



CROYDON & DISTRICT GROUP NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2025

The Croydon and District Group of the CSPA is the local group for CSPA members in this area. The Group meets at 11.00 am on the second Tuesday of each month at Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road Croydon CR0 1BD, with refreshments available before the meeting.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear CSPA Members,

Welcome to the January 2025 newsletter of the CSPA Croydon Group. I would like to give a special welcome to national members who will be receiving our group's newsletter for the first time.

On behalf of our Group Committee I wish all of you a happy and prosperous New Year. Most importantly, I would like to thank all of our committee members, subscribers, meeting attendees and raffle participants for helping to make 2024 a successful year for our Group. Without them, our Group could not exist. Our attendances have reached pre-Covid levels for our more popular meetings, and we continue to have a Group committee of eight. I also wish to express condolences to the families and friends of members that passed on during the course of 2024.

Croydon Group subscribers who attended our meeting on the 10th September and some, but not all, of those from the former groups affected will be aware that we have agreed to welcome members from some neighbouring groups. These groups were either closing or have been closed (cont)

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I would like to join / renew my membership of / make a donation to / the Croydon & District Group of the CSPA:

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____

Post Code _____ e-mail _____

Please return to

The Treasurer, CSPA Croydon & District Group, 58 Forster Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4LQ

for some years and attempts at restarting them have been unsuccessful. The aim is to support members' preference, as decided at National AGMs, that groups should remain key to the CSPA's democratic processes, whilst also ensuring that national members not previously allocated to an active group would have a voice in these processes. We therefore welcome some 170 national members from the former Lewisham & East Southwark Group together with around 200 from the former Bromley Group to our group's allocation. They join some 80 national members of the former Epsom Group from the SM1, SM2 and SM3 postcodes whom we welcomed earlier in the year. By far the greater part of the former Epsom Group was allocated to the Kingston Group to help balance group sizes within the London Region. Two items that we shall review and consider at our Group AGM in April will be how to utilise the funds that Mike Sparham, the National Treasurer, is allocating to us from the former groups that have joined us, and the future name of our group to reflect our expanded coverage area.

You will find details of Croydon Group's 2025 programme at the end of this newsletter. There will also be occasional outreach meetings into the areas of former groups, details of which will be published in The Pensioner and on the CSPA's web site. We are moving the start time of our main meetings at Ruskin House back by half an hour to 11 am to allow more time for those coming from further afield to travel after the morning restrictions on London Freedom Passes have lifted.

Any national CSPA members allocated to our area are welcome to attend our AGM and National AGM mandating meetings to have a say in CSPA business. These meetings are simulcast via Zoom for those who are unable to attend in person. You are also welcome to sample our guest speaker meetings, which are fully funded by our local group, on a wide range of topics, see our programme. If you would like to support us by joining Croydon Group and, we hope, come to some of our meetings, then a modest local annual subscription is requested, payable in January each year.

We hope that you will come along and meet us. Ruskin House is well served by local buses including some passing East and West Croydon stations. If you would like more information about buses and local parking, contact Brenda Jones, see page 4. However, if another active group would be more convenient for you, then you can contact HQ and request a transfer to an active group of your choice.

David Owen, CSPA Croydon Group Chair & CSPA EC London Region Representative
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TREASURER'S REPORT

Seasonal Greetings to you all. We hope that Group members who have attended our meetings have found the speakers this year, covering a broad range of topics, interesting and stimulating. We understand that some members, for various reasons, cannot attend our meetings and to those I say a sincere thank you for joining our Group and supporting us.

With ever higher speaker fees and other increasing costs we have decided, in order for the group to remain viable, to increase the Group annual membership fee to £8 per member or £10 to include one's partner. It has been many years since we increased annual membership fees.

You can pay by cheque (not cash) payable to CSPA Croydon & District Group and sent to me at 58 Forster Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4LQ. Please enclose your details (and update any changes to address, email or phone number), preferably with the membership form within this newsletter.

As always, you can instead pay at a group monthly meeting. You may attend two meetings while deciding whether to join the Group.

Alternatively, payment may be made directly into the Group's bank account at Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-91-72, account number 01042787, account name CSPA Croydon & District Group. Kindly insert your name in the reference field so as to clearly identify yourself and, if you are a new member and on-line, please email your contact details to me at bilbohudson@btinternet.com. I shall acknowledge all renewals providing I have your email address.

IMPORTANT I'd ask those members who pay by standing order to please amend the amount to the current membership rate, ie £8 per member, £10 including partner. Thanks.

Bill Hudson, Hon Group Treasurer

SECRETARY'S COLUMN

We would like to welcome CSPA members who are now in the expanded Croydon and South London area. As David explained, this gives you the opportunity to participate in the CSPA democratic processes and to influence decisions about CSPA priorities without joining the Croydon Group.

However, this newsletter also invites you to join our Group, which has two broad aims:

- To help keep our members informed about current CSPA work and also to discuss problems affecting pensioners, including local issues. Our members are usually well-informed and the discussions often quite entertaining.
- To provide an opportunity for members to meet each other socially. We realise it takes some effort to come to a meeting where you are not known at first but we are a friendly group and do our best to make new attendees welcome. Our discussion is followed by a small raffle to help us cover our costs and a talk (details provided over). You can also get information on how to access the wide range of services which the CSPA provides.

We are fortunate as many Croydon area members who are unable to come to our meetings for various reasons support our Group and help to keep us financially viable. However, we would welcome more members at our meetings too and hope you will consider joining us.

It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves of just a few of the important issues which CSPA is currently pursuing on our behalf.

Nationally, CSPA negotiates with the Cabinet Office to protect the value of Civil Service pensions and takes up individual cases on behalf of members.

The CSPA has close links with several civil service-related pensioner groups, and campaigns and lobbies with all these groups on many issues. Current priorities include:

SOCIAL CARE: There has been delay after delay and so we urgently call for a National Social Care Service, integrated with a National Health Service that remains free at the point of delivery, also for a comprehensive plan to address the chronic workforce issues in the social care sector;

STATE PENSION: Campaigns for the government to maintain the State Pension triple lock and to hold the pension age to healthy life expectancy rates;

TRANSPORT: We call for increased investment in local bus and rail services, for uprated concessions and for improved accessibility and assistance for older people on all bus and rail stock and facilities;

DIGITAL EXCLUSION: The government should play its part in encouraging banks to maintain free withdrawal services, adopt more easily accessible tools and provide local banking hubs where necessary;

OLDER PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONER: Such a post to be set up, so as to hold the government to account and provide a voice at the highest level for older people;

The CSPA also provides a wide range of membership benefits as listed in the Members Area on the CSPA website.

We very much value your participation in CSPA, be that active or passive. You, in turn, can rest assured that your interests and those of all civil service pensioners will be actively pursued at all levels.

John Hickey, Group Secretary

CROYDON GROUP PROGRAMME FOR 2025

Meetings are held at on 2nd Tuesday of each month, starting at 11am except in December.

We meet at Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Rd, Croydon CR0 1BD, at the junction with Park Lane, which is well-served by local buses. Contact Brenda for more information about how to get there.

brenda@jonesmb.plus.com 020 8688 2189 5B Standope Road Croydon CR0 5NS.

14th January	Predatory birds John Birkett from the RSPB returns to give us an illustrated talk about predatory birds.
11 February	A welcome return by Linda Regan , April in Hi-de Hi, to raise our spirits by telling us more entertaining anecdotes from her time as an actress.
11 March	In the Realm of the Polar Bear Sue Henning will talk to us again about her travels, this time about her experiences in Spitzbergen.
8 April	Croydon Group Annual General Meeting Time to take stock of where the Group is, to outline future plans and to elect officers. There will be a guest speaker from Head Office. <u>Please note: all CSPA members in this area are invited to attend.</u>
13 May	Royal National Lifeboat Institution Stephen Burl, who is a water safety officer for the RNLI. will tell us about the RNLI's history and talk about water safety.
10 June	Isambard Kingdom Brunel Doreen Parkingson, our Social Secretary, will talk about the brilliant 19th century engineer who worked on so many innovative projects, and tell us about how her interest in him developed.
8 July	London Fire Brigade will give us advice about how we can improve fire safety in our homes and update us about the devices available to help with this.
12 August	Country Churches – The Tudors to the Commonwealth The Revd Dr Nicholas Henderson returns to continue his series of talks to help us to look at church architecture and features with greater understanding.
9 September	Mandating meeting for the CSPA AGM in October We shall decide how our representative will speak and vote on the AGM motions published in the Autumn edition of The Pensioner (please bring this along if possible).
14 October	Vision Foundation This organisation provides support in a variety of ways for blind and partially sighted people and for those whose vision is deteriorating, showing how there is life after sight loss.
11 November	CSPA Annual General Meeting Report. Our delegate will report back on the outcome of the motions debated and current CSPA priorities
9 December	Christmas Social Do come along to the Ruskin House bar at 12.00 pm to enjoy the company of other members and, of course, the buffet, including home-made delicacies provided by committee members.

CSPA Membership Records

Following the introduction of the new Computer System, CSPA Headquarters staff have put a lot of effort into ensuring that our membership records are correct and complete. However HQ need help from members to complete this work.

One obvious deficiency is that HQ do not have email addresses for many members who are on-line and some of the email addresses they have are out-of-date. If you have an email address but think you may not have notified HQ, please email me at brenda@jonesmb.plus.com, giving your name and membership number or address. Also please let me know if you have changed your email address. I shall then check if the membership database does need updating and pass a list of updates to HQ. Thank you.

Brenda Jones, Email Secretary and Newsletter Editor