

PIGEON POST

Keeping you informed & involved

July/August 2026 



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Luxury living
EXCEPTIONAL CARE



Hello

June brought record-breaking heat and with the hot weather set to return, don't miss our practical tips for staying safe in the heat on page 15. Despite the heat, we've been swept up in the excitement of the World Cup and Wimbledon, and if you have too, you'll be pleased to hear that simply watching sport is surprisingly good for us - find out why on page 10.

Over on page 7, we're diving into the power of friendship, plus sharing a few simple tips on keeping those friendships going strong.

This issue also features a lovely chat with dog-lover Cynthia, along with all your favourite recipes, puzzles and handy tips to see you through the summer.

Helen Newman
Chief Executive
Age UK Barnet



According to dietitian Kato, adding these little powerhouses to our five-a-day can help to increase our intake of nutrients such as fibre, good fats, plant protein, zinc, and Vitamin E, all of which we struggle to eat enough of in our daily diet.

“A portion of unsalted nuts and seeds a day has been proven to improve heart, brain, and mental health,” says Kato. “Eating nuts and seeds also help manage weight as a small amount can help us feel full for longer.”

Adding nuts and seeds to your daily diet can be a lot of fun, and need not involve great amounts of cooking. They can be added to soups, shakes, bakes, and desserts with very little effort. Why not experiment with some of the ideas and recipes below?

Doctor your breakfast bowl and soups: Add chopped hazelnuts, walnuts, pecans, or flaked almonds with some fruit and honey to your morning yoghurt or porridge. Or add 2tbsp of chia seeds to a cup of kefir/drinking yoghurt and soak in the fridge for an hour or so. Add 1-2 tsp of honey or jam, with chopped fruit and cinnamon. Add 1-2 tbsp of savoury seed mix to soups

Make a nut and seed butter smoothie: In a bowl, add ½ ripe banana cut in slices, a handful of frozen berries, 1-2 tbsp almond butter/peanut butter/tahini, and a cup of milk. Blend until smooth with a stick blender (add ¼ avocado for a creamy texture).



Put nut and seed butter on everything... Add 1tbsp nut/seed butter of your choice (almond, peanut, cashew, tahini), with 1tsp honey/maple syrup (if preferred) to toast, crackers, rich tea biscuits, apple slices, banana slices, pear slices, or a small bowl of Greek yoghurt (with chopped fruit on top). Add 2tbsp cashew butter in Indian curries, or 2tbsp peanut butter in Thai curries.



Nut and seed treats:

Walnut crunchies: Mix 3 cups of whole walnuts with 1/3 cup maple syrup, 1tsp cinnamon, 1tsp vanilla extract, 1/2tsp sea salt and 1/4tsp cayenne pepper. Spread out in a single layer on a baking sheet, and bake for 10 minutes at 180°C. Leave to cool and store in an airtight container

Date and cashew cocoa bites: In a small food processor, add 100g seedless dates, 90g plain cashew nuts, 1.5tsp cocoa powder, 1tsp vanilla or orange essence. Blend carefully until a smooth paste. Roll into 10-12 small balls on a baking sheet, place in fridge to set

Seed bars: Mix ½ cup pumpkin, ½ cup sunflower and ½ cup sesame seed with 3tbsp maple syrup or honey, 1tsp vanilla extract and a pinch of salt. Drop 1 tbsp of mixture on a baking sheet and flatten – make 12 bars. Bake at 180°C for 15 minutes and cool. Heat 100g dark/milk chocolate for 30-45 seconds in the microwave, stir to melt. Dip the bottom of cooled seed cakes in the chocolate and place in fridge to harden.

Some days feel lighter than others, says professional lifestyle coach Hazel Theocharous. “While we cannot always control what life brings, small daily habits can often make a surprising difference to our mood and wellbeing,” says Hazel who suggests the following little lifestyle changes to lift your day.

Start the morning gently. Opening the curtains, making a cup of tea, and sitting quietly for a few minutes before the rush of the day can help create a calmer start.



Get outside if you can. Even a short walk around the block, sitting in the garden, or simply getting a little fresh air can help improve both mood and energy levels.

Listen to music you love Music has a wonderful way of bringing back happy memories. Playing songs from younger years is a little window into the past and can lift spirits and provide comfort.



Stay connected A quick phone call, a chat with a neighbour, or message to a friend can make a big difference. Small moments of connection help remind us that we are not alone.

Give yourself something to look forward to It might be a favourite television programme, meeting a friend for coffee, reading a chapter of a book, or enjoying a slice of cake in the afternoon. Little pleasures matter.



Be kind to yourself - Not every day will feel positive, and that is perfectly normal. On difficult days, try speaking to yourself as kindly as you would speak to a friend. One helpful habit is to end the day by thinking of one good thing that happened, however small. Perhaps someone smiled at you, the sun came out, or you enjoyed a lovely meal.

Often it is the small moments that help carry us through. Sometimes happiness is not about big changes at all: it is about finding comfort, connection, and little pockets of joy in everyday life.

TODAY
I choose
HAPPINESS

OLDER AND BETTER

WHY IT'S GOOD TO GET OLDER



A University of Toronto study has found that younger people tend to view older adults who feel much younger than their actual age as more capable and switched-on. But there's a twist: when someone seems to break age stereotypes too much, younger people start to feel less warmth toward them and are less keen to interact. So “young at heart” can be seen as a sign of successful ageing - but push it too far, and reactions become more mixed.



SUNNY DAYS, *Simple Joys!*

A EASY SUMMER CRAFT FOR YOU

Relaxing,
rewarding &
beautiful!

Brighten your home with this cheerful
decoupage mason jar vase!

YOU'LL NEED:

-  • 1 clean mason jar (any size)
-  • 1-2 floral paper napkins
-  • Mod Podge (glue & sealer)
-  • Foam brush
-  • Scissors
-  • Fresh or faux flowers (optional)

STEP-BY-STEP:



1 Separate the napkin layers. You only need the top printed layer. Cut or tear pieces with your favorite flowers.



2 Brush a thin layer of Mod Podge onto a small section of the jar.



3 Place a napkin piece onto the jar and gently smooth it down. Don't worry if it wrinkles a little.



4 Add more pieces, overlapping slightly, until the jar is covered how you like.



5 Brush a thin layer of Mod Podge over the entire jar and let it dry completely (about 30-60 minutes).



6 Add fresh or faux flowers and enjoy your beautiful summer creation!



Perfect for
your table,
windowsill
or to gift!

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:



Take your time. There's no rush—enjoy the process!

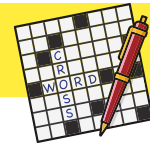


Small wrinkles will smooth out as it dries.



Use different napkins for each season or mood!

TOP TIP! You can make your own Mod Podge at home by mixing 2 parts white craft glue (like PVA or school glue) with 1 part water. Pour the ingredients into a sealable jar or airtight container and shake well until you reach a smooth consistency similar to heavy cream.



SUDOKU

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			9				5	1

Across

1. Optimistic (7)
5. Defame (5)
8. Reddening cosmetic (5)
9. Chivalrous, dashing (7)
10. Idea (7)
11. Beg earnestly; long for (5)
12. Cunning (6)
14. Derived from milk (6)
18. Wherewithal (5)
20. Self-consciously timid (7)
22. Keepsake (7)
23. Awaken (5)
24. Packing case (5)
25. Most costly (7)

Down

1. Unorthodox believer (7)
2. One of the planets (5)
3. Cargo (7)
4. Illuminations (6)
5. Light purple colour (5)
6. Flagrant (7)
7. Leave undisturbed (3,2)
13. Lack of red corpuscles (7)
15. European country (7)
16. Gather together (7)
17. Overseas (6)
18. Imitate (5)
19. Sound practical judgment (5)
21. Accidental success (5)



BRAIN TEASERS

1. **The Missing Pound.** Three friends pay £10 each for a room (£30 total). Later, the hotel realises the room should have cost £25 and gives £5 back. Each friend gets £1 back and £2 is kept as a tip. Each friend paid £9 (£27 total). The bellboy kept £2. $£27 + £2 = £29$. Where is the missing £1?
2. **What Comes Next?** 2, 6, 12, 20, 30, ?
3. **A Farmer's Animals.** A farmer has 17 sheep. All but 9 die. How many are left?
4. **The Letter Puzzle.** What English word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
5. **The Clock.** How many times do the hands of a clock overlap in a 12-hour period?
6. **The Family.** Mary's father has five daughters: Nana, Nene, Nini, Nono and...?
7. **The River Crossing.** A man walks one mile south, one mile east, and one mile north and ends up exactly where he started. How is this possible?

CROSSWORD

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24						25						



LIGHT, FRESH & DELICIOUS
LOW FAT RECIPES
PERFECT FOR SUMMER

GOOD FOOD
GOOD MOOD
GOOD FOR YOU!



LOW FAT SUMMER MEAL FOR ONE

LEMON HERB GRILLED CHICKEN WITH QUINOA SALAD

INGREDIENTS

CHICKEN

- 1 skinless, boneless chicken breast (about 120g)
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- Salt and black pepper to taste

QUINOA SALAD

- 75g cooked quinoa (about ¼ cup)
- 4 cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cucumber, diced
- 1 tbsp red onion, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1 **Marinate the chicken:** In a small bowl, mix lemon juice, garlic powder, oregano, salt, and pepper. Add chicken and let marinate for 15–20 minutes.
- 2 **Cook the chicken:** Heat 1 tsp olive oil in a non-stick frying pan or grill pan over medium heat. Cook chicken for 4–5 minutes each side, or until cooked through. Let rest, then slice.
- 3 **Make the quinoa salad:** In a bowl, combine cooked quinoa, tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, and parsley.
- 4 **Dress the salad:** Drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. Toss gently.
- 5 **Serve:** Top salad with sliced chicken and enjoy!



HIGH IN PROTEIN
LOW IN FAT
FULL OF FLAVOUR!

NUTRITION (approx.)

Calories: 330 Protein: 32g Fat: 7g
Carbohydrate: 34g Fibre: 5g



TIP: Make extra quinoa and keep in the fridge for up to 3 days for quick, easy meals all week!



SWEET,
SIMPLE &
SATISFYING!



LOW FAT SUMMER DESSERT FOR ONE

BERRY YOGURT PARFAIT

INGREDIENTS

- 75g low fat Greek yogurt (plain or vanilla)
- 75g mixed berries (such as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup (optional)
- 1 tbsp porridge oats or granola (low fat)

DIRECTIONS

- 1 In a small glass or bowl, add half of the yogurt.
- 2 Add half of the berries.
- 3 Add the remaining yogurt.
- 4 Top with the rest of the berries and sprinkle with oats or granola.
- 5 Drizzle with honey or maple syrup, if using. Enjoy!

NUTRITION (approx.)

Calories: 190 Protein: 16g Fat: 2g
Carbohydrate: 24g Fibre: 3g

GREAT FOR:

☀️ Warm days



A light, guilt-free treat!



Eating well doesn't mean giving up the foods you love.

ENJOY EVERY BITE!



In a recent Age UK Barnet Q&A, neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday and award-winning science writer David Robson unpacked the psychology of friendship - why it matters, how it shapes our health, and what really helps us connect.

1. **Friendship protects your health.** People with strong social ties live longer and have lower risk of illnesses - from Alzheimer's to everyday infections.



2. **Loneliness activates the stress system.** Feeling isolated triggers a biological stress response that, over time, can contribute to chronic disease.

3. **We underestimate how much people like us - what scientists call 'the liking gap'.** Studies show we consistently misjudge how warmly others feel about us - in reality, we're liked more than we think.

4. **Loneliness peaks in youth too.** It's not just an older-adult issue. Teens and young adults often report the highest levels of loneliness.

5. **Quality beats quantity.** A handful of close, meaningful friendships can deliver the same wellbeing benefits as a large social circle.

6. **Shared reality bonds us.** Feeling "on the same wavelength" - having similar outlooks or values - is a powerful predictor of connection, even visible in brain-scan patterns.



7. **Compliments strengthen relationships.** Positive feedback boosts closeness and trust, even if giving compliments feels awkward at first.

8. **Most of us think we're shyer than average.** But the science shows we're not as socially inept as we fear.

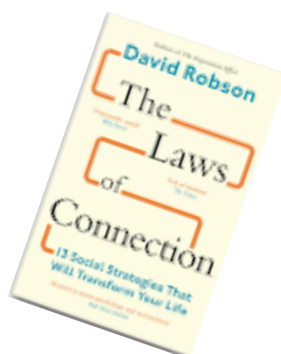
9. **Small interactions build confidence.** A quick chat with a barista or shop assistant can train your social muscles and make bigger conversations easier.

10. **Curiosity is your superpower.** Asking questions - and following up with more - helps people feel heard and opens the door to shared interests.

11. **Listening creates connection.** Active listening signals warmth and safety, two ingredients that make friendships deepen faster.

12. **Friendship is a skill, not a personality trait.** The habits that build connection - noticing others, showing interest, offering kindness - can be learned at any age.

Find out more about this fascinating subject in David Robson's latest book - **The Laws of Connection**.





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 he speaks to Cynthia Shaw who spoke about her love of dogs and how this led to a writing career.

Cynthia Shaw decided very early in life that she much preferred dogs to cats. A few years down the line, she certainly hasn't changed that opinion. Sounds like we could be provoking a Pigeon Post pet protest here but, for Sylvia, there's no doubt that the highlight of any day is when her beloved boxer Barney turns up to visit her at the Signature Home in Hendon.

She's not the only one either – most of the residents look forward to being greeted by Barney's enthusiastically wagging tail.

"Everybody knows Barney by name and they all love seeing him," Cynthia tells Pigeon Post. "They all say hello when they see him and one lady was coming back from hospital when she told the ambulance to stop so she could say hello. He puts a smile on everybody's face."

When Cynthia and her late husband Martin moved into the former Hendon Hall Hotel a few years back, they could have taken Barney with them. But they thought it would be fairer to leave him in the care of their children Loren and Gary – with the strict instruction that he came to visit on a regular basis.

"Barney loves long walks so we knew it would be better for him," says Cynthia. "I ring every day to see how he is and his visits always do me good. He could have been a therapy dog and he's been a real comfort to me since my husband died a few months ago. Barney being able to visit was one of the reasons we moved to Signature in the first place. He just loves older people and they love him."

Cynthia has owned several boxers over the years and they've all proved their total loyalty, unlike the cat her family had when she was a child.

"One day there was this cat stuck up a tree and my father, who hated heights, climbed up to collect it," Cynthia recalls. "At first, I thought it was lovely but then somebody up the road fed it and he went to live with them. I remember thinking then that I would never have cats, and dogs have been my thing ever since."

It was her passion for dogs that would, by chance, lead her into a writing career that spanned many decades. In particular, she would write about her dogs and other animals. Cynthia also wrote a beautiful book detailing her family history.



Cynthia and her dog Barney

"My writing started when I saw a line in a magazine asking readers to send in a paragraph about their dog," she says. "The prize was a year's supply of dog food. I wrote about our first boxer Bengo, who I'd fallen in love with, and it won me the competition. But Bengo didn't actually like the food so I asked if I could send it back and they gave me the money instead! That got me thinking that perhaps I could write more and that's where it all began."

Cynthia and her husband enjoyed many holidays around the world and there would often be adventures, usually including animals, to relate in stories for various magazines. One of those came when they visited East Africa and discovered the joys of elephants.

“We rode on elephants on that holiday and, at first, it was a little scary when you saw the high ladders you had to climb up. But I wasn’t afraid once I got up there. My husband never got over the fact that when he dropped something while up there, the elephant driver, known as the mahout, said something to the elephant and it bent down, picked it up with its trunk and put it over his back so Martin could reach it. Elephants are such clever animals.

“On another trip to India we came across another remarkable animal. I think it was a panther that had been brought up by humans. He’d fallen from a tree and broken some bones and we got very close to him. The breed could be very dangerous but he was very friendly and let us stroke him.” Cynthia wrote articles for many different magazines and also became a strong advocate for animal welfare. One story that remains firmly in her mind is that of Goliath the gorilla, who she first met soon after it had been born at Bristol Zoo. He was a very friendly gorilla and Cynthia formed a strong bond with him over various visits.

“Goliath was so lovely,” she says. “He would see me and come tearing down the cage to greet me with his arms out. Everybody loved him, he was wonderful and I remember he once appeared on television with the great Johnny Morris.

“Sadly though, Goliath’s story didn’t end well. He was sent with other young gorillas to Singapore in a failed attempt to breed with them. They caught the same disease and they all died. I couldn’t speak when somebody rang to tell me, I was so angry. That’s why I will always speak up on behalf of animals.

“Of course, that’s exactly what Sir David Attenborough has done brilliantly for so many years. He’s marvellous and my grandson was lucky enough to meet him after Sir David responded to his letter by inviting him to pay him a visit. That was a wonderful experience for him.”

Animals remain a huge part of Cynthia’s life but none more so than Barney, of course. His presence at Signature Homes has been particularly important for her since Martin died in January. The former Hendon Hall Hotel, where Alf Ramsey’s England team were based before their World Cup triumph 60 years ago this summer, had been part of their lives together for seven decades.

“We were married nearby in 1957 and we used to come to Hendon Hall for their lovely dinner dances,” says Cynthia. “It felt like we were back to where it all started and we couldn’t have found anywhere better.”

The benefits of owning pets

- One long-term study from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging found that older pet owners experienced improvements in happiness and anxiety levels over time compared with non-pet owners.
- Research by the University of Michigan found that 83% of older pet owners reported their pets gave them a sense of purpose, and 70% said their pets helped connect them with others
- Owning a cat or dog is linked to slower cognitive decline by potentially preserving specific brain functions as we grow older.
- In one study, dog owners were found to retain sharper memory, both immediate and delayed, while cat owners showed slower decline in verbal fluency.



SCAMS UPDATE POSTCODE LOTTERY & TV LICENCE SCAMS

Post code lottery scams. Scammers are contacting people via phone calls and fake social media accounts to promote sham versions of the Lottery, according to Which? magazine.

You can only win the People's Postcode Lottery if you sign up, after which you're entered into prize draws every month. The official website is www.postcodelottery.co.uk

You can report scam accounts on social media by selecting the three dots in the top right corner and pressing 'Report.'

Scam calls can be reported by texting the word 'call' followed by the phone number to 7726 on an iPhone. If you have an Android phone, text the word 'call' to 7726. You'll then receive a message asking you for the scam number.

A scam email impersonating TV Licensing

Watch out for emails that tell you that your TV Licence could not be renewed and provides a link to start the renewal process.

The email also says that your direct debit payment has been declined and is sent from a '.jp' domain, which is a Japanese-registered email address.

The link included in it will lead to a phishing website intent on stealing your personal and payment information.

How Age UK Barnet can help: Our scams awareness team can give you a free one-to-one consultation to help you reduce your risk of scams. Book your free session by ringing 0208 129 7615 or 0208 129 7627. Age UK Barnet's digital support sessions also help people stay safe online. Phone Howard on 0208 432 1415 to find out about your nearest group.

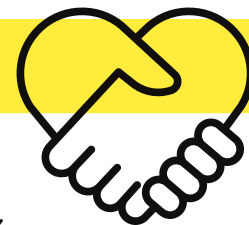


FOOTBALL WORLD CUP AND TENNIS - WHY WATCHING SPORT IS GOOD FOR US!

A new study suggests that watching sport - whether live or on TV - can significantly cut the risk of depression in later life. Researchers found that older adults who regularly attend games are up to 34% less likely to develop depressive symptoms, and even weekly TV viewers see around a 29% lower risk. The secret isn't just the sport itself but the social buzz around it: shared excitement, being part of a crowd, the emotional release that comes with cheering your team on, and getting out of the house, if you see it live.



- 1. Host a match-day get-together.** Invite friends, family or neighbours round to watch a big football game or tennis match with snacks - it turns passive viewing into a social event.
- 2. Join (or start!) a local sports chat group.** A weekly Talking Sport Club, a WhatsApp group, or a café meet-up gives people a chance to debate results, share memories and keep up with what's happening now. Swap stories about favourite teams, unforgettable matches or childhood sporting triumphs. For details of future Talking Sport groups at Age UK Barnet, contact activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call 020 8203 5040.
- 3. Go to live games or public screen.** Local pubs and cafes often show live sport - better than watching on your own at home, soak up the atmosphere and shared excitement.
- 4. Volunteer at community sports events.** Helping at fun runs, youth matches or charity tournaments keeps you active, connected and part of the action - without needing to play.
- 5 Take part in walking sports.** You can play walking tennis, walking football and walking netball at Burnt Oak Leisure centre, Watling Avenue, HA8 0NP (email: burnt-oak@gll.org or phone: 020 8201 0982). At Barnet Copthall, as well as gym and exercise classes, there's a Club lounge for over 50s with seating, books, a television, board games, a kitchenette and refreshments available. Barnet Walking Football Team is open to men over 50 and women over 40 and is a fantastic way to stay active, socialise, and play football at a comfortable pace without running or tackling. Takes place at The Hive, Camrose Avenue, Edgware, HA8 6AG. Just email Barnetwft@yahoo.com



- 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.
- **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
- **Advice Clinic Burnt Oak Library**, 99 Watling Ave, Burnt Oak HA8 0UB - 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. The clinics are open from 10am-1pm and 2-4pm. To book an appointment, please call us on 0208 432 1417 or email us at laterlifeplanners@ageukbarnet.org.uk
- For essential jobs in the home please phone our **Handyperson Service*** on 020 8150 0963.

*There is a charge for this service

EVENTS

Talks: getting to grips with your tech. A series of useful talks as part of Age UK Barnet's free weekly digital support sessions on Mondays from 2-4pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT. August 3 – parking apps; 7 Sept – police talk: spotting a scam; 5 Oct – using the NHS app. For more info contact Howard on 0208 432 1415 or email howard.chapman@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Talk: Hobbies, happiness and healthy retirement – Thursday 16 July (6.45-8pm) - Neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday on what happens to our minds when we dive into a hobby - and why do they matter more in retirement than we realise? Catherine lifts the lid on the surprising science behind purpose, play and how we spend our time. Takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT. Optional £3 donation on the door. To register, tel07502 989403 or email Teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Musical Afternoon with Operatic Tenor Geoffrey Strum - Wednesday 26 August, 3–4pm - Enjoy a wonderful hour of classical and musical theatre favourites at Ayrtton House, 3 Medawar Drive, Ridgeway Views, Mill Hill, NW7 1WD. Pay £5 on the door for non-residents (includes refreshments). Getting there: Limited parking. Close to the 240 bus route and within easy reach of Mill Hill East station. To book: Call Helen on 07384 466840 or email activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Monthly bingo on Fridays. Fun, friendly competition at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT from 2-3pm. Next dates for 2026 are: June 26, July 24, Aug 21, Sept 18, Oct 16, Nov13 and December 11. £3 donation. Fancy lunch too? Join us at our lunch club earlier at 12.45pm for a delicious home cooked two course meal - for only £10. To book your place for the lunch club (which also takes place every Friday), please call 020 8203 5040 or email activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk

Dementia practical support session for relatives, carers and volunteers who are supporting people living with dementia - Thursday 3 Sept (5-7pm). Takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT. Email rowan.gibbons@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call 02081297612.

Writer Lee Janolgy, an 86 year old semi retired fitness instructor and author, shares the conversational highlights of her regular meet ups with a group of friends. This time they discuss the perils of make-up after a certain age.

I was woken by a phone call at 8.30am and Pauline's croaky voice saying she really didn't feel well and could I find someone else to host the coffee 'n' cake meeting that Wednesday.

I couldn't have the meeting at my house as the council were digging up the road just outside – again – and the noise of the drilling was intolerable. I called Sheila who offered to act as host. "I've got a Swiss Roll in the freezer so it should be defrosted by the time you get here."

I informed the others of the change of venue, and we all trooped into Sheila's house, complaining about the freezing weather. At least the coffee was hot, but unfortunately the cake was more Arctic Roll than Swiss Roll, enhanced by crunchy shards of ice in the cream.

We chatted for a while then Barbara said, "Has anyone told the make-up lady that we're not meeting at Pauline's?"

We looked at her, puzzled. "Oh, you didn't know," she said. "Pauline bumped into one of her old make-up artists from her acting days and invited her to come along to our meeting as a surprise to demonstrate 'make-up for the mature skin.' We'd get a discount on any products we bought from her."

That was not only a surprise for us, but it certainly would be for the make-up artist on her way to Pauline's.

None of us had her contact details so there was nothing we could do.

Naturally the chat turned to make-up, and I told them about my mother who had beautiful, unlined skin right up to her death at 91, probably due to a liberal nightly application of Pond's cold cream.

"Maybe you should try that then," suggested Jess.

I let it go.

"As a child I was fascinated by her make-up routine. She would get a damp sponge and slather her face with some orangey foundation called 'pancake'. Then she'd add blue eyeshadow, mascara, and finish it off with a dab of 'rouge' on her cheeks"

"A lot of those women used to pencil in their eyebrows into high arched thin lines," said Jessica, looking pointedly at me. "It made them look permanently surprised."

"My aunt wore dark red lipstick which always bled into the little lines round her mouth," said Deely. "By midday she looked like Mrs Dracula at a hen night."

"I think older women who wear thick black eyeliner round their eyes look dreadful," said Laila, "with sparkly eyeshadow and about ten coats of mascara. I'm always reminded of Debbie Reynolds as Cleopatra, riding into town in her chariot."

"It was Elizabeth Taylor," corrected Sheila.

"Was it? So, which one was married to Eddie Fisher?"

"Both of them - but not at the same time - as far as I know."

"I loved Eddie Fisher singing 'Moon River,'" said Barbara,

and started crooning 'Wiiider than a miilee –'

"That was Andy Williams."

"I liked Val Doonican."

"Was he related to Lonnie Donnegan?"

"Why would he be?"

Suddenly the doorbell rang, and we all jumped. Sheila ushered in a very thin, middle-aged lady, dressed entirely in black and carrying a large suitcase. Her hair, also jet black, was backcombed into a huge beehive on top of her head. She wore orange make-up, sparkly blue eyeshadow, thick eyeliner with long false eyelashes and dark red lipstick, which was slightly smudged. Her eyebrows were two thin, angry-looking lines across her forehead.

"I'm Felicity Mahoney," she announced. "Sorry I'm late but I've just driven across town from Pauline's house." She opened the suitcase and spread samples of make-up all over the coffee table. "Now, who's going to be first for me to demonstrate my cleansing lotion which contains hydroxypropyl cyclodextrin and retinyl palmitate? Anyone?" The eyebrows rose even higher. Silence. She went on, "After I've cleansed your face, I'll show you the correct way to apply make-up for wrinkle – er – mature skins."

Silence - even Jessica sat mute.

'Would you like some Swiss roll?' asked Sheila.

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





We asked some of our activity goers to tell us about the one invention that truly made a difference – here's what they told us.

LYCRA

"I never suited the clothes made for curvier bodies like my friends. When lycra came along, suddenly leggings, skinny jeans and swimming costumes actually fitted. It opened up my wardrobe and made getting dressed fun again." - Isabella



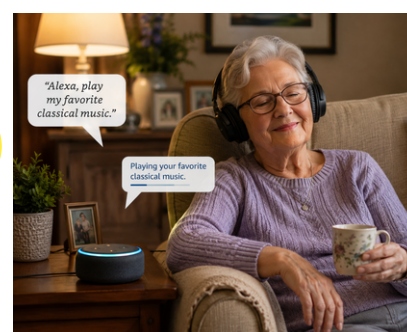
AI

"It jogs my memory, helps me plan, designs things for me - even gave me ideas for my new kitchen. It's like having a clever assistant who never gets tired." - Andy



MY SMART SPEAKER - ALEXA

"I used to rummage through piles of albums just to play one track. Now I just ask, and the song appears. It's magic." - Mark



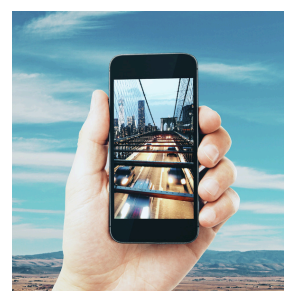
MODERN MEDICINE

"I take a cocktail of medications every day. Without today's medical advances, I don't think I'd have made it to 90." - Gilda



THE MOBILE PHONE

"I was a bit reluctant to have a mobile when they first came out – now I couldn't live without one. I talk to my grandchildren every week but the phone is also set up to answer my questions. I can ask anything from what the weather is going to be today to what's on TV later." - Jenny



CENTRAL HEATING

"When I was growing up we had no central heating and my mother used to tell us to just put another layer on. I still don't take it for granted that I can take off my coat when I get in the house." - David



SMARTWATCH

"My smartwatch saved my life. It warned me that my resting heart rate had shot from 50 to 130 - a nudge that sent me to my GP and led to a diagnosis of atrial fibrillation, a condition that could have caused a stroke if left untreated." - Roger





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 this time he offers tips on Mediterranean style gardens.

All gardeners are obsessed with the weather, of course we are. If one word sums up this year so far, it's "exceptional."



After an extremely wet start, the rain stopped, flaming June arrived in April, and we enjoyed an unusually dry, sunny spring. My carefully sown parsnip seeds failed to germinate, while last year's self-seeded ones popped up everywhere. A late cold snap hit early crops like potatoes - thankfully recovered - followed by record heat in May.

As we move into July and August, watering becomes vital. Rather than a light daily sprinkle, water thoroughly once or twice a week to encourage deep roots. Early morning or late evening watering reduces evaporation and ensures moisture reaches where it's needed most.

The warm weather has produced remarkable displays. Roses, lavender and peonies have thrived, and my tomatoes, courgettes and beans promise a great harvest. Prolonged dryness can stress even established plants, so mulching with compost, bark or well-rotted manure helps conserve moisture and keep roots cool.

Hotter, drier summers are becoming more common, so gardeners may benefit from Mediterranean-style planting. Herbs like rosemary, thyme, sage and lavender thrive in sunny spots and need little water once established. Plants with silver or narrow leaves cope well with heat and drought. Many prefer free-draining soils and gravel mulches that retain moisture and reduce weeds.

Whatever space you have, try drought-tolerant plants in pots or baskets - trailing geraniums, colourful Lewisia, Mexican fleabane, creeping thyme and compact rosemary. They'll love the sun, need less watering, and even provide herbs for cooking.

A few other jobs to maintain a Mediterranean style in July / August

Manage Drainage:

Mediterranean species like olive trees, lavender and woody herbs can rot in cold, wet soil. Create free-draining conditions in pots by mixing potting compost with horticultural grit, or add it to planting holes in the garden.

Watering:

While drought-tolerant once established, container plants and new plantings need deep, regular watering during dry, warm summer months.

Summer Mulching:

Spread a 2–3 cm layer of light-coloured gravel or stone chippings around the base of the plants. This suppresses weeds, insulates roots against temperature changes, and reflects heat upwards to mimic a sunny Mediterranean environment.

Summer Pruning:

Trim off faded spring flower spikes on plants like Salvia or lavender and deadhead bedding plants and roses regularly to encourage a second flush of blooms.





WHEN IT'S HOT KEY PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES



STAY OUT OF THE HEAT:

- Keep out of the sun between 11.00am and 3.00pm
- If you have to go out, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat and light scarf
- Avoid extreme physical exertion and wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes



COOL YOURSELF DOWN:

- Have plenty of cold drinks and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks
- Eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high water content
- Take a cool shower, bath or body wash or sprinkle water over the skin or clothing



KEEP YOUR ENVIRONMENT COOL:

- Keeping your living space cool
- Place a thermometer in your main living room and bedroom to keep a check on the temperature
- Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and open windows at night
- If possible, move into a cooler room, especially for sleeping
- Electric fans may provide some relief, if temperatures are below 35°C



LOOK OUT FOR OTHERS:

- Keep an eye on isolated older people to ensure they are able to keep cool
- Don't stay in the stationary car for too long
- Be alert and call a doctor or social services if someone is unwell or further help is needed



IF YOU HAVE A HEALTH PROBLEM:

- Keep medicines below 25 °C or in the refrigerator (read storage instructions on the packaging)
- Seek medical advice if you are suffering from a chronic medical condition or taking multiple medications



IF YOU OR OTHERS FEEL UNWELL:

- Try to get help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache; move to a cool place as soon as possible and measure your body temperature
- Drink some water or fruit juice to rehydrate
- Rest immediately in a cool place if you have painful muscular spasms (particularly in the legs, arms or abdomen), and drink oral rehydration solutions containing electrolytes
- Medical attention is needed if heat cramps last more than one hour, if you feel unusual symptoms or if symptoms persist



Stay cool. Stay safe. Look out for others.



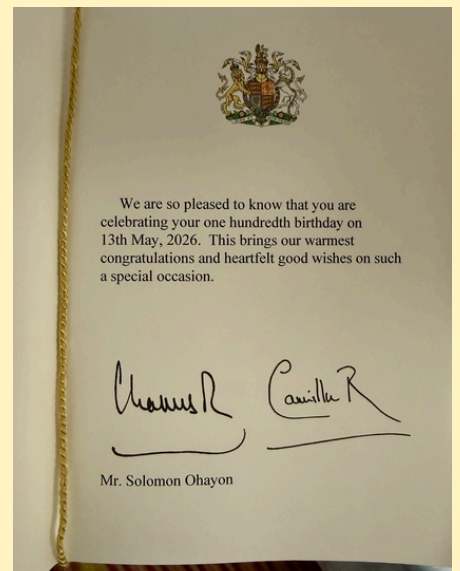
In an emergency call **999** or **111**

100 AMAZING YEARS!



We're delighted that former Pigeon Post interviewee Solly Ohayon has received a letter from the King for turning 100 - a milestone made all the more remarkable by the extraordinary life that came before it. As a teenager, Solly spent the first years of the Second World War evacuated to Reading and the last years serving as an infantry signaller, following the Allied advance from the D-Day marshalling camps all the way to Germany. He went on to build a new life with his beloved wife Bertha, raise a family, work well into his seventies and even take up bowls in later life.

Looking back now, surrounded by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Solly says he's simply grateful he lived to tell the tale - and to enjoy the celebrations of reaching a century.

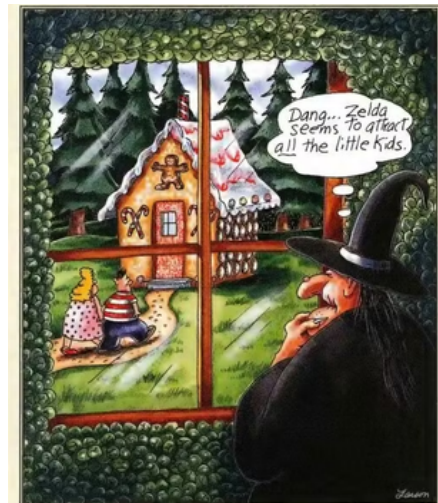


If you have enjoyed this newsletter, or have any suggestions, please let us know. Just drop us a line at Pigeon Post, Age UK Barnet, Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT



"Listen. I think we better keep this quiet."

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



Later, Edna was forced to sell her Brussels sprout house.

Brain teaser answers

1. There is no missing £1.
 The friends paid £27 total: £25 for the room - £2 tip. £25 + £2 = £27.
 The mistake is adding the £2 tip to £27 instead of subtracting it.

2. 42. Pattern:
 $1 \times 2 = 2$, $2 \times 3 = 6$, $3 \times 4 = 12$,
 $4 \times 5 = 20$, $5 \times 6 = 30$, $6 \times 7 = 42$

3. 9 sheep. "All but 9" means 9 survived.

4. Short. Add "er" and it becomes "shorter."

5. 11 times. The hands overlap 11 times in 12 hours.

6. Mary. The question says Mary's father.

7. He started at the North Pole.

1	H	O	2	P	E	3	F	U	4	L	5	L	I	6	B	E	7	L
	E		L		R					I		I		L				E
8	R	O	U	G	E				9	G	A	L	L	A	N	T		
	E		T		I		H				A		T					B
10	T	H	O	U	G	H	T				11	C	R	A	V	E		
	I					H		S						N				
12	C	R	13	A	F	T	Y			14	L	A	C	T	I	16		C
						N			17	A			U					O
18	M	E	A	N	S				20	B	A	S	H	F	U	L		
	I		E		E				R				T		L			L
22	M	E	M	E	N	T	O				23	R	O	U	S	E		
	I		I			S				A			I		K			C
24	C	R	A	T	E				25	D	E	A	R	E	S	T		