

PIGEON POST

Keeping you informed & involved

May/June 2025



P2 Nutrition Bites

P3 Scam update

P4 Remembering VE Day

P5 Quiz time

P6 Recipe time

P7 Exercise time

P8 Over to you

P9 Dela's chocolate shop

P10 Crafts

P11 How can we help?

P12 Me - and my friends

P13 Wellbeing - Helping my mum live well with dementia

P14 Gardening column

P15 Health

P16 Quiz answers

Welcome



On 8th May we'll be celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE day – a day of immense relief and celebration to honour the courage, resilience and sacrifice of those who lived through the war – from the soldiers who fought, to the civilians who kept life going on the home front.

We have been speaking to our clients who were children or young adults at the time including our Bridge club regular Ruth Bourne who was a Bletchley Park codebreaker. On page 4 she shares a few memories from the day.

And if there are any knitters out there, please join in the innocent Big Knit and help support Age UK Barnet by knitting tiny hats for innocent smoothie bottles. We're still 3,000 hats away from our Big Knit goal and every hat knitted raises 30p to help us provide much-needed services and support. You'll find more details and patterns on page 10.

Enjoy the issue and see you next time!

Helen Newman
Chief Executive
Age UK Barnet



**"The month of
May is the gateway
to summer."**



Experts say we should eat a handful of seeds and nuts a day to stay healthy and lower the risk of developing heart disease, dementia, cancer, and type two diabetes. “These tiny powerhouses are not only packed with fibre, healthy fats, and plant chemicals that support the immune system, reduce inflammation, and keep blood vessels healthy, but also contain a good amount of protein,” says dietitian and cookery volunteer Kato. “For those with smaller appetites, eating a handful of nuts and seeds a day is a delicious and easy way to get the nutrients you need.”

Getting your quota

There are many ways to add nuts and seeds to meals and snacks. Try out a handful of flaked toasted almonds, chopped mixed nuts, or ground flaxseeds over porridge or with yoghurt and fruit; a level tablespoon of almond or peanut butter in a smoothie or on a piece of apple; or a handful of toasted seeds in salads and soups. Here are some recipe ideas to get you started.

Spicy seed mix

Preheat oven to 160°C. In a bowl, mix together 250g mixed seeds (such as sunflower, pumpkin, flax, sesame), 1 tsp rapeseed oil, 1 tsp Ras El Hanout spice, 1/4tsp salt, 1tsp reduced salt soy sauce, 1tsp maple syrup or honey, ¼ tsp cayenne pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and bake for 8 minutes. Stir, and bake for another 8-10 minutes until dry and golden. Allow to cool. The mix will keep in a sealed container for 3 weeks. Use as a topper in salads, soups, stir fries, and stews.



Seed and nut bread (900g loaf)

Oil or line a 900g loaf tin with baking parchment. In a mixing bowl, combine 135g sunflower seeds, 90g milled flaxseeds, 65g chopped almonds, 145g oats, 2 tbsp chia seeds, 3 tbsp psyllium husk powder (sold on Amazon or in Boots), pinch of salt. Whisk together 1tbsp maple syrup/honey, and 3tbsp coconut/rapeseed oil. Add to dry ingredients and mix until dough becomes thick (add 1-2tsp of water if the dough is too thick). Pour the mixture into loaf tin, smooth the top, and leave to expand for at least 2 hours, preferably overnight. Preheat the oven to 180°C and bake the bread on the middle rack for 20 minutes. Remove from the tin, place upside down on the rack and bake for another 40-50 minutes until it sounds hollow when tapped. Cool bread completely before slicing. Freeze slices to make quick and easy toast.

Tahini (Sesame seed paste) chocolate pudding (serves 4)

Preheat the oven to 180°C. In a large bowl, mash 2 very ripe bananas, then beat in 4tbsp vegetable/rapeseed oil, 4tbsp tahini (sesame seed paste), 50g full fat Greek yoghurt, 1 large egg, 3tbsp castor sugar, 3tbsp brown sugar and 1tsp vanilla extract. In another bowl, mix together 60g flour, 25g cocoa powder, ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda, and ¼ tsp salt. Beat into the wet ingredients, and fold in 60g dark chocolate chips. Scrape mixture into a small 750ml ovenproof dish. Bake for 40 minutes, and leave to stand for 5-20 minutes. Serve with 4tsp tahini beaten together with 150ml double cream, and drizzle with date molasses or honey.



Nut butter smoothie (serves 2)

In a cylindrical bowl, add 200ml milk, a handful of frozen berries, one very ripe banana, 1tsp honey, and 1tbsp of peanut/almond butter. Whizz with a stick blender or in a liquidizer until smooth – add more milk if it the smoothie is too thick. Serve in two glasses.



Scam subscriptions

Unauthorised subscriptions are one of the most common complaints reported to Which? magazine's scam sharer tool. Victims often assume they're giving their card details to legitimate companies, but later find they're paying money to unrecognised recipients every month. Be wary of offers that seem too good to be true, especially those involving free trials or low-cost offers. Look out for hidden fees, difficult cancellation processes, and unclear terms and conditions. Also, be cautious of messages or emails from unfamiliar sources requesting payment details.

WhatsApp scams

Data analysed by Revolut (digital banking service) has found that in the last year, British consumers lost more money to scams through WhatsApp than any other country in Europe. WhatsApp fraud accounted for one in five of all reported scams in the UK and victims lost an average of £2,437 per fraud incident. Two of the biggest scams on WhatsApp were job scams, making up half of cases among Revolut customers, and investment scams, making up four in 10.

- To report the sender on WhatsApp, open up the chat, tap on the sender's contact details and select 'block and report'.
- You can report a WhatsApp message by selecting it in your conversation and tapping 'report'.
- Remember, be wary of unsolicited messages, and look out for inconsistent stories or requests for money.


For more advice on scams prevention, please contact Joyce and the Age UK Barnet scams awareness support team on 020 8432 2217. A member of the team can give you a one-to-one session and review your regular activities. They can give you the tools to spot a scam and support you if you have been a victim of a scam.


WALKING WAYS


TURN YOUR DAILY STROLL INTO A FEEL GOOD WORKOUT


Walking is one of the easiest and most effective ways to stay active, says Age UK Barnet walks coordinator Wendy. 'No special equipment, no gym required, and you can go at your own pace - and with a few simple tweaks, you can turn your regular walk into a mini workout that boosts fitness, mood, and energy levels.'

Try Wendy's small changes on your next walk:

 **Pick up the pace** Walk a little faster for 30 seconds, then return to your usual pace. Repeat a few times to gently raise your heart rate.

 **Change your route** Add in a slight hill or a loop around the park bench. Uneven ground helps improve balance and strength - but watch out for trip hazards!

 **Engage your core** Stand tall, pull in your tummy muscles slightly, and swing your arms.

 **Set a mini goal** Count your steps, walk to a local landmark, or time yourself for 10–20 minutes a day. Small goals keep you motivated.

Most importantly, enjoy it, listen to the birds, or simply take in the view. A daily walk doesn't just move your body—it lifts your mind, too. And if you'd like to walk with others, join one of our six walks around the borough. Contact Wendy on 07741 877 027 to find out your nearest walk.



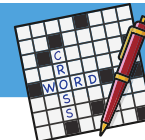


To mark the 80th anniversary of VE day we asked one of our bridge club goers Ruth Bourne of her memories from this day. Ruth, now 98 year old and from High Barnet, worked at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire where codebreakers intercepted Nazi messages.

On VE Day, she was in London taking part in the celebrations: 'It was a great, euphoric feeling. 'People were doing the conga with complete strangers holding each other round the waist. 'I don't think anyone anywhere went to bed that night, it was such a party spirit, everybody just feeling happy and glad it was all over.'

VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) took place 80 years ago on 8 May 1945 when the Second World War ended in Europe. It was a day of immense relief and celebration, marking the end of nearly six years of war, loss, and hardship. It's a moment to reflect, remember, and come together in thanks – and to share stories with younger generations so this vital part of our history is never forgotten.





SUDOKU

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

Across

- 1 Orange-yellow colour (7)
- 5 Put off till later (5)
- 8 Beasts of burden (5)
- 9 Outside (7)
- 10 Conundrums (7)
- 11 Conceals (5)
- 12 Rove (6)
- 14 Bicycle for two (6)
- 18 Jittery (5)
- 20 Feeling, sentiment (7)
- 22 Ruffian (anag.) (7)
- 23 More pleasant (5)
- 24 Shouts (5)
- 25 Spendthrift (7)

Down

- 1 Common garden bird (7)
- 2 Combined (5)
- 3 Make a firm decision (7)
- 4 Most recent (6)
- 5 Drainage channel (5)
- 6 Deluged (7)
- 7 Council tax (5)
- 13 In name only (7)
- 15 Sums (7)
- 16 Cur (7)
- 17 Language of Israel (6)
- 18 Instant (5)
- 19 Renowned Irish poet (5)
- 21 Become liable for (5)

FUNNY RIDDLES

- a) What do you call a bear with no teeth?
- b) What has many rings but no fingers?
- c) What can you break without touching it?
- d) I sometimes run, but I can't walk. What am I?
- e) It has keys, but no locks. It has space, but no room. You can enter, but can't go inside. What is it?
- f) I have pointed fangs, and I sit and wait. I have piercing force, and I crunch with weight. I grab my victims, but they do not fight. I join them each with a single, quick bite. What am I?
- g) Pronounced as one letter, And written with three, two letters there are, and two only in me. I'm double, I'm single, I'm black blue and gray, I'm read from both ends, and the same either way. What am I?

CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
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						17						
18				19		20				21		
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24						25						

RECIPE TIME


"CHEESE MERINGUE": RECIPE FROM WADHURST PARISH'S 1955 MAGAZINE



On a recent visit to her gran, our former Age-friendly manager Pippa discovered a store of old Parish magazines from the 1950s. 'I was surprised to find that not only did these contain local updates and church news, but had many other fascinating regulars. One that particularly caught my eye was the "Weekday Pages for Women with Homes" section, in which local women sent in "good hints" in return for 5 shillings each month.'


So intrigued by a recipe send in by a Mrs Brown - Cheese Meringue - that Pippa had to make it at home. She was surprised at how tasty it was. 'It was like a soufflé on toast, and the mountain of egg white keeps the yolk runny and soft on top of the bread.'

It made Pippa think how important it is to keep a record of local history. "Maybe in 70 years' time, my own granddaughter will read this edition of Pigeon Post and try out this recipe too!"



Cheese Meringue. Ingredients: one egg, two tablespoonfuls of grated cheese, pepper, one round of bread for each person. Toast the bread on one side, butter the untoasted side, sprinkle one tablespoonful of cheese on the buttered side, and put the yolk of the egg on the centre. Season with pepper and salt. Beat the white of egg until stiff, add a pinch of salt and pile on top. Sprinkle the remaining cheese over. Bake in a moderate oven until white of egg is firm and the grated cheese brown.

—MRS. BROWN.



Pippa and her gran

Top tip!

Why not pass on a recipe, craft, or bit of life wisdom to a friend, grandchild, or neighbour. It's a lovely way to connect and keep traditions alive.

Age UK has partnered with GP and health coach Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi to share some simple, effective ways to add more activity to our lives. According to Hussain, it's never too late to get moving and while genetics influence how we age, our daily habits play a far greater role. He says small, consistent changes to keep moving and build your strength can have a significant impact over time, leading to more energy, greater independence, and fewer health concerns in the future.

Start small

Take little steps and build up as you gain confidence! Replace sedentary time with small chunks of movement:

1. Take the stairs
2. Travel actively - walk, jog or cycle
3. Park the car in the furthest space
4. Carry your luggage/shopping rather than push it in a trolley
5. Whisk by hand
6. Avoid a robot vacuum cleaner/mower
7. Dance during the ad breaks. All these can make a real difference over time!

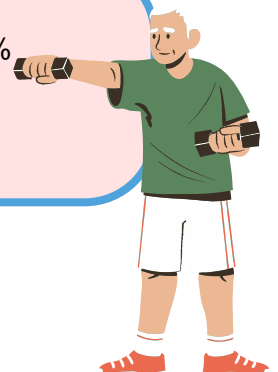
What a week might look like

How someone new to exercise could spread physical activity across a week. This mix helps meet the 150-minute aerobic target, includes two strength sessions, and fits into daily life realistically!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
15 minute brisk walk to see a friend, the shops, or as a break.	Cycle to the shops or the library instead of a short car journey (20 minutes total).	30-minute swim at a comfortable pace.	Two 10-minute walks during the day	20-minute dance session (in a class or at home).	Walk or fast walk for 20 minutes.	30-minute nature walk with a friend or family.
Strength session at home (10 minutes -sit-to-stands, wall push-ups, carrying shopping bags)	Stand up and stretch every 30 minutes at work/home.	Strength based movements (10-minutes) squats, lifting household objects, or resistance bands.	Household activity (vacuuming, gardening, or DIY can count as movement).	Stretching or gentle yoga to help mobility.	Play outside with grandkids or dog (park games, ball games).	Gentle stretching or balance exercises (5-10 minutes).

The stats

- Being active more than once a week can lower depression risk by 40%
- Regular movement can cut dementia risk by 30%
- Regular exercise can help lower cardiovascular disease risk by 35%
- Staying active can help reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by 40%





Each month former journalist Ed Newman has a lovely chat with a Barnet resident and shares their story with the rest of us. This time Ed speaks to entrepreneur Della Galmez who opened an upmarket chocolate shop in Whetstone in the mid 1970s.

Della was always ahead of the game when it came to business.

If you lived in the Whetstone area in the late 1970s and early 1980s, you may well remember visiting Chocolates by Della, a very different sort of chocolate shop she owned on the High Road. It became the place to go for a special confectionary gift or, indeed, just to look at the beautiful window displays created by Della herself.

At first, the locals seemed very doubtful about the idea of buying Belgian chocolates. Nearly 50 years on, Della can still remember hearing their grumbling outside her new shop

'That first week back in 1976, I can remember we had a lovely window display, music playing and I was offering free samples to encourage customers,' Della tells Pigeon Post.

'Inside the shop, I could hear people's comments as they were walking by. They were saying "we don't want any of that foreign muck, give us Cadbury's any day". For a moment, I wondered what I'd let myself in for opening the shop.

'I knew it would work though. Business has always been a great passion of mine and my husband and I both agreed we could make a success of it. I'd worked for a woman who had Belgian Chocolate shops in Hampstead and in Selfridges and that's what gave me the idea to start my own business. I liked the product – after all, who doesn't love chocolate?'

Della always wanted her business to be distinctive and to put her commercial and creative instincts at the heart of everything. A key moment came when she travelled to Belgium and found a company prepared to allow her to trade under her own name and so Chocolates by Della was born.

It wasn't long before the Whetstone store was becoming a popular destination for anybody looking for gifts for birthdays, Valentine's Day, Christmas Day, Easter, Mother's Day and even Father's Day. Della didn't just do chocolates, she also supplied gifts to accompany them to make them a little bit different.



Della standing outside her chocolate shop in Whetstone



The beautiful window display

'There were certain times of the year when it was madness at the shop,' Della recalls. 'At the height of the business, people would be queuing around the corner.'

As the business expanded, Della took over next door to open a coffee shop and purchased another shop in Wigmore Street in the centre of London. It was there she met the actor Topol who at the time was starring in the West End as Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof.

He was a lovely man and he even arranged us some extra business as well,' Della remembers fondly. 'Over the years, we had quite a few well-known customers including The Beverley Sisters and Frankie Vaughan who used to come to the Whetstone shop. I didn't have too much to do with them – I left that to my staff while I concentrated on running the business. That was always my first concern, although I also think customer service is very important.'

Della also stayed in the background when the late Queen Mother came to visit their stall at the Olympia Food Fair. However, she likes to think she still got the royal seal of approval from that brief encounter.

'You could tell the Queen Mother had a sweet tooth,' says Della. 'So, I hope she enjoyed the boozy chocolates we gave her.'

The Queen Mother was no doubt one of thousands of satisfied customers but Della admits there were, just occasionally, the odd complaint.

'We used to do bonbonniere, which were a few sugared almonds in a little net,' says Della. 'People bought them for functions and one day a lady ordered a hundred for her son's Bar Mitzvah. I can remember the lady was waiting to see me on the Monday morning clearly not happy. I asked her how it went and she opened her mouth and showed me her teeth were blue from the colouring on the sugar almonds. It was awful and we obviously had to make amends but thankfully that was a very rare event.'

'I always tried to look at my business through the customer's eyes. Over the time we ran Chocolates by Della in Whetstone, I like to think it was that consideration that made it so successful.

'It was non-stop throughout the year. You'd get through one Christmas and you'd immediately have to start planning for the next one. In the end, we decided it was time to bring it all to an end after eleven successful years. That had been a very happy time in my life.

'Even now, I'm still very interested in business and it's great to see how many women are playing a major role in running companies. After all, we're very good at it.'



Della opens a second shop in central London



The Queen Mother visits Della's stall at the Olympia food fair

Every year, an army of woolly warriors take up their knitting needles and crochet hooks as part of the innocent Big Knit. For every little hat you knit for us, innocent smoothies gives us 30p to help us run Age UK Barnet services and activities. We're still 3,000 hats away from our Big Knit goal - can you help us get there by 1 July 2025!

Here are a few basic patterns to get you started, but there are plenty more on the Age UK Barnet website. And if you fancy knitting along with others, come along to our Wednesday Knit 'n' Natter class at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT (Phone 020 8203 5040 for details.) Let's get those needles clicking!

Stripe hat - beginner pattern

Yarn: Blue and white - but you can use any colour you like.

DK Needles: 4mm

Hat

Cast on 31 sts in blue

Knit two rows (garter st)

Change to white and beginning with a knit row continue in st st as follows

2 rows white, 2 rows blue, 2 rows white, 2 rows blue, 2 rows white, 2 rows blue.

Continue in blue

Next row: k2tog to last st, k1 (16sts)

Next row: purl

Next row: k2tog to end (8sts)

Cut the yarn leaving approx 10cm length. Thread this through a sewing needle and bring through stitches and pull up to tighten.

Making up

Use a sewing needle to join side seams.

Make a pompom in blue and white and sew securely to top of the hat.



Sombrero hat - intermediate crochet pattern

Yarn: Red and yellow - or colour of your choice.

Crochet hook: 3.5mm

Hat

You will be working in spirals so you might like to use a locking stitch marker to keep track of the round.

Using the magic loop technique and red yarn make 6dcs into the ring. Join with a ss.

Round 1: make 2dc in each dc from the previous round.

Join with ss (12sts) Round 2: *1 dc, 2dc in next dc, repeat from * to the end of the round.

Join with ss (18sts) Round 3: *1 dc in next 2 dcs, 2dc in next dc, repeat from * to the end of the round.

Join with ss (24sts) Round 4: 1 dc, in each dc to the end of the round.

Join with ss. Repeat round 4, 3 more times.

Round 8: *2dc in next st, 5dc, repeat from * to the end of the round (28sts)

Round 9: *2dc in next st, 1dc, repeat from * to the end of the round (42sts)

Round 10-11: 1dc in each st Round 12: change to yellow, 1dc in each st

Fasten off and sew in ends



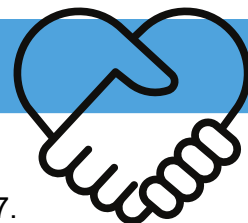
ready, steady, knit

send your hats by **1st July 2025 to:-**

**Age UK Barnet, Ann Owens Centre,
Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT**



For more information call 0208 203 5040



- 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.
- If you can't get out without help and would enjoy a regular chat with a friendly volunteer, try our **Befriending Service** on 020 8432 1416
- 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 clubs*** 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 nailcutting with a podiatrist (£20). For an appointment, phone 020 8203 5040.
- **Advice clinics at Chipping Barnet Library** - 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. The Age UK Barnet advice team will be giving benefit checks, pension credit checks and winter fuel payment advice. Drop in from 10am-1pm and bookable appointments in the afternoon (you need to book during the morning drop in). Speed up the process by bringing rent, service charge and bank statements. Takes place at Chipping Barnet Library, 3 Stapylton Rd, Barnet EN5 4QT
- **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.

*There is a charge for this service

EVENTS

COME ALONG FRIDAYS (2-3pm) - A programme of engaging talks and musical performances at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT.

- **Talk: VE Day** – 2 May 2025
- **Talk: Life of Elvis** – Friday 23 May 2025
- **Music: The Goldfinches** – 30 May 2025. Maurice Jackson & Band singing popular songs from the 60s

Fancy lunch too? Join us earlier at 12.45pm for a delicious home cooked two course meal - for only £8. To book your place for the lunch club and/or any of the events, please contact Louise on 07384 466 840 or email activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Talk: Food and relationships - Q&A with Professor Catherine Loveday and psychotherapist Andrea Oskis who believes that food is never just something to eat, but at the heart of what we eat is a memory, a story or a life lesson. Takes place on **Monday 9 June 2025** (6.45-8pm) at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley, N2 8LT. To register, just call Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email: teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Drag Bingo evening - bingo with a difference, hosted by drag queen Manuka Honey at our Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley. Please phone 020 8203 5040 or check our What's On guide or website. Exact date to TBC nearer the time.

Age UK Barnet's Summer Music Festival – June 28 2025 (11am - 3pm)

Enjoy a fantastic line-up of live music, plus a tombola and raffle, stalls selling plants, cakes, and delicious food and drink. Our musical acts include the brilliant Italian tenor Yuri Sabatini, the uplifting N12 Community Choir, and timeless classics from Once a Favourite. Takes place at The Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT. £3 to enter. Any questions, contact Teresa on teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call her on 07502 989403.

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 introduces us to her brutally honest friend Jessica...

'You don't have to shout, Jessica,' I said, following her into the kitchen, 'there are only the two of us here.' 'I'M NOT SHOUTING,' she said, 'THIS IS MY NORMAL SPEAKING VOICE.'

Unfortunately, this was true. In her working life, Jessica was a primary school teacher, and years of trying to control a class of unruly 10-year-olds had obviously left its mark. This was not so obvious when our little group of friends met together but close-up it could damage your ears.

I had only popped in to return a dish Jessica had leant me when she persuaded me to stay for a cup of coffee.

'What's with the hair?' she said, busying herself with the kettle. I tried to smooth down my shorter-than-usual style with minimal effect.

'My hairdresser wanted to try a little experiment,' I explained defensively.

'What, by cutting with his eyes closed!' she replied.

And that's another thing about Jessica: as she's got older, the filter between her brain and her mouth seems to have disintegrated and whatever thought pops into her head gets uttered, regardless of the effect around her.

As her friends, we'd got used to shrugging off these remarks as 'typical Jess' but when our friend, Gloria, was bemoaning the fact that the hair on her head seemed to be disappearing and reappearing on her chin, we all rushed to reassure her that the one or two tiny bristles were barely visible. Jess's suggestion that Gloria could always join the circus did not go down too well.

I was in a bus with her recently and she turned to the two women sitting two rows behind us and said, loudly, 'The symptoms you are describing sound like interstitial cystitis. You should try D-Mannose, it's good for all urinary tract infections, and you don't need a prescription.' She turned back, delighted that she had helped someone, quite oblivious of my embarrassment and the stony silence from behind us.

I accompanied her into Zara and we both browsed and gathered a few items to try on, then made our way to the changing room area. As we searched for an empty cubicle, the curtain of one was drawn back and a woman stepped out with a couple of dresses over her arm.

'Oh hello!' cried Jess, and turned to me, 'this is my next-door neighbour, Shirley.'

Shirley smiled, somewhat warily it seemed to me. Jess turned back to her and gave a little shriek of horror.

'You're not going to buy that dress, are you?' she cried loudly, and a couple of heads popped out of adjoining cubicles to see what was going on. 'It's horrendous, everything is wrong, the colour, the style, it doesn't suit you at all!'

'Actually, I was just leaving,' said Shirley, frostily, 'and this is what I was wearing to come here,' and she turned and marched off. Oops. Even Jessica made a face.

A slight comeuppance came when Barbara invited Jessica and me to the wedding reception of her grandson. We had known this boy since he was born and stood with our drinks wondering where the time had gone. The bride's mother came up to welcome us. 'I've heard so much about your little group of friends,' she gushed, then leaned forward and lowered her voice, 'but I was warned to avoid some ghastly woman with a loud voice who makes bitchy comments.'

Jess looked at me, genuinely puzzled, 'I don't think we know anyone like that, do we?' she said – loudly.

Lee's very funny book, 'Getting Old, Deal with It' is published by Mensch Publishing.



Age UK Barnet's special adviser and professor of neuroscience Catherine Loveday shares how she spotted the signs that her mum had memory issues and how her experience as a memory researcher and neuroscientist has helped her mum live as well as she can with Alzheimer's Disease.



“There are a few moments that stick in my mind, like the first time my mum got lost walking the dog in her regular spot, and the Christmas that went rather pear-shaped when she realised that she hadn't put the turkey in the oven. In honesty, my creeping concerns had begun a year or two earlier. I had noticed that my mum was repeating herself more than usual and getting muddled. She regularly complained that my step-dad was getting confused, which she put down to his increasing poor health and heavy drinking. I wanted to believe her – to think that it was him and not her – not least because she had always been so bright, clever and competent in everything she did. Frankly I couldn't imagine her being any other way. But, having spent so many years researching and understanding memory, in my heart of hearts I knew that what I was seeing was likely to be the earliest signs of Alzheimer's Disease.

My experience as a memory researcher means I quickly learned to recognise what healthy cognitive ageing looks like and, by extension, how to spot when things are starting to go awry.

I eventually plucked up the courage to gently suggest to mum that I run my battery of neuropsychological tests on her. The majority of her scores were her exactly where she should be for her age, not surprising given her Cambridge education and career as a Consultant Psychiatrist. In stark contrast, her scores on delayed memory measures were poorer than 99.9 per cent of others her age.

The next conversation was difficult. My mum was – is still, as far as possible – a proud and independent woman. When I shared these findings, I could see the fear in her face as she desperately sought out other explanations. Maybe she was depressed, she thought? I told her, we could not know for sure what was causing it or how it would play out, but I did know that there were lots of active steps we could take to protect and support her memory.

It took only a few days for her trademark optimism and resilience to return and despite her underlying worries, she quickly became pragmatic and very determined. She put her trust in me and as a natural scientist, she was happy to try out everything I threw at her.

Fast forward 14 years, and my mum – now with a formal diagnosis of Alzheimer's type dementia – is still happily living at home, albeit with 24-hour care. The progression has been resolute but slow and all things considered, she has a very good quality of life. At each stage of the journey, we have tried and tested different ways both to support her memory, and to reduce the inevitable anxiety that results from not being able to access the past. In the early days, her inability to lay down new memories hugely impacted on her capacity to socialise and manage her own affairs. In contrast, as is typical, her memory for the past was strong. So, to start with, we focused on techniques that aimed to improve consolidation of day-to-day events (for instance, daily journal writing) and lighten the mental load around the home (such as labelling cupboards and using a memory board). We also discussed ways that she could look after her physical health and improve her sleeping and resting habits.

Based on my own research, we used a range of cueing techniques to curate my mum's most important moments and experiences. Interestingly, by implementing these techniques, I learned a huge amount about her that I had never known growing up, and in time this has proved incredibly valuable.

Now – with her memories fading – I am able to focus conversations and reminiscence on the periods in her life that were happiest and which support her sense of identity. We can actively avoid those which have been more difficult or just less relevant. Most importantly, I know which cues work and we make every effort to surround her with these, to scaffold her sense of self. ”

Mempathy podcast

Catherine has launched a fantastic new podcast called Mempathy based on what she has learned from supporting her mum and years of memory research. You'll find out how science can help you to support someone living with dementia. In the first episode Catherine and her friend Sonia tackle sleep disruption and their nocturnal mums. An absolute must listen! Catherine is a professor of neuroscience at the University of Westminster and a regular on BBC Radio 4's All in the mind.

You can listen to podcasts on your smart phone or your laptop or computer – if you need help to access and listen to these, our friendly digital volunteers can help. We have sessions around the borough - **just contact Howard on 020 8432 1415 or 07798 622832.**



Since retiring, our gardening columnist Kevin 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...

This spring gradually developed into a very dry period and the sun finally made a prolonged appearance. While this was a bonus for getting outside, it posed challenges for getting directly sown seeds to germinate.

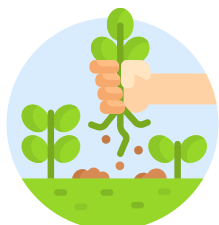
I also think the warm sunny days shortened the flowering time of the cherry blossom trees. There are always pros and cons, but it gives us gardeners something extra to talk about!



One benefit of the longer days and extra sunlight at our allotment site is that the up-graded solar panels have finally started keeping the storage batteries fully charged. In addition to running the fridge, kettle internet hub and other appliances, we are even able to give electric car owners the opportunity to give their batteries an occasional top up.

Every spring I tell myself that this is the year I will get to grips with my garden and allotment and every year, my garden and allotment remind me who's really in charge.

No matter how many plans I make, nature always has its own ideas. I have learned to accept the situation, embrace the chaos and persevere as best I can.



The key, this month, is to keep on top of the weeds. Hoe them or pull them when they are small, as they will grow into big ones! Weeds can quickly overwhelm young plants, making them difficult to remove. Some, like ground elder and bindweeds are relentless and will quickly infest a vegetable bed or flower border if left unchecked,

If you want to encourage wildflowers in your lawn, try No Mow May. As the name suggests, simply stop mowing in early May to allow the wild plants already in your lawn to grow up, flower and attract pollinators. You can just leave just a section uncut or the entire lawn, perhaps mowing a pathway through it. While you can re-start mowing in June, it's even better to leave the grass uncut until August to preserve the newly created wild area.

A few other jobs for May/June.

- Add a mulch around plants to retain moisture and suppress weeds
- Sow dwarf or climbing beans, runner beans, courgettes and squash in the greenhouse or under cover.
- Earth up Potatoes planted up last month
- Potatoes planted up last month need to be earthed up this month.
- Plant up pots and tubs with annual bedding plants for a summer display
- Regularly water and feed potted plants



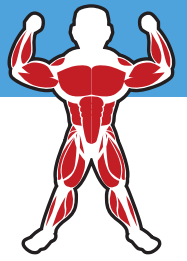
OLDER AND BETTER

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT GETTING OLDER



Age UK Barnet
Knit 'n' Natter
attendee Margaret

I'm glad I don't have to work so much and get a chance to travel more. It's also great attending groups, picking up hobbies that I learnt as a child and making new friends!



Did you know we start to lose muscle strength from the age of 40? This natural process, known as sarcopenia, can lead to weaker muscles and affect how easily we move, stay balanced, and do everyday tasks. But the good news? There's plenty we can do to slow this down and stay strong, says dietitian Caroline Morrison.

'Healthy muscles are essential for everything from walking and lifting shopping to breathing and digestion,' says Caroline. 'If we lose too much muscle, it can increase our risk of falls and make us feel more tired, weak or even frail – but becoming frail isn't an inevitable part of getting older.'

Muscle health, nutrition and ageing are linked, says Caroline. 'Moving more every day and eating a nutrient-rich diet keeps your muscles, bones and joints strong. And maintaining your weight is usually best for good health and giving you the energy to stay well, socialise and be active.'

Caroline's top tips for stronger muscles

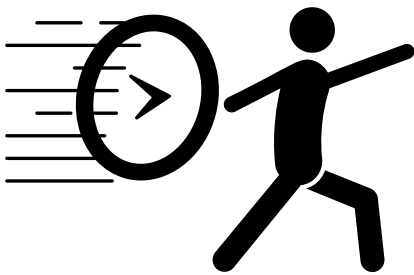
- ✓ Try resistance activities, which increase muscle strength by making your muscles work against a weight or force. These include yoga, Pilates, tai chi, lifting weights, working with resistance bands, push-ups, sit-ups or heavy gardening such as digging and shovelling.
- ✓ Eat a varied diet, which we need to maintain healthy strong muscles and bones and so reduce the risk of a fall. 'A diet with enough protein and calcium together with a daily 10ug Vitamin D supplement has been shown to help or maintain or improve muscle health as we age,' says Caroline.
- ✓ And stay hydrated – a vital part of ageing well!

What is Frailty?

Frailty is a health state associated with ageing - although becoming frail when getting old is not inevitable, says Caroline. Frailty is a complex condition that includes weight loss, exhaustion, low physical activity, slowness, weakness, reduced ability to carry out day to day activities and reduced quality of life.

These simple tests will help you identify frailty:

1. Walking speed: taking more than 5 seconds to walk 4 metres
2. Timed get up and go test: taking more than 10 seconds to get up from a chair, walk 3 metres, turn around, walk back and sit down again.



COFFEE MORNING DATES AROUND THE BOROUGH



Join us for a coffee morning!

NEXT DATES ARE:-

All Saints Church, Church Walk, Childs Hill, NW2 2JS - 15 MAY and 12 JUNE

North Road Community Centre, 230 Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware HA8 0AP - 13 MAY and 17 JUNE

Lane End Medical Centre, 2 Penshurst Gardens, Edgware HA8 9GJ - 14 MAY and 18 JUNE

Kingsley Court, Tayside Drive, Edgware HA8 8RE - 28 MAY and 25 JUNE

Mill Hill Library, Hartley Avenue, Mill Hill NW7 2HX - 1 MAY and 29 MAY

Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT - 31 MAY and 28 JUNE

Held
between
10.30am
and 12
noon



All over 55s
welcome

Phone Louise on 07379 311807

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



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9	5	6	7	4	8	1	2	3

Why should you always knock on a refrigerator door before opening it?
In case there's a salad dressing.

A bossy man walked into a bar ...

Then ordered everyone a round.

Why do golfers wear two pairs of pants?

In case they get a hole in one.

Funny Riddles Answers

- a) A gummy bear
- b) A phone
- c) A promise
- d) A nose
- e) A keyboard
- f) A stapler
- g) Eye

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