

EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the spring edition of Backnumber. As ever, we hope our members are well and thriving but we know that for some, health and family problems will be very much present and we hope that everyone is coping.



As spring approaches, as ever people will be looking to get out and about more and with the easing of covid restrictions this might be a bit easier than before. We are somewhat more cautious than the government is on this, however. Many of our members will be vulnerable to infection and the limited restrictions of wearing face masks on public transport and in shops along with sensible social distancing should be the minimum to try to ensure less spread of the disease. That being said, we hope people will feel safe enough to venture out and enjoy all that Norfolk has to offer and we are always willing to hear from members about good days out that we can share with each other.

We are always interested to hear from prominent politicians and journalists about how cosseted we older people are and that we should thank our lucky stars that we have such brilliant protection around us. Quite how this fits with the fact that our state pension is amongst the worst in Europe and is being raised by only 3.1% as we face huge inflation and energy cost rises is for people such as “two brains” Lord Willetts and Polly Toynbee of the Guardian to explain. We mention them as they are at opposite ends of the political spectrum yet share the view that older people are too well off for their own good. There will be those who say that we, as members of the Local Authority Pension Scheme are protected from this because of our “generous” pensions. It is true that many of us are relatively comfortably off but we should remember that the average pension

is around £4,500pa, which means that many of our members will be receiving considerably less than this sum and will be feeling the effects of inflation very acutely.

Which brings us to the matter of the triple lock. This is a scandal that will not go away. True, it does not get the publicity now that it did at the time of its announcement but the scandal is almost upon us and Jann Short of the National Pensioners Convention believes that even at this late hour, there is time for the government to change its mind on this. Readers may recall that the rate should have been akin to 8% given that is the rate of wage inflation as calculated at the end of September. This was considered to be a false figure by the government as it had been “exaggerated by covid”. Funny how the growth figures are not “exaggerated by covid” but then this government is perfectly happy to choose the statistic that fits the crime. The truth is that inflation is now at 5.5% and predicted to be at over 7% by the time that the 3.1% pension rise comes into effect. Inflation will have a devastating effect on everyone but more so on older people as they are the most likely to want to keep the heating on for longer simply because they are at home for more of the time and probably feel the cold more.

To show some generational solidarity, we are very aware that the NI rises in April, added to inflation pressures, will increase the devastating effect on families and other working people. The fact that these rises are supposed to be about securing Social Care but, in fact are nothing of the sort, just adds to the overall frustration with government. Unison's position is to call out the lies and misrepresentations with which we are presented and to call for the triple lock to be restored before April and to see moves in place towards decent pension provision for all.

As usual, letters, comments etc to porterjames172@gmail.com

AGM

Eagle eyed readers will have noted that the AGM, which was advertised to take place on 16 February, didn't happen. This was due to a combination of events, principally that members of the committee who would have been organising it weren't available for a variety of reasons. We have also had advice that we do not have to have the AGM before the end of March, which was our previous understanding. We also had hoped that we could have a "face to face" meeting. This will not now be possible mainly because, added to continuing nervousness about Covid, there are structural problems with the Social Club which means that there may be building work going on at the time of our AGM. Therefore, we have taken the regrettable decision to meet via Zoom. This will be on 6 April 2022 (see notice ►). We are aware that this disenfranchises large numbers of our membership and we will put this right as soon as we are able to do so.

RETIRED MEMBERS' SECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Like everyone else we have had to contend with Covid and the frequently changing rules and guidance and organise our activities accordingly. This has meant almost no face to face activities but we have been able to

Continue to produce Backnumber in digital and print formats for our members,

Continue to meet virtually as a committee quarterly,

To campaign, especially for a new approach to adult social care locally, regionally and nationally,

Attend and contribute to Branch Executive meetings,

Attend regional meetings,

Deal with members' queries,

Re-establish a link with NCC pre-retirement planning,

Work with other organisations to promote the interests of older people.

This has not been a good year for older people generally. We have borne the main brunt of deaths, consequent bereavement and serious illness from Covid. The government reneged on its promise and suspended the state pension triple lock. More over 60s are now paying for prescriptions. Free TV licences have been taken away. Access to GPs has been restricted. The digital world has expanded, further excluding those who, for whatever reason, are not on-line. Living costs are rising fast.

Since the birth of the welfare state there has never been a more important time for Unison members to rally in support of older people.

David Button Jan. 2022

AGM NOTICE

THE UNISON NORFOLK COUNTY RETIRED MEMBERS' SECTION AGM 2022

**THIS WILL TAKE PLACE ON WEDNESDAY
AT 10.30AM ON 6 APRIL 2022 VIA THE
ZOOM LINK BELOW.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88508572898?pwd=dXVWcEZDYXdJUFRLLOGIFMkRTb1orQT09>

ALL NECESSARY PAPERS WILL BE E-MAILED TO MEMBERS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING. THE AGENDA AND ANNUAL REPORT ALSO APPEAR IN THIS EDITION OF BACKNUMBER.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS SHOULD BE RECEIVED, BY THE SECRETARY, ON OR BEFORE 30 MARCH 2022.

AGM AGENDA

Welcome and opening remarks from the chair

Apologies for absence

Minutes of A.G.M. on 24/3/2021

a. accuracy

b. matters arising

4. Annual Report

5. Report from the branch and further afield in Unison:

Jonathan Dunning, Branch Secretary

6. Financial Report

7. Election of officers:

There are currently TWO vacancies for women on the committee and one vacancy for a man.

Chair currently James Porter

Deputy Chair currently Jackie Mitchell

Secretary currently David Button
[standing down at this AGM]

Assistant Secretary currently Verity Gibson
[standing down at this AGM]

Treasurer currently Tricia Arnup
[standing down at this AGM]

8. Election of representatives to other bodies:

Eastern Region RMs committee

Norfolk Council on Ageing

NCC Staff Sports & Social club

9. Feedback from members

10. Any other business

ENERGY PRICE RISES

Committee member Alan Cubbage wrote to his MP, his concerns about energy price rises and those that be fair to Ms Smith, at least she did reply to him. Re-she is a Minister of State (Minister for Disabled Peo-surprising if her reply had been anything other than a ernment's efforts to contain the issue. So the letter com-formation about the loan of £200 we are all going to get in October to offset our costs. Only, Ms Smith does not refer to it as a loan. She says it's a rebate. Since when did we have to repay a rebate, we ask?



Chloë Smith, with are to come. To membering that ple), it would be eulogy to the Gov-tains all the infor-mation about the loan of £200 we are all going to get in October to offset our costs. Only, Ms Smith does not refer to it as a loan. She says it's a rebate. Since when did we have to repay a rebate, we ask?

Ms Smith also refers to the forthcoming rise of 6% in the National Living Wage for those over 23. This is, of course, better known as the Living wage and welcome though this is for those who receive it, it is short of the Living Wage Foundation's estimation of what it should be (9.90 in the country and £11.05 in London). Ms Smith also admits that the government's measures, taken together, will provide help of about £350 pa whereas the price Cap is to rise by £700. For those of us reliant on pensions a minimum increase of £350 pa could well be crippling. And that takes no account of price rises already in the system or those to come before October. The Campaigning Group "Silver Voices" estimates that by October, when the "rebate" is to be paid, there well may have been a further 2 rises in energy prices rendering the "rebate" almost worthless. Perhaps Ms Smith might get the government to reintroduce the triple lock, with effect from 1st April. Or perhaps not.



Alan also raised the issue of a windfall tax on companies whose profits have soared as a result of the "global shortage of energy" as Ms Smith puts it. Shell, for example, announced profits of £9bn over the last year, mostly brought about by the price hike.

It seems clear that the government is more interested in protecting the profits of companies such as Shell and its shareholders, rather than those of a desperate populace trying valiantly to cope with these enormous price rises. Perhaps they should look for France for at least a partial answer. There, President Macron has decreed that the electricity price rise hike will be limited to 4%. But then, the French Government has an 84% stake in EDF, which is pretty much the sole provider of electricity in France. Mind you, EDF provides electricity here so some of you will be helping to offset EDF's losses in France.

UNISON AND UKRAINE

Almost as soon as the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, Unison made a powerful statement on its position, which is to oppose it, to call for an end to aggression and the convening of peace talks. Unison will combine with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Ukrainian Trade Union movement in support of the people of Ukraine. A donation of £10,000 was made to the ITUC. *Backnumber* fully supports this position and urges members to help in any way they can. Although things will have changed dramatically by the time you receive this, Unison advice about how to do this is printed below.

How you can help

UNISON branches and members have been asking how they can help. The ITUC has launched an appeal to support the Ukrainian trade union movement and ordinary workers in Ukraine.

Donations should be sent to ITUC-CSI account number 068-9007804-23 with Belfius Banque SA, Boulevard Pachéco 44, B – 1000 Brussels, (BIC/Swift code: GKCCBEBB – IBAN Code: BE92 0689 0078 0423). Any amount of contribution will be appreciated. Please mark the contribution for 'Ukraine' and if not possible please alert finance@ituc-csi.org to what has been sent and say it is for Ukraine.

UNISON is also encouraging branches to reach out to any Ukrainian members they may have to see how they can be supported at this incredibly difficult time.

The British Red Cross has also launched an appeal to support refugees, people or have been made homeless or who have been injured by the fighting. You can [donate here](#).



HIGH DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

One of the oldest people whose voices I heard during my UOSH sessions was a woman who had been born in Caister-on-Sea in the 1880s. Her voice was quiet and a little shaky, but her memories of childhood were vivid. She recalled that Caister had been one of the many places in England where the custom of Good Friday skipping was kept up. This seems to have been particularly popular in coastal communities, but there was also a mass skipping on Parker's Piece, in Cambridge. Every Good Friday, the children of Caister would walk around the parish and stop to skip at certain places, using a long rope which stretched right across the road. Two of the bigger girls would turn it and all the children would skip. There was no problem with holding up traffic, in those days before motor cars, and the occasional cart would pause and wait for them to finish their fun. They would skip all through the day and go home tired out.

She was asked what sort of entertainments they had during the rest of the year. "Well, the hurdy-gurdy man came round, and once, when I was very small – I do remember seeing a bear being led around in the street." (One of those moments, for the listener, when you seem to be dropped down through time like a stone in a bowl of water.)

People who worked hard in physically demanding jobs, and sometimes lived under the eye of Parson and Squire, really enjoyed the occasions when the whole community could come together to make a bit of a row and a bit of a riot. A man who had grown up in Brightlingsea, in Essex, talked about Bonfire Nights, when there would always be a big bonfire on the common. Inevitably, the point comes on these nights when the fire starts to die down and it's necessary to go and find more fuel. One year he recalled that the lads, rambling around the village on such a quest and somewhat the worse for wear, spied an old rowing boat upended in someone's orchard. Just right! They got ropes around it and started to drag it out to the road. What they did not realise was that the rowing boat, having finished its days at sea, had stood over wherever the owner was 'at home' ...



You cannot help feeling that, grateful as one is for modern comforts, life has become just a little bit – well – sterilised!

Rita Gallard

December, 1911.

NEW ASSOCIATIONS.

BOURNEMOUTH, GREAT YARMOUTH, AND LOWESTOFT.

We are pleased to announce the formation of new associations at Bournemouth, Great Yarmouth, and Lowestoft. We hope to be able to give full particulars in the January issue, and take this opportunity of giving the officials of the boroughs named a hearty welcome to the ranks of the N.A.L.G.O.

GREAT YARMOUTH.

The inaugural meeting of the Great Yarmouth Municipal Officers' Association was held at the Town Hall, Great Yarmouth, on the 2nd ult. The meeting was well attended by representatives of all branches of the local municipal service. The Town Clerk (Mr. W. Edgar Stephens) was unanimously elected to the chair.

Mr. L. Hill, the secretary of the N.A.L.G.O., attended and gave an instructive address upon the objects and advantages of the N.A.L.G.O., and expressed the hope that Great Yarmouth would decide to form an association and become affiliated to the N.A.L.G.O.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

After considerable discussion it was, upon the motion of the Borough Accountant (Mr. W. Lewis Smith), seconded by the Clerk to the Education Committee (Mr. F. W. Wroughton), resolved unanimously "That an Association of the Municipal Officers of the Great Yarmouth Corporation be formed and that a Provisional Committee be appointed to consider details and report to a future meeting."

It was resolved further: "That the Assistant Solicitor (Mr. F. H. C. Wiltshire) be elected honorary secretary of the Association." The following officers were then appointed to form the Provisional Committee, viz.:—The Town Clerk and Mr. R. S. Hubbard (Town Clerk's Department); the Borough Surveyor (Mr. J. W. Cockrill); and Mr. L. Leeper (Borough Surveyor's Department); the Borough Accountant and Mr. P. G. King (Borough Accountant's Department); the Medical Officer of Health (Dr. A. N. Stevens); and Mr. S. Hassall (Health Department); Mr. F. B. Bell (Electricity Department); Mr. W. W. Bell (Tramways Department); Mr. H. Long (Education Department); Mr. R. G. Watlow (Free Libraries Department).

On the motion of the Chairman, a cordial vote of thanks was extended to Mr. Hill for his attendance and interesting address.

Mr. Hill having suitably responded, the meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk for having acted as Chairman of the meeting, a motion which he briefly acknowledged.

COUNTING THE POPULATION: THE CENSUS 1921 – 1951

The first national population census was in 1801 when enumerators visited every household to record the names, ages and family relationship of each person present on census day. Much media attention has been given to the recent release of the 1921 census: '*A comprehensive count of the UK population after WW1*'; '*The census that heralded the start of the 'Roaring Twenties'*'. Does it live up to this billing and which census is released next?

In the years following the WW1 the working population struggled to rebuild their homes and livelihoods after the devastation and dislocation caused by the war. The census should have been conducted in April 1921 but was delayed until 19 June 1921, due to industrial unrest. Coal miners held what was reported as the 'Black Friday Strike', one of several protests of industrial discontent after the promise made in November 1918, by Prime Minister Lloyd George, to build 'Homes fit for Heroes'. Yet, by 1921 that had amounted to little.

The 'Roaring Twenties' were enjoyed by people who had jobs and money to spend. This prosperity was not shared by the labourers who marched in the General strike of 1926 when unemployment remained high and wages low. (See photos below.) 8.5 million households are recorded along with those in institutions e.g. prisons, public schools, workhouses and military bases; hospital patients were recorded too. The 1921 census shows a 35% increase in those in hospital compared to the 1911 census. Presumably, many were suffering from wounds sustained in the war. Police were sent out to find and record details of '*vagrants*'. The census highlights the impact of war on family life; 730,000 children were recorded as 'fatherless' and there were 192,000 women listed as '*war widows*'.

The 1921 census did not cover the whole of the UK. There was no census completed in Ireland due to the Irish War of Independence. An exceptional census for Ireland was taken in 1926 and, given the 100 years rule before release it should be published in 2027.

Whilst the public can view the 1921 census, it is not free to access. The ancestry website Find my Past won the tender for exclusive rights to release the census. There is a fee for access. I looked up a family member to see what can be found for free. I was put onto a search form and entered my father's name and year of birth. These searches are free. It costs £3.50 to access and print a transcription of the entry, £2.50 if you subscribe to Find my Past. My search came up with 3 possible names from his area. I clicked on one name. It proved not to be my father's record as the other family names shown did not match. I could have paid again to view one or both of the other names listed but did not do so; it could get quite pricey if your family has a common name that may also belong to several others.

The 1931 census will not reveal much about the population. The records were duly collated and stored at The Office for Works in Hayes Middlesex. However, records state that a "*mystery fire*" broke out at the office on 19 December 1942 and all the records were destroyed. The report into the fire ruled out bombing being the cause and noted that there were "*fire watchers and hydrants*" on site; a mystery indeed. People with Scottish ancestry will be able access their census records for 1931 which are secure as they were stored in Edinburgh. A census was not taken in 1941 due of the war. So, the 1951 census is the next full record of the UK population, due to be released in 2052.

The 1939 Register is a full record of the UK population during the interwar years. The House of Commons declared in December 1938, on the eve of the war, that it would list the personal details of every civilian in Great Britain & Northern Ireland. The register was to be a "*critical tool*" in co-ordinating the war effort. Registration day was 29 September 1939. Enumerators visited and issued forms to 41m people. The register was used in several ways, i.e. to monitor the population, organise rationing, to issue identity cards (still mandatory until 1952). However, perhaps the most important function and its lasting legacy was its use in 1948 in the planning and founding of the NHS.

The 1939 Register is not a census and is available to view. Most of the ancestry websites, including Find my Past will offer a '14 day free trial' to enable access, but BEWARE, cancel before the free trial period ends or you may find yourself signed-up to an annual subscription. Census records up to 1911 and the 1939 Register can be accessed for free at the Heritage Centre at Norwich Central Library. A small charge is made to print off any documents. It may be worth checking to see if branch libraries have internet access to these records too. The 1921 census is not currently available at libraries.

Jackie Mitchell

FILBY

Driving from Acle to Caister on Sea, during the summer months the village of Filby attracts attention for its wonderful floral displays Winner of the Anglia in Bloom competition in 2019 and achieving a silver gilt medal in 2021 the residents of Filby transform the already green and pleasant village into a brightly coloured jewel.



Crossing the narrow bridge to the right there is a glimpse of Filby Broad, the southernmost of the Trinity Broads. To the left is Ormesby Little Broad and the Trinity is completed by Rollesby Broad. This whole area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is part of the Norfolk Broads Area of Conservation.

Filby and the Trinity Broads are a reservoir for eastern Norfolk's water supply, and are connected to the main Broadland waterways only by narrow cuts so are not accessible to motor boats and the bulk of Broadland traffic. This makes them a particularly quiet haven for a variety of interesting wildlife.

The name "Filby" dates back to the Viking invasions of Norfolk around the 9th century AD. Old Norse "Fili" and "byr" mean simply Fila's farm. It has continued as a family name, and members of the family from across the world get together every three years.

A fascinating by-product of these reunions is the invention of the Filby cocktail

Filby Cocktail

1¼ oz Gin (London Dry)

½ oz Amaretto Liqueur

½ oz Dry Vermouth

¼ oz Campari

Mix with ice and add orange zest.

Sounds like something to look forward to in 2022!

Activities

Nearly normal but not quite.....

Come and join in Monday Morning activities at the NCC staff Sports and Social club in the grounds of County Hall. Table tennis is the preferred activity at the moment but short mat bowls, snooker, pool, darts and card games are all available.

We meet from 9.30 until 12.00 with a tea and coffee break at around 10.30. New members are very welcome, as they are at whist afternoons normally on the third Thursday of each month at the same venue at 2pm.

NB. The March whist drive is on Thursday 24th.

The club is now open to social club members and their guests as follows :

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 5.30pm - 11pm

THURSDAY LUNCHTIMES 12noon - 2pm

THURSDAY EVENINGS 5pm - 11pm

FRIDAY LUNCHTIMES 12noon - 2pm

FRIDAY EVENINGS 4.30pm - 11pm

**SATURDAY EVENINGS 7pm - 11pm
as well as additional hours when Norwich City are playing at Carrow Rd.**

Please check Facebook '@nccsocialclub' and the 'norfolk county council social club' webpage for more information about the club.

WHERE TO FIND US

If you wish to make any comments or raise issues about **Backnumber**, please e-mail the Editor

Jim Porter at porterjames172@gmail.com

The Unison Branch Office at County Hall is closed until further notice and not able to respond to phone calls or post. The retired members e-mail address at County Hall is

Retiredmembers.norfolkcounty@btconnect.com