

PIGEON POST



Keeping you informed & involved September-October 2025

Our first five years!



Welcome

Can you believe it's been five years since we launched Pigeon Post? What a journey it's been! We've loved receiving your contributions, letters

and poetry, and some of you have even become regular columnists! A big thank you, too, to everyone who's shared their story with our profile writer, Ed - including David, a former film journalist and interviewer, who features in this issue.

We also hope to see many of you at this year's Silver Sunday celebration on 5 October - the biggest event in the borough for people aged 55 and over! Last year more than 700 of you joined us, and we're expecting an even bigger crowd this time.

You can look forward to a fantastic day of live music and dancing, free health checks, crafts, fun activities and a special Pigeon Post fifth anniversary exhibition. There'll be refreshments and a light lunch, too - and it's all completely free!

Enjoy the issue, and thank you for being part of the Pigeon Post family.

Helen Newman
Chief Executive
Age UK Barnet



Autumn will soon be upon us with its colour spectacle of autumn leaves and a flood of squashes and sprouts on supermarket shelves. “But it also brings with it the prospect of more viruses circulating around,” says dietitian Kato. “Eating enough protein and fibre, and a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables every day, will help our bodies fight and recover faster not only from viral infections, but also many other common illnesses.”

Batch cooking is a great way to ensure you have plenty of immune-boosting meals, without having to adapt recipes or cook every day. Just freeze the leftovers, says Kato.

The following recipes can be batch-cooked and frozen, and served with one or two freshly chopped or cooked ingredients when reheated. They are packed with protein, fibre, greens and beans and can be on your plate in 10 minutes from taking them out of the freezer for a tasty breakfast (when your appetite may be at its best), lunch or dinner.



Kedgeree

An Anglo-Indian breakfast dish dating from colonial times. It can be batch-cooked up to the stage before adding eggs and fresh herbs. When reheating, add the fresh boiled egg and herbs.

In a thick-bottomed pan or pan, gently fry 1 chopped onion in 2tbsp vegetable/rapeseed oil. Add 1tsp ground coriander, 1 tsp ground turmeric and 2tsp mild curry powder (adjust based on your preferences) and cook for a further 3 minutes. Add 300g long grain quick cook brown rice, and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes, then turn of the heat and let it steam for a further 10-15 minutes. Don't peek! Meanwhile, bring 250ml milk to the boil in a pan, add 300g smoked haddock (skin on), and 2 bay leaves. Poach until the haddock is translucent, around 10 minutes. Remove skin, flake the fish, and add to the rice with a few handfuls of greens (cool and freeze at this stage). Bring a small pot of water to the boil, add 4 eggs and boil for 6 minutes. Cool, peel, and cut into quarters. Stir a handful of chopped fresh parsley and coriander through the rice, and serve with eggs on top.



Coconut Dhal

Dhal is a fantastic breakfast food as it can be served with a roti, flatbread, rice or any grain your choice, which you can batch cook and freeze as well. Reduce or omit the chillies or spices if you don't like spicy food.

Rinse and drain 300g red lentils. Heat 2tbsp vegetable/rapeseed oil in a frying pan or pot, and sauté 2 peeled and thinly sliced onions for 10 minutes on medium heat. Add 4 chopped garlic cloves and cook for a minute. Then add 5 dried curry leaves (optional), 1tsp mustard seeds, 1 tsp cumin seeds (or dried powder), 1 tsp ground coriander, 1 tsp ground turmeric and 1tsp mild chilli powder/chilli flakes (optional). Cook for 1 minute, then add 1 tbsp tomato puree and cook for another minute. Stir in the lentils, 1x400ml can coconut milk and 800ml water. Bring to a boil, cover the pan, and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add four handfuls of spinach leaves (or half a pack defrosted frozen leaf spinach) and leave on a low heat for 3-4 minutes.



Shakshuka

This is a traditional breakfast dish in many near eastern and Mediterranean food cultures. Freeze in portions, and when reheating, poach the egg.

Heat 1tbsp olive oil and sauté 1 sliced bell pepper (any colour), 3 minced garlic cloves, 1 thinly sliced onion for 3 minutes. Add ½ tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp ground coriander, 1 tsp chilli flakes and 1 tbsp ground smoked paprika and cook for 5-7 minutes. Add a can of drained and rinsed cannellini beans, 1tbsp tomato puree, and one can chopped tomatoes. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Add a few handfuls of greens (spinach, kale, chard), and leave 1 minute to wilt in the pot (if batch cooking, cool and freeze in portions). Make four wells in the middle of the mixture (or one if you are cooking for one), break 4 (or one) eggs and cook for 5 minutes. Mix through a handful of fresh parsley and dill each.





Scammers are continuing to send fake texts claiming people have been issued with a parking penalty notice (PCN) using spoofed mobile numbers and email addresses.

The text tells you that you must pay a £20 parking fine and says that this is your final notice.

It goes on to scare you by claiming that legal action could be taken against you if you don't pay and includes a malicious link to follow to make the payment.

This will lead to a website impersonating the government's official site in order to get you to type in your personal and financial information.

Councils do not send text messages about parking fines to residents. Parking fines are issued by civil enforcement officers via a PCN on the vehicle dashboard, or by post to the address of the vehicle's registered keeper. Never give out any personal information or bank details to anyone you are not 100% sure about.

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.

OVER TO YOU

THE CAT'S WHISKERS

We're delighted to welcome back Suki (AKA Kat Moss), our resident diva columnist, after a little summer break...

I've had a glorious summer doing what I do best - absolutely nothing. When the sun was shining, I basked in it. When it got too much (which, frankly, it often did), I retreated to the cool comfort of the shrubbery.

Charlotte, my ever-dutiful housekeeper, made sure I had fresh water to sip – I hope your humans kept you equally hydrated during those scorching heatwaves.

Did you know the human body is made up of 55%-78% water? No wonder they're always sipping from bottles and mugs. Hydration, I'm told, is key – for them and for us.

There's been a development here at New Ground: a new cat has arrived. He's a rescue, full of youthful energy, and his housekeeper has named him... Boy. (Apparently, she couldn't decide on anything else.)

Boy is eager, bouncy, and always on the lookout for a playmate. Naturally, he made a beeline for me. I had to explain - firmly but with elegance - that I am far too mature, dignified, and, dare I say, beautiful to engage in silly kitten games. I even suggested he go and pester Max, the younger male cat nearby.

Did he listen? Of course not. So yes, I may have had to give him a light bop on the nose – strictly as a warning. I'm not proud of it, but a diva must maintain boundaries.

Sending love, miaows, and a purr-fectly happy fifth anniversary to Pigeon Post!

With affection (and just a hint of superiority),

Suki



Suki Might Be Boosting Your Brain...

Our resident cat columnist Suki may be doing more than just making you smile. According to researchers at the University of Geneva, having a cat or dog could actually help keep your mind sharper as you get older.

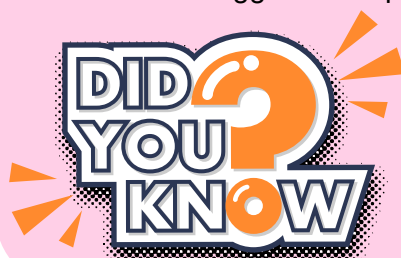
The study found that dog owners tend to have better memory over time, while cat owners show a slower decline in word-finding and speaking skills. Sadly, owning fish or birds didn't show the same brain-boosting benefits – though they still make lovely companions, of course!

Other studies suggest that spending time with a dog can increase brain activity linked to focus and

emotional connection – and for cat lovers, interacting with their more mysterious feline friends may stimulate areas of the brain that help us adapt and think on our feet (or paws).

And let's not forget the bonus that comes with dog ownership – all those friendly chats with fellow dog walkers can add a healthy dose of social interaction to your day.

So next time Suki shares her musings, remember – she may be helping keep your brain as sharp as her claws!



Join us for Barnet's Best Silver Sunday celebration yet!

Mark your diaries for Sunday 5 October 2025, because our Silver Sunday celebration is back - and it's going to be bigger, brighter and more joyful than ever!

From 11am to 3pm at Middlesex University, we'll be throwing a fantastic free celebration of ageing well, filled with music, dancing, inspiration, and practical support. Whether you come for the entertainment, the advice, or simply the tea and good company, there'll be something for everyone.

What to Expect

This year's event is packed with uplifting activities: **Live music and dance performances, a buzzing disco room to get your feet moving, creative workshops to spark your imagination, talks and advice sessions on everything from health checks to making a will, a fascinating talk on social connection and the ageing brain by Pigeon Post columnist Professor Catherine Loveday plus an exhibition of Pigeon Post features to mark 5 years since launch.**

On top of all this there'll be free refreshments and a light lunch!! So whether you're up for dancing, learning something new, or just fancy a chat and a cuppa, you'll be in good company.

Venue! Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon NW4 4BT. Sunday 5 October 2025, 11am–3pm
Free entry – but let us know you're coming if you can by contacting Salima Jiwa on salima.jiwa@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call Salima on 07503 353157

This year's event is generously sponsored by Barnet Grange Care Home, supported by Your Choice Barnet, TLC Candlewood House Care Home and Medequip, plus additional support from Fahri Solicitors and Home Instead Barnet



Highlights from last year's Silver Sunday event



PIGEON POST – 5 YEARS ON!

October marks 5 years since the first issue of Pigeon Post which we started during Covid to reach people who weren't able to go online and might be feeling particularly cut off. The idea? As well as useful information, we wanted the magazine to reflect the wider interests of readers – so we included puzzles, recipes, a bit of nostalgia, readers' letters and poetry, plus interviews with residents about their lives. Five years later, we're still going strong. Here's to another five years!

Meet the Pigeon Post team. It doesn't happen on its own!

As Pigeon Post celebrates its 5th anniversary, we thought we'd introduce the people behind the pages – because it takes a whole flock to keep this little paper flying!



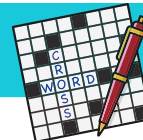
Teresa & Karen - the editorial team

First up is **Karen** (*on the right*), who commissions, edits and writes many of the stories you read in every issue. She's supported by **Teresa** (*on the left*), who puts together some of your favourite regulars – from recipes to puzzles – and designs every edition with care and creativity.

Behind the scenes, **Madeleine, Hilary** and **Maggie** make sure each copy gets where it needs to go – whether that's posted directly to readers or stacked up for delivery to libraries and community centres across the borough by our trusty driver **Mark**. We also couldn't do it without **Malcolm**, from Abbey Print, who ensures everything is printed on time and delivered to our base in East Finchley, ready to be sent far and wide.

A big thank-you goes to everyone who has sent in poems, letters, ideas or shared their life stories with our profile writer, former journalist **Ed**, who handles their stories so sensitively.

And finally, hats off to our other brilliant regular columnists – **Kato, Lee, Kevin, Catherine** plus **Suki** (Aka **Kat Moss**) all of whose contributions have kept us smiling, thinking, and coming back for more.



SUDOKU

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Across

- 1 Loose from moorings (6)
- 4 Academy awards (6)
- 8 Brownish tint used in photography (5)
- 9 Frankness (7)
- 10 Oriental (7)
- 11 Choose to participate (3,2)
- 12 Morning snack (9)
- 17 Supermarket section (5)
- 19 Welsh port (7)
- 21 Exceed (7)
- 22 Intense sorrow (5)
- 23 Diatribe (6)
- 24 Story in instalments (6)

Down

- 1 Solution (6)
- 2 Quick sharp reply (7)
- 3 Distress signal (5)
- 5 Wavy, winding (7)
- 6 Approximately (5)
- 7 Pilgrim's destination (6)
- 9 General agreement (9)
- 13 Green gem (7)
- 14 Japanese dish of thinly sliced raw fish (7)
- 15 Short-legged hound (6)
- 16 Legal (6)
- 18 More certain (5)
- 20 Bicker (5)

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR PIGEONS!

1. What is a baby pigeon called?
squab, pigling, keet, all of these
2. There is a sport in which homing pigeons are raced from hundreds of miles away to their homes.
True, False
3. What is the pigeon named G.I. Joe famous for?
He was the first bird to travel into outer space,
All of these, He was featured in biscuit commercials,
He saved thousands of lives.
4. Most healthy pigeons have white, slimy droppings.
True, False
5. What type of pigeon is extinct?
All of these, Homing, Passenger, English carrier
6. The eyelashes are the only part of a pigeon that are made of hair.
True, False
7. How long would a homing pigeon most likely take to fly 100 miles?
1 hour, 4 hours, 3 hours, 2 hours
8. Which of the following is a term used to describe a particular color of pigeon?
blue bar, red check, silver, all of these
9. Which of the following people keep (have kept) pigeons?
All of these, Pablo Picasso, Walt Disney, Mike Tyson,
10. What is considered a treat for pigeons? barley, peas, peanuts, corn

CROSSWORD

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RECIPE TIME

TANDOORI TOFU WITH CARROT PICKLE



Ingredients

- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons rice wine or cider vinegar
- 1 carrot, peeled in ribbons
- 150g tofu, cut in 2cm cubes
- 2 tablespoons tandoori paste
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- spray oil
- ¼ cup brown rice
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon sriracha or other chilli sauce
- fresh coriander to garnish (optional)



Method

- 1) Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a baking dish with baking paper. In a bowl, combine sugar and vinegar and add carrot. Set aside to pickle.
- 2) In a small bowl, toss tofu cubes in tandoori paste to coat. Place on prepared baking dish. Add broccoli, spray with oil and bake for 15 minutes.
- 3) Prepare rice following packet instructions.
- 4) Serve tofu and broccoli on rice with carrot pickle. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and chilli sauce. Garnish with coriander if using.

Variations

Make it gluten free: Check cider vinegar, tofu, tandoori paste and sriracha or chilli sauce are gluten free.

Make it vegan: Check tandoori paste and sriracha or chilli sauce are vegan.

Nutrition Info (per serve) **Calories 575 cal** **Kilojoules 2410kj** **Protein 27g** **Total fat 27g**
Saturated fat 4g **Carbohydrates 55g** **Sugar 14g** **Dietary fibre 11g** **Sodium 710mg**
Calcium 380mg **Iron 5mg**

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CARE HOME

Heartfelt Care

Every Step of the Way

We offer high-quality residential, nursing, dementia and respite care in a welcoming and engaging environment. Arrange a visit to discover comfort, companionship, and expert care.

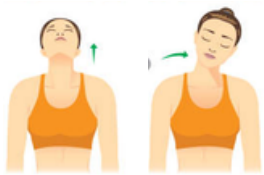
Learn more about our heartfelt care
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 Or scan the QR code to see our exclusive offers
 59 Wood Street, Barnet, London, EN5 4BS

EXERCISE TIME

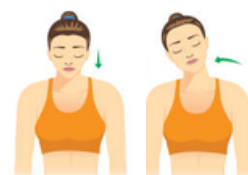
ENERGISING MORNING STRETCHES TO WAKE UP YOUR BODY



Start every day with a little less stiffness and a lot more energy with these gentle effective moves. The first three can be performed standing up or do them all sitting down.

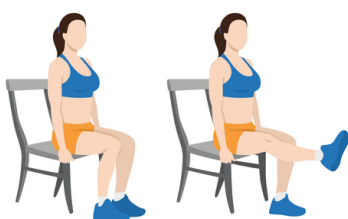
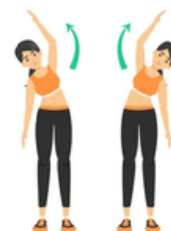


- **Neck Rolls** – Sit or stand tall. Slowly roll your head in a circle—right ear to shoulder, chin to chest, left ear to shoulder. Repeat 3 times in each direction to release tension.



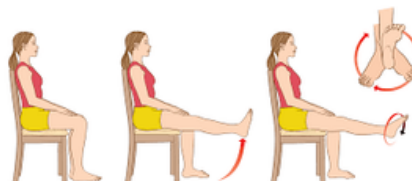
- **Shoulder Circles** – Raise your shoulders toward your ears, then roll them back and down in smooth circles. Do 5 forward and 5 backward to loosen stiff joints.

- **Side Reach** – Stand with feet hip-width apart. Raise one arm overhead and gently lean to the opposite side. Hold for 10 seconds, feeling the stretch along your side. Switch sides.



- **Seated Leg Extension** – Sit on a chair, back straight. Extend one leg forward, hold for a count of 5, then lower. Repeat 5 times on each leg to warm up your knees and thighs.

- **Ankle Circles** – While seated, lift one foot slightly off the ground and circle the ankle 5 times in each direction. Repeat with the other foot. Great for circulation and balance.



WHAT ADVICE I'D GIVE MY 16 YEAR OLD SELF

"Enjoy life to the full and don't be too influenced or restricted by others fears and negative advice. Use to the max your own 'spirit of youth' and fear not! Take a few calculated risks!"

Vijay



A few of our art class and knit 'n' natter participants share what they'd tell their younger selves



"I was quite ill as a child and grew up to enjoy my freedom at 16 years and made lots of friends. I went dancing, joined a fan club and had fun. My head teacher found me my first job and I wouldn't change anything."

Irene

"Have confidence in yourself and it will all work out alright in the end. Value your family and friends."

Cliff



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 our dementia day club member David Gritten, a former film critic, author and journalist who has interviewed some of the most famous people in Hollywood and the film industry.

An English accent proved a perfect passport for success in Hollywood for David.

As a young boy growing up in Smethwick, West Midlands in the 1960s, he would never have dreamed of the life he would go on to live in Los Angeles. He enjoyed a notable career that saw him meet the likes of Steven Spielberg, Meryl Streep, Clint Eastwood, George Clooney and Tom Hanks as he established himself as one of the most respected film journalists in the business.

David admits he can't now recall too much about those encounters but he's in no doubt about one thing - he had a great time.

"I don't remember all the details because my memory is shot but I know I had a ball in the States," David told Pigeon Post when we met for a chat at the Anne Owen's Centre.

"There was nothing in my younger life to suggest I would end up in Hollywood. My father was a jeweller and he couldn't have imagined that sort of world. I don't think my parents were too thrilled when they heard my decision but they came out to see me a couple of times and were fascinated by all the stories.

"Previously, I'd been freelancing in London and somebody suggested I gave America a go. So, I thought 'why not?' Los Angeles is very big and full of itself but I loved it. It really was the place to be. The Americans seemed to enjoy all things British. People would say to me 'gee, I really love your accent' and that would open a lot of doors because people found you interesting and were always happy to talk." Over the years, David met a host of people involved in the movie business, visited a lot of Hollywood studio lots and reviewed a huge number of films. He attended glamorous events like the Oscars and the Golden Globes but he always was far more interested in having a discreet chat with the stars away from the spotlight.

He was fascinated by getting to know more about actors, directors and producers and found that the more you talked, the better you got to know them. Over time, David became a well-known face around the set himself and earned everybody's trust.

"It was important to look after people in Hollywood, even though it was my job to give an opinion on their films," David tells me. "I just loved being around them, which is something I never saw coming when I was at school. You'd be talking to somebody one day, then the next they'd be on the front page of all the newspapers. They were big stars but nearly everybody I met was very nice. They were just human beings and I used their first name when talking to them, just like anybody else."

One of those who left a particular impression on David was director Steven Spielberg. It's fifty years since he grabbed everybody's attention with *Jaws* and he's been making great movies ever since. So, he'd always have plenty to talk about although David found Spielberg was just as interested in finding out about him.

David with Sir Paul McCartney



“Steven Spielberg was very amiable and I liked him a lot,” says David “He’d always come half way in our conversations - I’d ask him about himself and he’d come back with ‘what about you?’ I would think to myself why would Spielberg care about this but he would. He was a very decent guy.

“I could tell that he was fascinated by people and wanted to tell their stories. What he has achieved in his career has made a huge difference - not just to the tourism industry after Jaws either!”

Two other stars that left their mark on David were Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep, both of whom have enjoyed incredible longevity in a notoriously ruthless industry. David met both of them on a number of occasions.



David with Ringo Starr

Meryl Streep was quite something, wasn't she?” says David. “I can remember the presence she had in a room. She's still working now after all this time. Vintage is a funny word but it suits people like her and Clint Eastwood.

“He was another who had a strong presence about him but not in a bad way. I can remember thinking he was actually quite pleasant and very real. He's always been a big deal. I encountered him a couple of times and it was quite something to be in the same room.”

“Actors like Streep and Eastwood grab your attention and keep it. They make you laugh and they make you cry.”

After working hard and enjoying life for many years in Hollywood, David returned to London and he compiled the 2007 Halliwell's Film Guide, the industry bible. He was also heavily involved in the London Film Critics Circle as chairman. Since retirement, he has still enjoyed an occasional trip to the cinema and listens out for the results of his beloved football team, West Bromwich Albion.

David and his wife Philippa first met as teenagers in the West Midlands, friendly faces from nearby schools who often crossed paths on the local buses. Life took them in different directions, and they lost touch – until 14 years ago, when fate stepped in and brought them together again through work. Assigned to the same project, they reconnected, with a shared past and a lot of life in between – marriages, children, and beloved grandchildren. This time, the timing was right and their relationship became what David describes as 'something rather more'. Sounds like a good script for a film!



David with Dame Judi Dench

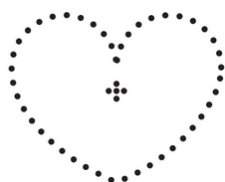
David with Ralph Fiennes



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Cardstock (folded in half if you want to make a greeting card)

Embroidery floss, string or yarn (I used coloured embroidery floss and sparkly gold yarn for my cards) Needle, (Optional) Mini heart embellishment Extra cardstock, Double sided tape, An envelope, Folded paper insert



Make a heart shape from your cardstock

Either trace a heart shape onto your cardstock using a pencil or you could draw around something heart-shaped. Using your needle or a pokey tool, mark holes in your cardstock that follow the shape of your heart. You should leave enough space in between each hole to prevent tearing the paper (about half a centimetre should do it).

You'll also need to make five holes in the middle of your heart – as shown in the image above: Remember to rub out your pencil markings before you start stitching!

Thread your needle with about 20-30 cm of thread at a time. You may need to wet the end of the thread to help you thread it through the needle, or use a threader if you have one.

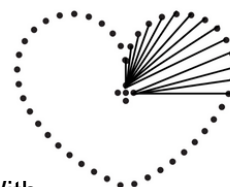
Starting at the back of your cardstock, bring your needle up through the top hole and back down through the closest hole in the middle. Continue stitching. The rest of the stitches follow a clockwise direction. Come up through the back of the next outer hole and down through the same middle hole as before. Try not to let your threads cross over unless that's the look you want to go for. Repeat for the following 8 or 9 holes (approx) before moving on to the next hole in the middle.

Your embroidered heart should start to resemble something like this:



Note: When you start to run out of thread, you'll need to thread a different piece onto your needle.

But you first need to cast off the existing thread. With your needle at the back of your cardstock, carefully thread the end of your needle underneath some of your other stitches and trim any excess thread. You'll want to leave about half an inch of thread leftover to stop any stitches from coming loose.



Continue stitching. To complete your heart, keep stitching in the same way as before but use different holes in the middle. For example, your next 8 or 9 holes will use the middle right hole, the next set will use the bottom hole, the next set will use the centre middle hole and the next lot will use the left middle hole.

Keep going until all of your holes are filled. If you have any holes along the outer rim of the heart that haven't yet been filled, then you can bring the thread down through any of the closest holes in the middle.

(Optional) Add a stitched border to your heart. If you want to add a border to your heart, then this is done by backstitching around the outside of it. Bring your needle up through your first hole, down through the next, and back up through the first hole. Keep going until you have a border around your heart.

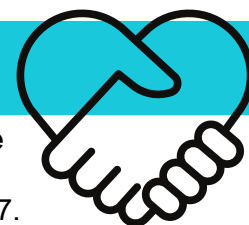
(Optional) Add a heart embellishment. If you'd like your heart to look like a sunburst coming out of a heart in the middle, then this can be done by glueing a mini heart embellishment onto the front (like you can see in the photo above). This also covers up the holes in the middle in case you don't like the look of them.



How to turn your paper string art into a pretty embroidered card.

The cardstock you stitched onto needed to be folded in half like a greeting card. You can then open up the card and stick an extra piece of cardstock onto the back of your stitched heart using double-sided tape. I usually put a bit of tape along each side to secure it. Glue your folded paper insert inside your card using a glue stick, just a small dab on all four corners.





- For advice about benefits, grants, housing and money concerns, phone our **Later Life Planning Service** on 020 8432 1417 or email info@ageukbarnet.org.uk
- 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 or email befriending@ageukbarnet.org.uk
- 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 or email info@ageukbarnet.org.uk. 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.
- For essential jobs in the home please phone our **Handyperson Service*** on 020 8150 0963 or email handyperson@ageukbarnet.org.uk (Some jobs such as changing a lightbulb are free of charge).
- **ADVICE CLINICS** in Chipping Barnet and Burnt Oak - for Barnet residents over 55 who might be struggling financially. The Age UK Barnet advice team will be giving benefits checks, pension credit checks and winter fuel payment advice.
- Chipping Barnet Library, Chipping Barnet Library, 3 Stapylton Rd, Barnet EN5 4Q - 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month.
- Burnt Oak Library, 99 Watling Ave, Burnt Oak HA8 0UB - 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month - starting 28 July 2025
- The clinics are open from 10am-1pm and 2-4pm. To speed up process bring rent, service charge and bank statements. To book an appointment, please call us on 0208 203 5040 or email us on support@ageukbarnet.org.uk

*There is a charge for this service

EVENTS

MUSICAL AFTERNOON with tenor Geoffrey Strum on 18 September 2025 from 2.00-3.00pm. Held at Avery at Barnet Grange, 59 Wood Street, Barnet EN5 4BS. Free parking via Cattley Close entrance. £5 on door for non-residents which includes refreshments. To book call Activities on 07384 466 840 or email activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk Bus: Manor Road Barnet is the closest stop to the venue. Routes 263, 107, 307 and 84B stop here.

COME ALONG FRIDAYS (2-3pm) - A programme of engaging talks at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT. Free to attend – but donations welcome. Upcoming dates....

* Bingo - 12 September, 10 October, 7 November, 5 December 2025

* Talk: Inside tips from firefighters (and yes, they will be bringing their fire engine!) - 19 September

* Talk: History of Hendon and the RAF - 26 September

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 07379 331807 or email activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk

New Beginners bridge class! Our next beginners Bridge Club will be starting on Thursdays 11 September 2025 at Wilmot Community Hall, Tarling Road N2 8LB. The 8 week course costs £64 and runs from 3-4.30pm. Improvers sessions are on Thursdays from 2.30pm – 4.30pm. Just email activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call 020 8203 5040 to book a place.

Learn or brush up your Spanish - beginning 8 September 2025. Takes place at East Finchley Library, 226 High Road, N2 9BB and costs £48 for a six week course.
Beginners - 4.30-5.30pm; Intermediate - 3.15-4.15pm and Advances - 2-3pm

BLACK HISTORY MONTH - Age UK Barnet is celebrating Black History Month at The Ann Owens Centre on Monday 20 October. Join us for a celebration of African-Caribbean culture, music and food from 2-4pm. Actor, comedian and author Andi Osho will be joining us to share her showbiz stories. There'll also be other speakers and performers, a live cookery demo, delicious food and vibrant African-Caribbean music. Free event. To register contact Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Writer Lee Janogly, an 85 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's at odds with her garden loving companions

"What a beautiful day!" exclaimed Barbara, throwing open the patio doors leading to her extensive terrace. "Let's sit outside in this glorious sunshine."

My heart sank as I followed them out and tried to find a chair in the shade. I hate the sun. Even with sunscreen factor 1,000, I seem to come out in a hideous rash. In fact, during hot summers I have to keep a cardigan in my car so I can slip my right arm into a sleeve to stop it getting red through the window on the driver's side. I have no interest in gardens or, I'm ashamed to say, flowers. I don't know one from another apart from daffodils, which are yellow, and tulips, which – er, aren't.

The others always tease me about my lack of horticultural knowledge. "Come on," said Sheila, pointing to a large bush with, admittedly, pretty pink blossoms, "What's that called?" "I'm not that ignorant," I said, "it's a rhododoodlum." "Laburnum," she corrected.

I shrugged - nearly right....

I also can't understand why gardening as a hobby is supposed to be good for you. There must be easier ways to get chronic backache.

Why do people bring me flowers when I'm entertaining? I do realise how ungrateful that sounds, but it means I have to find a vase, then go through the rigmarole of cutting off the ends and arranging them nicely - a task which totally defeats me when all I want to do is get on with serving whatever I've prepared for my guests.

And even though I carefully pour the contents of the accompanying little sachet into the water, which is meant to extend the life of the flowers, by the following morning they take one look at me and keel over and die. I'd much rather my guests brought me a bar of Cadbury's finest, although that wouldn't last much longer.

However, I do appreciate elaborate flower arrangements at functions (when someone points them out to me, otherwise I wouldn't notice!). At one wedding, however, the table decoration was so large I couldn't see who was sitting opposite me, and just about avoided going home with someone else's husband. It also had little lighted candles amongst the flowers, which I suppose was meant to create a fairytale effect, but the melted wax kept dripping into the soup.

My mother loved flowers and tried to educate me. She came to my house one day with a cutting from something called a Busy Lizzie. It was a little sprig, and she instructed me just to water it. Well, it grew and grew and each time she visited, she put it in a larger pot until it took up half my living room and looked like something from that musical, The Little Shop of Horrors, about a people-eating plant! A drastic solution was called for, so I got a cat, for whom the leaves are poisonous if eaten, and it had to go (the plant, not the cat).

Meantime, my grandson, aged 20, is at university studying for a Bachelor's degree in Botany, Plant Science and Horticulture. His ambition is to become a landscape designer and eventually open a Garden Centre of his own.

Where did I go wrong?!

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





Here are some useful takeaways from a recent talk by Professor Catherine Loveday on memory and how we can hold on to the things we need to remember.

Science-backed facts about memory

- Forgetting is normal – our memory system is designed to filter information. Fortunately, our brains are very good at holding on to what really matters.
- We're more likely to remember what happened yesterday than three days ago, whatever our age - after a few days, memories fade significantly.
- Some memories are exceptionally strong - especially those from our teenage years.
- Dreams fade fast - if you don't write them down or talk about them within 20 minutes, they're often lost.
- Blocking and interference can hinder memory retrieval. For example, thinking of a similar word can block the word you're looking for (the "tip of the tongue" effect). And old memories (like where you parked last week) can block new ones (like where you parked today).



- Mood matters – when we're low, it's hard to recall positive memories; when we're happy, the negative ones feel more distant. Researchers in Oxford have helped people with depression find and access and enjoy positive memories from the past
- Most of us are surprisingly good at forgetting things we don't want to remember.
- Context helps memory – in one study, divers who learned words underwater recalled them better underwater than on land.



Tips for Remembering More (and Forgetting Less)

- Pay attention as being fully present in the moment helps memories stick and attention lapses account for a fair amount of forgetting. So if you don't want to forget your keys, for instance, say to yourself out loud 'I am putting the keys down here'.
- Reinforce memories - repetition, writing things down, and talking about experiences help strengthen brain pathways.
- Struggling to recall something? Step away and try again later.
- Take breaks between learning new things – especially when learning similar things.
- Use cues and associations – can't remember someone's name? Try to find different ways to access that memory. An actor, for instance? Think about films they were in, people they resemble, or where they're from etc.
- Let go of what you don't need - make a point of actively forgetting something you don't need to remember.
- Walked into a room and forgot why? Go back out and come in again – it often jogs your memory!

Catherine Loveday's podcast Mempatthy offers science backed strategies to help people with dementia live well. Listen wherever you get your podcasts. Catherine will also be giving a talk on social connection at our Silver Sunday event on Sunday 5 October at Middlesex University. See page 4 for more details.



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 time he's talking seeds.

There's something rather lovely about this time of the year whether in the garden or at the allotment. The pace slows

and the air is a little bit cooler. One of the nicest things you can do now is save a few plant seeds. Look at your own plants or even ones you admire that friends and family may have.

Saving your own plant seeds is a very satisfying and sustainable way to garden. Not only does it save money, but it can also help preserve plant varieties that thrive in your local conditions. It's easier than you might think and many common garden favourites like foxgloves, tomatoes, beans, poppies, sweet peas and sunflowers are perfect for beginners.

Many years ago, my dad bought some runner bean seeds from an exhibitor at the RHS Great Autumn Show and ever since then, from them I have been saving my own seeds at the end of the year. It's become a bit of a tradition now at our allotments site that I grow and have plants available of 'Bob's Beans'.



I also save my own parsnip seeds but this is a bit more involved, as like carrots, parsnips are biennials- so they flower and set seed in their second year of growing. This means that you have to leave a few in the ground and then the following year let them produce their very impressively tall flower spikes. When the seeds are ripe, remove them from the stalk and place them in labelled paper envelopes and store in a cool, dry place. A great benefit of this is that instead of buying a packet of expensive seeds that don't often contain a large quantity, you can have an abundance of your own saved seeds for the following year.

It's worth noting that not all seeds "come true" to the parent plant type, especially from F1 seeds or hybrid plants. Open-pollinated or heritage varieties are more reliable for seed-saving and tend to adapt better over time to your garden's growing conditions.

Saving your own seeds is not just practical, I feel that it connects you with generations of gardeners, like my dad, who over time have passed on their favourites. You will also find extra satisfaction knowing next year's plants were produced in your own back garden. Why not start swapping spare seeds with friends or family? It's a great way to grow your gardening community too. The renowned garden designer Gertrude Jekyll, is famously quoted as stating, "The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies."

A few gentle jobs for September / October

Sow hardy annuals like poppies and cornflowers – especially if you saved your own seeds!

Now is the time to plant Garlic as it need to get established and a period of winter cold weather for the bulbs to divide.



Get ready to plant spring flowering bulbs. Maybe try something a bit different like Snake's head fritillary or the firework like Allium schubertii.

Tidy up containers and move more tender plants to a sheltered position.

And after our long, hot dry summer, take time to enjoy the slower pace of your outdoor space.





NHS state registered dietitian Caroline Morrison shares her tips on living well with rheumatoid arthritis (RA)

WHAT IS IT? RA is a systemic autoimmune condition that can affect organs such as the eyes, lungs, heart and joints. The joint lining becomes inflamed and swollen leading to extreme tenderness and pain. Increased inflammation increases the risk of developing stroke and heart failure and it can make daily activities a challenge.

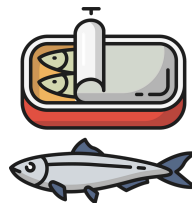
HOW IS IT TREATED? Rheumatologists work with a team of health professionals who give advice on medications, pain management and exercises to improve joint function and diet.

Although dietary change is not a substitute for medication, you may find these tips helpful:

- **Keep a Healthy weight:** Excess weight may worsen symptoms.
- **Stay active:** Regular exercise can help reduce and prevent pain.
- **Diet:** Reduce saturated fats (such as cheese, cream, crisps and cakes) and replace with unsaturated fats (such as olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds). This may reduce blood cholesterol levels and the level of joint pain and inflammation.
- **Cut back on salt:** A high salt intake may promote inflammation due to changes in the immune system and can increase the risk of high blood pressure.
- **Eat 2 portions of Oily fish a week:** Fish oils from sardines, mackerel, herring, fresh tuna and salmon are rich in omega-3 polyunsaturated fats and have been shown to help dampen general inflammation and may help to reduce joint pain and stiffness.
- **Up your calcium intake:** Calcium in your diet ensures that your bones stay strong and healthy. Go for low fat milk, yoghurt, cheese, green leafy vegetables, soya drinks with added calcium, almonds and fish with edible bones, eg. sardines and pilchards.

Shopping and cooking with arthritis

- If lifting shopping bags is difficult, consider using online shopping to get heavier items delivered. You can still go to the supermarket for lighter items.
- Use convenience foods such as pre-prepared or frozen fruit and vegetables, grated cheese or ready meals in the freezer for the days that your arthritis is particularly bothering you.
- If cooking is difficult, make use of electric can openers, hand held blenders and microwaves to make food preparation easier.
- Other tips include keeping the skins on fruit and veg rather than peeling and batch cook – make extra portions for freezing so that you can heat up a meal if you are tired or in pain and don't feel like cooking.



COFFEE MORNINGS



COFFEE MORNINGS: Join us for a cuppa and a friendly chat at one of our new coffee mornings which are held between 10.30am to 12 noon around the borough except Mill Hill library which is 11.00am to 12.30pm.

- North Road Community Centre, 230 Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware HA8 0AP, Tues 24 Sept
- All Saints Church, Church Walk, Childs Hill, NW2 2JS Thurs 11 Sept.
- Lane End Medical Centre, 2 Penshurst Gardens, Edgware HA8 9GJ Wed 17 Sept
- Kingsley Court, Tayside Drive, Edgware HA8 8RE Wed 24 Sept)
- Mill Hill Library, Hartley Avenue, London NW7 2HX Thurs 4 Sept - Health and Wellbeing Session
- Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 9LT Sat 27 Sept
- NEW! Orchard Housing, 1 The Orchard, London NW11 6YN. Thursday 21 Aug - Age Friendly talk by Age UK Barnet and on Thursday 18 September - Health and Wellbeing Session.

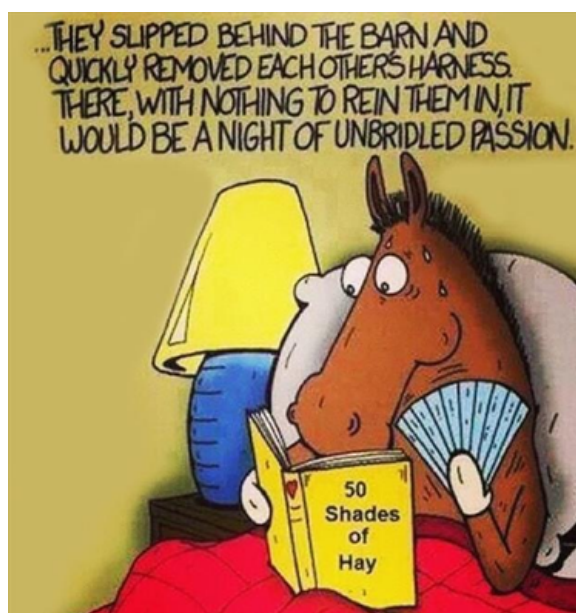
For further info call Tamara on 0208 1297619 or email activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk

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

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR PIGEONS!

1. squab
2. true
3. He saved thousands of lives
4. false
5. passenger
6. false
7. 2 hours
8. All of these
9. All of these
10. peanuts

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