

THE LATE EDITION



NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER LONDON RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION

JULY 2025

THERE IS STILL A LOT OF WORK TO DO

The Branch committee works hard but is short on numbers

So the government have had second thoughts about the winter fuel allowance and will now restore it to some pensioners "at a fiscal event" but is reluctant to say when this will be and who will be affected, so we will have to await the announcement from Rachel from accounts, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as she is sometimes known.

As reported in the January **Late Edition**, Unite have been leading the campaign to overturn this decision and there is a report of their banner drop on page two of this newsletter, whilst Unite's General Secretary, Sharon Graham, has been very critical of the original decision.

For some time, we have been trying to persuade our Union to take the needs of Retired Members far more seriously than they have in the past, and we now have a good relationship with Josh Berlyne, a Unite Organiser, who also has specific responsibilities for retired members and who has been our guest speaker on a couple of occasions.

However, the lack of attendance at Branch meetings is of great concern, particularly if we have a guest speaker – it is embarrassing for us and unfair to them – so, if you used to attend but no longer do so, then please consider coming back; and bring a friend with you, whilst we are failing to recruit 'newly' retired members who will, by implication, be more mobile and find it easier to get to the Marx Memorial Library.

We are working with the latter about the possibility of members joining remotely but many people do not have the facilities to enable them to do so, and it is hypocritical to talk about 'digital isolation', which we do a lot, only to adopt that format!

The committee is working hard on this, and many other matters, but we have lost some key people of

late and need replacements, so please consider volunteering.

Sad to report the deaths of Doreen Parish, wife of Alf, and Ken Martin, of our Manchester Branch and great friend of our own – obits of both appear in these pages - whilst Carol Garner and Geena Gibbs write movingly about their good friend June Phillips.

Our darts competition, in honour of Alf Parish, was again a great success - and made £190 for the branch – and Doreen's death means that it will be in honour of her as well as Alf next year.

Finally Paul Osborne, who, along with Perry Russell, continues to do such great work in putting my haphazard ramblings into good order, has asked "Will you mention Palace's amazing win in your editorial?"

Strikes me it would be churlish not to do so, particularly as Alf, our erstwhile secretary, was the father of Steve, the Palace Chairman, and Doreen was such a big fan, and Paul asked the question, but I have resisted the temptation of including an eight page supplement!

Mike Pike

MEMBERS MEETINGS 2025

Marx Memorial Library

37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU

Wednesday December 10th 2025

Meetings start at 11 a.m.

*Hopefully you will put these dates in your diary now
and come along to reminisce
with some old friends and colleagues*

UNITE LEADS THE CAMPAIGN TO RE-INSTATE THE WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE

Banner drop well supported

Unite made its position on the government's decision to withdraw the winter fuel allowance from the majority of pensioners clear from the very start – they were against it – and organised a well attended, by Unite members, lobby of Parliament on October 7th but, and as we all know, governments do not always, if ever, take note of the views of the electorate, so further action was called for.

“We are organising a banner drop on Westminster Bridge on January 29th”, explained Unite organiser Josh Berlyne. “The banner will read ‘Dear Keir, how many excess deaths this year?’ and we need as many Unite members as possible to support this venture.”



The Banner is unfurled before being hung over Westminster Bridge

The day arrived, bright and crisp, and before long they were 30 or so of us in position to wave Unite flags and lower the banner over the bridge, adjacent to the Houses of Parliament.

We were promised milk bottles to weigh the banner down and stop it flapping in the river breeze, a promise that excited many of us of a certain age - which most of us were - and recalled the days when the milkman, and the baker, were daily visitors to our homes. “The milkman’s horse has been outside Mrs Edwards house for a long time”, was a regular cry of those inclined to gossip amid much sniggering, nods and winks but, in the end, we were disappointed as there were no milk bottles at all, just the plastic cartons available in supermarkets.

However, they did the job, the banner looked splendid and received supportive toots from the river traffic and some driving over the bridge.

It was not long before security arrived – this was a somewhat clandestine event and official permission had not been obtained – to ask what was going on. Joe Rollin explained and recruited them to Unite.

There may be an argument for claiming that not every pensioner needs the winter fuel allowance – the King, Richard Branson and Alan Sugar are all examples – but to deny them such challenges the very principle of universal benefits, and to exclude anyone is an oxymoron of the principle.

Do those of a certain age and income get refused medical treatment? No, so why discriminate against the elderly when it comes to keeping them warm; failure to do so will increase the likelihood of them ending up in hospital thereby requiring such treatment; at least that will mean they will be able to keep warm!

When they were in opposition the Labour party attacked the Conservatives for their treatment of pensioners - e.g the removal of free TV licenses for those over 75, the threat to the triple lock, the fact that the old age pension is one of the lowest in Europe – but one of the first things they have done is withdraw an allowance which means so much to so many. Most of those who (used to) receive the payment can remember rationing so, to a degree, they do know how to cope. Many were children then but, thanks to their efforts during their working lives, particularly if they were Union activists, things have improved and everyone is better fed.

One of the targets of the Trade Union movement is to improve the pension schemes of the companies its members work for and the state pension albeit with mixed results. Pensioners are coming to the end of their lives so surely they are entitled to respect and thanks for their efforts? By implication most pensioners do not work, so they spend more time at home. They become more immobile so do not get out so much – some are house-bound so do not go out at all, thereby increasing their heating costs.

Yes, many retired Unite members can afford to be without the payment but that is because they have fought for, and won, better working terms and conditions **and better pensions**. Yes, it is true that those on pensions credit and certain allowances will continue to receive the payment, but this will still leave them struggling at the most vulnerable time of their lives.

A recent Unite survey shows that their members are having to make significant adjustments to their lifestyles to cope with the loss of the payment with one in six saying this has led to them becoming ill, or symptoms worsening, with a consequent extremely high demand of A & E services leading

to several hospitals declaring critical incidents.

Unite conducted a number of interviews on the day, including the likes of hospital workers, who spoke vehemently in opposition to the government's plans whilst Josh was due to be interviewed by GB News - thankfully he survived, so food parcels will not be necessary. The situation must be serious – when was the last time that Trade Unions had the support of 'The Daily Express?' So what is the answer?

Unite is calling on Keir Starmer to introduce a wealth tax which could raise up to £25 billion annually, enough to reinstate the winter fuel allowance and help rebuild NHS services after 15 years of austerity. It might also stop him talking about the £52 billion black hole as well!

Mike Pike

N.B. Had not been home for more than an hour or so when my (one piece) of post arrived - it was a Gas bill.



Unite members make their feelings known to the Prime Minister

THOSE NO LONGER WITH US

It is with regret that we have to inform you of the deaths of the following members since our last edition:

Ian Acaster
S. Benn
Peter Betten
Anthony Bettsworth
Edward George Briggs
Tony Brothers
Jim Carson
Len Connor

John Delve
Frank Greenwood
Michael Grice
John Hollamby
Philip Gramsbury
J. Lusty
John McNamee
Victor Marelli

Ken Martin
Owen Martin
Doreen Parish
June Philips
Albert Watts
Charles Wilkins

Our thoughts and condolences go out to all those who have been left behind.

DARTS EVENING TINGED WITH SADNESS

The Branch enters its own team as we remember our former secretary

This year's Darts competition was tinged with sadness following the death of Doreen Parish about a month before the event.

She had not been in the best of health for some time, a condition that had prevented her from attending for several years. She had also stopped going to Palace games for some time but still followed their progress avidly.

"How do you think we are doing?" she would invariably ask when I called her and although she could not attend the evening in Alf's honour, she always expressed her gratitude that we continued to remember him in such a way.

"We said goodbye to Doreen on Tuesday March 18th; it was a lovely ceremony and a great send off," Mark Bright informed me.

Thanks to the ever-efficient Erin Corrigan, Palace's Events Sales manager, all of the preliminary work had been completed successfully with 37 darts players confirmed and eight teams competing, including one for the very first time – more of which later.

The GPM Print Branch had made their usual generous donation of £300, for which many thanks, so, even before the first dart was thrown, there was already a substantial amount of money in the pot.

"Are you Mike" asked Fabian, a jolly man with a beard when I arrived at Selhurst Park shortly before 5-30 p.m.

"Yes; that's me", I responded, "Didn't you used to work at 'The Yard' or possibly you were an American singer in the late 1950s around the time of Elvis Presley."

He looked puzzled, primarily because he was too young to remember either. "I'm in charge of security for this evening. Everyone needs to put a band around their wrist and be searched quickly," he explained.

"If you find anything of value then we will split it between us," I responded.

Vinny, another accomplished member of the Palace staff, was making some last-minute adjustments to the darts boards, and it was a delight to see Caroline ensconced behind the bar; the evening would not be the same without her.

Soon after 6-00 p.m. Roger Hough, of the Greenwich and Woolwich Labour Party, arrived and it cannot be overestimated how vital he is to ensure the smooth running of the evening, his skills in organising the draw being exemplary. Roger is also a very good darts player and a former winner of the trophy.

Around 6-30 p.m. players started to arrive, and it was particularly gratifying to report that a new team 'Alf's Arrows' were participating for the very first time and representing Alf Parish himself.

When Alf retired as a full-time Trade Union official, he became secretary of the Retired Members' Association of the London and Eastern Region of Unite – YES - **OUR BRANCH** – and thanks are due to our treasurer, Laurie Pocock, for organising



Laurie Pocock, our Branch's captain, ponders the team's plan

our team, with John Catto making his affiliations very clear by wearing an "Evening Standard" t-shirt. We intend entering a team on a regular basis so potential darts players should make themselves known.

The first competitive dart was thrown just after 7-00 p.m. and, thanks to the co-operation of everyone involved – and Roger's organising skills - the final took place just before 10-00 p.m. This was contested by Chesney Jennings, of 'The Old Wilsonians' Football Club', and Owen Medwin of 'Men of the Hill', a game that enthralled everyone, with some excellent check outs and some very fine play by both, which Chesney won to claim the individual trophy and the team trophy for his side.

The evening raised £1,145, with the money being distributed equally between the participating teams, which means they all received £190 including, of course, our Branch!

Steve Parish was unable to attend but kindly put £500 behind the bar - not sure how long it took to exhaust but, with a team of print workers involved you can probably guarantee that it did not last that long!

The evening also saw the birthday of Simon Ward, a member of the 'Men of the Hill' team who is a big Palace supporter, and thanks to Mark Bright, and the Palace kit man, he was presented with a Palace shirt signed with a personal message from Mark.

Another Palace supporter, Matt O'Donoghe, from the Old Wilsonians' Cricket Club, played, and beat, Mark Bright and will no doubt dine out on this for many years to come.

The evening coincided with England's World Cup qualifier against Albania, which meant that last year's winners, 'The Flying Eagles' were not able to defend their trophy as they were at Wembley to witness Thomas Tuchel's first game in charge; and the multitude of Palace players in the England squad.



Mark Bright presents the winning trophies to the Old Wilsonians' Football Club

The occasion also saw the premier of some music written by Scott Jenkins, son of one of the darts players: "The teams are coming out to one of Scott's pieces of music," Paul Jenkins proudly informed me.

William Britton and his splendid team again provided a magnificent buffet for all to enjoy on what was one of the most memorable evenings ever as we remembered Alf and, as Tom Murphy put it: "Alf was a great officer, and it is our Branch's privilege to sponsor this event in his name."

We also remembered Doreen, with everyone standing for a minute's applause in her honour and, from henceforth, the evening will be known as 'The Alf and Doreen Parish Memorial Darts Tournament.'

My sincere thanks to all of the participants and congratulations to Chesney, the winner this year. Everyone played his/her part in the evening and left with the knowledge that they had raised some much-needed money for their respective teams, all of whom we hope to see again next year.

Mark Bright, as ever, did everything that was asked of him and more; it was particularly good to see him playing, a move that, hopefully, will continue, whilst CPFC ensured that the event went smoothly and professionally; even some of the Millwall and Charlton supporters enjoyed it!

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your lovely thoughtful card.

It was so touching to see Mum get a round of applause at the last event. It would be lovely to have the match named in both Mum and Dad's honour. Mum always supported Dad's work in every way, so it is very fitting.

I will definitely be at the next one, so let me know the date as early as possible. Also, if you would like to come to the cup final let me know and I'll get you a pair of decent tickets.

Steve (Parish)

REMEMBERING DOREEN PARISH

A Supportive wife and mother

They say that behind every good man there is a good woman and that is certainly true of Doreen Parish who, sadly, died shortly before the annual Alf Parish Memorial Darts match.

"We gave her a good send off", explained Mark Bright on the evening of the latter event.

Being the spouse or partner of a full-time Trade Union official is challenging due to long work hours and frequent absences, but Doreen managed admirably. "Alf was always there for me," she once told me "and if I had a problem or issue we would sit down and calmly discuss and resolve it," whilst son Steve asserts: "Mum always supported Dad's work in every way."

Doreen was a regular attendee at the darts evening in Alf's honour, always looked forward to it and presented the trophies at the end of the evening but in her later years her ill health prevented her from doing so. I spoke to her on a regular basis and she was always delighted to learn that the darts competitions went well, money was raised for important causes and that Alf was remembered in such a way.

"Was Alf a keen darts player?" I once asked her. "Not really," she replied, "but Pete Williams, who organised the first such evening was, and I was happy to continue with this format."

We often spoke about our respective diets - Doreen's was far healthier than mine - and she always thanked me for calling, but I was saddened to hear of her condition and wished I could do more to help. Doreen was also very protective towards son Steve - whom she always referred to as Stephen - and got very upset with the mindless abuse he got on social



Doreen - second left - enjoys the darts evening in 2019

media because of his position as Chairman of Crystal Palace Football Club. I always re-assured her that Stephen could take care of himself and, more importantly, that such abuse told you more about the abuser than the innocent target of their often-disgusting comments.

Doreen used to go to Selhurst Park on a regular basis but started to watch the second half of games on the television rather than from the stands until, eventually, her ill health prevented her going at all, but she always followed their results avidly and with concern; a typical football supporter, in fact.

The darts competition will certainly continue on an annual basis, but, henceforth, the evening will be known as "The Alf and Doreen Parish Memorial Darts match" in honour of two people who meant so much to so many people..... and to each other.

Mike Pike

THANK YOU



& KEY WORKERS

THE GPM CHARITABLE TRUST FUND IS HERE TO HELP YOU

A reminder that the GPM Charitable trust is an independent Charity, administered by Keith Keys, aimed at employees and their families who are working or have been employed within the Graphical, Paper and Media industries, and is here to help you.

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A LIFE WELL LIVED

Geena Gibbs and Carol Garner remember June Phillips

Having known June Phillips as a longtime friend of my grandmother, Eileen Morris, since I was born, what I will remember most about her is her work ethic and generosity of spirit. Even 'though she had retired for most of the time I knew her, June was never one to slow the pace of her life. Instead, she took her beloved dog, Tilly, on even longer walks, focused on her fitness through her visits to the gym and meetings with her local Weight Watchers group, and kept up a busy social life, constantly inviting her friends to numerous events.

When she relaxed, June enjoyed holidaying to both local and faraway destinations alike, if she had her friends by her side. She was generous with both her money and time, often offering to pay for her travel companions' trips, willingly giving up weeks of her year should somebody suggest a holiday destination they would like to visit. Even in her final years at home, following her diagnosis with Alzheimer's, she was desperate to travel, and her trips to tropical climates, with one or two friends, became trips to Yorkshire, Devon and the Cotswold's instead with four of her closest friends, as they all rallied around her.

June took great pride in her garden, constantly working on and tweaking it until it was a space where she felt she could relax and sunbathe, one of her favourite pastimes, and entertain friends. June also took an equal amount of pride in her appearance; regularly visiting her hairdressers to have her hair dyed her trademark auburn, and never missing a nail appointment to have her nails painted the colour she insisted was called 'slut red' up until the final few years of her life.

June will be remembered as a fun, generous and 'up-for-anything' friend, who valued the friendships in her life, even remembering - if not being able to recognise - her friends as late as the final year of her life.

Geena Gibbs

June started work at George Rose printers, Croydon, at fifteen years old as June Clarke. The first request made to June was to ask her to take the workers' orders for their sandwiches and rolls, to which June replied: "I have come here to learn a trade, not to be an errand girl". June carried on in that vein all her working life, fighting against injustices and supporting the ongoing fight for equality. When George Roses moved to Thornton Heath, June became the MOC at the grand age of 21. She remained in office and also became a member of the London Women's Branch committee until its closure. The next step for June was to become a London Women's Branch Assistant Secretary, which she remained for three years.



June then became a jobber for a couple of years until an opening became available at H.M.S.O. books in the VDU department. Until the move to Nine Elms, this opportunity had only been available to the London Central Branch, who were all men, so she became one of the first women to be employed in the department. Whilst this was not very popular at the time with said men, June eventually became the Chair of the mixed Chapel and was subsequently well respected by the Chapel and the employers. Her last employment was to work for the TUC as an education officer. June had a varied career in all aspects of the printing industry and will be missed by all of her friends. June was diagnosed with dementia several years ago yet managed to continue living at home independently for a long period of time. The decision to move her into a Care home was one she never really adjusted to. Hopefully now she will find peace.

Carol Garner

June Phillips - born June 3rd 1949, died November 2nd 2024

KEN MARTIN — THE BEST BRANCH SECRETARY MANCHESTER NEVER HAD

Tales of our Northern correspondent

For many years our Branch sent a delegation to Blackpool for the annual Pensioners conference organised by the National Pensioners Convention, where we were always delighted to be joined by Ken Martin from the Manchester office who regaled us with many tales from his forty years of dedication to our Union.

A retired newspaper proofreader and reviser, Ken was also a former Chairman of the UK Branch of Amnesty International and died on February 8th at the age of 92, having spent the last few months of his life in a care home suffering from Alzheimer's. His wife Margaret, who had her own health problems, which she always dealt with stoically, visited him regularly but, sadly, he was not aware of her presence during the latter part of his life.

Ken was awarded bronze, silver and gold medals for his contributions to the Union. He was also presented with a watch for 40 years' service by his employer, Thomson newspapers. He served on the Branch committee, and also the Executive, for many years and many regarded him as "The best Branch secretary Manchester never had."

He told many stories, including that of the member who was disciplined and instructed to appear before the Branch committee to explain his behaviour, but responded to every

question with what can best be described as "agricultural language", the Branch Chairman fining him £50 on each occasion until the latter suggested he leave the meeting for a while to reconsider his position. The member concerned took this advice on board and, returning about 15 minutes later, declared: "This conversation is becoming far too expensive for me."



On the last night of the Pensioners' Conference a social was held where the delegates delighted in dancing to music of the 50s and 60s and imagining they were teenagers once again. On my first visit to Blackpool Ken told me about "Duracell Man" whom, the previous year, took to the dance floor early on and never left it until the very end and, sure enough, he was there again.

In his way Ken was a lot like 'Duracell Man' himself, with his boundless energy and constant support of the members he represented. He produced a newsletter for the retired members and often made contributions to **The Late Edition**, and we will all miss our Northern correspondent.

LETTERS & EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

You can contact the editor by telephone on **020 8659 6443**, by email **owmikepike@yahoo.co.uk** or by post **Mike Pike, Secretary, RMA, 68a Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, London SE26 5RL**

Dear Mike,

My husband, Michael Grice, passed away on January 2nd 2025 after a number of years of ill health and always enjoyed reading the news and letters in **The Late Edition**.

He worked for Dewsons for most of his working life and, for a short time, for HMSO.

Yours,
Margaret Grice

Dear Mike,

Re the January **The Late Edition** and Billy Osborne's encounter with the dreaded snuff.

It reminded me of around 1977 when I was then allowed to work on the Presses in Fleet Street – you had to be 21 years old in order to do so. I had just qualified to do casual nights on newspapers and this particular night I was working at 'The News of the World', not the most hygienic place to work as it was set below ground level with not the best ventilation and mixed with ink fly and paper dust.

I was put on a press as a fly hand – all of the regular crew were getting on in age and I was a young whipper snapper.

After joining the tea club, with brews all night, I was then offered a pinch of snuff. I had never tried it before so I bravely took some, and that was when my head seemed to explode, running nose, blurry eyes and sweating like a pig.

I remember the old boys laughing their heads off and, after a couple of hours, I was ok, but god bless the old timers, in the NOTW, they were fun to work with and I learnt a lot but, and needless to say, I never touched that dreaded snuff again.

Best wishes
Fred Beeden (ex Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday Press room)

Dear Mike,

I'm sending you this email to let you know that my husband, Jim Carson, passed away on 3rd January 2025 at the age of 86.

Jim was a member of the NGA union for many years whilst he worked at various newspapers including 'The Sun' and 'The Observer.'

Thank you for **The Late Edition** newsletter over the years; he very much enjoyed reading it.

Many thanks,
Eve Carson

Hello Mike,

I came across this poem recently. Don't know if it's ever appeared in **The Late Edition**, but if not I thought you may like to use it as a filler.

It would be interesting to know how many words or phrases on there members can recall.

Regards,
Howard Richards

Thanks Howard and following Terry Kelly's 'Spirit of Christmas' discovery, printed in the January **Late Edition**, perhaps we should have a regular Poetry corner.

And, as Howard asks, can any readers recall the words and phrases in the poem?

If so, it would be good to hear from you - ed

A COMPOSITOR'S LAMENT

Thanks for all the memories of putting jobs to bed,
Quoins, furniture, formes, bodkins, flat-beds and rising lead,
Planers, shooters, ink-slabs, stones, gas-pots, setting stick,
One week's holiday - no payment for the sick.

Brevier, bourgeois and nonpareil, type cases by the score,
Lino, Ludlow, Monotype, and splashes evermore.

Blocks, mounts, tweezers, lead slugs, diss, brochures,
posters, books,
Hand flogged heads and adverts with pride in how it looks.

Cutters, bowlers, aprons, snuff, lay-down charts, precision,
Page cord, brass rule, Palace Script, four colour imposition.

Print techniques had barely changed within 400 years,
When suddenly, in my life's span, a different course it steers.

There came the revolution, photosetting rules today,
Print finds itself computerised - hot metal passed way.

And now I'm classified "Retired" I set these final pars,
No mark-up, reading galley proofs, no deadline now to keep.

The printer's ink within my blood I know will never dry,
On 50 years I reminisce - my imprint cannot die.

(Excerpt from an original by Jack Blake)

IF MEMBERS ADDRESS OR CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER, PLEASE KINDLY INFORM THE SECRETARY - DETAILS ABOVE,
IN ORDER THAT WE CAN UPDATE OUR RECORDS.