

We believe that Roupell Park has a resident who is a real gem and it comes in the form of Molly Sinclair, an 87 year old lady who has lived on the estate for the past 52 years, or as she puts it, since her block went up, and was one of the first residents to move in to their brand new property.

Molly says that she was forced to retire at the age of 65, from her much loved M&S job, and she had to find other ways of channelling her enthusiasm and energy. She leads such an active life style and even those of much younger age, would envy her social diary. Molly has daily engagements which vary from groups that she leads on or attends, to formal meetings which she is part, socialising with her friends and family, theatre groups or sightseeing.

Molly has been the Chair of the coffee morning group for the past 12 years, and it started by Molly's idea to start off something in the community hall which had been sitting 'empty' at the time. Molly does not serve ordinary coffees and teas, but in pretty tea cups with saucers and always with some nice cakes and biscuits, which are all beautifully presented. The group meets every week, with 14 faithful members - all ladies and one lucky man. They are all, apart from Molly, either single or widowed and this group provides a real social opportunity, a chance to come out of their homes, and have a point of contact, irrespective of the weather as it is close by to all. They are all made to feel really special and there is always a festive feeling in the way that Molly makes it look so pretty and appetizing. This is all followed by couple of games of bingo, which they all love and take very seriously. They are quite anxious for the 'guests' to leave, such as office staff members, when the time comes to play bingo. Moreover, Molly is always prepared for an adventure; be it a pub lunch with the coffee group, which she organises a few times per year, or leading on a theatre excursion of their choice – some would argue that this is pretty much Molly's choice; and she has never failed to organise anything that the rest of the group did not like and appreciate.

Last year, I gave Molly a last minute call to see if she wanted to apply for some external funding and this meant that she had to attend the meeting which was held on a Saturday afternoon. She cancelled her other social plans, and delivered such a straight forward and heart-warming presentation, as she said with no fluffing about, that when she finished the audience was clapping and on their feet. Needless to say that when voting came, Molly came 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 20 various projects, and she secured £400 which enabled the group to go for an outing of their choice, to Eltham Palace.

Molly is also a Board member and has been since 2000. It's only recently that she missed one Board meeting, and only then due to a family emergency. Molly is so reliable. She is also full of old school common sense. Often in the Board meetings, with all the strategic and complex reports, she would ask a question which demonstrates practical thinking and often she would bring up the most obvious point that perhaps wasn't thought of. Recently, all the Board members have been given iPads as part of our digitalization. Molly really wanted to master computing well enough so that she could read all the Board papers on line. Her ambition was fulfilled, when Morley College started delivering IT sessions for the elderly on our estate. Needless to say that Molly is on board and in just the first session, she was pointing at the Wi-

Fi box and saying: if I have got this (IPad) and not that (Wi-Fi) it is not going to work, is it? So, how much do I have to pay to have that (Wi-Fi)? This lady is so quick in her practical applications, always on point, and really to be admired with her sharpness.

Molly is also on the Events Committee which oversees our community event, the Fun Day, where she has strong views. In addition, she takes part on the day at our community event, and provides her famous teas, coffees and cakes for the day, which is hard work. She does it with a smile and has never complained of being tired or that she has had enough. She loves doing things and she loves being with people.

I am used to it now, but it took me a long time to understand that when I ring Molly, unless it's a coffee group morning, she may well be miles away from our estate. 'Molly can you speak, it's noisy, where are you?' We are having a lunch at Borough market; we are just about to see the show - you know my M&S group are taking us to the west end show; or we are at Covent Garden - me and my hubby are here just to see the crowds. What's the point of living in London otherwise?' Molly puts me to shame.

It is also only recently that I learned of Molly's personal tragedy, which happened now 15 years ago. Her eldest son, who was a martial arts champion, passed away unexpectedly, and this caused, as Molly calls it, a permanent sorrow. She learned how to deal with it and that is to embrace life and all that it offers, and to make herself of service to others. She said that if they (Molly and her husband) stay at home for more than a day, feelings of grief and depression creep up. When they are out and about, they are at their happiest. Molly equally loves all her children and grandchildren; her other son is an international racing driver – adventure, enjoying oneself and being brave were three key words for Molly's family.

Molly never ceases to amaze me. Recently, we discussed launching the befriending scheme, and she was the first one to volunteer for knocking on people's doors and to provide a point of contact. If by any chance a coffee morning member does not turn up, she is there on the phone ringing not only the person but also respective family members just to make sure that all is well. It was also the case that an 80 year old lady collapsed, not long after the coffee morning group ended, and was found on the estate. Molly found her, rang 999 and went as a companion with the ambulance and spent the entire day at the ward until her daughter turned up.

Molly loves people and is passionate about defending their views or rights, and she also holds her argument well. She is escorting other elderly residents to explain about their repairs or to demand an urgent response. She says what she thinks and is well respected for it. As one of the ladies puts it: 'I'm sure we would be lost without Molly. She is unique and irreplaceable, and she truly cares about her fellow neighbours and residents.' It is possible to say that without Molly we would not have had a coffee morning group and 14 ladies from our estate would not have that weekly social activity which makes a difference, something to look forward to. Molly is a great person, fun to be with, full of life, very fashionable and always beautifully presented, just like her cakes – this is what I can say about Molly. '