

The Pensioner

journal of the Brighton and Hove Pensioners' Forum

no. 34, Autumn 2009



Do the poor have to pay for the poorest?

Bankers and big businesses are defending the payment of bonuses and large salaries

Suggestions of what expenditure should be cut after the General Election are coming thick and fast. And as usual, hard-won benefits for the poorer or middle-income people are pushed to the fore by the organs speaking for the 'well-heeled' brigade. So, free bus passes, winter fuel allowance, child benefit and public services are favourite targets.

Meanwhile, bankers and big business are defending the payment of bonuses and large salaries on the grounds that any curb would damage entrepreneurial spirit and encourage high flyers to go abroad. Well let them! Who caused the mess in the first place?

The word 'bonus' means gift. What right do these people have to a 'gift' when they should be performing to the very best of their abilities for the extremely over-generous salaries they already receive?

We all know that how we judge a good business is in the service we

receive personally, which is delivered by the person carrying out the work. Do they receive a bonus?

Compass, a coalition of campaigners is urging the Government to set up a body to monitor excessive pay. One idea is to replicate the Low Pay Commission by creating a High Pay Commission to review pay at the top. It would consider proposals to restrict excessive remuneration to provide the just society and sustainable economy we all want.

Lord Turner has said that there needs to be a fundamental examination of how banks operate and the social consequences of the harm inflicted on millions of people across the world.

Other commentators have said that the common good should rank above freedom of the markets. There should be a moral notion that the financial world does not act like a spoilt child but does have a clear responsibility to contribute to the common good.

Is this the future for the Post Office?

Earlier this year, it emerged that a state-owned People's Bank could save the Post Office from privatisation. The move would allow local Post Offices to offer full banking facilities to customers and revitalise Royal Mail, hit by declining revenues, by injecting millions of pounds into the Post Office at a time when it is under siege from private mail firms.

This proposal came from the Business Secretary, Lord Mandelson, and has been welcomed by Billy Hayes, leader of the Postal Workers' Union, the CWU, who said "The People's Bank is an idea whose time has come".

Older People's Day

at Hove Town Hall

Thursday, 19th November 2009
10am to 4pm

FREE entry . FREE refreshments

Don't miss out on one of the biggest and most fun events for older people in Brighton & Hove

Organised by the Pensioners' Forum and Older People's Council, the day will be packed full of entertainment - music, dance, gentle sports and exercise.

The Forum will also be holding their AGM on the day. There'll be 40 stands bursting with information on services for older people. You might even win a great prize in the raffle!

Put 19th November in your diary. Arrive early and leave late for a great day out. Join us in celebrating age!



on the buses? - page 8



**The Forum hits the
airwaves - page 3**

Editor's Letter



I've been busy making arrangements for Older People's Day which is at Hove Town Hall again this year, on Thursday 19th November (see front page for more details). The day is just one of the things that the Brighton & Hove Pensioners' Forum brings you from our very limited funds. And with that in mind, we encourage every single reader to join the Forum or renew their membership. For just £3 each year, you get four issues of *The Pensioner*, give weight to our campaign work and get to enjoy great events.

Find out in more detail on page 6 what the benefits are of belonging to the Pensioners' Forum, see where every precious penny is spent, and see how you can help us help you!

We want to improve your publication each and every time, so if you have any comments, then do let me know. If a particular article strikes a chord, or if you want to raise a concern, then *The Pensioner* is here to listen and act where we can. The Forum exists to help campaign for appropriate services for older people in our city, particularly around housing, health, transport, education, community safety and environmental issues.

You also have a voice through 60+ Action Groups which work alongside the Pensioners' Forum. Dates of their next meetings are on page 4.

Do U3A?

From art appreciation and intermediate Spanish, to Scrabble and walking groups. There's all this and more waiting for you through U3A, University of the Third Age.

U3A is a learning co-operative of people no longer in full time employment - and anyone can join. All you need is interest and enthusiasm, with no qualifications required and none to achieve. It offers the opportunity to share your knowledge, experience and talents with others and learn from them in friendly surroundings.

Everyone who is no longer in full-time employment is invited to join the Brighton and Hove University of the Third Age at meetings that are held mornings or afternoons at a variety of venues in the city. There is no lower age limit for joining, although nearly all of their members are of 'mature years'.

Membership fees are £22 yearly, which entitles you to free membership of any of the groups listed on their programme.

For further information and an application form contact the U3A Membership Secretary on 01273 702960 (early evenings only) or go online at www.brightonandhoveu3a.org.uk.



Green Party correction

We wish to correct an error in the last issue of *The Pensioner* (page 11 - *Use Your General Election Vote Wisely*). Ben Duncan (not Simon Williams) is the Green Party's parliamentary candidate in Brighton Kemptown, telephone 01273 296441 or at ben.duncan@brighton-hove.gov.uk. The Green Party candidate for Hove is Cllr. Ian Davey and is contactable on ian.davey@brighton-hove.gov.uk



A-boards - a brilliant marketing tool or a navigational nightmare? There is a move by the Council to control street hazards for partially-sighted and blind people, other pedestrians and wheelchair users. Generally a safe width of pavement must be maintained between displays and the kerb.

The telephone number you can call to report A-board enquiries and problems is 01273 292054.

How to contact the Editor

Write to: Paula McEnaney, Editor, Pensioners' Forum, 1st Floor Interger House, 65-67 Western Road, Hove BN3 2JQ. Telephone: Mondays and Thursdays 01273 229004 (voicemail available). Email: paula.mcenaney@pf.bh-impetus.org

OPC Chair talks to *The Pensioner*

Jack Hazelgrove, Chair of the Brighton & Hove OPC, tells *The Pensioner* how they have been busy taking up your collective concerns. Directly elected, the OPC is an independent body set up and supported by Brighton & Hove City Council. The OPC works in partnership with the City Council and other large statutory services, such as health, making sure that older people have a say in the services and policies. Two OPC members also sit on the Pensioners' Forum Management Committee.

September has been a glorious late summer bonus and it's been great to see so many older people still sporting summer outfits and enjoying free travel out and about. I've been enjoying bottles of home-produced fig and lemon jam that is fortifying me for the winter ahead.

We had a most interesting visit to Patching Lodge in Eastern Road in Brighton, the latest extra sheltered complex adjacent to Leach Court. Of course most of us want to remain in our own homes as long as possible and Martin Reid from the Council explained what is being done with aids and adaptations to enable us to live independently.

Make a date, also, for the very informative and entertaining Older People's Day at Hove Town Hall on Thursday, 19th November 2009, organised by the Pensioners' Forum, in association with the OPC.

We have taken up many issues of concern to older people over the year. Amongst our campaigns there is the perennial topic of the availability of public toilets plus the drive to get more pubs, cafes and shops to display the 'You're Welcome' sign for members of the public to use their facilities, without the need to make a purchase.

Bob Gunnell of OPC continues to press the Council for a green garden waste collection service



Jack Hazelgrove, Chair of the Older People's Council

that is open to subscribers, for a small fee, completing the Council's comprehensive recycling scheme.

Francis Tonks, John Barry and I have been forging links with Age Concern to spread greater awareness of the Government's Green Paper 'Shaping the Future of Care Together' (see story on page 10). The fact is that more of us than ever are living to a greater age than our parents. 'Three-score years and ten' is no longer our expectation. But the cost of residential and nursing care gets ever greater with many people having to sell their homes to pay for the cost. So the Government has launched a consultation about how to plan the financing of care in the future. They also talk about establishing a National Care Service.

The OPC has also been involved in research projects with Age Concern and Brighton University Social Policy Department. The report on alcohol and older people, 'Cheers', has already been published and work is ongoing on the subject of 'Well Being and Older People'.

We are delighted that in his speech to the Labour Party conference Prime Minister Gordon Brown promised free personal home care to those most in need, and also more support for hospices. Good news!

Going Grey!

After being asked by Radio Reverb to produce more programmes, Grey Matters, the local radio programme for older people made by older people, now broadcasts two new programmes each month, with repeats.

**Broadcasting on
Tuesdays at 11am on
97.2 fm**

Tune into Radio Reverb 97.2 fm on 3rd November at 11am when you can hear Joan Moorhouse, Chair of the Pensioners' Forum talking about the exciting Older People's Day, the great benefits of being a member of the Pensioners' Forum and how we work alongside the Older People's Council.

Grey Matters is keen to recruit and train older people who would like to help in making the programmes. They also want to hear the views of listeners, so if you've heard a recent programme and would like to comment, please contact Harry Steer on 01273 419723.





60+ Action, a neighbourhood-based self-advocacy project, also provides consultation for services such as health, adult social care, housing, community safety and Brighton Buses. Betty Davis, Community Group Facilitator of 60+ Action, keeps you informed of what's been going on around the local groups.

60+ Action Steering Group - the newly formed Group has met already and is guiding the project, offering support to the project leader, and direction to the work. The Steering Group is made up of 60+ Action members and service managers from the NHS, the Council, and other organisations such as the Pensioners' Forum and MIND. 60+ Action is looking for more members to join the Steering Group and voice how 60+ Action develops. Meetings are held every three months, in Hove (two hours, including lunch). Please contact Jo Tulloch on 01273 229004 for more details.

West Hove - there is a new venue for the West Hove group - now at Muriel House, Ingram Crescent West.

Discussion focused on an article produced by the NHS on its future targets. Many members thought these targets very ambitious and some were sceptical they could be achieved. 60+ Action will be monitoring progress closely over the

next two years.

Members informed the meeting that the self-referral (nail cutting) chiropody service is still up and running. However, other chiropody services, (i.e. removal of calluses) will need a referral from a GP.

Portland Road members have concerns about the untidy state of some shops in Portland Road, and other buildings, including the ex-Gala Bingo building. 60+ will make

enquiries with the Council about this issue. A request has been made to the Council to place a seat on the south side of Portland Road (at the bus stop, before turning into Olive Road) as it's a 20-minute wait if the number 2/2a bus is missed or cancelled.

Craven Vale - a representative from Money Advice was warmly welcomed by the Craven Vale group, and plans to visit other 60+ Groups in turn.

Come to the next 60+ Action Group meeting

Moulsecombe: The Orchards, Moulsecombe Way - 3rd Nov, 4th Jan.

Kemp Town/St James/Hanover: Courtney King House, Eastern Road (near RSH) - 10th Nov, 12th Jan.

West Hove: New venue: Muriel House, Ingram Crescent West - 18th Nov, 20th Jan.

Craven Vale: Resource Centre, Queensway, Brighton - 25th Nov, 27th Jan.

All groups meet at 2.30-4.00 pm, except Craven Vale (2.00-4.00 pm).

There are no meetings in December. **Contact Betty Davis on 01273 779888 if you would like to come to a meeting.**

Are you fit and safe to drive?



Sussex Safer Roads PARTNERSHIP

Today's roads are busy and can be confusing. For the older motorist, changes in eyesight, hearing, mobility and judgement mean that extra care is needed.

The physical effects of ageing also mean that older people involved in a collisions are more likely to be injured or killed than younger ones.

If you would like more information then click on the experience and age section on our website:

www.SussexSaferRoads.gov.uk

Safer roads
Safer communities
Sharing the responsibility

Welcome to Brighton!

The Amsterdam Hotel in Madeira Parade in Brighton was buzzing on 22nd August, among them, the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) men's group from Camden in London.

The afternoon welcomed the group of Gay Elderly Men's Society (GEMS) members and was organised by fellow GEMS members Jack Dixon (Vice Chair of the Pensioners' Forum) and Peter Amon.



Some of the men on the way to Brighton

Committee members from the Pensioners' Forum, Age Concern and LifeLines were also among those who enjoyed an afternoon of music by Mark, socialising and a buffet, prepared by *The Pensioner's* 'friendly gourmet',



Jack Dixon makes final preparations to the buffet to welcome the Camden group

Jack. The Amsterdam kindly provided their venue free of charge, plus tea, coffee and fruit juice. Some great prizes were won on the raffle, all donated by GEMS members.

"We had an amazing turnout of around eighty people and it was great to welcome the Camden group to Brighton", Jack said.

News from the Pensioners' Forum

by Joan Moorhouse, Chair of the Pensioners' Forum

This has been a very busy time for the Forum, and especially for Paula our Administrator and Editor.

In addition to our Editorial Group gathering and writing material for this issue, we are preparing our Annual Report and planning for the Forum's Annual General Meeting in November. Our members have received an invitation to attend the AGM and nomination forms for one elected place on our Management Committee.

We would like to include more stories of your activities in *The Pensioner*. Rambling and singing were mentioned as examples previously, and your contributions with photographs to the Editor would be most welcome.

I hope you are able to

receive Grey Matters, the radio programme (on 97.2fm) owned by the Older People's Council, Age Concern and the Pensioners' Forum, as we are now taking the opportunity to broadcast the Forum's activities and our joint working with other older people's groups.

We have been studying details of the Government's Green Paper on *Shaping the Future of Care Together* to give our response to the proposals and you can read more about this important subject on page 10.

The last weekend in September saw the Forum again outside B&Q in Lewes Road, Brighton collecting for the newly merged Age Concern and Help the Aged charities, an organisation which has been very supportive to the Pensioners' Forum.

We continue to work closely with 60+ Action Group, including sharing stands at a 50+ Event in Hangleton and BME Elders Information Day at Hove Town Hall, both in October.



The update on our Extra Seating campaign is that serious consideration is being given to our long list of requests for more benches. At the time of writing one bench in Holland Road in Hove has been sited, with another to follow. We will continue to press

City Clean on providing extra seating across the City.

Did you notice that we were ahead of the local and national media in highlighting the Loan Sharks Scandal in our last issue?

The Forum's AGM takes place during the Older People's Day on Thursday, 19th November at Hove Town Hall. A small, joint working group made up from Forum and Older People's Council members have met to make arrangements for the event which will include over 40 exhibition stands, free refreshments and a fantastic entertainment programme. It makes all the hard work and cost of arranging the Older People's Day worthwhile! This event is always well attended and I look forward to seeing many of you there enjoying the day.

Help the Pensioners' Forum

What price would you put on better services in social care, better pensions, keeping your post office and surgery open and more street seating, to name just a few?

The Brighton & Hove Pensioners' Forum campaigns for all these things. We also organise free events such as Older People's Day at Hove Town Hall, and produce what you're reading right now - *The Pensioner*.

The Pensioners' Forum survives on a small grant from Brighton and Hove Primary Care Trust (PCT) which pays for our two-day-a-week Administrator/Editor, and some running costs. The elected Forum's Management Committee work on a

voluntary basis and is always in need of financial help and support to continue producing *The Pensioner*, lobbying the government and our continual campaigning for better services for older people in the City. We strive to publish useful information and easy contact details in your publication.

Each issue of *The Pensioner* costs around £1,500 just in print and postage costs alone, and if every one of our 4000 readers (not all are members) paid a £3 subscription each year, we could feel safe in the knowledge that we have the publication costs of the magazine for a whole year.

Did you know that if we add all the £3 annual membership subscriptions together, it doesn't even cover the cost of printing and mailing out JUST ONE issue of *The Pensioner*?



Why not have a car boot sale and donate takings to the Pensioners' Forum?

On-line and on air

If just half of our readers were to donate £3 per month, we would have enough money to employ someone to design and manage a Pensioners' Forum website and contribute to fund Grey Matters, the community older people's radio programme broadcast on 97.2fm, of which the Forum is part-owner. We want to develop these communication vehicles so that more people can access information about issues affecting older people in different ways, particularly those who find reading difficult or are unable to leave their homes to track down a copy of *The Pensioner*.



Turn your pennies into pounds and donate them to the Pensioners' Forum



Buy the Argus on Tuesday 3 for the Forum to receive a special award to help local communities. YOUR VOTE COUNTS.

Support us

There are lots of ways that you could support us so we can support you:

1. Renew your subscription each November, particularly if it is overdue (there is a form on page 7).
2. Become a member of the Pensioners' Forum for just £3 each year (form on page 7).
3. Perhaps you have family or friends who would like to organise a sponsored walk or swim on our behalf - or even run the first ever Brighton Marathon on 18th April next year! We have a charity place ready and waiting for a very keen fundraiser (see page 7)!
4. Collect your pennies and donate them to us.
5. Leave us a gift in your will.
6. Ask family and friends who work in organisations to make the Pensioners' Forum their chosen voluntary organisation.
7. Set up a standing order with your bank and donate a regular amount to us - we can help you to do this.
8. Have a car boot sale or sell home-made goods to friends and family.

Ask us about any of the above. We want you to see the benefits of the Forum's campaigning, enjoy free events and to continue receiving *The Pensioner* and help it to grow into an even bigger and better publication. Everyone who supports us will get a special mention in the magazine and our personal thanks.

to help you!

rd November and vote
share of a £10,000 cash
community groups.
COUNTS!



Brighton Marathon could raise vital funds for the Pensioners' Forum

To get the Pensioners' Forum fundraising off to a flying start - or should we say running start - we're looking for a runner to take part in the very first Brighton Marathon on 18th April 2010, a full 26-mile affair. It's a well known fact that older runners are better runners, but if it's too much for you, perhaps a family member or friend would like to fly the Pensioners' Forum flag? Or maybe they know someone at their workplace who'd like to run for us?

We've secured a charity place and are looking for someone who wants

to take part in the challenge, and can raise £1,000 in sponsorship to help boost the funds of the Forum. Their guaranteed entry to the marathon will cost them £86.25, and is refundable once we receive their sponsorship money (over 18's only).

The course is generally fast and flat. It takes in Preston Park and the city centre area, on and close to the Steine, before heading east out towards Rottingdean on the A259, west towards Hove on the seafront and Church Road/New Church Road, and finishes using the promenade towards the Peace Statue and the

A259 towards the pier and the Finish Line in Madeira Drive. The last mile in particular will be along the seafront road alongside thousands of cheering spectators. Silver Sounds, the older people's samba band will be drumming out their infectious beat to help our runner come home.

Please get your prospective runner to contact the Editor for more details - 01273 229004.

More details about the marathon can be found at <http://www.brightonmarathon.co.uk>

Sponsor our Brighton Marathon runner

Please sponsor our runner and help them to raise urgently needed funds for The Pensioners' Forum. Your cheque for any amount can be sent to the Editor (details on page 2) made payable to Brighton & Hove Pensioners' Forum. Please mark on the back of your cheque 'Brighton Marathon Sponsorship'. Cheques will be cashed after the event and should therefore be UNDATED.

**RENEW YOUR FORUM
SUBSCRIPTION NOW
AND BE GUARANTEED
OF THE PENSIONER
MAGAZINE BEING
MAILED TO YOUR
HOME ADDRESS TWO
WEEKS BEFORE
GENERAL RELEASE**

Join the Brighton & Hove Pensioners' Forum NOW!

**Annual Membership Fee just £3
(renewable each November)**

I would like to join the Brighton & Hove Pensioners' Forum

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

New Member: YES/NO

Cheques payable to Brighton & Hove Pensioners' Forum and returned to: Pensioners' Forum, 1st Floor Interger House, 65-67 Western Road, Hove BN3 2JQ

Data Protection Act: The information you have provided on this form will be used to keep you up-to-date with Forum activities. On occasions, the Forum may decide it is appropriate to pass your contact details on to other organisations who wish to make contact with older people (i.e. Health Service, City Council, arts or community organisations).

If you DO NOT wish your contact details to be passed on, please tick here ☐

Signed Date

Pensioners' Association dates for your diary

10th November, 11am

Trevor Weeks, founder and rescue co-ordinator of the East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service will talk about the work his organisation performs.

8th December, 11am

Elm Grove School children sing, followed by Christmas drinks, mince pies and a raffle.

Pensioners' Association Brighton, Hove & District Branch meets on the second Tuesday of each month (except August) at Brighton Trades & Labour Club, 16 Lewes Road (almost opposite the bottom of Elm Grove). Tea and coffee from 11am, ready for a prompt start at 11.30am.



On the buses?

By Francis Tonks, Pensioners' Forum Committee Member

Free bus passes and the NHS are the two greatest benefits for older people in our society. Our pensions are one of the lowest in Europe, yet we do have free healthcare and can travel freely on buses. The latter is especially valuable. You can get about on the bus, visit family and friends or even do a bit of shopping.

With the recession and cuts in public services, transport may be a target for savings. Brighton & Hove Buses provide a fairly good service but they have a near-monopoly. Some routes, especially off-peak, are subsidised by money from the Council. We should defend these as any savings might leave outlying estates 'no-go' areas after dark, isolated from the centre of town.

Keith Ludeman, Group Chief Executive of the Go-Ahead public transport company said of the free bus pass, "pensioners cannot be given a blank cheque". The scheme cost local authorities a staggering £1 billion last year, so the private bus companies aren't doing badly out of the deal - and who can put a price on the health and happiness of pensioners?

In Belgium, transport is in public ownership, fares are heavily discounted and travel is free for over-65s. That's not all. Their state pension is worth about 60 per cent of average earnings and here in the UK it's about 15 per cent.

The moral of the story is this. Keep taking the bus, keep it free and let us have a pension that pays for our needs.



Francis Tonks interviews Brian Avey, a member of the Pensioners' Forum, aged 68, who was a bus driver for 42 years ...

F.T. Did you always work on the buses?

B.A. Yes, I was born in Brighton and worked out of Conway Street. At one time the bus service was nationalised.

F.T. How did it rank as a job?

B.A. Bus driving was always one of the better paid jobs after the Police and Post Office.

F.T. What do you think of the free bus pass scheme for older people?

B.A. Bus travel should be free for the elderly without any time restrictions and available throughout the whole country.

F.T. How should it be funded?

B.A. It should be funded nationally. I believe the bus companies are mounting a campaign against the scheme. They want a half-fare system and the Go-Ahead boss says the free scheme is unaffordable.

F.T. With Government cuts in public spending what services are most at risk?

B.A. Late night buses, evening and Sunday services. I'd like to know how much is spent on subsidies from the Council to keep these services running. Once people have gone to work buses are running fairly empty.

F.T. What improvements in transport would you like to see in Brighton & Hove?

B.A. I'd like to see a municipal bus service run by and for local people and free for both locals and tourists. There could be electric mini-buses. We should be looking at trams and trolley-buses and small capacity vehicles as the way forward for our city.

Be part of a lifesaving team



East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) are working with LifeLines to identify 'at risk' older people who are unaware they can have a fire safety visit and smoke alarms fitted for FREE. Sadly, many of the fire deaths recorded by ESFRS are older people who did not have a smoke alarm fitted. Many older people live alone and have reduced mobility, which makes it harder to escape from a fire.

Just a few hours of your time could help avert a fire tragedy!

LifeLines need a team of 50+ volunteers to help us inform older people about fire safety. Training will be provided by LifeLines and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's Home Fire Safety Team.

To find out more about this important initiative please call Gwyneth Chanlewis at LifeLines on 01273 508118 or email Lifelines@ageconcern-bhp.org.uk

Your letters to The Pensioner

Many thanks for your letters to *The Pensioner* which are edited. Please keep them coming and let us have your views about health, housing, learning and transport if any such changes have seriously affected you.

On the buses? We hope so!

We don't know the details yet for restricting the issue of free bus passes to older people. Something to keep an eye on.

R Wootton, Saltdean

Please send your letters to the Editor (details on page 2).

photographic competition

Our City Old and New

Ever fancied yourself as the next David Bailey or Annie Leibovitz? Well, now is your chance to get your camera out and take a stunning photograph in the Pensioners' Forum photographic competition.

The theme is *Our City Old and New*, and all you need to do is capture an image to impress our judge, freelance photographer Ray Gibson. We have three prizes of free subscriptions to the Pensioners' Forum for the winners (three years for first prize, two years for second, and one year for third). All three winning photos will be printed in the next issue of *The Pensioner*.

Get snapping, and we look forward to viewing your work.

Rules of entry

- * Give your image a name, i.e. 'Newly Painted Bandstand'.
- * Your photo can be sent as a print to the Editor with your name and postal address written clearly on the back. Mail carefully so it does not get damaged (all prints will be returned).
- * Or bring your print along to Older People's Day on 19th November.
- * Or attach your digital photo to an email and send to the Editor (with image name and your contact details).
- * Closing date is 30th November 2009.
- * Only one entry per reader.
- * Maximum size per image = 8" x 10".
- * All members and non-members are eligible to enter.
- * The judge's decision will be final.



Computers etc.

1-1 Tuition for Older People

- Beginners level computer & Internet skills
- Using email, google, iplayer, youtube, etc.
- Online Shopping
- Digital Photography and editing
- 1-1 tuition in your own home, at your pace
- Windows or Apple, Laptop or desktop
- Experienced Tutor

 Ray Gibson 07760 471 540
 raygibson2@yahoo.co.uk

* Prices start at **£15 per hour**

Do you have a garden that you can no longer maintain, or would like to find a garden where you can grow your own food? *Grow Your Neighbour's Own* matches up residents of Brighton & Hove who don't have gardens but would like to grow their own food with other residents who have gardens but aren't able to grow food, whether for time, knowledge or mobility reasons.

Chris Callard, who started up the scheme, is excited about the project. "The scheme aims to help form lasting gardening relationships between people, preferably those who live near each other. The garden owner and volunteer gardener arrange between them what they will grow and how often the gardening will take place, and share the produce as it is harvested. The scheme is for owners with gardens of any size, and gardeners of all levels of experience - the aim is to pair people who have similar expectations from the scheme".



The scheme, set up by Transition Brighton & Hove, is primarily to see more food grown locally; but there are many other benefits - people getting to know each other better in their community, and providing elderly and those less-abled with more social contact.

How does the scheme work?

Garden owners and gardeners register their details with *Grow Your Neighbour's Own* either via their website or by phone, and they pair up people who are a good match, by location, expectations of the scheme, etc. If you would like one, you'll get a home visit as a garden owner to ensure you are comfortable with the scheme. *Grow Your Neighbour's Own* personally interviews all the gardeners and checks references and only pairs owners with a gardener who has been CRB (criminal records bureau) checked, if that is appropriate for you as an owner. There's no charge for the scheme at all.

Garden owner registration

To register as a garden owner with *Grow Your Neighbour's Own*, you can call Julie on 01273 735795 and she will take your details over the phone. Or go online: www.transitionbrightonandhove.org.uk

Sign e-petition to increase pension

Want to petition the Prime Minister to press for a major increase in the United Kingdom old age pension? There's an online e-petition that closes on 23rd January 2010, so if you can get online, go to <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/pensionsoldage/> and make your voice heard.

Paying for social care

By Peter Lloyd, PF Management Committee

In July the Government published its Green Paper, 'Shaping the Future of Care Together'. It's a 132-page document proposing the establishment of a National Care Service which, implicitly, will exist alongside and in close collaboration with the National Health Service.

A repeatedly cited concept is 'fairness'. However we age we should receive equal treatment and at present we do not. If one succumbs to cancer or diabetes, or needs a hip replacement, all medication and hospital treatment is free. But if one develops dementia or suffers paralysis following a stroke, one will be entitled to social care - help in getting up, domestic chores, etc. - only if one has a low income and few savings. The rest of us may well exhaust all savings, including the value of our house, in paying for years of social care. This is grossly unfair.

But how can we pay for social care? How much responsibility should rest with the individual and how much with the State? Government seeks our views and asks us to participate in the 'Big Care Debate'.

The Green Paper rejects two

options. Total individual responsibility would take us back to the 'bad old days' before the Welfare State. And a fully funded state system, like the NHS, would place a tax burden which the Government is loath to impose - it would lose votes.

In between are three options which range between individual responsibility and state aid, and involve voluntary insurance policies. Choosing between these seems almost impossible without more details of the likely costs and levels of service provided.

Pensioners' Forum member, Richard Allden, has also read the Green Paper, and writes, "After reading the document, one is left with the thought that this National Care Scheme sounds fine in theory, but may be both expensive and difficult to put into practice. Many questions are asked and one relates to how the scheme should be funded:-

- a) Partnership - supported by Government (taxpayers) for a quarter or one-third of the cost of care, or more if you have a

low income.

- b) Insurance - for the cost beyond one-quarter or one-third paid by Government, an insurance scheme would be made available to provide the remainder of the cost.
- c) Comprehensive - a state insurance fund into which everyone contributes, if they can afford it, and then free care and support are available to those needing it.

Which scheme do you prefer?

There appears to be a long way to go before the Scheme takes off! But little time is left for us to have our say".

Nevertheless, the issue is a vital one. The Government's consultation period ends on 13th November 2009. To obtain a copy of the Green Paper phone the Department of Health's Publications Office 0300 123 1002 and quote reference 295936 or visit www.orderline.dh.gov.uk.

Paying for social care must be one of the major issues raised in the coming General Election. The Pensioners' Forum would like to arrange a public event at which candidates or representatives of the political parties may debate its several policies.



book review - by Ben Moorhouse, Pensioners' Forum member

Brighton's County Hospital 1828 - 2007, by Harry Gaston

Prior to January 1810 when the Brighton Dispensary opened its doors, the outlook for poor people in BRIGHTHELMSTONE who fell ill or needed surgery was bleak. This charitable institution provided, for the first time, the existing treatment available, albeit only on written recommendation from a subscriber to the charity. Still, it was a start.

The statement by Richard Russell, a Lewes doctor, that sea water both inside and out was good for you, was instrumental in the founding of The Sussex County Hospital and Sea Bathing Infirmary in 1828. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The author's enthusiasm and knowledge of the

subject of this book are infectious. The progress of development of successive locations, improvements in medical technology, treatments, knowledge, training and education is set in the associated historical context and fully engages the reader.

The inclusion of extracts from documents, minutes of meetings and newspapers at the time were in line with the growth (and occasional lack of it) of the hospital. It adds much interest, and enhances the story, as do the descriptions of the many notable people well known locally, and those national figures that contributed, and are contributing, to the present day hospital complex.

This book is a major addition to our mass of knowledge and understanding of local history. It is lavishly illustrated photographically and is a very good read.

Published by Southern Editorial Services, Newhaven, RRP £15.00. Most of the money raised by the sale of this book will be donated to the Friends of Brighton and Hove Hospitals.



health matters

Handwashing for health!

With swine flu still hanging around, it is useful to remember that the old-fashioned way of preventing the spread of infection - regular and thorough hand washing.

Germs spread easily - often through contact with hands, which in turn can transfer germs to every surface they touch. This was illustrated, perhaps only too graphically, by a study which found that over a quarter of people waiting for buses or trains had faecal bacteria on their hands. This study was reported by the BBC last October and researchers said that this was due to people failing to wash their hands properly after using the toilet.

Soap stars!

Washing hands thoroughly with soap and warm water is the best defence against the spread of infections. Hands should be washed

thoroughly and dried carefully first thing in the morning, after each visit to the toilet and before eating. There is no need



to use anti-bacterial soap as an ordinary one is just as effective. And although you will see alcohol hand-rub used by doctors and nurses, it is not normally necessary in the home. Use a good moisturiser frequently - germs will lurk in cracks and crevices caused by hard skin, and around the nails and cuticles.

So break the cycle of infection spreading - start a good hand washing routine, if you don't already have one, and stay healthy this autumn and winter.

Eyes at Home

If you have difficulty getting to an optician, there is FREE* NHS eye testing at home for the over 60s in Brighton & Hove. There's no catch, just a genuine service for those over 60 who can't access a normal high street optician without assistance due to illness or disability.

- * Free NHS spectacles to those who qualify.
- * Full frame/lens range.
- * Warranty, delivery and fitting service included.
- * Friendly, professional and personal service.



When should I consult my pharmacist rather than my GP?

Many acute illnesses can be dealt with without seeing a doctor. "Pharmacists can often put people's minds at rest by diagnosing and providing a remedy for minor ailments such as coughs and colds, fever, worms, lice, skin problems and headaches" says Paddy, Head Pharmacist of Ashtons Pharmacy.

This also saves the over-busy GPs from dealing with trivial enquiries. The pharmacist is generally more available to see and get to talk to than a GP, as you don't have to make an appointment. "We're even open until 10pm", says Paddy.

Other services that are provided by pharmacies include:

- Cardiovascular checks
- MUR (Medication Use Reviews)
- Cholesterol tests
- Flu jabs
- Travel clinics
- Smoking cessation clinics

If your condition is serious, the pharmacist will always refer a patient to a doctor if they feel it is appropriate.



Have you ever wanted to try out a scooter?



Then come along to Shopmobility and try one for **FREE**. Our friendly staff will show you how easy it is and how you can get out and about shopping, visiting friends - in fact going anywhere in Brighton & Hove!

We're based at Churchill Square Car Park 1, Parking Level P3, Regency Road, Brighton (just off West Street)

Call us on 01273 323239 for more information or log on to our website www.bhfederation.org.uk

Normal hire is £5 per day and £3 per day for members (annual membership is £12)

50% discount off first hire for readers of *The Pensioner* - and 50% off the annual membership fee. Just mention this ad.

Registered Charity No. 1114435, Company Ltd.
By Guarantee No: 05706441

Telephone FREEPHONE

0800 345 7509

www.eyesathome.co.uk

Applies to all who are entitled to NHS Domiciliary services

Dieppe - very much alive

By Connie Fraser

The great Dieppe Trip is still very much alive. It was started 31 years ago by the left-wing journalist, Peter Avis, as a way of making a friendly link between the people of Brighton and those of Dieppe, with the continuing support of their progressive local government.

Over those 31 years, the yearly trippers have become pensioners, and the number joining in the event has risen closer to forty, including some younger ones.

This September, I joined the trip again and was glad to meet familiar faces including Forum members Ray Blackwood, Jack Hazelgrove, Joyce Edward-Smith, Francis Tonks and Sheila Schaffer, as well as the previous editor of *The Pensioner*, Len Goldman and his wife Rita.

After we settled into our various hotels on the Friday, we met up at the Mini Golf on the seafront, where we enjoyed a reception by the very young-looking and pleasant local mayor. Then we went on to a restaurant where we discovered it was Sheila's birthday - good reason to raise our glasses!

My friend Kate and I explored the extensive town market the next morning, discovering only a few things cheaper than in the UK, but there was a great variety of attractive food stuffs on the stalls - cheeses, olives, fruit ...

In the afternoon, we went to the very



moving exhibition of the disastrous 1942 Dieppe raid, in which nearly 1000 Canadian soldiers were killed. Kate was particularly saddened by this as it brought back memories of a Canadian she had known when very young. I felt angry, as well as sad, because of the incompetence of the 'top brass' who had so badly mismanaged the raid from the safety at Whitehall.

Afterwards, our climb up to the Castle Museum and discovery of the delightful paintings and artifacts on show cheered us.

With no time for a real rest, we surprised ourselves by being increasingly alert as the evening wore on. Food, wine and talk in

the friendly close-quarters of the restaurant were followed by our self-made entertainment - two of my poems and a splendid, robust poem by Len Goldman who then went on to present Peter Avis with a selection of his Great Dieppe poems written over many visits. That put us all into enthusiastic form to join in Joyce's sing-song before the arrival of the delicious pudding.

On Sunday morning, we travelled by coach to the Parc de Cleres to appreciate the magnificent trees and the many beautiful water-birds including glowing flamingoes, and the peacocks which walked with dignity to meet us. Except for briefly bouncing wallabies, other animals such as the deer and gibbons, kept their distance - possibly due to the rain-threatening sky.

Then it was time for the return journey and 'goodbyes' all round at Newhaven, too tired to appreciate what a good weekend it had been.

Next year, the people of Dieppe might reciprocate by visiting us in Brighton. Though we cannot compete with their open market, our unique Royal Pavilion, museums, and variety of our restaurants and the vibrant life of the streets would surely give our French visitors an interesting, happy experience.

Diella's Ristorante

01323 892771

'Il Ristorante Italiano a Seaford'

www.diellas.co.uk

Taking bookings now (up to 70) for our fantastic Christmas lunch and dinner menu in December, £23.50 (not open Christmas day). Seaford hosts their Christmas Extravaganza evening, on Friday 4th December at 5.30pm with Father Christmas switching the lights on our tree. Stalls, fairground rides, music and many of our shops opening until late.



Open for coffee from 10am (Tue-Sat)
Lunch from midday, dinner from 6pm

10% discount for The Pensioner readers when
booking or before ordering

Dane Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 1DJ