
















PIGEON POST

Keeping you informed & involved

May/ June 2023



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Welcome,
We're all busy planning our Coronation Carnival event taking place at our Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley on Saturday 20 May to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. We hope some of you will be able to join us for a day of live music - from jazz and classical to folk and show tunes. Stay for lunch, have a cream tea and enjoy a drink or two before browsing the stalls and having a go at the tombola or one of our raffles.

A packed issue - including a piece on why we should all be writing a diary and the amazing story of our art class participant who volunteered for the Red Cross during the Bosnian war.

Until next time,

Helen Newman
Chief Executive
Age UK Barnet



Each person must live
their life as a model for
others.

ROSA PARKS



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HOW TO PACK A PROTEIN PUNCH

We generally eat enough protein to keep us well in this country, says cookery volunteer and trainee dietitian Kato. 'The problem is, as we age, we are less able to digest and absorb the protein in our food, while at the same time we need more than before to keep our muscles from losing mass and strength,' she says. 'One way to eat enough protein is to include a protein rich food in every meal, including snacks.' And while meat and fish are very good sources of high-quality protein, they also cause more environmental damage than eggs, dairy and protein-rich plant foods – and are generally more expensive. For some inspiration, try some of the tasty meat-free recipe ideas below.

Breakfast frittata



Line a rectangular casserole oven dish with a sheet of baking parchment and preheat the oven to 190°C. Beat 5 large eggs in a bowl with 300g natural cottage cheese, then add 1 peeled and crushed garlic clove, 2 tsp grated parmesan or strong cheddar, 225g thawed and squeezed frozen leaf spinach, 2 roasted red peppers torn in strips and a pinch of nutmeg and pepper. Tip into the casserole dish and bake for 40mins. Cut into wedges and serve hot or cold. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 4 days.

Breakfast yoghurt drink medley

Add 2tbsp of chia seeds to a large glass (200ml) of natural drinking yoghurt or kefir. Leave for 4 hours or overnight to soak. Before serving, add a tablespoon of your favourite chopped nuts with a chopped fruit (berries, apple, or banana).



Pea and edamame soup



Gently fry 1 chopped onion in 1 tbsp of olive oil for 5 minutes. Add 200g frozen green soya beans (also called edamame beans), 200g frozen peas and 500ml vegetable stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Add a pack (25g) of shredded basil leaves, a large handful (50g) of watercress, and 300ml milk. Blend with a hand blender until smooth and creamy. Toast 1 tbsp of pumpkin seeds and 1 tbsp of sunflower seeds for a few minutes in a pan. Sprinkle on the soup and add a dollop of crème fraiche or Greek yoghurt. Leftovers can be frozen.

Quinoa salad

Cook 200g quinoa following pack instructions, drain and set aside. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Add to a roasting pan 1 red onion, peeled and cut into thick slices, 2 red or yellow peppers, deseeded and cut into chunky wedges, 2 medium courgettes, halved lengthways, and 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled. Rub vegetables in 1tbsp of olive oil and roast for 30 minutes. Squeeze the roasted garlic flesh into a bowl, and mix with the remaining olive oil, the zest and juice of 1 lemon and a pinch of sugar. Mix dressing into the quinoa, add the roasted vegetables, and top with 1 pack (25g) of chopped parsley and 200g of crumbled feta cheese.



Quick protein power snacks

- ◆ Spread almond or peanut butter on apple slices
- ◆ Top 125ml Greek yoghurt with 1 tbsp chopped walnuts and chopped fruit
- ◆ Mash a boiled egg with 1tsp mayonnaise and ground pepper. Spread on a rye cracker or toasted wholewheat bagel
- ◆ With a hand blender, whizz 1tbsp peanut butter, 1 frozen banana, 2tsp honey, and 250ml milk to make a smoothie



SCAM ALERT

SCAMS TO WATCH OUT FOR!

Each month our Scams Awareness Team lets you know a common scam to be aware of.



£400 energy grant

A text message claiming to be about the government's energy support scheme asks you to apply for the £400 grant. In reality, the grant will be sent automatically and doesn't need to be applied for. The link leads to a scam website that mimics the official Gov.uk website, to convince you to part with your personal details. Don't click on the links on these texts and then block the sender.

Fake Amazon texts

Fraudsters are impersonating Amazon in fake text messages. The texts warn of an attempted login and tell you to follow a link to secure your Amazon account, which takes you to a convincing copycat Amazon website. Here you're asked for personal information which will be used to scam you now or in the future. Do not click on any links.

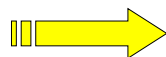
Age UK Barnet's scams prevention and support programme is there for all over 55s in Barnet. Please get in touch with us on 020 8203 5040 if you would like to know more about protecting yourself from a scam or if you have fallen for a scam and need some support or advice.



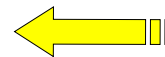
READER'S CRAFTY MAKES!

Inspired by our Easy Crafts page in the April 2022 issue of Pigeon Post, Gill Wingham painted 221 pebbles for the next Poppy appeal in November. For Gill this has been a very therapeutic project, an absorbing and enjoyable way to pass the time. She bought some pebbles online but the best ones came from beachcombing on Hove beach!

Do send us your pictures of your Pigeon Post crafts – we also welcome any new ideas too for future issues!



SUPPORT PIGEON POST



The funding that we originally received to produce Pigeon Post has come to an end and we are looking for donations to keep our magazine going. If you can afford to give a small amount, we'd be very grateful. Please contact Teresa on 07502 989 403. We are suggesting £5 a year, which works out less than £1 an issue!



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.



FOR THE LOVELY PAUL O'GRADY written by one of his fans....

"Hello! "From me in heaven
As you all know, I've died.
To stay down there amongst you lot
Well, I really, really tried
But Him up there sent a hit man
Who dragged me from my bed
And instead of taking me below
I've landed here instead.
It happened all so suddenly
While I was sound asleep
Dreaming of my doggie friends,
My pigs, my goats and sheep.

I got dropped outside these shiny gates
And told to ring the bell
(I was glad I wore my jimjams
And my breath it didn't smell!)
I got ushered in by Peter
(I think that was his name)
And I asked him what the matter was
And just what was his game.
"You'd better see the boss" he said
And quickly disappeared
Leaving me confronted by
An old guy with a beard.

This guy produced a glass of wine
And gave me a strange nod
"I am known by many names
But you can call me God.
Now, we have up here a vacancy
Impossible to fill
But someone very close to you
Told me you'd fit the bill".
I stared at him with open gob
Then guzzled down the bevy
"I'll help you if I can" I said
"As long as it's not heavy!"

"There is a door beside the gate
Through which all creatures pass"
And staring back I saw a sight
Which made me drop my glass
T'was Murphy standing, arms outstretched
My mind was all a fluster
For standing right beside my love
Was Bullseye, Olg and Buster.
"You're needed here to help these pets"
My Murphy did advise
And seeing my loved ones once again
Brought tears to my eyes.

"Ahem, may I continue please?"
This man named God then spoke
"These animals need someone kind
And we think you're the bloke
To wait beside this special door
Let those approach come through it
And help each one dispel their fear".
"That's it!" said I "Let's do it!!"

So here I am with Murph and dogs
Putting creatures at their ease
A job which gives me so much joy
And really is a breeze.
We spoil them when they come to us
With treats from out the fridge
Then when we know they're ready
We help them cross the Bridge.
So stop the sadness that you hold.
Don't let those teardrops fall.
For I'm here in my element
With heavenly love
From Paul xx





YOUR LIVES, YOUR STORIES!



Art class volunteer Richard chatted to our Teresa about his time in Bosnia as a Red Cross volunteer during the Bosnian War. “I started work as a technician at the Royal Free Hospital in the dialysis unit in 1982, helping to look after all the dialysis equipment (kidney machines) and water treatment used in the renal unit. I belonged to a technical association and in 1994 a newsletter went round the UK hospitals appealing for a kidney dialysis technician to visit Bosnia. Due to the war, they were very short of kidney machines, supplies, and qualified technicians. Their own technicians had left to join the army as well as many nurses, so patients were left with very little help to manage their dialysis. Machines would constantly break down, and they had no one available to repair them or sufficient spares.

I felt inspired and volunteered to go over there for a few weeks, and after checking with my family and colleagues at work, I started to organise the trip. Twenty-five old, but working, dialysis machines were donated from various UK hospitals, thousands of pounds of spares and a huge collection of dialysis medical supplies. Permission was eventually given to export all these supplies and the equipment. I was ‘employed’ for the visit by the Red Cross, but before leaving I had to have a medical – the doctor asked if I was serious about going to Bosnia– as it was extremely cold at that time of year there and not the best environment for a 47 year old! But I was determined to go, passed the medical and made the arrangements.

I flew to Zagreb and then was driven to Banja Luka, the main Red Cross centre and Serbian capital. The journey was an eye opener, with destroyed houses and factories, bomb cratered roads, blown up bridges, check points and soldiers everywhere. In Banja Luka Hospital I was shown a roomful of poorly looking machines. The staff had very little English, and all they could say whilst pointing to each machine was – broken, broken, broken! However, their other worry was that there was only one old fashioned toilet, and that was out of order as the water would not flush. This was used by about 15 doctors and nurses. It took me only five minutes to repair it - after that everyone appreciated me and it got me off to a good start.

While waiting for the spares and machines to arrive through the Serbian customs, I managed to repair a few of their machines and help ease the situation. They only had 18 machines in total, for more than fifty patients, so I don’t know how they were managing! The sister in charge of the dialysis unit was Bosnian and she had around 15 nurses, 13 of whom were Serbian and who all hated her! They made her life so uncomfortable that she finally had to leave. Strangely, the patients were made up of Bosnians, Croatians, and Serbians, but all seemed to be looked after equally. Food was scarce but a lovely Russian doctor always shared his evening meal with me at the end of a long day. We had plenty of bread rolls, but no coffee, sugar, milk or proper tea (only Earl Grey which I grew to love!) At that time only limited food or essentials were available to the general population. It took about a week for the dialysis machines and equipment to start arriving from customs. Once they were assembled, my time was taken up with repairing them and all the setting up. Three other hospitals were desperate for help as well and over the weeks I took six machines to each, using a Red Cross vehicle and accompanied by a translator.

Back at Banja Luka Hospital I found that the patients were being dialysed using water straight from the tap, which would normally be extremely dangerous. Dialysis water would normally be purified, and any contaminants removed to make it suitable. I asked the doctor if they had any more suitable water available, he said that the water was coming from the hills around them, was probably soft and anyway they had no facilities to analyse the composition of the water! The water softener and purifying equipment they had at the hospital had been abandoned when the engineer who had installed it disappeared when the war started. I said when I had time, I would try to get it up and running again.

Eventually I did manage to get it sorted, and the following morning we were able to put the patients back on dialysis using the filtered, improved water. Unfortunately, and worryingly, the patients then started to feel really unwell. I had to turn off the supply and we had to go back to using the untreated water – and fortunately, they all recovered. The doctor theorised that their bodies had become so used to using the mains water that the purer supply was just too different for them. They had to be slowly weaned on to it over the next few weeks, but it did finally benefit them. I was very relieved.

On my penultimate day there, I was invited to join a Red Cross convoy in a prisoner exchange and a food and seed potato delivery. This consisted of a convoy of trucks, with me bringing up the rear, and we had to drive as fast as possible for about four hours across Bosnia, to where the Serbians were dug in at the front line. Surrounded by tanks and Serbian soldiers a two-hour negotiation took place. At the front line it was difficult and worrying, but I was so bored with all the talking that was going on, that I looked for a distraction. I saw a group of Serbian soldiers nearby and decided to go and have a chat with them! I walked over to these grim looking soldiers who looked me up and down and I tentatively asked them if anyone was an Arsenal football fan! They understood that! Mostly they were Manchester United fans, but this totally broke the ice, and we ended up talking about football, laughing and looking at each other in an almost friendly way. Some of them spoke ‘American’ English, picked up from all the films they watched, so we did manage to understand each other.

Eventually, with the prisoner exchange complete and the food delivered, we then drove back, leaving the decimated towns and houses behind. We travelled through the beautiful countryside where the trees and fields were green and the rivers iridescent blue, an amazing contrast to all the destruction. I later asked why the rivers were so perfect and was told that it was because there were no factories operating to pollute them anymore!

I came back after five weeks on a complete high. Grateful that I had done what I had set out to do and had survived. I have never forgotten those five weeks.....”



RECIPE TIME



CARIBBEAN PEPPERPOT WITH TOFU



Ingredients

300g brown rice
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 onion, diced
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
3 sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 leeks, sliced
2 large carrots, peeled and sliced

1 reduced-salt vegetable stock cube dissolved in 1200ml boiling water
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes
Freshly ground black pepper
150g pre-sliced frozen okra or defrosted frozen okra, sliced
280g packet of tofu, drained and cubed

Method

1. Cook the rice according to packet instructions.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large non-stick pan over a medium heat.
3. Add the onions and cook until they start to soften. Then add the garlic and cook for a further minute.
4. Add the sweet potatoes, leeks, carrots, vegetable stock, dried thyme, dried chilli flakes and freshly ground black pepper. Bring to the boil, cover with a saucepan lid and simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Add the okra and simmer for a further 5 minutes or until the vegetables are cooked and the liquid in the pepperpot has reduced. You may need to add more water to prevent sticking.
6. While the okra is cooking, prepare the tofu. Heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in a frying pan over a medium-high heat and fry the tofu for 5 minutes until golden brown, stirring frequently. Add to the pepperpot and mix thoroughly.
7. Serve with the rice. Makes 4 portions.

Top tip

Caribbean pepperpot is traditionally made with seasonal vegetables so vary this recipe by using your favourite seasonal vegetables



Nutrition information (per serving)

Calories
575

Fat
15g

Sugar
15g

Fibre
12g

Protein
19g

Salt
0.3g

5 A DAY
2.5

EXERCISE YOUR PELVIC FLOOR



IMPORTANT EXERCISES THAT NOBODY WILL KNOW YOU ARE DOING!

Leaking urine and passing wind can be embarrassing and upsetting, but former physiotherapist Gillian Jordan says that with a bit of understanding about how our pelvic floor work and a few exercises, you can improve your bladder and bowel control.



The pelvic floor consists of layers of muscles and ligaments that extend from the pubic bone in the front to the end of the backbone – the coccyx- and from side to side. 'They are there to support the bladder, womb and the bowel and are kept firm and slightly tense to help control the bladder and back passage,' says Gillian. 'When you pass water or have a bowel movement, the pelvic floor muscles relax and then they automatically tighten again to regain control. The muscles actively squeeze when we laugh, sneeze, cough or lift something heavy, which they do without us having given it a thought. But as we age the pelvic floor muscles can weaken and some people find that they cannot always stop passing wind at the wrong moment or they leak urine with an unexpected sneeze, cough or even laugh.

However regular exercising can strengthen the pelvic floor so that they can again give the right support and improve control of bladder and bowel function.

So, how do we strengthen these muscles that we can't see?

1. Start by sitting on a chair with your legs slightly apart or lying on the bed. Now imagine that you are trying to stop yourself from passing wind. To do this you must squeeze the muscles around the back passage so try this as if you really do have wind and you should be able to feel the muscle tightening. Try really hard to feel this squeezing and lifting but make sure your buttocks and legs are not moving.
2. Now imagine you are sitting on the loo passing urine and think about trying to stop the flow of urine – you may find this harder but you are using the same group of muscles. By the way, never try to stop the flow of urine mid-stream as this may, if repeated, cause problems with full bladder emptying.
3. Next try to tighten the muscles around your back passage and front passage and lift up inside all at the same time as if trying to stop passing both wind and urine. This will probably take a bit of practice and you must make sure that you are not bringing other muscles into play, such as tightening your buttocks, squeezing your thighs together or holding your breath.

Now you have found your pelvic floor muscles, here are the exercises to practise:-

Slowly tighten and pull up the pelvic floor muscles as hard as you can and hold for as long as you can. Rest for a count of 4 and tighten again. Build up your strength until you can do 10 slow contractions, resting for a count of 4 between each one. This is to build up stamina.

For quick reactions to deal with sudden stresses from coughing or laughing, practice quick repeated contractions, rather than holding on to the tightening. Do 10 quick contractions in rapid succession.

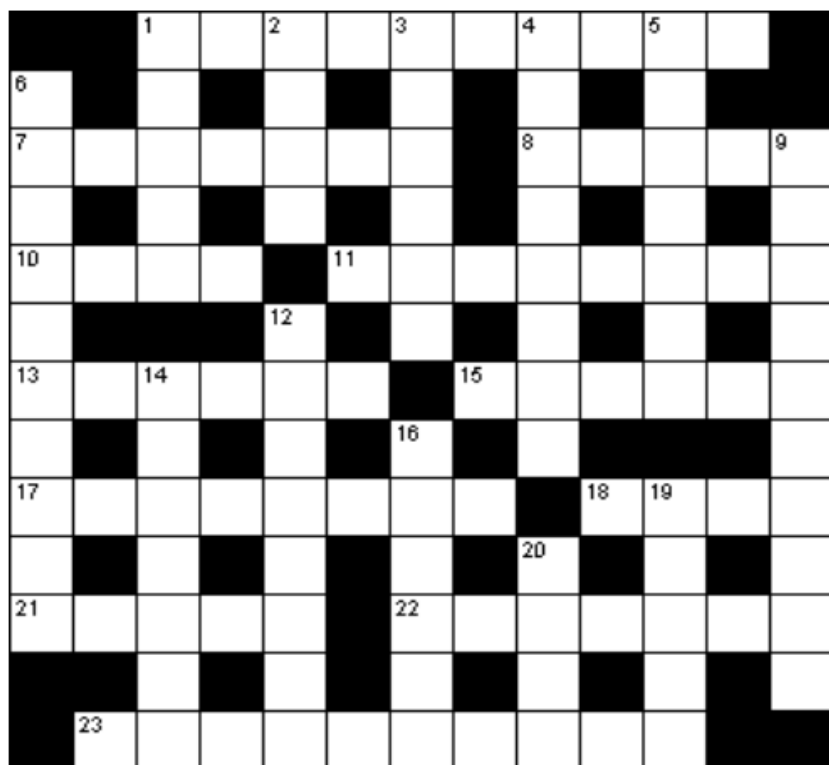
It takes time to make these muscles stronger, so do persevere! Get into the habit of incorporating pelvic floor muscles into daily activities as well as setting time aside for the long slow and the rapid repeated contractions.

Remember you can exercise your pelvic floor muscles wherever you are – nobody will know you are doing them and the benefits of restored pelvic floor strength are many.

Men have pelvic floor muscles too and they can also benefit from doing these exercises.



PUZZLE TIME....



Across

1	Excellent (5,5)
7	Put in order (7)
8	Vagrant (5)
10	Contended (4)
11	Abroad (8)
13	The capital of Portugal (6)
15	Current (6)
17	Ignore (8)
18	A smaller amount (4)
21	The devil (5)
22	Nonsense (7)
23	Searcher for minerals (10)

Down

1	Smithy (5)
2	Circle (4)
3	A dozen (6)
4	Able to read and write (8)
5	Thai (7)
6	Wonderful (10)
9	Expert (4,6)
12	Young geese (8)
14	Jumper (7)
16	Container for liquid (6)
19	Senior (5)
20	Final (4)

					8		1	3
9								
			5	4				
		8				7		
5	2			7				
	3			5			8	4
6	4							1
	7		3		9			
					1	5		9

*All answers
on p16*

WILDFLOWERS

S U N F L O W E R L I L A C
T W B L O S S O M H A T A S
E L A L L O R O C O N E U K
R D B L Y P L A C E I N R T
O N E O W L E G A S E A O U
L O N E Q L A R D G B M B C
F G E O S U O R T O E H L A
Z A V E I O E A K T W O O R
I R L D T L R T S S V W I T
N D H B O U E T V E P A W L
N P I U L D H D R I F U L E
I A O D W E T R N W N F R A
A N B T Z F N R V A K E Z F
H S L R R R A Q Y F D K S F

Anther
Bark
Blossom
Bouquet
Bud
Clover
Corolla
Dandelion
Floret
Genus
Larkspur
Leaf
Lilac
Root
Sage
Seed
Snapdragon
Stem
Sunflower
Vines
Zinnia

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

EASY CRAFTS - Polka Dot Circle Tree

What you will need

Acrylic paints, in - white, soft black, melon, lemonade, fuchsia, turquoise, violet, yellow.

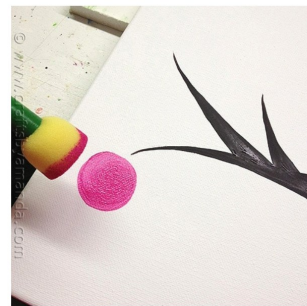
Various sizes of round sponge applicators, Toothpick, Pencil, Acrylic sealer in matte, Canvas

Instructions

First I gave the canvas a coat of White Wash. Why paint a white canvas white? Because, canvas is a cloth and dirt can get into the fibers and stain it. If it's painted, it has a layer sealing those fibers allowing dirt to be wiped off with a damp cloth. Now you know. 😊



1. Sketch your design onto paper to get the correct size, then copy onto canvas in pencil then paint tree in black



2. Next I added circles with a round sponge applicator, the largest size first. I did about 3 of each color in various places.



3. I then repeated the process with the medium sized applicator and finally with the small applicator. I also randomly added small dots with the handle end of my



4. Next, I added polka dots to the large and medium circles using the handle end of my paintbrush.

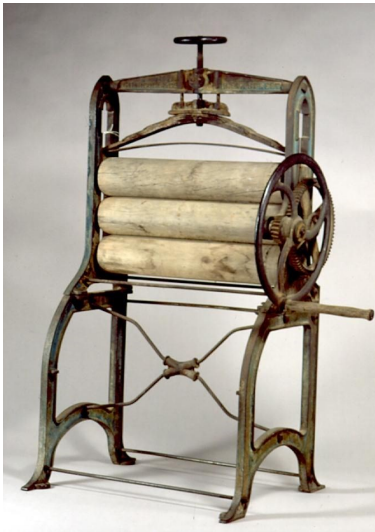


5. Finally, I used a toothpick to add polka dots to the smallest circles.

6. Once it was completely dry, I added a coat of acrylic sealer spray in matte finish.



HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FROM DAYS GONE BY!



Washday blues! Always used outside because the water just ran straight out of the wrung clothes onto the floor!



No kitchen was complete without some trusty pyrex dishes!



Paraffin heater!



Darning mushroom - not edible of course!



"Quick Mum - The Archers is about to start!"



No lady was dressed without her vanity case!



Dial 100 for the operator...



The Woolworth Gardener: A Guide to successful Gardening for All. In the 1950s Woolworths was Britain's biggest seller of seeds and bulbs.

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 - one-off grants for Barnet residents of pensionable age who are struggling to make ends meet during this cost of living crisis. Phone **020 8203 5040** or email

support@ageukbarnet.org.uk

**There may be a charge for this service*



PROTECT YOUR BRAIN - TAKE A HEARING TEST!

The greater your hearing loss, the higher your risk of dementia., according to the RNID. Even mild hearing loss can double the risk of dementia and severe hearing loss increases the risk five times.

If your hearing isn't as good as it used to be, book a hearing test now.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants can:

- ♦ **reduce the risk of dementia**
- ♦ **slow down memory loss**
- ♦ **reduce decline in thinking skills**

And the earlier you intervene, the better!!



Are you looking for a trader you can trust?



Over 55? Visit the Age UK London Boroughs Business Directory

Call us free on **0800 334 5056**

or visit us online at www.aubdlondon.co.uk

A large selection of businesses and tradespeople that have been checked by AUBD staff



'Me.....and my friends'

A new column from writer Lee Janogly – an 83 year old semi-retired fitness instructor and author - who meets up each week with a group of good friends for a good chat and a giggle. Each issue she'll be sharing some of their conversational highlights. Their mission: to put the world to rights and to laugh at the travails of old age.

They say you know you're old when your adult children talk to each other in front of you and spell certain words. But when do you actually realise that you are, shall we say, way beyond the first flush of menopause and probably in the final quarter of your life?

For me, was it the number 80 on the birthday cake or when that nice young man offered me a seat on the bus? I decided to ask some of my similar-aged friends when they discovered they were old. My friend Deely said she definitely felt old when she fell over in the tube. 'I tripped over one of those wheely cases', she said. 'People rushed to pick me up and settle me in a seat. I felt so embarrassed.'

This is unsurprising as Deely falls over regularly, be it at a wedding, on a cruise ship, in Zara and once, conveniently, at the local hospital. Miraculously, she never seems to hurt herself, probably due to a generous supply of – um - adipose tissue to cushion the fall.

My oldest friend, Nancy, was in a café with her sister and gestured towards a couple of much older-looking women sitting at a table nearby. 'That's us in ten years' time,' she opined, and was horrified when her sister pointed out that it was a mirror.

Laila moved to my neighbourhood from Iran in 1976. She definitely felt old when her grandson asked why she was limping and realised she was wearing odd shoes, each with a different heel height! 'But at least they were the same colour,' she said, 'almost'.

Sheila-Round-the-Bend (RTB) gets annoyed with her doctor when he diagnoses every ailment as being 'normal for her age'. She is known as Sheila-Round-the-Bend not because she's loopy (although ... ?) but because her house is round the corner from mine. This is to distinguish her from another local friend known as Sheila-Down-the-Road (DTR) for obvious reasons. Sheila DTR agreed by saying, 'I guess dying will be normal for your age at some point.' Quite.

This reminded Pauline, 76, of her doctor's appointment accompanied by her daughter as they were going shopping afterwards. The doctor put on his kind, sympathetic face and enquired of her daughter, 'So how has she been lately?' Barbara raised her hand and said, 'Helloo doctor, I'm not deaf or senile and can speak for myself.' He had the grace to look slightly abashed.

Listening to them chat, I thought to myself that all these women and other older people of my acquaintance, mostly in their 70s and 80s, are far from the slow, dim-witted geriatrics they are often portrayed to be. Their days are filled with looking after grandchildren, going to the gym, doing charity work or taking courses in everything from art appreciation to psychology.

Many of us are much-loved grandparents who are enjoying watching the present generation growing up while confessing how glad we are that we are not raising children in this climate of mobile phones, 'wokeness' and the internet. All we can hope for, as they grow and become more discerning, is that our young charges will learn that life is a continuum from young to old and, regardless of age, all we want is for everyone to adhere to the Aretha Franklin song and be treated with 'Respect – just a little bit'. What do you think, Reader?



Lee Janogly is the author of, 'Getting Old, Deal with It', £7.99 (Mensch Publishing)



THE POWER OF WRITING THINGS DOWN



Neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday recently gave a talk on how to become better at remembering events and conversations. One of the best ways to remember anything is to be active at remembering, she says – so as well as talking about what happens to us and thinking about it, we should be writing about it. ‘This way we are reactivating pathways in the brain, strengthening them and making it easier for us to access that information again.’ Why not start a diary or journal? Write regularly,

ideally before bed as your memories are consolidated when you sleep. Don’t feel you have to do it every day and try to look back at previous entries every time you go in. You don’t have to spill your heart out – you can keep it short and factual.

You might find other ways to record your thoughts such as photos, ticket stubs or drawings.

Having trouble getting started? Catherine says it might be useful to ask a series of questions. Can you picture where you went? Mentally walk through where you went. Imagine yourself walking through that space. Who did you see, who did you speak to? Do you remember any of the conversations. What was



the weather like today – was it hot or cold? What were you wearing? Did you have anything to eat or drink. Was there anything that stuck in your mind?

Benefits of writing a diary

- Reduces stress – helps you work through the day’s anxieties
- Improves memory and recall
- Boosts self awareness – helping you to make better decisions
- Enhance problem solving skills



TRUE OR FALSE? Memory - Professor Catherine Loveday dispels some popular memory myths

Everyone forgets a lot quickly - True. For all ages! Our brains would be too full if we remembered everything and we wouldn’t be able to think straight. Our brain needs to work out what is important. More likely to remember emotional or important things.

The brain acts like a video recorder - False. It’s more like a set of mental images, which for most people will be visual but will also include smells, sounds, and feelings. Every time we remember things we are reconstructing from images. Every time we reflect on an event we are changing the memory of it and putting together a new account of what happened. You feel like it’s a video because the brain puts the sequence of events together again. This explains why memory is prone to making errors.

Most memories are unconscious - True. If we had to remember everything we’d never get anything done. For instance, you can brush your teeth while doing something else and we don’t need to say to ourselves – squeeze toothpaste onto brush, hold the brush up to our mouth and so on. Most memories are instinctive and most habits are unconscious such as driving home and not really remembering the journey because you’ve been thinking about other things.

It’s ok to look things up on the internet - True. It’s absolutely fine. When people look up things on internet but they are more likely to think they already know it. However, if you want to exercise your memory spend a bit of time thinking about it and then look it up.

It is possible to remember being a baby - Unlikely. The weight of evidence is that we can’t remember anything before the age of 2. But our memory can play tricks on us and make us think we can. Our most powerful and long-standing memories come from late childhood and early teenagehood.

Naps help us to remember better - True. Sleep and napping help solidify memory. Brain imaging shows this. If you learn a piece on piano and go to sleep you will learn it better, for instance.

Creating memories causes physical changes to the brain structure - True. Remembering our stories and experiences and learning new things help the brain to make new connections, grow new cells and generate stronger connections between cells.

Older people have poorer memory - Mostly false. Memory lapses we have when we age, we are more likely to put down to age. When younger, we put it down to being tired, for instance. Unconscious aspects of memory are untouched by age.



HOW CAN I USE MINDFULNESS TO IMPROVE MY ANXIETY?

Mindfulness, which involves being fully present and aware of your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings, can be an effective way to reduce stress and anxiety, according to Wellbeing Manager Fiona Cronin who organises Age UK Barnet's mindfulness courses. Here she shares a few techniques she's has picked up from our courses.



Deep breathing: Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Focus on your breath and try to clear your mind of any distractions.

Body scan meditation: Close your eyes and scan your body from head to toe, noticing any areas of tension or discomfort. Breathe deeply and relax any tense muscles.

Mindful walking: Go for a walk and pay attention to your surroundings. Notice the sights, sounds, and smells around you.

Visualization: Close your eyes and imagine a peaceful place, such as a beach or forest. Visualize yourself in that place and focus on the sensations you feel.



Gratitude meditation: Focus on the things in your life that you are grateful for. Take a few moments to reflect on these things and appreciate them.

Mindful eating: Eat slowly and pay attention to the flavours, textures, and smells of your food. Focus on the experience of eating and enjoy each bite.

Progressive muscle relaxation: Tense and relax different muscle groups in your body, starting from your toes and working your way up to your head. This can help release tension and reduce stress.

relax

inhale
exhale



VOLUNTEER FOR US!!



We are looking for new volunteers to support our befriending services.. could you spend an hour or so a week chatting to someone who is feeling isolated or lonely? Or maybe you could do a light weekly shop for someone who cannot get out? Or you could become a dementia befriender, who spend time playing games and activities with someone living with mild to moderate dementia? Or think about being a walking buddy, helping someone living with dementia go out and about once a week for a walk.

We would love to hear from you if any of these roles appeal to you or anyone you know. 'We've found that volunteers find the experience as valuable as the person they support,' says volunteer manager Lisa. 'And some wonderful friendships have been made over the years.' Please phone Lisa on 020 8432 1422 or email her on lisa.robbs@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Volunteering keeps the brain active according to scientists, and meaningful, productive activities can help you feel happier with have a positive outlook on life. According to the National Institute on Aging, volunteering may also lower your risk of dementia and other health issues.

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY



Coronation Carnival - Saturday 20 May - 11am-3pm. Join us at the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley for a musical celebration of the Coronation of the King - there'll be live music all day including jazz, classical and popular show tunes plus food, drinks, cakes, cream tea, tombola, raffle, a plant stall and more. Just £2 entry.
Any questions, contact Teresa on 07502 989 403

Talk: love, connection and companionship - Wednesday 7 June from 7.00pm – 8.00pm
A talk by Pigeon Post columnist and neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday on • how the brain responds to kindness and love and why being kind can make us happier • how a hug or hearing someone's voice can trigger feel good chemicals • the scientific benefits of group activities and connecting with others. Takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT. Just phone Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk to book your place.



CORONATION CARNIVAL

Saturday 20 May 11am-3pm

Join us for a musical celebration of the Coronation of the King

***Live music all day including jazz, classical and popular show tunes *Food
*Drinks *Cakes *Cream tea, *Tombola *Raffles *Plant stall and more.**

Takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT

Any questions, contact Teresa on 07502 989



**£2
ENTRY**



FOOD



MUSIC



THE POWER OF OLD PHOTOS!



We were delighted that our trustee's son's amazing project - recreating photos that his grandma took 67 years ago - made it on to BBC Breakfast! Our trustee Catherine's son Philip, who is 16, is exactly the same age as her mother Scilla was when she took the original photos.

Catherine, who is a professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University of Westminster, says that her mother has really engaged with this project and it's helped her reconnect with her past. Scilla is living with dementia and Catherine wasn't sure how much she'd remember about taking the photos. 'But she clearly remembers taking some of

these pictures and could describe vividly what her emotions were at the time and why she was doing it,' says Catherine. 'The research shows that location is good for memory - there's a real sense of recollection and my mum has absolutely loved seeing Philip's work.'



SUKI - CAT MOSS!

Spring has sprung and summer sunshine is on the horizon. Barnet Age UK volunteer Charlotte's cat Suki (aka Cat Moss) is enjoying the warm weather in her beautiful garden in High Barnet. Suki is always delighted to pose for a passing photographer. Not a Vogue photographer this time (see March/April issue) but never mind!

CONTACT US



AND FINALLY.....

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.

SUDOKUS ANSWERS

2	5	7	6	9	8	4	1	3
9	6	4	2	1	3	8	5	7
8	1	3	5	4	7	9	6	2
4	9	8	1	3	6	7	2	5
5	2	1	8	7	4	3	9	6
7	3	6	9	5	2	1	8	4
6	4	9	7	8	5	2	3	1
1	7	5	3	2	9	6	4	8
3	8	2	4	6	1	5	7	9

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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7	A	R	R	A	N	G	E				8	T	R	A	M	9	P
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	23	P	R	O	S	P	E	C	T	O	R						

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

S	U	N	F	L	O	W	E	R	L	I	L	A	C
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R	D	B	L	Y	P	L	A	C	E	I	N	R	T
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N	P	I	U	L	D	H	D	R	I	F	U	L	E
I	A	O	D	W	E	T	R	N	W	N	F	R	A
A	N	B	T	Z	F	N	R	V	A	K	E	Z	F
H	S	L	R	R	R	A	Q	Y	F	D	K	S	F



Hidden quotation by Roland. R. Kemler

Unfortunately, the site we use for these puzzles does not say what the quote is! But it could be something like "What a lonely place it would be to have a world without a wildflower!"