

# PIGEON POST



Keeping you informed & involved

November/December 2023



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Helen thought it'd be a nice idea if different members of the team introduced Pigeon Post. This time it's me - so grab a cup of tea and settle in to another packed issue.

A great piece by Lee Janogly about having a clear out after 53 years in the same house! And Professor Catherine Loveday reveals fascinating research on how unreliable our memories can be and whether it's really possible to spot a liar.

Our new gardening columnist Kevin will share his seasonal tips and keep us posted on what's happening on his allotment.

Finally, many of you will be busy preparing for Christmas so I'm sure you'll pick up a few tips from our festive cookery and craft pages.

Have a wonderful festive season and hope you enjoy the issue!

## **Jenny Jean-Charles**

Advice Services Manager  
Age UK Barnet

**“One kind word  
can warm three  
winter months.”**

*Japanese Proverb*



## HEARTY AND HEALTHY WINTER SOUPS

As the winter months draw closer, we all tend to become more prone to infections. ‘Vegetables, legumes and whole grains contain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that help to keep our immune systems in top shape to fight off winter bugs,’ says cookery volunteer Kato. ‘We also tend to feel less thirsty in the cold weather, which could lead to dehydration, causing tiredness and headaches.’ Soups are a tasty, easy and budget-friendly way to help us take in the fluids and foods we need to stay healthy, especially in winter. A pot of soup can easily be refrigerated or frozen in single portions – perfect when cooking for one. Here are some tasty soup recipes to get started.



### Ribollita

Gently fry 1 finely chopped onion, 1 finely chopped garlic clove, 2 finely chopped carrots, and 2 finely chopped celery stalks in 2tbsp of olive or rapeseed oil on a low heat for 10 minutes. Add 4 chopped stoned prunes (optional), a pack of chopped fresh parley (stalks and leaves), and 1 fennel bulb cut into 1 cm slices. Cook gently for another 10 minutes, until soft. Add a can of drained borlotti beans, 1 tbsp sherry (or red/white) vinegar, and 200g each of finely chopped kale (no stalks) and finely sliced red cabbage. Cover with 1.2 litres of vegetable stock and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Add a cup of broccoli florets to the soup and simmer for 5 minutes (optional). Stir through the juice of 1 lemon and season to taste. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil and the zest of the juiced lemon.

### Pea soup

Warm 2 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil in a medium pan and gently fry 2 finely chopped onions and 2 crushed garlic cloves on a low heat for 8 minutes. Add 1 fresh green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped. Add 500g frozen peas and 500ml vegetable or chicken stock(1 cube), bring to a simmer, and cook for 4 minutes. Add 40g each fresh mint leaves and dill, and whizz with a hand blender to a velvety consistency. Add the juice of ½ lemon and serve topped the grated zest of 1 lemon.



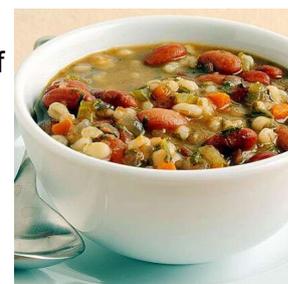
### Black bean and sweetcorn soup



Gently fry 1 finely chopped onion, 2 finely chopped carrots, 2 finely chopped celery stalks, and 2 finely chopped garlic cloves in 2tbsp of rapeseed oil. Add 1 litre of chicken stock (2 cubes), 1 can of drained black beans, and 1 can of chopped tomatoes, bring to a simmer. In a container or blender, whizz together a can of drained black beans, a can of chopped tomato, a handful of fresh coriander, 1 deseeded and chopped jalapeno pepper, 1tsp cumin, ¼ tsp chilli powder, and 1 tsp marjoram or oregano. Add to the soup, bring to the boil with another 500ml water (or enough for desired consistency), and simmer for 20 minutes. Add a cup of frozen sweetcorn (and more water if desired) for the last 5 minutes. Serve with fresh coriander.

### Barley and bean soup

Gently fry 1 finely chopped onion, 2 finely chopped garlic cloves, and 2 finely chopped carrots in 2tbsp olive oil until soft. Add 1 cup rinsed pearled barley, 1 can of drained white beans (butterbeans, cannellini or chickpeas), and 1 tsp each dried basil, oregano, parsley, thyme and ground black pepper. Cover with 1.5 litre vegetable stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes. Then add ½ cup each frozen corn, peas, and green beans, and simmer for another 5 minutes. Add 1tbsp lemon juice, season to taste and serve.



**Top tip:** When you have time, chop up a few onions, celery stalks, and carrots. Mix in proportion 1 onion, 2 celery stalks and 2 carrots (this is called a soffritto mix in Italy). Freeze in portions to use as a base for most soups – it is a great time saver when you want to make a quick soup.

## SWITCHOVER SCAMS

Each month our Scams Awareness Team lets you know a common scam to watch out for.

Criminals are using the switchover from analogue to digital telephones to scam vulnerable people. From 2025 the old analogue copper telephone landline network will be switched to digital, meaning that all phone calls will go through the internet, and everyone will require broadband to make landline phone calls. Scams include calls claiming your bank details are needed as part of the switchover or their service will be disconnected.

Please bear in mind that the change will be straightforward for most people and the switchover is free of charge.

People who use healthcare telephony devices are particularly at risk of being targeted by scammers, who trick victims into disclosing their personal and financial information over the phone. Remember councils and homecare alarm providers or contractors will never ask for personal or financial information over the phone.

For scams advice and support, call our **Scams Prevention Service** on **0208 432 2217**.



# HEALTHY TEETH AND GUMS

## WHY ORAL HEALTH MATTERS



The latest research shows that poor oral health is having a negative impact on older people's general health and quality of life. As well as causing pain and making it difficult to speak, eat and take medication, poor oral health is linked to conditions such as malnutrition, heart disease and pneumonia.

Maintaining good oral health can become more difficult as we get older. 'For example, brushing twice a day may not be easy for someone who has a long-term health condition, reduced dexterity or who has dementia and may be resistant to care,' says state registered dietitian Caroline Morrison. 'Taking lots of regular prescribed

medications can cause a dry mouth, which increases the risk of tooth decay and oral infections, as it reduces the protective effect of saliva, which has anti-microbial properties.'

For those without any natural teeth, having a comfortable set of dentures is also extremely important for general wellbeing and quality of life.

**What can go wrong?** Common problems are tooth decay, which can be painful and lead to infections, abscesses, fillings, crowns, root canal treatment or removal of the infected tooth.

Gum disease, left untreated, may lead to bone loss around the teeth and loose teeth.

'Plaque is a thin, sticky film of bacteria that constantly forms on your teeth,' says Caroline. 'When you eat foods containing sugars and starches, the bacteria in plaque produce acids, which attack tooth enamel. The stickiness of the plaque keeps these acids in contact with your teeth. After constant acid attack, the tooth enamel breaks down forming a hole or cavity.'

It is important to remove plaque and bits of food from around your teeth as this will stop your gums from becoming inflamed and swollen, and becoming infected.

**How do I keep my teeth and gums healthy?** A simple routine can help prevent most dental problems:

- ◆ Brushing your teeth last thing at night and at least one other time during the day, with a fluoride toothpaste
- ◆ Spit out after brushing and do not rinse, so that the fluoride stays on your teeth longer
- ◆ Cleaning between the teeth with 'interdental' brushes or floss at least once a day
- ◆ Good eating habits - having less sugary foods and drinks
- ◆ Regular dental check-ups.
- ◆ It is important to change your toothbrush every two to three months, or sooner if the filaments become worn.



# POETRY CORNER

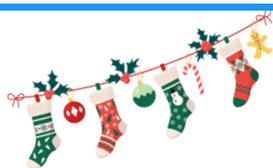
If you have any poetry or funny stories you would like us to include, put pen to paper and send it to us at **Age UK Barnet Letters Page, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT.** Or call Teresa on 07502 989 403 or 0208 432 1421.



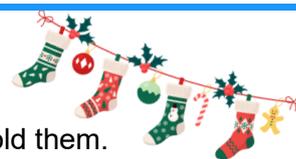
## TO LAUGH OFTEN AND MUCH by Ralph Waldo Emerson



*To laugh often and much;  
To win the respect of intelligent people and  
the affection of children;  
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and  
endure the betrayal of false friends;  
To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;  
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a  
healthy child, a garden patch,  
or a redeemed social condition;  
To know even one life has breathed easier  
because you have lived.  
This is to have succeeded.*



## PUPPIES CHRISTMAS! Anon



It's the day before Christmas  
And all through the house  
The puppies are squeaking  
An old rubber mouse.  
The wreath which had merrily  
Hung on the door  
is scattered in pieces  
All over the floor.  
The stockings that hung  
In a neat little row  
Now boast a hole in  
Each one of the toes.  
The tree was subjected  
To bright-eyed whims,  
And now, although splendid,  
It's missing some limbs.



I catch them and hold them.  
"Be good", I insist.  
They lick me, then run off  
To see what they've missed.  
And now as I watch them  
The thought comes to me,  
That theirs is the spirit  
That Christmas should be.  
Should children and puppies  
Yet show us the way,  
And teach us the joy  
That should come with this day?  
Could they bring the message  
That's written above,  
And tell us that, most of all  
Christmas is love



## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Fantastic to see so many people from all backgrounds at our celebration of black history and culture in October A heartwarming and inspirational talk from Lola Young, Baroness Young of Hornsey, who at the age of 8 went into foster care and now sits in the House of Lords! Wonderful food, singing, story sharing and poetry reading! We're looking forward to next year already!  
One woman told us that events like this one make her look forward to retiring!



## YOUR LIVES, YOUR STORIES!



**This month Ed speaks to Solly, who spent the first two years of the Second World War as an evacuee and the last two as a soldier. Now 97, the Barnet resident looks back to those tumultuous teenage years with gratitude that he lived to tell the tale.**

Born and brought up in Barnes by his Moroccan parents, he was thirteen years old at the outbreak of war in September 1939. It wasn't long before Solly was sent off to live with a family in Reading while his brother and three sisters were dispatched to different parts of the country. Unlike some children at the time, Solly has fond memories of the family who took him in.

"The father was an engine driver working for Southern Railways," Solly recalls. "When he came back to Reading he would toot his horn to let his wife know he was coming home. I was on my own there but they were very good to me in the two years I was with them. In that time, I can only remember one bomb dropping on Reading, while back home in Barnes my parents had to use their Anderson shelter regularly. One of the main problems of being evacuated was that it impacted on your education. Anyway, at fourteen I left and started working in a metal works which gave me a trade as a sheet metal worker."

As the war dragged on, Solly began to realise there was a good chance he would get called up himself. In the end, in 1943, he decided to volunteer for active service.

"I was about seventeen and a half at the time," Solly recalls. "I must have been mad, although I later discovered that those who joined up six months later were sent out to the far east which wouldn't have been good."

"It all started with six weeks basic training in Canterbury marching up and down. After that, I was sent on a signaller's course in Yorkshire, became an infantry signaller doing morse code and was posted to serve at a Marshalling Camp where British, American and Canadian troops were preparing for D Day. I was glad to be working at the camps because I wouldn't have wanted to have gone over on D Day itself, that would have been terrible." After that momentous day on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944, there was no further use for the Marshalling Camps so they were broken up and young men like Solly followed the invasion force out to France as reinforcements. It was the start of a journey that would take him all the way to Germany. "I was sent to join the Hallamshire regiment who had a terrible time and lost a lot of men on D Day," says Solly. "That's why they desperately needed reinforcements and the only ones that were available were eighteen-year-olds like me. There were lads from all over the country over there and I've still got a photo of myself and a couple of the friends I made in the regiment. At I was basically a radio operator and my job was to pass messages up and down the line."



"We went to Arnhem where there was the terrible disaster of the bridge too far. They hoped that campaign would shorten the war but sadly it extended it by a few months. I can remember a long straight road in the Netherlands with burnt out Sherman tanks all along it. It was terrible because there was a lot of very fierce fighting in those last few months of the war. I was worried like anyone else, stuck in a field when they start mortaring. It's no joke being in the front line anywhere, it might sound glamorous but it's definitely not when shells are coming down on you. Some of the older soldiers had been through a lot and by that stage they just wanted to get out of there alive."

Thankfully, in May 1945, the war did finish in Europe but it still continued elsewhere. For a while, Solly expected to be sent to the Far East but, after the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, he found himself in Italy instead doing a much more enjoyable job.

"I became a dispatch rider," says Solly. "Until then, I'd never actually ridden a motorbike but, after a thirty-minute lesson with the officer, I got the job. All I had to do was deliver messages around Venice where we were based, while selling all the spare cigarettes to the Italians. I heard some incredible stories as I rode around meeting people.." It wasn't long though before Solly was demobbed and returned to work as a metal worker in London. He was already starting to think about the next stage of his life and the chance to move to Israel. There was special training for anybody who wanted to go and it was at one such camp that he met his future wife Bertha. She had come to Britain from Vienna in the months before the war as part of the Kindertransport of 10,000 children who were rescued from the Nazis. Her parents would both be killed but she was rescued and taken in by a Hendon family, who Solly still has contact with now.

"Bertha's brother moved to Israel and she wanted to join him there," Solly continues. "We were like pioneers starting something new and having a trade myself was very useful. On November 14<sup>th</sup> 1948 we got married – the same day King Charles was born – and we went to Israel the next year."

"I was a bit homesick at first but we grew to love it and expected to remain there. Then, sometime after the Queen's coronation in 1953, I came back to visit my sick father and ended up staying. I joined the family firm where I was known as Mr Sol and was still working until I was about 75."

Sadly, Bertha died three years ago but Solly still has his two daughters living locally, a son in Australia as well as grand and great grandchildren. For a long time, he enjoyed playing tennis and golf and he still plays bowls which he says is a great way of meeting people.

"I had a pacemaker fitted a little while ago," says Solly. "That made a big difference and I can get around quite happily still. I asked the GP if I would make it to 100 – but he wouldn't commit himself!"

# RECIPE TIME

## CHRISTMAS BISCUITS

### Ingredients

150g butter  
150g light muscovado sugar  
160g golden syrup  
350g plain flour  
50g cocoa powder  
1 tbsp ground ginger  
For the decorations  
500g royal icing sugar  
green and red food colouring gels



### Method

Melt the butter, sugar and syrup together in a pan over a low heat, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and cool for a few minutes. [Whisk](#) together the flour, cocoa and ginger in a large bowl. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and mix together until you have a dough. Wrap and chill for 30 mins. *Will keep frozen for up to three months.*

Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5 and line two large baking sheets with baking parchment. To make the game board, roll half the dough into a 20 x 20cm square. Bake for 12 mins until the edges are firm and slightly darker in colour than the middle. Leave to cool slightly and firm up, then lift onto a wire rack to cool fully.

Meanwhile, to make the playing pieces, roll the remaining dough out to a 3mm thickness. Use a 7cm round cutter and 7cm tree cutter to stamp out about 32 biscuits (16 of each shape). Arrange on the baking sheets and bake for 8 mins until slightly darker at the edges. Leave to cool.

Mix the royal icing with 2 tbsp warm water until the icing is loose enough to pipe, but still thick enough to hold its shape. Add a little more water, a teaspoon at a time, if needed. Pipe lines over the large square biscuit to make a noughts and crosses board. Pipe drips of 'cream' onto the round biscuits to create Christmas puddings. Colour most of the remaining icing green, and use this to decorate the trees and pipe holly leaves onto the tops of the puddings. Colour any remaining icing red and pipe holly berries and baubles on the biscuits, or use sprinkles, if you like.



Leave the icing to set completely, then pack into an airtight tin. *Will keep for at least a week.*

\* Freezable (uncooked dough)  Vegetarian

Nutrition: Per serving

kcal	fat	saturates	carbs	sugars	fibre	protein	salt
175	4g	3g	32g	23g	1g	2g	0.1g



## PHYSICAL EXERCISES THAT ARE GOOD FOR THE BRAIN

Last month former physiotherapist Gillian Jordan looked at how some brain exercises were good for your muscles so this month she shows how physical activity can make your brain work better. And remember even a little bit more exercise than we're used to is good for us, as long as we stick to it.

Research shows some physical activities are more beneficial for the brain than others. High on the list is any form of dancing, which may have social benefits too. Alternatively, perform some of your regular exercises to music, adapting the moves to the rhythms of the music. Do you remember hand-jiving? That can be a fun activity! And we know that laughing not only helps us to breathe more deeply, it releases the feel good chemicals called endorphins in our brains.

According to scientists, Yoga, Tai Chi and Pilates are also good for the brain. These are all activities that can be adapted for those with limited mobility and are on offer at Age UK Barnet.

### Your exercise checklist

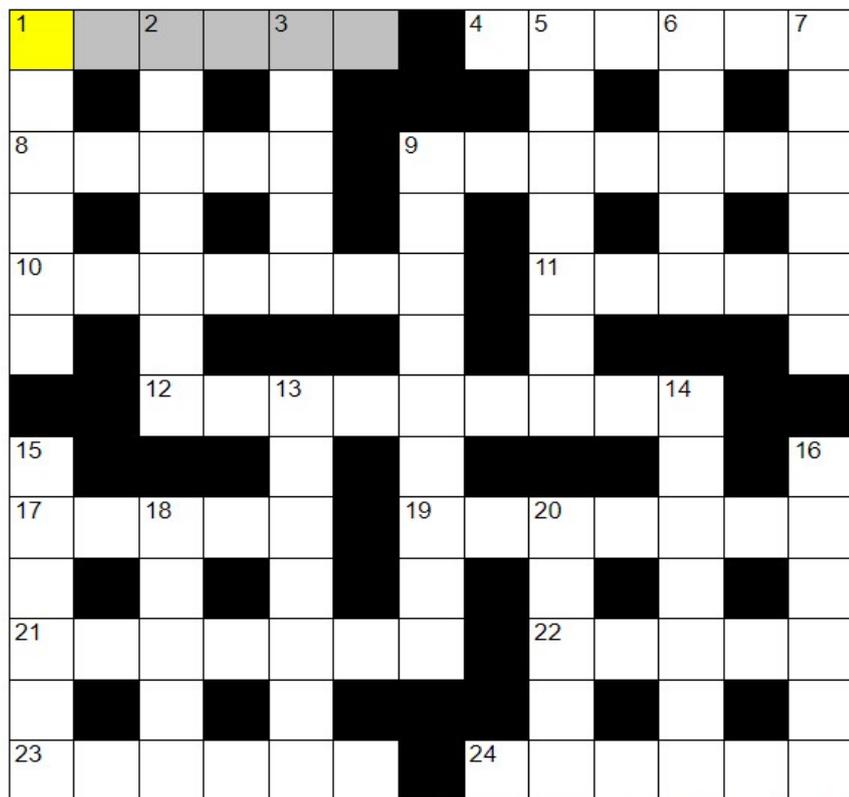
- How long you spend exercising each day? Try to increase the amount of movement in small amounts each day.
- How many sessions you do a day? Don't forget even a few exercises each time you stand up and move around are exercise opportunities!
- How hard are your sessions? It is a bonus if you can work hard enough to feel you are breathing more deeply. Ways of making exercises harder are to increase the speed or the number of repetitions, or add resistance by making one arm or leg push against the one that is moving. See a few examples below. Pushing against a wall for some arm or trunk exercises or holding a weight or using an exercise band can all add resistance.
- How much of the day am I sitting? We should all try to reduce the amount of time we spend sitting every day. How to do this? Perhaps when watching TV stand up when the adverts come on and march on the spot or practice standing to sitting. When walking about your home, try to make it a longer walk, go round twice on trips to the kitchen or bathroom. Or go to the front door and open it to get a breath of fresh air. Anything safe that will increase your total activity every day is a good thing!



*Add resistance to your exercises by using your body weight, arm or leg.*



# PUZZLE TIME....



## Across

- 1 Expensive (6)
- 4 Mariner (6)
- 8 Proclamation (5)
- 9 Outer districts of town or city (7)
- 10 Whaling weapon (7)
- 11 Person under age (5)
- 12 Deferred (9)
- 17 More secure (5)
- 19 Sweet dish named after a ballerina (7)
- 21 Everywhere (3,4)
- 22 Chess pieces (5)
- 23 Hang loosely (6)
- 24 Putrid (6)

## Down

- 1 Day nursery (6)
- 2 Rider's footrest (7)
- 3 Numbers game (5)
- 5 White of an egg (7)
- 6 Sophia \_\_\_\_, Italian actress (5)
- 7 Holiday destination (6)
- 9 Wading bird (9)
- 13 Become shrunken and wrinkled (7)
- 14 Cease to participate (4,3)
- 15 Area surrounded by water (6)
- 16 Sherlock Holmes's assistant (6)
- 18 Criminal (5)
- 20 Sixth sign of the zodiac (5)

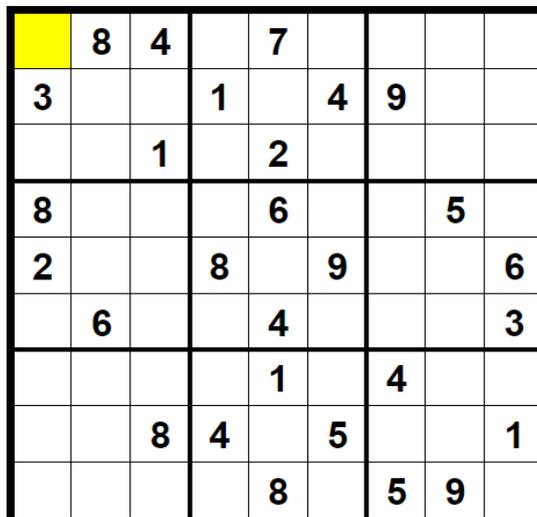


## CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

CANDY CANE  
CHIMNEY  
COOKIE  
DECEMBER  
EGGNOG  
ELF  
FROSTY

HOLLY  
LIGHTS  
MISTLETOE  
MITTENS  
NORTH POLE  
PRESENT  
REINDEER

RUDOLPH  
SANTA  
SNOWBALL  
STOCKING  
TINSEL  
TREE



## SODOKU

All answers on p16

# CRAFTY CRAFTS

## HANGING FAIRY

### What you will need

Clean plastic milk bottle  
55cm jute string or gardeners twine  
Two gold split pins  
A large bead for head  
Two smaller beads for feet  
8cm (3inch) circle template  
Scissors  
Bradawl or sharp needle  
Pen or pencil  
Thimble (optional)



### Instructions

1. Using the 8cm circle template, draw and cut out two circles from the milk bottle. Cut one of the circles in half.
2. Take the full circle and roll it into a cone shape, leaving just enough of a gap at the top for the twine to fit through. This will become the fairy's body. Overlap the sides slightly and very carefully pierce a hole in the centre, through both overlapping layers, using the bradawl or needle.
3. Push a split pin through the hole and open up the pins to secure.
4. Now take the half circle and, with the curve facing downwards, position it centrally on the back of the cone. This will become the fairy's wings. The top of the wings should be level with the top of the cone. From the back, pierce through the wings and the body in the same way and secure with another split pin.
5. Cut the twine into two lengths, one measuring 30cm long and the other measuring 25cm.
6. Fold both lengths in half and tie together with a double knot at their centre point.
7. Thread the two small beads onto the shorter length to become the fairy's feet. If you use a bradawl or needle you can tease the twine down through the long beads.
8. Now take the longer end of twine and pass both strands through the body and up through the neck of the fairy. Thread on the large bead to become her head and secure with a knot on top.





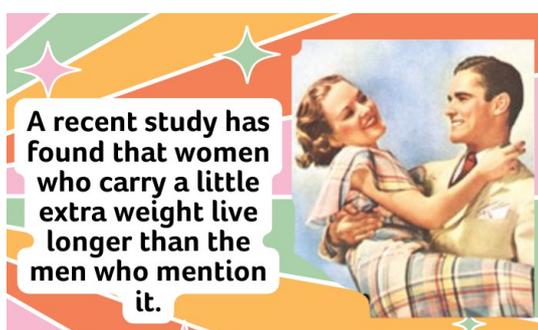
## MARITAL RATING SCALE FROM THE 1930s

### WIFE'S CHART

To calculate the score, add up the items under DEMERITS which fit the wife and add the total. Each item as one point unless specifically weighted as in the parentheses. Then check the items under MERITS which apply. Now subtract the DEMERIT score from the MERIT score. The result is the husband's raw score. Interpret it according to this table:

RAW SCORES	INTERPRETATION
0-24 .....	Very Poor (Failure)
25-41 .....	Poor
42-58 .....	Average
59-75 .....	Superior
76 and up .....	Very Superior

DEMERITS	Tick	MERITS	Tick
Slow in coming to bed - delays till husband is almost asleep.		A good hostess - even to unexpected guests	
Doesn't like children (5)		Has meals ready on time	
Fails to sew on buttons or darn socks regularly		Can carry on an interesting conversation	
Wears soiled or ragged dresses and aprons around the house		Can play a musical instrument, such as piano, violin etc.	
Wears red nail polish		Dresses for breakfast	
Often late for appointments (5)		Neat housekeeper—keeps things tidy and clean	
Seams in hose often crooked		Personally puts children to bed	
Goes to bed with curlers in her hair or lots of face cream		Never goes to bed angry, always makes up first (5)	
Puts cold feet on husband at night to warm them		Asks husbands opinions regarding important decisions and purchases	
Is a back seat driver		Good sense of humour - jolly and gay	
Flirts with other men at parties or in restaurants (5)		Religious - sends children to services and attends herself (10)	
Is suspicious and jealous (5)		Lets husband sleep late on Sunday and holidays	



# HOW CAN WE HELP?

## AGE UK BARNET SERVICES



For advice about benefits, grants, housing and money concerns, phone our **Later Life Planning Service** on **020 8432 1417**.

For scams advice and support, call our **Scams Prevention Service** on **0208 432 2217**.

Would you enjoy a regular chat over the phone with a friendly volunteer? Try our **Befriending Service** on **020 8432 1416**

For essential jobs in the home please phone our **Handyperson Service\*** on **020 8150 0963**. Some jobs such as changing a lightbulb are free of charge.

Unable to get out to the shops and cannot shop online? We have a **Shopping Service\*** for people who need a light weekly shop. For more info, Tel **020 8150 0963**

**Living Well Dementia Hub—dementia adviser service** and **day opportunities** for people living with mild to moderate dementia and their carers. Phone 020 8203 5040. Our **Dementia Befriending Service** offers companionship—phone **020 8150 0967**.

**Our Stepping Out Service** for those who have early stages of dementia or confirmed memory issues, we offer short weekly walks with a volunteer Phone **020 8150 0963**.

**Foot care\*** We offer basic nail-cutting (£15) at the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley and, for people with diabetes, taking steroids or warfarin, we have nail-cutting with a podiatrist (£20).

For an appointment, phone **020 8203 5040**.

**Household Support Fund** - grants for Barnet residents over the age of 55 who are struggling to make ends meet during this cost of living crisis. Phone **020 8203 5040** or email [support@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:support@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

**\*There may be a charge for this service**



## THE BENEFITS OF SINGING WHEN YOU'RE OLDER



Studies have long reported the wellbeing benefits of joining a choir – from reduced anxiety, depression and loneliness. But research at Helsinki University has found:

- \* Older adult choir singers had better verbal flexibility – that's the ability to think about different concepts at the same time or switch between different thoughts or ideas
- \* Choir singers also showed faster thinking skills
- \* Choir singing was associated with higher word retrieval in vocabulary tasks



Age UK Barnet Senior Singers meets up for a singalong every fortnight on a Tuesday at the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley and we also hold regular musical events. **Call Helen on 07384 466 840 to find out more.**



## 'Me.....and my (very) old friends'

**Writer Lee Janogly – an 84-year-old semi retired fitness instructor and author – shares the conversational highlights of her regular meet-ups with a group of good friends. This time she enlists a friend to help her with decluttering**

It was when I opened the hall cupboard and a box containing my husband's old hats fell off a high shelf colliding with the vacuum cleaner, which tipped forward and hit my forehead, that I thought, 'That's it, I need a clear-out!' Fifty-three years living in the same house which my adult children, having long left home, treat as a free storage unit, meant a load of STUFF cluttering up every shelf, cupboard and drawer.

I summoned my friend Nancy to help and we started by making a LIST: -

1) large plastic tubs with lids, 2) black rubbish bags, 3) cardboard boxes to take things to the tip, 4) a packet of chocolate Hobnobs. Then we made four columns: Keep. Sell on eBay. Charity Shop. Chuck. Pleased with our efficiency, we decided that was enough for one day and settled down to watch *Countdown*. Nancy got the nine-letter conundrum, which was very annoying.

The next day we tackled the attic. Peering past the dim light bulb revealed an assortment of old suitcases, video recorders, a sagging sofa-bed, chest of drawers, and a rocking horse. We agreed we couldn't possibly carry any of that heavy stuff and settled down to watch the aptly named *Pointless Celebrities*, amusing ourselves by counting how many times Alexander Armstrong uttered his buying-time phrase, 'thank you very much *in-deed!*'

The following week, Nancy dragged me into my bedroom to sort out my clothes. She declared herself an expert at de-cluttering having watched two episodes of Marie Kondo on YouTube. 'You can't just pile T-shirts in a drawer', she said, 'you have to roll each one into a little bundle and place them side by side so you know what you've got.'

'But how do you know if one has a round neck or V-shape?' I asked.

'Well, you have to unroll each one to check', she answered. Um – I see.

I retrieved a box filled with clothes 'in case' I wanted to wear them again.

'What on earth's this?' Nancy held up a green satin evening dress.

'I wore that for my sister's wedding,' I protested. 'I'm sure it still fits me.'

'When did your sister get married?'

'I think it was 1964.'

'And you think your waist might magically reappear or you can turn up in public in a low-cut dress without wearing a bra? Get real, girl!' I sighed and we put everything back in the box because it was nearly time to watch *The Chase*. Bradley Walsh is our favourite presenter. We opened the packet of chocolate Hobnobs and agreed that this clearing out malarky was just too exhausting and we'd leave it for another time.

**Lee is the author of 'Getting Old, Deal with It' (Mensch Publishing)**





## 6 SUPRISING THINGS ABOUT DECEPTION

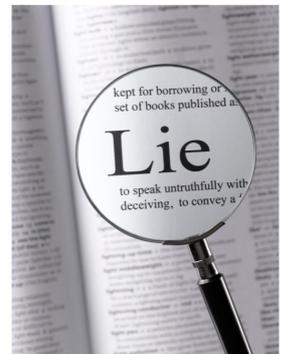
Professor Catherine Loveday gave another fascinating talk about the psychology of deception recently – she reveals how unreliable our memories can be and whether it's possible to spot a liar.



1. Research has consistently shown that people's ability to detect lies in strangers is no more accurate than chance, or flipping a coin. Body language is generally an unreliable way to spot a liar because people who aren't lying also display these body language signals. In the same way, lie detectors are notoriously unreliable. They pick up bodily signals such as increased sweating, changes in pulse rate and breathing rate changes but, while these things may indicate that someone is lying, they can also happen when someone is nervous or excited. And someone who has repeated a lie many times may not show any of these signs.

2. We are much better at spotting a liar when we are close to the person lying – we can spot changes in behaviour and body language because we know how they usually behave.

3. Sometimes someone may lie, not because they are trying to deceive, but because they have developed a false memory, which is something we are all susceptible to. Although we all like to think that our memories are accurate, we can often misremember the details. In one famous classic experiment, participants were asked to look through family photos which included a fake picture of a family hot air balloon ride from when they were a child which did not take place. At the time, participants said they couldn't remember going on the ride. A week later when they're shown the photos again, however, half the participants said they remember the trip, and some even went into detail about how they were feeling and what they were wearing!



4. Lying is hard work and uses a lot of brain power because there is a lot in your mind at once. Because constructing stories is a harder task, people are more likely to make mistakes or slip up. However, if you are drawing on real memories, it takes less effort because you're just retrieving from stored memories, so you are less likely to trip up.



5. One of the best ways to spot if someone is lying is to listen more than speak. The more you listen, the more likely the person will talk and trip themselves up. Also, asking back and forth questions means that people who are trying to hold a story in their mind can begin to lose their thread. So try asking them to tell their stories in reverse order. Truth tellers can rely on their memories to tell their story backwards, often adding more details, but liars tend to struggle.

6. We are psychologically vulnerable to scams for a variety of reasons. We tend to have a truth bias – we are more likely to trust that things are true. If something feels right, sounds right, looks right or it fits in with our world view, we tend to trust it. We are emotional creatures – for instance, common scams include appeals for help or fear of missing out or losing money. We also have limited capacity and can only take in so much. Scammers may overwhelm us with information and urge us to make a quick decision. The more we know ourselves the more we reduce our risk of becoming a victim of scams.

## WHAT'S GROWING ON

Meet our new gardening columnist Kevin who, since retiring, loves spending time in the garden and his allotment. Each issue he lets us know what he's been up to and shares a few seasonal gardening tips.

I was brought up to be a hands-on gardener. My mum loved working in the garden, so did my dad, but he also had an allotment where runner beans were a firm favourite. We always had a greenhouse at home where we would grow seeds, young plants and propagate much-loved dahlia plants. This is how my love of gardening grew.



Gardening is a continuous fight, the soil, the weather, the weeds, slugs and snails. However, it does have great rewards. Tasty vegetables, lovely plants and flowers, the satisfaction and wellbeing that working outside brings.

At the allotment I have been planting garlic as it needs a period of cold weather to develop and broad beans for an early crop. Also tiding up the plants that have finished producing and adding them to the compost heap. The dahlias keep flowering until we have a hard frost, then sadly I cut them down. The tops end up in the bean trench and I dig up and store the tubers for next year.

At home I have been planting up pots with bulbs for some spring colour, this is something that can be done even if you only have a balcony or window box. I have added some winter pansies and primulas for extra interest.

Whatever you do, whenever you can, enjoy the great outdoors.

### Garden jobs for November and December

- ⇒ Remove leaves from your lawn.
- ⇒ Raise containers onto pot feet to prevent waterlogging
- ⇒ Protect tender plants
- ⇒ Reduce the height of shrub roses to avoid windrock damage over winter.
- ⇒ Put out bird food to encourage winter birds into the garden



### Suki says 'Thank you - and keep the donations coming!'

*Pigeon Poster regular Suki – aka Cat Moss – wants to extend huge thanks to all the readers who have kindly donated money to Pigeon Post to help keep the magazine going. Although Suki has been featured in national newspapers, including The Guardian, she assures us that Pigeon Post is the publication she most enjoys working for. We continue to welcome donations – just contact Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email: [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk)*



## WHY IT'S GOOD TO GET OLDER

Some thinking skills improve with age! The Seattle Longitudinal Study has followed the mental abilities of 6,000 people since 1956, and is the longest-running study of its kind. Researchers found that while older volunteers aren't as good at maths and are slower to respond to commands, for vocabulary, spatial orientation, verbal memory, and problem solving abilities, they were better in their late 40s and 50s than they were in their 20s.



## WHAT'S COMING UP



### **Talk: Nostalgia: why it's good to look back - Wednesday 15 November 2023 (7-8pm)**

Harking back to the past can sometimes be seen as bad thing, but nostalgia is actually rather good for our brains. It can also boost physical wellbeing and can even make us feel positive about the future. Neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday lets us know how to do nostalgia well. To register, contact Teresa on [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or phone 07502 989 403.

### **Book Club— Tuesday 21 November**

Our book club for over 55s is friendly and welcoming - just bring your enthusiasm for reading. You can share your views or just listen - up to you. This time we'll be discussing *A Single Thread* by Tracey Chevalier, *Butcher's Crossing* by John Williams and *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah. Most people read just one book out of our choices. We meet at 1.45pm the Wilmot Close Community Centre, Tarling Road N2 8LB. Want to join us? Just get in touch with Helen on [helen.nicolaou@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:helen.nicolaou@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call her on 07384 466840.

### **Wellbeing event – Monday 4 December 2023 (10am-12.30pm)**

Interesting talks and information for people worried about their memories or people living with dementia and their carers. A chance to find out about local community groups. Takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT. For more details, contact [Fiona.cronin@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:Fiona.cronin@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call 0208 629 0269 or 07799 519 314.

### **Christmas concert and singalong – Monday 11 December 2023 (3-5pm)**

Join us for festive songs, musical performances and a good old singalong. There'll be mince pies, mulled spice apple juice and mulled wine. To register, contact Teresa on [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or phone 07502 989 403.

## COOKERY Q&A

### HOW CAN I SAVE ENERGY WHEN I'M COOKING?

These money saving tips from Which? might help.

#### **1: Try passive cooking.**

Boil spaghetti for just two minutes – placing the lid on the pot and leaving it to 'passive cook' for another eight minutes in the hot water.

#### **2: Pre-boil cooking water.**

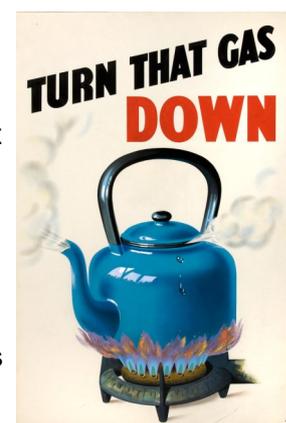
Boil water in your kettle and transfer to your hob for cooking. The fastest kettles take just over two minutes to boil a litre while the fastest gas hobs take around 9 minutes. Induction hobs come close to kettle speeds but aren't quite as fast.

#### **3: Use the right sized pan and zone**

Use an appropriate pan size for the amount of food you're heating so you don't waste energy heating a larger surface area. Choose a hob zone of a similar size too – a burner bigger than your pan will waste energy. With induction, a smaller pan might not register.

#### **4: Clean up your appliances**

If you're guilty of leaving dried-on food on your burners – or inside the oven or other appliances – give them a good clean. Caked-on food will absorb heat, which results in less being directed to your cookware to heat up your food.





If you have enjoyed this newsletter, please let us know. Just drop us a line at Pigeon Post, Age UK Barnet, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT.

### SUDOKU ANSWERS

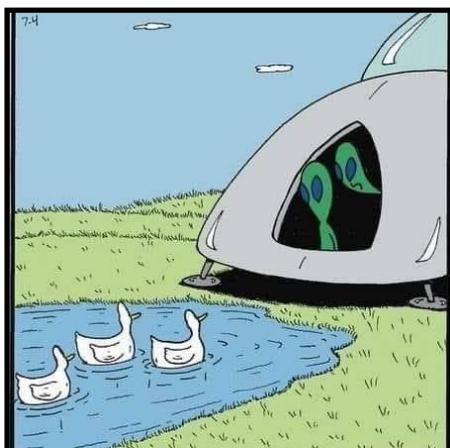
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### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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### WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

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M	D	Z	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	I	U	O	R	M



"They obviously possess a highly advanced telepathic ability. How else could they possibly know your name, Kwak?"



"Okay, Mr. Hook. Seems you're trying to decide between a career in pirating or massage therapy. Well, maybe we can help you narrow it down."