

THE MIDLAND PENSIONER



JUNE 18



IN THIS ISSUE
Contact Information

**HAPPY 70TH
BIRTHDAY**

NHS **NOT FOR SALE**
Keep our NHS public

LET'S MAKE SURE THE NHS
CAN CELEBRATE ANOTHER 70
YEARS OF LOOKING AFTER
THE PEOPLE

WHATS ON



THIS IS THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE WEST MIDLAND PENSIONERS CONVENTION



ABOUT US

The West Midlands Pensioners Convention is the Regional Organisation of the National Pensioners Convention.

Our main objective is to promote the welfare and interests of pensioners, both now and in the future; securing dignity, respect and financial security for all in retirement.

We have a number of very active committees, including a Transport Group which holds regular quarterly meetings with Transport for the Midlands (formerly CENTRO).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About our local branches, Trade Union Retired members sections and affiliated organisations CONTACT: Membership Secretary, Trevor Eames on 0121 733 8081 or : email solihullratepayers@hotmail.co.uk

For General enquiries about the

West Midlands Pensioners Convention:
Call 07342264482
email : wmpconvention@gmx.com

Please visit our website: wmpconvention.weebly.com

OUR ORGANISATION

We have local and Trade Union Branches across our Region. Each Branch is entitled to send delegates to the Regional Council which meets on the second Thursday of each month, at the offices of Birmingham UNISON, 19th Floor, Maclaren Building from 11a.m.

We also welcome applications for membership from non-party political organisations of pensioners and retired people from across our Region. Pensioners can also become individual members.

LOCAL BRANCHES

Walsall: Andrea Stanton :01922448331
Wolverhampton: barryhodg@yahoo.com
Halesowen :Tony Whitehouse:07715314608
Stourbridge: : 07342264482
Coventry : : 07342264482
North Staffs: Owen Sloss : 07582115742
Birmingham
Kingstanding : Ken Smith: 0121 624 6981
East Birmingham: Stan Simpson:0121 7830734
B'ham/South Central: 07342264482
Northfield: Richard Phillips:0121 477 3594
Solihull: Mike Wragg: 0121 242 2416
Sandwell (West Birmingham):
Andrea Stanton: 07809565454



The creation of the NHS by the 1945 Labour Government was a landmark in the formation of the welfare state, and for years there was a broad consensus across the political parties that it should be protected.

But now in the year the NHS celebrates its 70th birthday-like most pensioners-it's feeling the pressure.

Over the last twenty years our health service has faced an unprecedented amount of re-organisation, much of which has been done to enable the private sector to play a greater role. This stems from the misguided idea that it doesn't matter who performs the operation- so long as the operation gets done. What this approach fails to understand is that those who deliver the services, shape the services.

All the evidence shows that the private sector has no intention of treating the most difficult, costly and complicated cases. It's interest is in the quick and easy routine procedures that can bring the biggest profits. For too long the state has been training doctors and nurses and then seeing them slip away to the private sector.

It also has to be recognised that our NHS relies on overseas workers. The recent Windrush scandal affected the very people that helped to build the NHS after World War 11, and today the negotiations around Brexit could end up preventing future generations of European health workers from filling those much needed jobs.

However, what has become one of the greatest challenges in the last few years is the relationship between the health service and social care. Today it is unbelievable that the two are not properly connected and funded in the same way. Caring for someone with dementia should be no different to caring for someone with cancer- regardless of where that care takes place.

So for ourselves and the pensioners of the future, let's make sure the NHS can celebrate another 70 years of looking after the people.

Jan Shortt

General Secretary

National Pensioners Convention



“ UNITE TO RESTORE THE NHS TO ITS PERFECT GLORY”

Cyril John Randle



I was born in October 1930..no NHS ..no Social Security. If you couldn't work you didn't eat unless a family member or loving neighbour helped out. Disease was rife, death all too familiar and rituals of viewing the deceased even included young children.

The slum we lived in was my home until 9years old, one tap up in the yard and three outdoor lavatories.The Doctor would have been a constant visitor but the halfcrown needed for his presence was beyond the means of most ;especially when the cost of the medicine was needed.So many home remedies were pressed into service,some good , some utter nonsense; such as putting a child's feet into a poe filled with wee to cure chillblains! If a doctor was essential, the neighbours borrowed ha'pennies and pennies from each other to be paid back on a Friday,when the wages came in.

In 1939 we moved to a new council house in Stone Cross,West Bromwich.We had gardens front and back,a large field behind with a stream,tiddlers,frogs, newts,3 marl holes open to everthing to swim or drown in and,the SKY WAS BLUE! I thought I'd died and gone to heaven!

Meantime,dad had poured a pot of molton cast iron into his boot at Walsall Conduit foundry.The doctor did come to deal with him for twenty weeks but who paid I've no idea.We couldn't with only my sisters wage in Robinson's cake factory.

Somehow we survived,even the lack of food due to rationing.Then,after six years,the war ended.The forces voted Labour,in spite of Churchill's leadership,having seen close up the priviledges the officers expected and got with their rich backgrounds.A new era dawned under Clem Attlee and Nye Bevan.The NHS and Social Security was born.Treatment was free at source,everyone had deductions from wages to pay for it.Peoples health improved,teeth were kept with real smiles.

Too good to be true? Maybe, because within six years the Tories were back in.They didn't dare destroy the NHS,(and probably still daren't),but it got modified slowly but surely until we got what we have today.An underfunded NHS,attacked on all sides.

Now we seem to accept that the NHS isn't working properly,nurses underpaid,dreadfull working hours etc. Yet if we were told the unfettered truth by the media,the people would unite once again to restore the NHS to it's perfect glory.

Thank you Cyril for sharing your memories with us and for your passionate belief in our NHS.

MANY THINGS IN THE NHS HAVE CHANGED



I entered the NHS in 1961. As a foreigner I had no idea about the changes that came about after the NHS was founded in 1948. I got a job as a Nursing Assistant in a large Mental Health Hospital and soon discovered that practically all the untrained and some of the trained staff came from other European countries. We all got on very well. The hospital had a strict hierarchical structure, with the Medical Superintendent, Matron and Administrator in charge. Ward sisters ruled their territory, which included cleanliness, ordering supplies, keeping an inventory, ward maintenance, duty rots, discipline and yes, patient care too.

Dignity in care? What a strange thought. Patients had no property. Weekly pocket money, maybe, or maybe not. Clothes were communal, cleaned once a week after a bath in a communal bath room, three baths in one room. Relatives occasionally brought some clothes, but those were soon lost in the laundry system. Was it any better in the General Hospital? Large wards, 20 beds on either side, curtains that we forgot to draw on a regular basis. Sunday mornings Matron did her hospital round. Oh yes, every patient was in bed, sitting upright, clean top sheet, never mind what was underneath. No creases in the counterpane, bed wheels turned in, pillow cases openings away from the door. That was important.

I was very pleased that many things have changed for the better. But others are far worse. The first change came in the 1970s. Cleaning services were outsourced. I complained to our union (COHSE), but they seemed to support it. I suspect because now men were employed to use the heavy polishing machines. But gradually outsourcing moved on.

Now soon the government will pay private firms to provide health care at all levels. These must make a profit or will fail. Will the same happen to hospital services? Of course. Competition is all about winning and losing. We will have a NHS, paid for by taxation to independent firms, but not necessarily free at source.

Today the NHS and Care Services still rely greatly on staff from abroad. With Brexit and difficult visa requirements recruiting will be difficult. Maybe if better wages are paid, student nurses get grants again instead of taking up loans and medical schools will admit more students to train doctors, there might be less need to recruit from overseas.

These are the personal reflections of Ingrid Caras-Altas on a lifetime working in our NHS.

Ingrid is the Vice Chair of the West Midland Pensioners Convention.

OUR NHS IS 70 LETS CELEBRATE IT AND DEFEND IT



July 5th 1948 the day our NHS came alive a date that would dramatically improve the health and well being of a nation.

Prior to it's creation many could not afford to access health care for basic needs let alone life saving interventions. We must never forget that back then like now the Tories never wanted it and tried to prevent it. Move forward seventy years and they remain hellbent on destroying it.

The envy of the world ,the most cost effective health system on record.Built by the hard work and dedication of millions of hardworking,dedicated staff;many like the Windrush generation who came to this country to help build the service.We should never forget our NHS has a proud multicultural workforce,that delivers treatment irrespective of class or colour or creed.

Together we have to thank every member of staff working in our NHS today and everyone who has ever worked in it;everyone a hero,from consultants to cleaners,they all care for us.

But as it turns seventy we not only need to celebrate we need to stand shoulder to shoulder to defend our NHS from vicious attacks by this rotten government.under which this current crisis is growing day by day.Patients are waiting for hours in overcrowded accident and emergency departments,waiting lists are rising and hospitals are saddled with huge financial problems,

Together we need to make sure that our NHS is there for the next seventy years,delivering high quality healthcare free at the point of delivery,publicly owned,publicly funded and accountable;ensuring healthcare is delivered across the country from the cradle to the grave.

Frank Keogh

Regional Officer

UNITE the UNION





Celebrate and Demonstrate

#OurNHS70 Free, for all, forever

We're celebrating the 70th birthday of our NHS.
Come and join us & show your love.

Say yes to:

- A publicly owned NHS that is free for all
- Proper funding and proper staffing
- Support for our wonderful NHS workers
- World class services for every community

Saturday 30 June 2018

Assemble 12pm, Portland Place, London W1A (nearest tubes: Oxford Circus / Great Portland St)

COACH 1:
BIRMINGHAM
Unite Office, Holte Court North, Heneage Street
West, Birmingham B7 4AX
Departs: 8am

COACH 2:
WALSALL / Wolverhampton
Jane Lane School, Churchill Road, Walsall
WS2 0JH
Departs: 7.45am then pick up at
Wolverhampton train station 8.15am

COACH 3
WEST BROMWICH
Unite Office, 9-17 Victoria Street, West Bromwich
B70 8HX
Departs: 8am

COACH 4
NUNEATON
George Eliot Hospital, Maternity Entrance,
College Street, Nuneaton
CV10 7DJ
Departs: 7.45am
Then
COVENTRY
Unite Office, Unite House, 90 Short Street, Coventry
CV1 2LW
Departs: 8am.

COACH 5.
STOKE
Stoke Unite Regional office 8am



Supported by: TUC, UNISON, Unite, GMB, RCM, CSP, BMA, BDA, RCN and SoR

HEALTH CAMPAIGNS
TOGETHER

THE PEOPLES
ASSEMBLY

WHAT'S ON

WMPC REGIONAL COUNCIL

JUNE 14TH

SPEAKER

LEE BARRON

REGIONAL SECRETARY

MIDLANDS TUC

11.00 A.M. TILL 1.00 P.M.

BIRMINGHAM UNISON

19THFLOOR MACLAREN BUILDING

PRIORY QUEENS WAY

B4 7LR

Visitors, Guests and Friends -welcome



Branch Meetings

Walsall :Meets on 1ST Friday of the Month

Halesowen : Meets on 3rd Thursday of Month

Sandwell : Meets on 1st Tuesday of the Month

Kingstanding : Meets on 3rd Monday of Month

East B'ham: Meets on 2nd Tuesday of Month

Northfield : Meets on 3rd Monday of Month

Solihull : Meets on 4th Wednesday of Month

~

If you do not wish to join one of our local Branches – Please consider taking out individual membership of the WMPC

BIRMINGHAM



The Birmingham Branch of Keep Our NHS Public brings together activists from a broad range of organisations, including the WMPC, along with health workers, academics and professionals working across the NHS in our City; and individuals concerned about the future quality and direction of Health and Social Care.

We always welcome new members and supporters to our Monthly meetings. Held on the 1st Wednesday of the Month: at The Wellington-7.30 Bennets Hill . Call 07799415279 or email: btuchcc@hotmail.com

WALSALL SENIOR CITIZENS ORCHESTRA



We are retired people who play just for the love of making music.

Our concerts are at 2. 00p.m on the first Tuesday of every month at the Forest Arts Centre Hawbush Road Walsall

Admission is £2.00
Payable on the door

The Forest Arts Centre is a local authority that needs all the help it can get at the moment.