Frances Bradley, Joyce Herron, Supa Kusumratana, David Milner, Blanche Woodbridge, Pam Zinkin, Eddie Zissler

TO BOOK FOR THE
PENSIONERS PARLIAMENT 10-14 June 2019
Name.....
Address.....
Tel:..... Email:.....
Enclosed £10 deposit (cheques to “IPF”)
Post to: Pensioners’ Parliament, IPF, 1a Providence Court,
Providence Place, Islington N1 0RN