



# ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

## October 2019 Newsletter

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Office opens from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm Monday & Wednesday (but 'phone first)



### Climate Strike . . . . .

"This is not a single generation job. It's humanity's job. . . Let's all join together with your neighbours, co-workers, friends, family and go out on to the streets to make your voices heard and make this a turning point in our history".

So young Greta Thunberg called for a worldwide demonstration on 20 September.

We took our banner to join others at Islington Town

Hall on that day. It does seem that many millions of people are now aware of global warming and voices are more and more raised demanding change. But it cannot be a one-day demonstration!

At our October Forum meeting Sebastian Sandys from Extinction Rebellion will speak about **ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**. Let's discuss how we can play our part in fighting to save our planet for future generations.

## OPERATION YELLOWHAMMER

On 2nd August the Civil Service produced a paper for government advising on situations in a number of fields which could arise from a "no deal" Brexit — i.e. if the UK ceased to be a member of the EU without a deal: all rights and reciprocal arrangements with the EU ended and the UK reverted to "third country" status in relation to the EU.

As you will no doubt be aware both of Islington's MPs, Jeremy Corbyn and Emily Thornberry are working with others in Parliament to stop a "no deal" Brexit, and we consider that the points set out in the government's Operation Yellowhammer paper is proof of the importance of and the necessity for their stand.

We have set out on page three some points in the Operation Yellowhammer document which are of special interest to older people . . . . .

## Blanche Woodbridge



**Blanche Woodbridge**, long-time member of the Islington Pensioners Forum — our friend and staunch supporter of this newsletter— sadly died on 4th August.

At the Memorial service on 7th September we met Blanche's family, her neighbours on the King Square Estate and her friends at St. Clements church. Afterwards all those present gathered in the garden next to the church, and on behalf of the Tenants & Residents Association Father David Allen said that from now on this is *The Blanche Woodbridge Nature Garden*. IPF will donate a rose bush and arrange with all concerned a planting ceremony.  
(more on page two)

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# A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

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What a September in the world of politics!

Even we (the IPF) were moved to get a letter published in the *Islington Tribune* on 6th September.... see copy on page three.

In the end Boris Johnson's closure of Parliament was found to be illegal — the unanimous decision of 11 Supreme Court judges.

But there was no apology! Instead the Prime Minister went to the re-opened House of Commons and said that although he accepted the decision, he did not agree with it. Then his inflammatory language provoked angry responses on the other side of the Commons, and it was provocative language that was discussed on the following day.

oooOooo

Meanwhile millions of ordinary people are doing their best to tackle the problems faced by so many.

I CARE BECAUSE YOU DO (loneliness and isolation) was the seminar at Congress House, the headquarters of the Trades Union Congress. This cause is close to my heart and I was very pleased to be there.

One of the best reports was by Ageing Better in Camden whose speaker set out how they are tackling social isolation & loneliness in our community. I liked this report. It did not simply focus on the causes, but how to **find** isolated and lonely people and bring them back into the community something that is very hard to do.

We are hoping that the on-line "hub" we are planning to launch early next year will help in this regard. It will

set out regular up-dated information about what there is for older people in Islington — e.g. tea/coffee and a chat, luncheon clubs, memory meetings, bingo, dance, art, exercises, films, speakers, discussions, outings, walks etc. We know that, even with this information on IT, we must still find ways to reach people in isolation, and so there is plenty to learn from Ageing Better in Camden, who reported to the seminar.

I am a member of the retired members' section of my union — the Communications Workers Union, and in October I will be attending the retired members' conference in Birmingham.

On the agenda there will be motions on the campaign to keep the free TV licences for all over 75-year-olds and another on loneliness. . . . both submitted by the union's London retired members' section. I will give a report in the November newsletter.

It is necessary to keep reminding people that our demand for the free TV licences for all over 75-year-olds is part of our campaign to overcome isolation. We ask everybody to understand the difference television makes to older people — especially those who are house-bound and access entertainment and current affairs on their television set.

However, the main and important reason for demanding this is that it was put in place as a **UNIVERSAL BENEFIT**, because the state pension is so low. And we want to make it clear that if one Universal Benefit can be removed then what about the others? For instance, free prescriptions for over 60s and the pensioners' Freedom Pass are Universal Benefits!

## BLANCHE WOODBRIDGE

Blanche was a loyal, long-time member of Islington Pensioners Forum. She was a member of our executive committee and saw our monthly newsletter as her main responsibility. Blanche would go to the office on most Mondays to ensure that the labels were stuck on envelopes ready for despatch and then "stuffing" the printed newsletters into the envelopes for the post. She checked the articles with a keen eye, never holding back if she had criticisms or indeed, praise. We all knew her as quite a private person — independent, kind and thoughtful, never pushing herself forward, but not afraid to say what she thought.

At the memorial mass in St. Clements church her nephew, Julian Furnell spoke of her independence — it was always difficult to know whether she needed help; and Father David Allen, wryly

mentioned the look on Blanche's face which would indicate a critical view.

Penny Seal, chair of King Square Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) spoke. She said that Blanche was "an integral part of the community and always at the forefront fighting for us ... she was helpful and offered support." Blanche had been chair of the TRA for a very long time, and attended Council meetings, the Housing Panel, and many other meetings to do with concierge, police, repairs and local officer issues. It was very sad that she would not be there to see the Community Centre she so wanted. Penny ended by saying: "We are better people for knowing Blanche and I for one am extremely grateful to her for coming into my life. I will look to the stars and find that one winking at me. That will be Blanche looking down and watching."

## SOME IMPORTANT POINTS FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S OPERATION YELLOWHAMMER REPORT

**Point 5.** . . . . . “There will likely be significant electricity price increases for consumers (business and domestic)”

**Point 6.** . . . . . “The reliance of medicines and medical products’ supply chains on the short straits crossing make them particularly vulnerable to severe extended delays; three-quarters of medicines come via the short straits. . . . Whilst some products can be stockpiled, others cannot due to short shelf lives — it will also not be practical to stockpile products to cover expected delays of up to six months.”

**Point 7.** . . . . . “Certain types of fresh food supply will decrease. Critical dependencies for the food supply chain (such as key input ingredients, chemicals and packaging) may be in shorter supply. In combination, these two factors will not cause an overall shortage of food in the UK but will reduce availability and choice of products and will increase price, which could impact on vulnerable groups.

**Point 11 iii.** . . . . . “The Commission and individual Member States do not agree to extend the current healthcare arrangements for UK state pensioners and tourists beyond 31 October 2019 and refuse offers by the UK to fund treatments. Member States take no further action to guarantee healthcare for UK nationals and treat them in the same way as other third country nationals. . . . . Member States should treat people with urgent needs, but may require them to pay after the fact. There is a risk of disruption for patients and a minority could face substantial costs.”

**Point 17.** . . . . . “Low income groups will be disproportionately affected by any price rises in food and fuel.”

**Point 20.** . . . . . “There is an assumption that there will be no major change in adult social care on the day after EU exit. The adult social care market is already fragile due to declining financial viability of providers. An increase in inflation following EU exit would significantly impact adult social care providers due to increasing staff and supply costs, and may lead to provider failure with smaller providers impacted within 2-3 months and larger providers 4-6 months after exit. There are also possible concurrent localised risks: transport or staff disruption, severe winter weather or flu could exacerbate the existing market fragility, and that cumulatively could stretch resources of providers . . . . .”

## OUR PRIDE IN MPs WHO BACK DEMOCRACY

Islington Pensioners Forum is outraged at the “smash and grab” raid against democracy, and alarmed that the Johnson government’s decision to close down Parliament — aimed at overcoming its minority status and ensuring the success of its no-deal Brexit policy — could be the thin edge of the wedge for our hard-won historic rights. We are therefore pleased that thousands of people continue to demonstrate in London and around the country. We are encouraged that at the time of writing

(one week after the Queen “rubber-stamped” this attack on Parliament) more than 1.7 million have signed the petition saying “no to prorogation” and more than 15,000 of those signatories live in Islington. We want to put on record our pride in our MPs, Emily Thornberry and Jeremy Corbyn, who are in the forefront of standing up for democracy and against a no-deal Brexit. There is a great deal at stake. The government’s Yellowhammer report reveals what a no-deal Brexit

would mean, especially to children, the elderly and vulnerable people. Among other things, there would be disruptions to the supply of medicines, a decrease in the availability of fresh food and even potential water shortages due to possible interruptions in imported treatment chemicals. And there is the added threat of a Trump/Johnson trade deal attacking our NHS.

*Our letter published in Islington Tribune, 6th September 2019*

# NHS News . . . . . Pam Zinkin . . . . .

I didn't want to write about Brexit but pensioners must be warned that there may be serious risks to medical supplies if we leave in four weeks time (31st October) with no deal.

This is because three quarters of our medicines come to the UK through the main Channel crossing between the UK and France and some are particularly vulnerable to severe delays.

These include life-saving agents for cancer diagnosis and therapy and many others. "They cannot be stockpiled and, for those that can, stockpiles could run out," warned executives at the British Medical Association

(BMA), Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Midwives, Unison, GMB, Unite and the TUC.

Medicine shortage would clash with the start of the winter flu season if the UK crashed out of the EU on 31 October.

Union leaders also warned that leaving the EU without a deal could intensify the staffing "crisis" in the NHS. Thousands of EU workers have already left since 2016.

So make sure you get your flu jab this month and do whatever you can about no deal Brexit.

**Its bad for your health.**

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## **UNITED NATIONS DAY OF OLDER PEOPLE**

***The National Pensioners Convention issued the following statement for 1st October  
Older People's Day***

### **TACKLING INTERGENERATIONAL UNFAIRNESS**

Millions of younger people struggle day-to-day in the UK with high housing costs, low quality jobs and unemployment and deep cuts to the social services and benefit systems.

It is often claimed that older people are prospering at the expense of the young, yet the UK has the highest rates of "severe" pensioner poverty in Western Europe.

The House of Lords' Select Committee report entitled "Tackling Intergenerational Fairness" proposed:

- From 2026-28, when the state pension age becomes 67, free bus passes and Winter Fuel Payments should only be available five years after a person becomes eligible for their state pension and that the government should also consider treating them as part of taxable income.
- Phasing out the TV licence based on age, then decide on a means-tested based subsidy, like Pensioners Credit.
- Removing the triple lock for the state pension and uprating it with average earnings.

The Centre for Social Justice also recommended a major overhaul of the state pension age — with it raised to 70 years-old by 2028 and then again to 75 years-old by 2035, which the NPC funda-

mentally opposes.

The NPC will continue to campaign for the rights of tomorrow's pensioners and believes that rather than benefiting younger people now — these recommendations effectively remove their right to receive such benefits when they eventually retire.

The debate that should be taking place is about intra-generational unfairness and the increasing inequalities across all age groups that are so prevalent in our society. Some of our current campaigns and policies include:

- A state pension set above the official poverty level based on 70% of the living wage (outside London). In 2018 this would give a state pension of £200 a week. This should rise every year by the higher of wages, inflation or 2.5%
  - Maintenance of existing universal pensioner benefits such as the winter fuel allowance, TV licences for the over 75s and the concessionary bus pass without means-testing.
  - A National Care Service funded in the same way as the NS through general taxation, free at the point of use, publicly owned, publicly delivered and publicly accountable.
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## BLACK HISTORY MONTH — ISLINGTON

**Tuesday 8 October, 6.30 – 9pm**

**Islington Town Hall, N1 2UD**

Email [info@everyvoice.org.uk](mailto:info@everyvoice.org.uk) to book.

400 years of black women resistance leaders

A seminar detailing the black women around the world who have made pivotal contributions towards the fight for freedom and equality.

**Saturday 12 October, 1 - 5pm**

**Central Library, N5 1PF,**

Afrikan Heritage Writers present '100 Years Unheard – WW1 and the Afrikan Diasporan Woman'

The book celebrates the lives and unheard stories of Afrikan heritage women impacted by the Great War and gives voice to those history has forgotten.

**Thursday 17 October, 6 - 7.30pm**

**Central Library, N5 1PF**

An evening with Paul Crooks trailblazing family historian, Paul Crooks, author of *Ancestors*, traced his family back six generations. Paul's acclaimed novel and appearance on *Who Do You Think You Are?* inspired a generation to start exploring black and British ancestry. Paul talks about his book and his journey to find his family history.

**Tuesday 22 October 6 - 9pm**

**Brickworks Community Centre, 42 Crouch Hill, N4 4BY** — Further information email

[Aishah.w@everyvoice.org.uk](mailto:Aishah.w@everyvoice.org.uk)

Black history education – a practice of freedom.

Celebrate black-led interventions that are decolonising history curriculums and challenging the racial bias.

**Wednesday 23 October 11 am - 12 noon**

**Drovers Centre, 19 North Road, N7 9EY**

If you would like to attend call 020 7607 7701 or email [asinclair@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:asinclair@ageukislington.org.uk)

Our stories; reminiscence and history-making

A fun workshop for African and Caribbean people aged over 55. Bring along family photographs for a morning of sharing and storytelling and creating black family history archives.

**Saturday 26 October, 10.45am - 1pm**

**Meet outside Angel Station (or inside if it's raining) Suggested £3 donation to attend but spaces are limited. Email [info@everyvoice.org.uk](mailto:info@everyvoice.org.uk) to book.**

Black history of Islington walk — A two-hour walking tour through some of Islington's little-known landmarks and places of significance. Find out about the first Black cultural arts centre, the history of the ANC, Islington's Egyptian links and the legacies of Black revolutionary politicians and activists, such as Claudia Jones and Angela Davies.

**Saturday 26 October 4 - 9pm**

**Manor Gardens, N7 6ER To book, email**

**[mr.iyefa@gmail.com](mailto:mr.iyefa@gmail.com) or call 07438 637065**

Kimbauguism – a universal heritage

Discover more about the ideology and vision of Simon Kimbangu, a peaceful freedom fighter in the Congo during the colonial era. There will be a choir, play and a brass band to enjoy.

**Saturday 26 October, 4 - 9pm**

**Holly Park Methodist Church Hall, Crouch Hill, N4 4BY— Email [hollypark@live.com](mailto:hollypark@live.com) for more information**

African drumming — Holly Park Methodist Church and KeKeLi Dance Ensemble present an evening of entertainment for all the family with African drumming, a quiz and dancing, plus a book stand, fashion show and food.

**Saturday 26 October, 5.30 - 10.30pm**

**Gracepoint, 161-169 Essex Road, N1 2SN**

**Tickets from £11.37 For further information contact [annanjeafrica@gmail.com](mailto:annanjeafrica@gmail.com)**

Fashion4Africa showcase — A showcase celebrating African fashion and beauty, with catwalk shows, competitions and live entertainment including artists from Ethiopia, Sudan and Ghana.

Information above from Islington Life:  
<https://islingtonlife.london/things-to-do/black-history-month/>

**TA-RA-RA BOOM-  
DE-AY!**

**Music Hall in Islington**

**EXHIBITION**

**Monday to Saturday**

**10 am to 5 pm**

**to 22nd October 2019**

**(closed Wednesday & Sunday)**

**ISLINGTON MUSEUM**

**245 St John Street,**

**London, EC1V 4NB**

# INFORMATION

Please do not hesitate to send us items of news or opinions for publication in our Newsletter. Send to address on front of Newsletter.

BINGO	This is suspended for the time being. We will keep you informed.
Lunch and a chat on Wednesdays	1 pm in IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place N1 0RN
IT and Smart Phones on Wednesdays	3.30 pm in the IPF Hall, address above, fortnightly
Thursday 17th October	10.30 am Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall. Speaker: Sebastian Sandys from Extinction Rebellion — action on climate change
Thursday 21st November	10.30 am Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall, speaker: Claude Moraes Member of the European Parliament

## Number Sense — fun + skills = confidence

Bernard Manson spoke at our September Forum meeting on helping 7 year-olds with basic maths. He explained that volunteers find it rewarding to provide one-to-one support to children who have fallen behind in maths; volunteers do one and a half hours a week and training is provided. There were lots of questions and Bernard is hoping that there will be some volun-

teers for the 2020-21 school year and so we will keep this request in front of members . . . . but if, in the meantime you would like to find out more, you can go to

[www.numbersense.org.uk](http://www.numbersense.org.uk)

Bernard's email is [bernard@numbersense.co.uk](mailto:bernard@numbersense.co.uk)

### IPF Film Shows

We have decided to run the film shows on Wednesday afternoons every four weeks. We will have the usual lunch between 1 pm and 2 pm with the film starting at 2.15 pm

We had initially thought of showing the film on a different afternoon and, because of the decreasing number coming on a Wednesday, cancelling the lunch. However, we are hoping that showing the film on a Wednesday afternoon will revive the Wednesday afternoons.

Our plan will be to show a film every four weeks. To this end we would appreciate your view on what type of films to show. What would you like to see? We appreciate there could be differing views which we would like to cater for.

We intend to advertise what films are to be shown in the monthly newsletter. Each month we will advise you what the next three films will be. The films will be shown in the Forum Hall on a large screen television. A number of us have seen a film on this screen, and it proved to be excellent viewing.

Once we start the film afternoons — in the very near future, we would appreciate your views and any changes or improvements you may wish us to consider.

**Eric Hill**

On behalf of the Committee

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Or hand in at Forum meeting (see above)