



The Chairman writes:

PEACE on earth, and good will to all men. These are my (belated) wishes to you this festive season along with all our hopes for a happy new year. And as long as none of us falls ill or needs an ambulance ... or a doctor's appointment ... or a train ... or a letter delivered, all will be well. My New Year's resolution is to develop a positive mental attitude, and avoid conversations with people (generally my contemporaries) who tend to talk a lot about death and illness and moan about the state of the country. If I survive I'll let you know how it went.

THIS is a good time to remind you that this will be my final year as Group Chairman. Under our constitution (unanimously approved in 2019) we have set a maximum term of 8 years for each of the three officer posts on the Committee: Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. To facilitate continuity, the changeovers have been staggered. Marion has already – and most ably – taken on the role of Secretary. Clive, our treasurer and membership secretary, will be due to step down at the AGM in 2025. You will need to elect a new Chairman (or –woman) at the group AGM in January 2024. We think that limiting terms in this way gives us the best chance of ensuring the group's survival by way of a planned introduction of new personnel and ideas. You may remember that the former CSPA chairman took it upon himself to notify us that our constitution was 'not approved'. We have yet to be notified whether or not the Executive Council (responsible under the National Rules for approval or otherwise) have endorsed the 'chairman's ruling' which contained a number of significant inaccuracies. David Luxton, the Deputy General Secretary has agreed to attend our group meeting on 28 February and it is to be hoped he will clarify the situation. Those of you who take an interest in the activities of the Executive Council will be aware that three posts remained unfilled after the national AGM last October. Nomination forms have now been received and are to be submitted by 17 February next, countersigned by the Chair and Secretary of each group. The accompanying circular did not make clear what arrangements would be made for members not covered by active group committees (currently about half the total membership) to participate on an equitable basis, and hopefully Mr Luxton will be able to make this clear also.

ONE of the motions put forward at the AGM called for the abolition of groups and the establishment of some sort of 'regional' structure. The AGM agreed to remit this to the EC for consideration. It remains to be seen whether or not a regional structure would provide members with the face-to-face discussions and social support that many members prefer, or, for that matter, whether it would do anything to arrest the overall decline in membership numbers. With that uplifting thought, I wish you all a happy new year, and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our AGM on 31 January.

CAMPAIGN NEWS

WIDOWS' PENSIONS

The National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO) has been calling for a United Kingdom-wide policy on survivors' pensions, which would see those who remarry or cohabit after the loss of their spouse retain their pension entitlement in full regardless of how their spouse died. This is the current model in Northern Ireland and is the UK-wide policy for widows, widowers and civil partners of Armed Forces personnel.

In May 2022, the Manchester Administrative Court ruled against a legal challenge brought by NARPO that would have put an end to police survivors having to make the terrible choice between companionship in later life and keeping their financial support. Whilst the judge, Mr Justice Fordham, dismissed the case, he granted the claimants permission to appeal on two specified grounds; the application of the right to marry and the judge's decision on justification.

The Court of Appeal has now ruled against NARPO, stating that that the policy decision made by the Home Secretary not to retrospectively repeal Regulation C9 could, on balance, be justified. Appeal justices recognised the burden caused by Regulation C9, stating that it did not underestimate "the unfortunate potential effects of Regulation C9 upon the Appellants".

On the advice of counsel, NARPO has taken the decision not to appeal to the Supreme Court but will continue to fight this injustice outside of the courts.

CSPA TRAVEL INSURANCE

As you may know, the CSPA website has been revamped (at considerable expense); members now need to create a new login with an email address and password. Details of the new travel insurance scheme can be found in the members' area, below:

Our CSPA Travel Insurance scheme has been designed to provide a good quality product from a well-respected Insurer at a fair price. We are able to provide annual policies or cover for single trips (subject to scheme acceptance criteria) with a variety of policy limits and benefits.

Policies are available to buy online up to age 85, and with just a telephone call to our team quotes for 86-91 can be handled seamlessly by a specialist provider. There are 4 levels of cover, with the opportunity to select different policy limits within the product to suit your own needs.

Coverage is available for a wide range of medical conditions, although there may be some instances where unfortunately we will not be able to provide a quote. If that is the case, we will provide details of a service that may be able to help find a specialist insurer to provide the cover.

LACK OF ACCESSIBLE TOILETS

Britain is to receive its first public lavatory commissioner under the government's levelling-up bill to ensure there are enough facilities to meet demand. According to latest figures, provision of public lavatories fell from 5100 in 2010 to 4500 in 2018. Under the new proposals, local authorities will have to produce a public convenience plan, to include details of current provision, likely demand, and consideration of the needs of disabled people. Much of the bill (currently undergoing its second reading in the House of Lords) is concerned with the reorganisation of local authorities into CCAs or Combined County Authorities. It will be very interesting to see whether the new regulations apply to the London area. As our Regional Representative, David Owen, has reported, the 'London Age-friendly forum' sponsored by the Mayor's office, albeit with no dedicated funding, has been quiet for quite some time. Public lavatories cost about £15,000 per annum to run. Provision within our group's area – including a large number of distinct local authorities – has been patchy at best. We shall see whether this essential element of our public hygiene falls victim to the forthcoming squeeze on local authority finances.

INDEX LINKING

After the mayhem of the last three months and the 'kami-kwasi' autumn statement, some measure of stability seems to have returned, and it is gratifying to see that the triple lock and index linking appears – for the present – to have escaped the axe. However, the press remains full of articles complaining about 'civil service featherbedding' and it would be nice to see HQ taking the initiative to defend our position.

THE SENILITY PRAYER

Grant me the senility to forget the people
I never liked anyway,
the good fortune to run into the ones I do,
and the eyesight to tell the difference

Diary Dates

31 January 2023	Group AGM, treasurer's report, election of Committee for 2023, speaker: Cheryl Sands, 'Parks, Medieval, Georgian and Public'
28 February	Group meeting, Speaker tbn
28 March	Group meeting, Speaker: Jane Barder, 'The Queen and the Diplomatic Service'
25 April	Group meeting, Speaker: Pete Allen, 'Through the Stage Door'
30 May	Group meeting, Speaker tbn
27 June	Group meeting, Speaker: Cheryl Cates, 'The Story of St James's'
	<i>No meetings during July or August</i>
26 September	Group mandating meeting (prior to CSPA AGM), Speaker: Alain Chissel, 'military history', subject tbn
October	CSPA AGM, dates tbn
31 October	Group meeting, feedback from CSPA AGM, Speaker: Sue Henning, subject tbn
28 November	Group meeting, Speaker: Maggs Latter, subject tbn
12 December	Group Christmas lunch, Sorrento Restaurant Tolworth, cost tbn

Local Group Subscription for 2023

At the November meeting, the Group Treasurer presented a finance paper which looks at projected income and costs for the next two years. It is clear that existing funding levels will not allow us to sustain the current level of Group activity. We would most probably end up with insufficient resources by the end of 2023. The last increase in subscription was in 2013 when the fee was raised from £1.50 to £5.00.

Four options were discussed: including limiting meetings and speakers. A vote was taken and the Committee, those present at the meeting and respondents online all voted unanimously (100%) to **increase the Group annual subscription to £10.00 per person for 2023**. This rise in fees is expected to be ratified at the AGM in January in accordance with terms of the Group constitution.

Subscriptions are due in January 2023. Payment can be made in three ways:

- pay cash to the Treasurer (Clive Scammell) at a monthly meeting.
- send a cheque made payable to CSPA Kingston & District Group to the Treasurer, Mr C J Scammell, 125 Windsor Avenue, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey SM3 9RX.
- pay by bank transfer or standing order to CSPA Kingston & District Group Lloyds bank account: sort code 30-94-77 and Account Number:02302098

If you have an existing bank transfer or standing order, please update the amount to reflect the change in subscription fee.



Sixteen happy diners enjoying the group's Christmas lunch at the Sorrento Restaurant in Tolworth on 13th December. We think they all made it home without mishap, and the restaurant has courageously invited us back next year!

AS EVER, we are happy to publicise activities of our local sister organisations. CSRF Kingston & District has now sadly closed. There are however, two alternative groups that might be convenient:

CSRF Worcester Park (contact John Wright on 0208 337 8965);

and a new group CSRF Richmond & Twickenham (contact Philip Blow, p.blow1@btinternet.com)

...and finally... the fiendish New Year's Quiz...

Guess the brand names of the products shown, answers at the AGM on 31 January!!!

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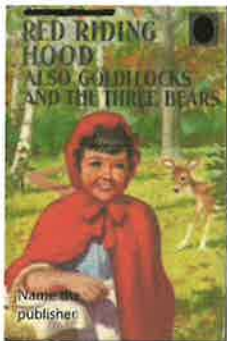
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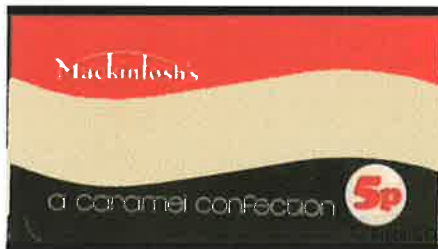
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