



SOUTH LONDON GROUP NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2026

The South London 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.

Dear CSPA Members,

Welcome to the January 2026 newsletter of the CSPA South London Group. On behalf of our Group Committee, I wish all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. I also wish to express condolences to the families and friends of those that passed on during the course of 2025.

I thank all of our committee members, subscribers, meeting attendees and raffle participators for helping to make 2025 another successful year for our enlarged Group. Without all of these active members, our Group would not exist. Our main meetings in Croydon now average around twenty attendees, and we continue to have a Group committee of eight.

This will be the first Group newsletter that some of you will receive by e-mail rather than through the post. HQ will be sending the e-mail version to most of those who have provided an e-mail address to reduce the massively increased postage costs that are now being incurred. This will help to leave more funding for vital campaign-related activities and keep national subscription rates down. If you find the e-mail version is unsuitable for you, please contact HQ, and they will reinstate the printed version for you.

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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

You will find details of our 2026 main programme at the end of this newsletter. There will also continue to be outreach meetings into the areas of the former groups that have joined us. Details of the first two for this year will be found at the end of this newsletter after the Croydon meeting programme. Information about outreach meetings later in the year will appear in our July newsletter. Details of all of our meetings can also be found both in the monthly diary and in the newsletter archive by logging into the CSPA web site. The Pensioner magazine is not affected by the newsletter changes and will continue to be posted to members.

We have found that moving our meeting start time back to 11 AM to assist members travelling from further afield has been helpful, and this start time will be retained. You will also note from our meeting programme that our next outreach meetings have moved from pubs to coffee shops to see if this will appeal to a wider range of members.

Please remember that as retired civil servants you are welcome to contact The Charity for Civil Servants if you encounter various difficulties in the coming year. They can now provide a wide range of support either directly or indirectly via trusted partner organisations.

Whether you are an existing or new member, if you have any suggestions or comments that you wish to make about our group, or are willing to volunteer to support our committee, please let me or our Group Secretary, John Hickey, know.

David Owen, CSPA Croydon Group Chair & CSPA EC London Region Representative
private.drdavidowen@btinternet.com

164 Littleheath Road, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 7SF. Landline: 020 8657 1073

TREASURER'S REPORT

Yes it's the time of year when we ask you to join or renew your annual membership of the South London Group. We do hope being a Group member has been useful to you and even if you do not attend the monthly meetings, simply being a paid up member helps keep the Group running.

The Group membership fee for the coming year is £8 per member or £10 to include one's partner. Ideally, we'd like subscriptions to be paid directly into our bank account because bank charges can take a large chunk of money when paying in cheques. Paying by direct bank payment costs us less. Our Lloyds Bank account details are sort code 30-91-72, account number 01042787, account name CSPA South London Group. Please insert your name in the reference field so I can identify you. If you are paying in this way, please could you also email me to confirm your name, address, email address and phone number so that we can check that our records are up-to-date.

If you prefer, we are still happy to be paid by a cheque made payable to CSPA South London Group and posted to me at 58 Forster Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4LQ. Please include your name, address and, if you use email, your email address. A form which you can use is provided on page 1 of the newsletter. No cash by post please.

Alternatively I will always accept cash subscriptions at our meetings. You may attend two meetings while deciding whether to join the Group.

I will acknowledge all payments provided I have a valid email address.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bill Hudson, Hon Group Treasurer
58 Forster Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4LQ

bilbohudson@btinternet.com

SECRETARY'S COLUMN

CSPA is proudly apolitical. It doesn't take sides. It is there to push the case of pensioners, whatever the government in power. So, CSPA will always campaign, on your behalf, and with your direction (via AGM motions etc.). As a result, we have clear and concise policies on the state pension, the triple lock, your occupational pension and negotiations with the Cabinet Office, health and social care, digital exclusion, public transport services, housing policies, banking facilities, a commissioner for older people and so much more.

The end of 2025 brought a second Rachel Reeves budget, following the Labour Party's election in June 2024. So what did that mean for us pensioners and how will that affect our day-to-day lives in 2026? The Chancellor confirmed that, next year, under the "triple lock" policy, the basic and new state pension payments will go up by 4.8% to £184.92 and £241.30 a week respectively. The Civil Service pension increase for April 2026 will be 3.8%, as determined by the September 2025 Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure. Inflation, for October 2025 stood at 3.6% with forecasts for 2026 (for what they are worth) ranging from 2.3 to 2.6%.

Personal Income Tax and National Insurance thresholds will be frozen for a further three years to April 2031, meaning that more and more pensioners will fall into the basic and higher tax brackets. Household energy bills should be reduced by £150 by moving green levies and rail fares and NHS prescription charges are frozen for one year.

The government's priorities currently seem to be, spend now and hope this will induce growth. Later, when financial constraints get tighter, growth will kick in, and there will be enough headroom anyway. A big gamble. We shall see. Meanwhile, us pensioners still seem to be in a slightly happier position than most. We still have the triple lock. We still have the grey vote lobby. We still have CSPA campaigning for us. You can get involved in our meetings and democratic processes. Change things! Play your part! Stay faithful !

John Hickey, South London Group Secretary

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To Ruskin House we wend our way.
It hosts our Group CSPA.
We hear updates on pension news
And have the chance to share our views
With those who gladly give their time
To pass our comments "up the line".

Engaging speakers are supplied.
The topic range is really wide.
With serious, curious, fact or fun
There's something there for everyone
And always there's a chance to snaffle
A tasty titbit in the raffle.

It's great to meet and chat and laugh
With more ex-Civil Service staff
Who, having reached "a certain age"
Receive a pension, not a wage
And lend support to those concerned
To help protect what we have earned.

SOUTH LONDON GROUP MEETINGS

**We would like to thank Beryl Piper,
one of our South London Group
members, for this poem which we
think sums up the purpose and
spirit of our meetings.**

SOUTH LONDON GROUP PROGRAMME FOR 2026

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. This is less than ½ mile from the Fairfield Halls and well-served by local buses, details from Brenda at brenda@jonesmb.plus.com 020 8688 2189. Come early to have time to sign in, say “hello” to other members and have tea or coffee with a superior quality biscuit !

13th January	The Samaritans: This charity provides a non-judgemental and confidential listening and support service for anyone struggling to cope. It also campaigns on suicide prevention. Our speaker is Marion Watson.
10 February	Life in the entertainment world: By popular request Linda Regan , April in Hi-de Hi and crime novelist returns to raise our spirits with more anecdotes.
10 March	Benjamin Beeson: Local historian Phil Swallow will tell us about Benjamin Beeson, who fought in the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean war. He later worked in this area in the mounted division of the Metropolitan police.
14 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>
12 May	The David Lean Cinema: This cinema at Croydon Clock tower is run as a non-profit-making company, presenting an eclectic programme of films. Adrian Winchester, a director, will tell us about the cinema and its history.
9 June	Cancer Research UK: This charity funds research into an illness which affects so many people. Don Davis, formerly a Customs Officer and a CSPA member will tell us about his involvement as a volunteer and about current research.
8 July	English Churches Part IV and Great Mysteries: The Revd Dr Nicholas Henderson’s final talk will cover the Georgian period to the present. He will also talk about great mysteries and conspiracy theories such as The Bermuda Triangle.
12 August	London Transport: Michael Peacock will talk about the history of London Transport from horse drawn buses in the 1820 through the development of underground railways until the unification of services in 1933. (Talk 1 of 2.)
8 September	Mandating meeting for the CSPA AGM in October: Members can discuss the motions to be raised at the CSPA AGM as published in the Autumn edition of The Pensioner and decide how our delegate should speak and vote on our behalf.
13 October	CSPA Annual General Meeting Report: Our delegate and other Group members who attended will report back on decisions made at the CSPA AGM.
10 November	Bats: Derek Coleman will tell us about these mammals which are capable of sustained flight and are more agile in flight than most birds.
8 December	Christmas Social: Do come along to the Ruskin House bar at 12.00 pm for our annual Christmas event. The bar will offers reasonably priced drinks and committee members will provide a buffet.

OUTREACH MEETINGS

BROMLEY OUTREACH	Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 11am Cuppa’ Chai, 112 High St, Bromley, BR1 1HG
CATFORD OUTREACH	Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 11am Dolce Dessert & Café, Unit 1, Adenmore Rd, London, SE6 4FD