
















# PIGEON POST

Keeping you informed & involved

July/August 2023



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We're delighted that Barnet has been accepted into the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities - a place that enables people to live a good later life, somewhere that people can stay living in their homes, take part in activities they value and contribute to their communities for as long as possible..

Age UK Barnet is leading this project, and our aim is to make Barnet, which is already a great place to grow older, even better! To kick things off we'd love your views - so please do fill out our survey. Details on page 11 and you'll have a chance to win a £50 voucher too!

Another packed issue - a great interview with the deputy mayor from our new profile writer Ed and some brilliant ways to save on your food bills from one of our cookery tutors Anne. And we really enjoyed the hairstyles through the years on page 10. Enjoy the issue!

**Helen Newman**  
Chief Executive  
Age UK Barnet

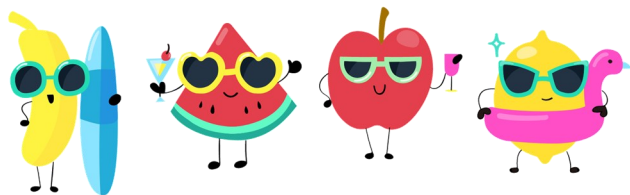


You are not  
a drop in a  
ocean;  
you are the  
entire ocean  
in a drop.

Rumi



## DELIGHTFUL SUMMER FRUITS



Summer is back and shops are bursting with British-grown, budget-friendly summer fruits. This makes it easier to find and eat your five-a-day and reap the anti-inflammatory benefits of the compounds that give summer fruits their distinct colours, says cookery volunteer Kato. In addition, they contain a host of vitamins and minerals that keep us healthy. Berries

and melons lift the summer salad recipes below to new levels.

Try Kato's quick and easy recipes for summer fruit desserts. And when you grow tired of tomatoes (yes, it is a fruit) in salads, try the traditional Spanish cold gazpacho soup.

### Roasted peach and ricotta cheese

Halve and destone four large ripe peaches. Mix together 2 tbsp honey, 2 tbsp lemon juice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground cinnamon and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground cloves. Rub the mixture into the peach halves and roast for 15 minutes at 160°C. Meanwhile, combine  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of ricotta cheese and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of plain yoghurt with 1 tsp icing sugar. Drizzle the remaining syrup over the roasted peaches and serve with ricotta dressing. Serves 4

### Strawberry chia pudding

With a hand blender, whizz 120g strawberries cut in pieces with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup plain yoghurt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla essence, and 1tbsp maple syrup (or honey/sugar). Add 2 tbsp chia seeds and leave to soak for 4 hours or overnight. Eat with granola or oats for breakfast, or serve for desert with a layer of crumbled meringue or digestive biscuit. Serves 2

### Melon, courgette and feta salad

Mix 1 small finely sliced red onion with 1tbsp of red wine vinegar, 1/4tsp sugar and a pinch of salt. Toss two sliced courgettes in 1 tbsp of olive oil and cook for 2 minutes on each side in a griddle or frying pan. Deseed a small honeydew melon, and cut into chunks. Shred 25g of fresh basil leaves. Mix all the ingredients into 250g of either cooked bulgur wheat, freekeh, wholegrain and black rice, or any other favourite whole grain. Top with 200g feta cheese broken into chunks. Serves 4

### Raspberry and chicken salad

For the dressing, blend together 1 cup plain yoghurt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh raspberries, 1 tbsp red wine vinegar, and 2tsp sugar. Chop 6 cups mixed salad leaves (spinach, little gem lettuce, rocket, romaine, etc), 2 cups cooked white chicken breast or legs and mix with 1 cup fresh raspberries, 1/3 cup thinly sliced celery, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped walnuts. Add the dressing to the salad. Serves 4

### Watermelon and feta salad

For the dressing mix 1tbsp olive oil and 1 tsp balsamic vinegar. Chop into chunks  $\frac{1}{2}$  cucumber and a full slice of watermelon. Shred a large handful of mint leaves and 2 cups mixed salad leaves (rocket, little gem). Mix together with 100g cheese broken into chunks, and add the dressing. Serves 2

### Cold gazpacho soup

Roughly chop 6 large ripe tomatoes, 1 cucumber, 1 peeled red onion, 1 red pepper, 1 rib celery, and 2 tbsp parsley leaves. Add to a large blender with 2 crushed or finely chopped cloves of garlic, 2 cups of tomato juice,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup red wine vinegar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil, 1 tbsp lemon juice, 2tsp sugar and 1tsp Worcestershire sauce. Whizz until smooth (or leave some chunks if you prefer). Serves 6.



# SCAM ALERT

## SCAMS UPDATE

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

- ♦ According to research from Citizens Advice almost half of those targeted by scammers were involved in a malicious parcel delivery scam, with fraudsters seeking personal information or bank details.
- ♦ Barnet police officer Nicole Bond warned us that a man has been going to older people's homes to discuss antiques, but stealing valuable items in the process. 'He has randomly knocked on doors claiming he was in the business of grandfather clocks and antiques,' says Nicole. **'Please do not allow strangers into your home, however friendly they appear.'**



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.

## HOW TO REDUCE CONSTIPATION



Being constipated means your bowel movements are tough or happen less often than normal. Almost everyone goes through it at some point – in fact, it's one of the most common digestive problems and unfortunately we are more prone to it as we get older. 'You are likely to be constipated if you have not had a poo at least 3 times during the last week, you're straining or in pain when you have a poo or if the poo is often large and dry, hard or lumpy,' says Caroline.

With a few lifestyle changes, however, it is treatable – as Caroline shows.

- 1) Boost your fibre:** · Swap to a high fibre breakfast cereal such as oats, wholewheat biscuits or bran flakes.
  - Choose high fibre snacks such as a portion of fruit, a handful of nuts, oat biscuits or vegetable sticks with hummus.
  - Swap to wholegrain carbohydrates such as wholewheat pasta, brown rice, wholewheat noodles and wholewheat or seeded bread.
  - Add beans and pulses to your main meals such as minced meat dishes, curries or salads.
  - Aim for at least one third, but try for one half, of your plate to be made up of vegetables and/or salad.
  - Add some wheat bran, oats or linseed to your diet

**2) Increase your fluid:** Your hydration status also impacts your bowels. When you are dehydrated, the body draws out water from your stools in your large intestine to use elsewhere in the body - this can cause your stools to become dry, hard and lumpy.

The typical adult needs 1.5-2 litres of fluid a day, or six to eight mugs. A quick, easy way of checking your hydration status is by looking at your urine - it should be clear or a light straw colour.

**3) Move more:** If you can, aim for 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity a week for instance, a brisk walk, dancing, water aerobics or pushing a lawnmower. If this is not achievable, a short walk is likely to provide some benefit.

**4) Improve your toilet routine:** · Keep to a regular time and place and give yourself plenty of time to use the toilet.

· Try sitting on the toilet so that your knees are above your hips, leaning forward with your forearms on your thighs to bulge out your abdomen, straightening your spine, which will 'straighten out' your bowel making it easier for you to open your bowels.

It may take a few days or weeks before your symptoms improve. If none of these suggestions work for you, you may need your GP to prescribe laxatives. They will recommend the most suitable type for you.

# 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



## PIGEON POST by our reader Maureen Walsh



Pigeon Post, Pigeon Post  
which of your contents do I enjoy the most  
please do not ask one to choose  
I vote for them all so no one can lose.  
And pray do not persuasively persist  
for one to reveal which item tops my list  
or to enquire which article is the best  
because all of them have always passed my test.  
And when the Pigeon Post lands on my mat  
It's like a friend that's popped in for a chat  
which I am very please to see  
so I put the kettle on to make a cup of tea.



## HOW TO CUT YOUR FOOD BILLS



**Food bills have risen 19 per cent in the last year – our cookery tutor and healthy lifestyle coach Anne larchy offers advice on cutting down your food costs without compromising your health.**

**Create a budget:** Start by setting a monthly budget for your food expenses. This will give you a clear idea of how much you can afford to spend on food and dining out.  
**Plan your meals** in advance, preferably for a week. If you shop in a supermarket such as Aldi where you know the special fruit & veg on special offer that week, build your meal plan around those ingredients. Planning your meals also allows you to make a

shopping list based on the ingredients you need, reducing the chances of impulse purchases. Meal planning also allows you to reuse ingredients that otherwise might go to waste.

**Make a shopping list:** Always shop with a list and stick to it. This helps you avoid buying unnecessary items and ensures that you only purchase what you need.

**Shop for special offers:** Consider buying non-perishable items that are on special offer, especially if they have a long shelf life. This can often save you money in the long run. However, be mindful of perishable items that may go to waste if you buy too much. The following weeks, plan your meals around the items you bought.

**Compare prices:** Check prices at different grocery stores in your area to find the best deals. Consider shopping at discount stores or using coupons to save even more.

**Cook at home:** Eating out or ordering takeout can be expensive. Cooking meals at home is usually more cost-effective. Learn to cook your favourite dishes and experiment with new recipes to make it enjoyable.

**Meal prepping:** Dedicate some time each week to meal prepping. Cook larger quantities of food and divide them into portions for the week. This can save you time and money by avoiding the need for last-minute takeout or dining out. If you don't enjoy eating the same meal through the week, get some containers and freeze your portions. That way you'll have some "home cooked ready meals" at hand for days you don't feel like cooking.

**Buy generic or store brands:** Consider purchasing generic or store-brand products instead of name-brand items. They are often cheaper and can be of comparable quality.

**Avoid convenience foods:** Pre-packaged convenience foods like frozen meals or individually wrapped snacks tend to be more expensive. Opt for fresh ingredients and prepare your meals from scratch whenever possible.

**Reduce food waste:** Be mindful of food waste by properly storing and using leftovers. Get creative with using leftovers in new recipes or freezing them for future meals.

**Frozen vegetables and fruit are handy:** Frozen fruit and vegetables contain nearly as many nutrients as fresh. They are picked from fresh and frozen straight away. They are often cheaper than fresh, and are handy to have in the freezer to up your 5-a-day in an easy way. As they are frozen, there is no waste at all. Only defrost and cook what you need. They are much better than tinned fruit and vegetables as those contain preservatives.





## YOUR LIVES, YOUR STORIES!



**A big welcome to our new profile writer, former journalist Ed Newman. He'll have a lovely chat with a Barnet resident and share their stories with the rest of us. This month Ed speaks to Deputy Mayor of Barnet Tony Vourou.**

Tony Vourou remembers the exact date when he moved to Friern Barnet. It was an association with the area that, fifty years on, sees him serving at the heart of the community as Deputy Mayor of Barnet. At the time, Tony had been living and going to school in Wood Green. Then the family made a decision to move further north, a familiar route to many of Greek Cypriot heritage who started to move to London to find work after the Second World War. "It was January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1973 and I was in the last six months of my time at secondary school," Tony told Pigeon Post. "Friern Barnet seemed very different from where we'd been in Haringey. It was more rural and very quiet. "One of my first memories is of the Town Hall building in Friern Barnet. There was always a man outside selling the Evening Standard."



After leaving school, Tony studied for a Business Study degree with a view to becoming an accountant. Things didn't quite work out that way and he found himself joining the family firm instead. "The year I tried to get into accountancy, there weren't many jobs around," Tony explains. "My mother's side of the family ran a dress manufacturing business and they suggested I joined them for the summer to help them run the office. Twenty-seven years later, I was still there after working in sales and accounts in various parts of London before ending up in New Southgate."

Tony switched careers just over twenty years ago when he followed another side of his family into the catering and event organising business. "I'd never done anything like that in my life, except for working in restaurants as a student," says Tony. "But we had two children and I had to learn a living. "Thankfully, I soon found my skills were transferable. It was a steep learning curve but we got there."

Tony developed an excellent reputation for his catering of weddings, funerals and parties. At the same time, he was becoming increasingly involved in the local community as a governor at his children's school, helping out first on London Greek Radio, the Greek Cypriot Paper and his Greek Orthodox Church in Friern Barnet before finally being encouraged to put himself forward to stand for Barnet council. In his current role, Tony is very supportive of the work of Age UK Barnet and the initiative to make Barnet an Age Friendly borough. "Age UK Barnet is such a brilliant resource," says Tony. "The work they do is invaluable and, with an ageing population in the borough, there will be huge demand for their services. "It must be so lonely for those who are living alone or as a couple where one of them is not physically able to do things. The more you can get involved with people, the more you can keep your brain stimulated – that's the only way to go." Tony himself has a very positive attitude to the ageing process. He hopes to continue being involved in the life of the community for as long as he can. "I can't see myself ever stopping," he continues. "You've got to include yourself in society. "You've got to plan your life and decide what you want as you get older. There's no point speeding down the high street because you're still going to be stopped by the red light. "The old saying goes that you wish you'd had the brain you have now when you were 30 because you would do things differently. You might not be the same physically later in life but you have experience and that counts for a lot."

As a local councillor, Tony is very aware that older people from different communities across the borough are experiencing very similar issues. In the past, children would be on hand to look after their parents as they got older and needed more support but, inevitably, times have changed. "Up until my generation, there was the perception that children would look after their parents as they got older," says Tony. "When my own mother fell ill in the 90s, my wife Caroline and I didn't want her to go into a home but kept her close and looked after her as much as we could. "These days it's become more difficult with all the constraints of work and couples both working. In Barnet, houses are very expensive and so if younger people are going to buy somewhere it's likely to be at a distance. "We've got a neighbour whose daughter lives out of town. So we pop in most days to see if there's anything we can do to help."

Tony will be a busy man over the next few months as he attends events around the borough as deputy mayor. He'll be in his element, meeting new people and finding out what they do for their communities.

# RECIPE TIME

## HEALTHY CHIPS!

### Ingredients

4 Medium sized Maris Piper potatoes peeled and sliced  
Fry Light cooking spray or any low calorie cooking spray  
Salt & Black Pepper



### Method

Preheat your oven 220C / 425F / Gas 7

1. Line a large baking tray with baking paper and spray the paper liberally with frylight
2. Peel your potatoes, and slice into approx 1.5cm chips
3. Half fill a large pan with water, salt well and bring too the boil
4. Pop your chips in and parboil for 5 minutes only - no longer
5. Remove and drain immediately using a sieve or colander
6. Place your chips in a single layer (that bit is important) on your paper lined baking sheet
7. Spray your chips liberally with Fry Light . Use salt and pepper at this point if you fancy
8. Bake in your hot oven for 10 minutes
9. Remove from the oven and turn your chips over - this is important to ensure even browning.
10. Spray again and return to the oven for a further 10 minutes
11. Ensure your chips are golden and remove from the oven and serve immediately.

Once cooked, why not try adding one of the following for more flavour:- garlic salt, cayenne pepper, spices or Italian herbs.



## APPLE BETTY

### Ingredients

2 tsp vanilla extract  
160g no-added-sugar, fat free vanilla yogurt  
Pinch of cinnamon to dust  
Fat free natural fromage fraise to serve

2 large eating apples,  
peeled, cored and sliced  
50g sultanas or raisins  
8 eggs  
4 level tbsp sweetener  
granules

### Method

1. Preheat your oven to 190°C/fan 170°C/gas 5. Arrange the apple slices in a 20cm flan dish and sprinkle over most of the sultanas.
2. Beat the eggs with the sweetener and vanilla extract, then add the yogurt and beat again. Pour over the apples and sultanas and allow to sink over the fruit. Scatter over the remaining sultanas, dust with cinnamon and bake for 30 minutes, or until set.
3. Serve warm with the fromage fraise.





# EXERCISE TIME

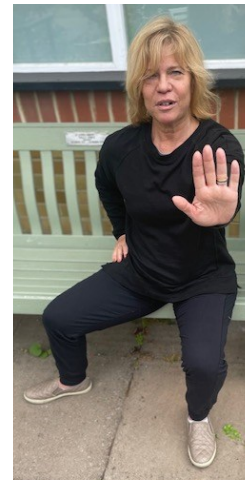
## MOVES TO BOOST YOUR COORDINATION

Coordination is an important part of total fitness and these exercises from Wendy can improve stability, reduce the risk of falls and boost your thinking skills.



**Thumb to finger moves** Can be done standing or seated. On your right hand, start by touching thumb to first finger. Continue to move along touching thumb to fingertips one at a time. When you get to pinky, go backwards. So thumb touching index is 1, middle finger 2 etc(1,2,3,4-4,3,2,1)

AT THE SAME TIME as right hand, with your left hand, start with thumb touching pinky (thumb to "4") and go the opposite way- 4,3,2,1-1,2,3,4) see how many times you can do it.



**Heel dig and arm push.** Can be done standing or seated. Heel dig with your right foot, then left. At the same time, push out with opposite arm. Right leg /Left arm, then left leg/right arm.

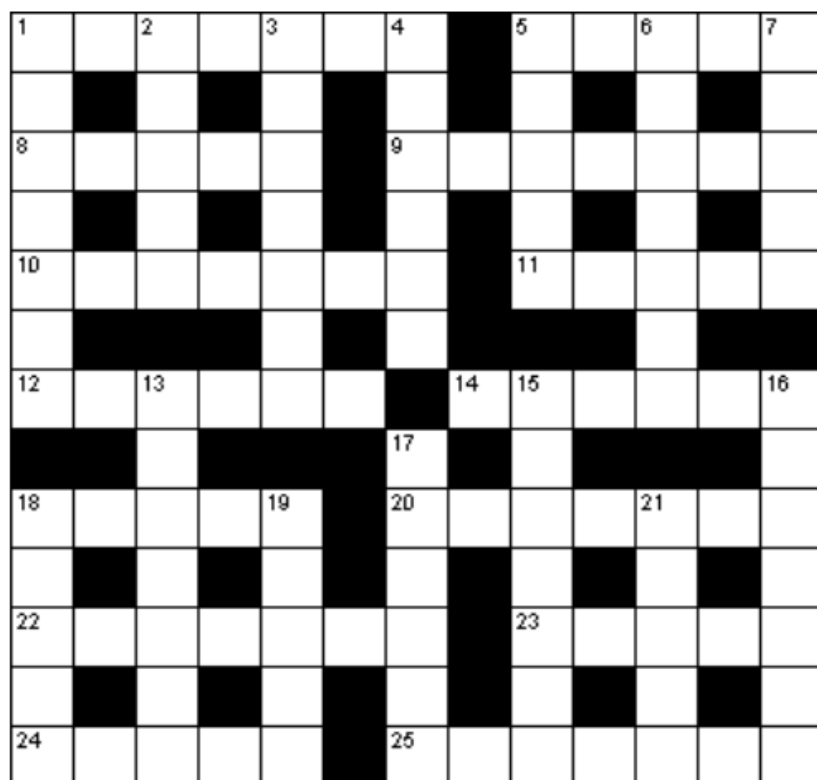


### Opposite arm to opposite leg

3A. Seated, straighten right arm out in front and at the same time open Left leg to the side. Do it 5 times in a row. Then left arm out in front, right leg out to side.

3B. Seated, lift your right arm out to side and left leg in front 5 times then change sides. Left arm in front, Right leg to side.

# PUZZLE TIME....



## Across

1. Coloured pencils (7)
5. Heartless (5)
8. Stand-offish (5)
9. Apparition (7)
10. Sports coach (7)
11. Tentacled sea creature (5)
12. Cad (6)
14. Not wearing shoes (6)
18. Asian country (5)
20. Funny (7)
22. Rude (7)
23. Performing (5)
24. Correspond (5)
25. Accomplish a goal (7)

## Down

1. Prattle (7)
2. Fragrance (5)
3. Crime (7)
4. Splendid (6)
5. Anarchy (5)
6. Falsehood (7)
7. Disabled (5)
13. Representative (7)
15. Wandering (7)
16. Inundated (7)
17. Weighing machine (6)
18. Pleasure trip (5)
19. Manual worker (5)
21. Rebuke (5)

## UK PLACES AND FOOD

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

**All answers on p16**

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

EDINBURGH

LONDON

PARLIAMENT

CAMBRIDGE

FISH AND CHIPS

BRISTOL

SUNDAY ROAST

TOWER OF LONDON

LAKE DISTRICT

EUROPE

BEEF WELLINGTON

BEN NEVIS

STONEHENGE

BIG BEN

GLASGOW

WALES

MANCHESTER

YORK

YORKSHIRE PUDDING

BIRMINGHAM

OXFORD

ETON MESS

LIVERPOOL

CORNWALL



# EASY CRAFTS - Marble Paper

Baking tray  
Cardstock  
Paintbrush

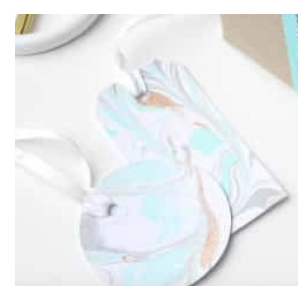
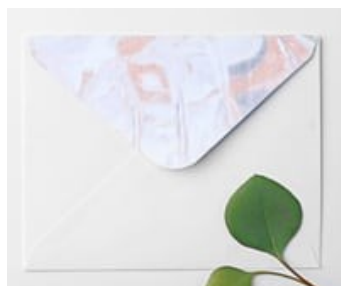
## What you will need

Greaseproof paper  
Shaving cream (must be foam not gel)  
Watercolors and acrylic paint  
Dropper/Pipet



## Instructions

- 1: Fill the baking tray with shaving cream.  
Fill a portion of the baking sheet with shaving cream foam. The area you fill should be a little larger than the size of the paper you are marbling. Make sure you use a shaving cream that foams; don't use a gel or lotion.
- 2: Smooth out the surface of the shaving cream.  
Use the scraper to smooth out the shaving cream so that it has an even surface.
- 3: Add in two to three colors with a dropper.  
Choose three or four colors that you want to marble your paper with. If you want a base color, begin by making the shaving cream that color. Add in a few drops of the other colors you'd like to use. You can always use more colors, but be cautious about using more than four, since that might turn the shaving cream brown.
- 4: Swirl the colors in a figure eight pattern.  
Take the end of the paint brush or a toothpick and run it through the colors in the shaving cream to create a swirled pattern. To create this pattern, draw figure eights in the cream. Be careful not to mix it too much or else it will lose its marbled appearance.
- 5: Lightly press the cardstock into the shaving cream.  
Gently press your paper into the tray of colored shaving cream so that its whole surface comes in contact with the paint. Once it's covered, remove the paper from the tray. Don't let it sit for more than a minute, or else your paper will get too wet and the pattern won't appear.
- 6: Remove and scrape off the extra shaving cream.  
Immediately after removing the paper, use a paint scraper, piece of cardboard, ruler or any straight edge to wipe off the remaining shaving cream.
- 7: Let the paper dry and enjoy!  
Set your marbled paper aside to dry for about an hour. Placing it on a plastic chopping board will keep it from sticking to any surfaces or getting damaged.

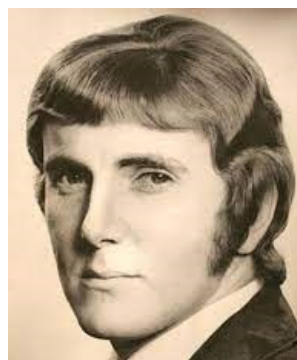


## HAIRSTYLES THROUGH THE YEARS

**Perfectly styled 1940s glamour**



**Throwback styles of the 1960s**



**Wild styles of the 1980s**



**And some never to be repeated styles!**





# 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](mailto:support@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

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



**How is the moon  
like dentures?**

They both come  
out at night!



## HELP US TO MAKE BARNET “AGE FRIENDLY”

### And be in with the chance to win £50!

Over the next 20 years, Barnet's population of over 65s is set to rise by 55%. With this in mind, we want to make sure that Barnet is a borough where everyone can make the most out of later life.

To help us achieve this goal, we have joined the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities. An Age-Friendly Community is a place that enables people to live a good later life - somewhere that people can stay living in their homes, take part in activities they value and contribute to their communities for as long as possible.

To start our Age-Friendly Journey, we are asking people to fill out a survey to let us know where there is room for improvement.

The survey should take around 10 minutes of your time and to thank you for taking part, Barnet residents who complete the survey will have the option of entering a prize draw for a chance to win a £50 gift card.

**To get a paper copy, contact Pippa (Age-friendly coordinator) on 07379 331807, or visit your local library. You need to complete our survey by 4 August 2023.**





## ‘Me.....and my friends’

**The second 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. This time she sheds the light on her friend Jessica.**

I love Jess. We've been friends for over 50 years and she is kind and lovely – most of the time. Except in restaurants. Somehow there is always something wrong, either the décor (bit dingy), table (too near the loo) or food (tasteless). Our little group of friends have learned it's safer to let Jess choose the restaurant to minimise these complaints. We still cringe about the time the waiter came up to our table and said, 'Is anything all right, ladies?'

I felt sorry for Jess as she was taking a long time to recover from a back operation and I invited her to my local café for lunch, taking a mutual friend, Gloria as reinforcement. We arrived early and chose a lovely table by the window.

Jess arrived carrying a large handbag, walking stick and padded back rest. She declared our window table was too draughty, so we traversed the room trying to avoid hitting the other diners with the aforementioned accoutrements, and not always succeeding.



Once seated - and something suitable found to put under the table leg to stop it wobbling – Jess examined the menu and declared there was 'nothing she fancied'. Her eventual choice came with various amendments: could she have creamed spinach instead of the chips, no onions on the salad – or beetroot – and dressing on the side. She'd like sparkling water with no ice. Or lemon. Oh, and please turn that music down, we can't hear ourselves speak'. The Lithuanian waiter looked confused.

That settled, we started chatting and Jess and Gloria engaged in what I call 'competitive ailments'; each vying with the other as to who knows someone with the worst medical condition and trying outdo each other with tales of pain and suffering. We then admired 400 pictures of Gloria's grandchildren on her phone – flick, flick, flick.

Jess ordered fresh mint tea to finish her meal, but unfortunately the waiter banged into her walking stick and slopped a few drops on to the saucer. One look at Jess's face and he executed a smart 180 degree turn back to the kitchen for a replacement.

Normally when you want to pay a restaurant bill, all the staff seem to have vanished. In this case the waiter was hovering, machine in hand, willing us to go.

Why do we put up with this behaviour? Well, as I mentioned we've been friends for so long it would seem strange not to have her in my life. We have shared the joyous births of children and grandchildren and the pain and grief of each losing our husbands. We parted with hugs and promises to do this again very soon. Maybe I'll adopt the late Peter Cook's excuse when he didn't want to go anywhere: 'I'm planning to watch television that night'.

Maybe you have a friend like that, Reader? Let me know.

Lee Janogly is the author of 'Getting Old, Deal with it' (Mensch Publishing).





According to large longitudinal studies, which follow people over a period of 60-70 years, one of the biggest predictors of wellbeing is the size of their social circle and the amount of time they spend in social situations. 'We know being social is good for our brains,' says neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday, 'And the more diverse people's friendship group, the more powerful the positive effect.'

Science has shown that stronger social connections lead to longer life expectancies and better immune systems and heart health. It also has been shown to lower levels of anxiety and depression and make us more trusting and cooperative. Some studies have suggested it helps maintain thinking skills as we get older and may even reduce the risk of dementia.

And it's not about how much time you spend with other people either, it's about how connected you are with other people. 'You can be in a room full of people and still feel lonely,' says Catherine. 'And you can spend a lot of time on your own and not feel lonely.'

It seems that interactions with others provide a buffer against more harmful impacts such as stress. 'Social isolation, maybe through bereavement, can cause high levels of stress,' says Catherine. 'But being with people who make us feel safe raises levels of oxytocin, which reduces stress hormones.'

### So how can we harness the benefits of social connection?

Catherine offers her science backed strategies to stay connected

- Join a group. There's evidence that being in collective activities together is good for us, whether it's cooking, singing or dancing together, because it enhances our sense of social identity. And this sense of belonging to a social group encourages individuals to look out for one another. Singing in a choir and rhythmic music have also been shown to lead to better social, psychological and physiological wellbeing, strengthening the immune system and lowering stress.
- Talk to a stranger. Say hello to someone on your way to the shops or chat to the person next to you in the waiting room – it humanises people, we learn about others and feel more connected. It's also the best way to reduce prejudice between groups. And it makes us feel good and spreads kindness.
- Look out for kindness. Being kind to people activates the reward pathways in the brain and it's contagious – if we are kind to someone, they tend to pass it on. If you're kind to someone else, it reduces your anxiety.
- Volunteer. Help others, either informally or formally through organisations and volunteering opportunities. If possible, cultivate connections with people of different ages, for example by staying in touch with grandchildren, or volunteering at a school or community centre. Think about skills you have that you could share, teaching them to other people.
- Spend quality time with the people you love. We can all forget to do this from time to time.
- Ask for help – it can make that person feel better.
- Practice empathy. Read books about other people's lives.



### Friendship facts

- ♦ The strongest predictor of brain size in animal species is predicted by the size of their social groups.
- ♦ At any one time, we tend to have only 4 to 5 really close friends. As soon as someone else comes into that circle, then someone else will drop away. These are the people we have most contact with and who we would reach out to. Then we have the next layer out – 15 people, then 50, then 150 – the largest number of social connections that people can keep active. For instance, the number of people you can send a Christmas card list. Or the number of people you might have interactions with on Facebook.



## WELLBEING



### CARERS SUPPORT GROUP

A reminder of our support group for people caring for someone living with dementia. A chance to meet others, share tips, and gain information about the condition and the services available in the area, there'll also be a programme of interesting speakers.

The next meet up takes place on **Wednesday 29 August 2023** (1.30-3pm) at the Ann Owens Centre Oak Lane N2 8LT when an Admiral nurse will be there to answer any dementia-related questions.



### LEAVING A LEGACY

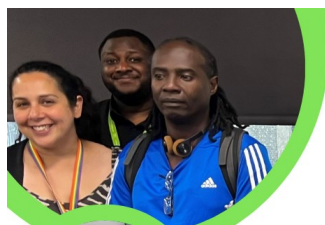


If you kindly decide to leave a gift in your Will to Age UK Barnet, maybe because we have helped you or a member of your family, please ensure you remember "Barnet" and if possible our Charity number (1080458) - That is Age UK Barnet rather than just Age UK.

This ensures that your gift will support our work with local older people rather than the national charity. If you already have a will and you want to include a gift to Age UK Barnet, there may not be any need to rewrite it.

You can ask a qualified professional such as a solicitor to add an amendment (called a codicil).

To get a copy of our codicil form please phone us on 020 8203 5040.



## BECOME AN INVOLVEMENT BOARD MEMBER



**Barnet Council are recruiting for 12 residents of Barnet to volunteer to be the voices of people who draw on care and support.**

Email: [engage.adults@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:engage.adults@barnet.gov.uk)

- Have your say on things that matter to you in social care



**020 8359 5582**

**REGISTER NOW**

**Deadline for applications MONDAY 28th July 2023**

# EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY



## **Jazz and swing singer David Eisen - 20 July at 2pm.**

Join us for our next musical afternoon at Barnet Grange (previously known as Signature), 59 Wood Street, Barnet EN5 4BS. £5 on the door and refreshments provided. Contact Helen Nicolaou on [helen.nicolaou@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:helen.nicolaou@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

## **Musical afternoons**

**Join us at Barnet Grange (previously known as Signature), 59 Wood Street, Barnet EN5 4BS.** The following event will take place from 2.00-3.00pm

**August 17 - Adam Parish** on keyboard playing classical and popular favourites £5 on the door. Parking available. Please contact Helen Nicolaou on 07384 466840 or email [helen.nicolaou@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:helen.nicolaou@ageukbarnet.org.uk).

## **Save the date - Silver Sunday event!**

Sunday 1 October 2023 at 11am-3pm A fun-filled day of activities for the over 50s at Middlesex University, The Boroughs, NW4. Exercise tasters, music and dance, talks and workshops, advice on budgeting, health checks. A free light lunch! More details in the next issue!

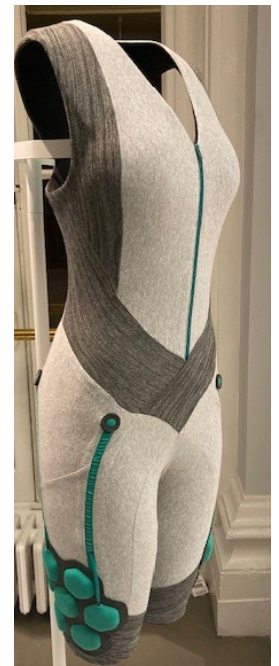


## **NEW TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL CHANGE OUR LIVES**

**Powered clothing.** Engineers have invented a type of garment with lightweight 'electric muscles' integrated into the fabric to enhance the capabilities of the human body. Aimed at older wearers, it provides power to the hips and lower back to help with movement like getting up from the chair and lifting objects. Sensors and motors in the fabric react the body's natural movement and sense when a task requires assistance

**A new smart watch** which can detect signs of a fall up to 32 days before they occur is being tested in Northern Ireland. The watch monitors activity levels, sleep, heart rate and oxygen levels and detects changes which can indicate an increased risk of falling. Each person has a base level and if there are any changes in that, the watch will pick that up, and if there is cause for concern, that data is passed through to a call centre.

In future, we will all be using **artificial intelligence devices** to remind us when to take pills, that we've run out of milk or that our favourite TV show is starting soon.



***Our volunteer Patrick's cat Archie - enthralled by 'How to kill a mockingbird'! Think he wants a few tips!***



# 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.

## SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

1	C	R	A	Y	O	N	S		5	C	R	U	E	L
	H		R		F		U			H		N		A
8	A	L	O	O	F		P	H	A	N	T	O	M	
	T		M		E		E		O		R		E	
10	T	R	A	I	N	E	R			11	S	Q	U	I
	E						C		B			T		
12	R	O	T	T	E	R			14	U	N	S	H	O
									15	S	O			
18	J	A	P	A	N				20	C	O	M	I	C
	A		I		A				A		A		H	U
22	U	N	C	I	V	I	L			23	D	O	I	N
	N		A		V				E		I		D	E
24	T	A	L	L	Y				25	S	U	C	C	E



"THE DOCTOR TOLD ME I NEEDED TO BURN SOME FAT, SO I'M GRILLING A STEAK!"



## WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

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