

# PIGEON POST

Keeping you informed & involved  
July/August 2024



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## Welcome

We are absolutely delighted that the new mayor of Barnet Cllor Tony Vourou has chosen Age UK Barnet as one of his three charities of the year! We very much look forward to working together on fundraising events over the next year. And on the subject of fundraising

I recently took part in the Regent's Park 10k to raise money for the work we do in the borough. I'm glad I did it but it was tough, partly because it was the furthest I'd ever run and also because it was so hot and busy on the day. But I believe strongly that we need to keep challenging ourselves and get out of our comfort zone so I am determined to keep running! You may not be up for a 10k, but there are plenty of opportunities to try something new here at Age UK Barnet - from art and cooking to Tai Chi and yoga, we'll have an activity for you. Enjoy the issue!

Helen Newman  
Chief Executive  
Age UK Barnet

The great thing  
about getting  
older is that you  
don't lose  
all the other  
ages you've been!



**Most of us remember being told as children to drink our milk to grow strong bones. 'It turns out that older adults need even more calcium to maintain their skeletal bones in top strength,' says trainee dietitian Kato. 'This is especially true for older women, who lose between 2-3% of their bone mass a year after the age of 65 and studies have found that higher calcium intake from food maintains bone mass and can reduce the risk of fractures when falling.'**

A varied diet is the best way to take in enough calcium. Surprising sources of calcium include canned sardines and salmon (which contain fish bones) and seeds such as chia and sesame. Hard cheeses such as cheddar and parmesan contain 2-3 times more calcium than soft cheeses, and a portion of tofu (set in calcium) provides a third of your daily calcium requirement. 'While most vegetables and some fruits contain small amounts of calcium, spinach and kale pack the biggest punch – one portion will give you a quarter of your maximum daily requirements,' says Kato. 'In Britain, all white flour is fortified with calcium to replace what is lost during milling – so even white bread can add to your daily calcium intake.'

The meal plan below suggests how to include a good source of calcium in every meal – the estimated contribution of each meal is based on the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of 1.2g calcium for people older than 65.

**Breakfast: Chia seed breakfast bowl** (serves 1) (1/3rd calcium RDA)

Soak 2 tbsp of chia seeds overnight in 200ml of plain kefir, drinking yoghurt, or a mix of 150ml plain yoghurt and 50ml water. To serve, add 1 tsp chopped nuts, 1 tbsp berries, 1 tsp berry jam, and 1 tbsp granola.

**Omelette with spinach and grated cheddar** (serves 1) (1/3rd calcium RDA)

Heat 1 tbsp of olive oil in a non-stick pan. Fry ¼ cup chopped onions and 150g spinach leaves. Cool on a plate while you heat another tsp of oil. Fry two beaten eggs until nearly set. Add the spinach mix and ½ cup of grated cheddar cheese. When the cheese is melted, fold the omelette in half.

**Lunch: Minestrone soup** (serves 4) (1/3rd calcium RDA per portion)

Peel and finely chop one onion, 2 garlic cloves, 1 small potato, 2 carrots, 2 sticks of celery and 1 small courgette. Gently fry the vegetables in 2 tbsp of olive oil until soft – about 10 minutes. Add 1 tsp each dried parsley, basil and oregano and fry for another minute. Add 2 cans of chopped tomatoes and 300ml vegetable stock. Gently simmer for another 15-20 minutes. Turn off the heat and add 200g spinach or kale (destalked) until wilted. Serve with 1 tbsp grated parmesan or 2tbsp grated cheddar cheese and a wholewheat roll per portion.

**Sardines on toast** (serves 1) (2/3rd of calcium RDA)

Toast two slices of wholemeal bread and serve each with ½ can drained sardines in olive oil (save the olive oil for another meal). Add tomato slices on top and chilli flakes and/or dried herbs to taste.

**Dinner: Tofu and sesame stir fry** (serves 2) (1/3rd calcium RDA per portion)

Heat 2tbsp of vegetable oil in a frying pan or wok. Add 200g cubed tofu, fry until golden and remove. Cut into thin strips 2 carrots, 2 sweet peppers, 1 pack of mangetout, and ½ a cabbage. Add 2tbsp oil to the pan and stir fry vegetables on a high heat until soft, about 5-7 minutes. Add the fried tofu and stir fry sauce (mix together 1 tbsp oyster sauce, 1 tbsp sesame oil, 1 tbsp rice wine vinegar, 2 tbsp soy sauce and 2 tsp sugar). Serve each portion with 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds and rice or egg noodles.





- A scam letter is being sent to households which tells you that your name 'drew lucky numbers' in the 'International FIFA World Cup online lottery program'. It goes on to say that you've won hundreds of thousands of pounds and you need to call a number to claim your prize money. Calling this number will put you through to a scammer who will try to obtain your personal and financial information.
- Action Fraud has warned of phishing emails pretending to offer you deals on solar panels. The emails ask you to check your eligibility for funding to cover the upfront costs of solar panel installation and prompt you to follow a link. The link asks for personal and financial information, and may install malware on your device.
- Scam texts promoting fake 'points' that lead to 'rewards' on your Vodafone account take you to dodgy phishing websites. The texts tell you that you only have three working days to redeem your points. Don't click on the link. You can report scam texts by forwarding them to 7726, then delete the message.

For more advice on scams prevention, please contact Joyce and the scams support team on 020 8203 5040. They can give you the tools to spot a scam and support you if you have been a victim of a scam.

## DEMENTIA STRATEGIES

## 10 WAYS TO BE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Whether you're caring for or have regular contact with someone living with dementia, Sohini Boron, MD of care company Home Instead, specialising in dementia care, offers her top tips.



Never **ARGUE**, instead **AGREE**

Never **REASON**, instead **DIVERT**

Never **SHAME**, instead **DISTRACT**

Never **LECTURE**, instead **REASSURE**

Never **REMEMBER**, instead **REMINISCE**

Never say **YOU CAN'T**, instead say **DO WHAT YOU CAN**

Never say **I TOLD YOU**, instead **REPEAT**

Never **COMMAND**, instead **ASK**

Never **CONDESCEND**, instead **ENCOURAGE**

Never **FORCE**, instead **REINFORCE**





Come and talk to our Age-friendly champions about what we are doing to make Barnet a better place to grow old in - plus it's a chance to find out about activities, events, information and services available for over 55s in the borough.

### Dates and locations

10 July - Brent Cross Shopping Centre, First Floor NW4 3FP - 10-2pm

11 July - The Spires Shopping Centre, High Barnet EN5 5XY - 10am - 2pm

17 July - The Broadwalk Shopping Centre Edgware HA8 7BD - 9am-12noon

31 July - East Finchley Library, East Finchley High Road N2 9BB - 2pm - 5pm

6 August - Brent Cross Shopping Centre, First Floor NW4 3FP - 10am - 2pm

7 August - Edgware Community Hospital, Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware, HA8 0AD - 10am-2pm

21 August - Colindale Library, 7 Bristol Ave, London NW9 4BR - 2-4pm

For more info, email [agefriendly@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:agefriendly@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call Pippa on 07379 331807

## 80TH D-DAY CELEBRATIONS

## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES



On the recent 80th anniversary of D-Day, we honoured the soldiers who stormed the beaches of Normandy and paved the way for freedom and peace. Day club member Brian remembers the day like it was yesterday - he was 10 years old, his mum woke him and his siblings, then they all walked to a park in Wood Green to join in the celebrations! 'It was so exciting - I'll never forget it!' says Brian.

## YOUR HEALTH

## DIET TO REDUCE DIABETES RISK



Cookery tutor Ann larchy offers a few dietary tips if you're at risk of type 2 diabetes

As well as keeping a healthy weight, there are certain foods that are linked to lower risk of type 2 diabetes

1. Choose drinks without sugar and drink unsweetened tea and coffee.
2. Choose higher fibre carbs such as brown rice and wholewheat pasta and bread and cut down on white bread.
3. Cut down on processed meats like bacon, ham, sausages, pork and salami. Try to get your protein from healthier foods like beans and lentils, unsalted nuts, eggs, fish, chicken and turkey.
4. Eat plenty of fruit and veg. Apples, grapes, berries and green leafy vegetables, in particular, have all been linked with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes.
5. Choose unsweetened dairy products.



**Each month former journalist Ed Newman has a lovely chat with a Barnet resident and share their stories with the rest of us. This month Ed speaks to Jenny La Touche who is choirmaster of our Singing Together sessions at the Ann Owens Centre on Tuesday mornings.**

**Jenny has sung with the stars – but she’s just as happy sharing her love of music with schoolchildren, those with learning disabilities and older people.**

As a key member of the legendary London Gospel Community Choir since it first started, Jenny has performed and recorded with the likes of Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Elton John, Madonna and Maria Carey.

Music has always been in Jenny’s soul. Growing up in the 1960s, she was introduced to gospel at her local Pentecostal Church and she hasn’t stopped singing since.

‘I grew up in a musical family,’ recalls Jenny. ‘Music was everything at the church we attended.

‘It wasn’t long before I started to listen to other types of music as well. I loved reggae and particularly Bob Marley, R & B with groups like Earth, Wind and Fire and also Nielsen, The Osmonds and songs like Sugar Sugar by The Archies.’



In 1982, Jenny attended a concert at Kensington Temple that changed her life dramatically. After the Brixton riots the previous year, the concert was organised to promote the positive side of Black youth. In the event, it did so much more than that and they have been spreading their message of peace and unity in diversity through music and faith ever since.

‘It was only supposed to be a one-off concert,’ Jenny tells Pigeon Post. ‘Afterwards though, there were over a hundred of us saying it had to continue.

‘So, the London Community Gospel Choir was born and I became a member. I was twentysomething at the time and I’ve done most jobs for them in the forty-odd years since.

‘So, it’s been quite a journey. It’s all my children have known and it’s been very exciting to work with so many different brilliant people over the years.

‘We did a recording of the Long and Winding Road with Paul McCartney and three tracks for the Lion King with Elton John. It’s thirty years since the film came out and, in July, we’ll be performing The Circle of Life at the Royal Albert Hall. We also performed with Elton at Glastonbury.

‘I would have to say one of my favourite experiences was performing with Luther Vandross at the Royal Albert Hall. That was very special and, although we’ve performed in some amazing venues, I don’t think you can beat the Albert Hall. We end our year there with a Christmas Show that is always a sell-out.’

When she’s not working for the LGCC, Jenny is out and about spreading her message about the power of music in a variety of different places. Whether with youngsters or older people, she’s in no doubt about the positive impact singing can make on someone’s life.

‘You can never take for granted the response people will have to a particular song,’ says Jenny. ‘Whether it’s babies or people who have been on a long journey, it’s a beautiful thing to see the emotion that music can inspire.

‘When I work at Age UK Barnet, we can have a group covering ages from 50s to 90s and I always try to find music that people will recognise and enjoy. My own memory can be bad at times but when I hear a certain song, I will remember it immediately. That’s the thing about music, it all comes flooding back to you.

‘That’s why I never want songs to be forgotten, whatever type of genre it comes from. Many people are too young to remember Vera Lynn’s “We’ll Meet Again” but it’s a lovely song and very emotional. That’s why I encourage people to sing and enjoy it.

‘I believe in what I would call real music, not some of the modern electronic stuff. Music that is made with blood, sweat and tears. That’s what I try to get young people to listen to. There’s always a real mix of music you can discover.’

Singing is a wonderful way for older people and those living with dementia to be brought together. Jenny likes the idea of starting a Barnet based choir for people of a certain age so watch this space.

‘I certainly hope it will come to that,’ says Jenny.

## RECIPE TIME

## SWEETCORN FRITTERS WITH CHIPOTLE COD



### Ingredients

- 3 large eggs
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 200g can sweetcorn
- 3 spring onions, finely sliced
- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 garlic clove, finely sliced
- 200g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1-2 tbsp chipotle chilli sauce
- 1 lime, zested and juiced
- 2 skinless cod fillets
- ½ small bunch of coriander, chopped

### Method

1. Beat the eggs and flour together until smooth. Stir through the corn, spring onion and some seasoning.
2. Heat half the oil in a medium non-stick frying pan. Pour in the batter and fry over a medium heat for 3 mins on each side until golden.
3. Heat the grill to high. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan and cook the garlic and tomatoes for 5 mins. Stir through the chipotle and the lime juice and zest.
4. Meanwhile, cook the fish on a baking tray under the grill, set to medium-high and cook for 3-4 mins on each side.
5. Slice the corn fritter into four and divide between two plates. Sprinkle over the coriander and serve with the fish and chipotle tomatoes.



## BROWN BREAD ICE CREAM

### Ingredients

- 200g stale sliced brown bread, or any wholemeal bread
- 600ml double cream
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 397g can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 tbsp treacle

### Method

- Toast the bread until deeply golden. Tear and put in a food processor, then blitz to fine crumbs.
- Beat the cream and syrup together until the cream holds its shape.
- Pour the condensed milk into a second bowl, drizzle in the treacle and whisk gently to combine.
- Carefully fold in the whipped cream and syrup mixture and all but 1 tbsp of the breadcrumbs.
- Spoon into a loaf tin or freezer proof container.
- Top with the remaining breadcrumbs and freeze for at least 6 hrs until firm.
- Remove from the freezer 10 mins before serving to soften slightly.

*Will keep covered in the freezer for up to three months.*



This month former physiotherapist Gillian wants us to focus on our hands, such vital parts of our general well-being. 'As we get older, we may find that our hands don't function as well as they used to,' says Gillian. 'We may notice that they are not as strong and flexible as they once were, and at times even painful to move. 'Jars may be harder to open or jewellery more fiddly to get on and off. I am sure you can think of some other activities no longer as easy as they used to be?'

The following exercises will help to improve both the strength and dexterity of your hands and wrists.

1. Place your hands palm down, with fingers spread, on a flat surface, such as a table. Lift one finger at a time off the table. This might initially be difficult as your fingers may tend to move together. Repeat each finger lift several times before moving on the next.



2. Put your palms together as if saying your prayers. Keep your shoulders down and elbows at right angles. Hold the position and turn your hands towards your chest and then away from you – repeat several times.

3. Hold your hands out in front of you and bend the end joints of your fingers to make claws. Bend and straighten several times, ensuring it is only the end joints that are moving.



4. Shake hands with yourself, changing which hand is on top.



5. With one hand facing up and the other down, put your fingers together and try to pull your hands apart. Then repeat with the other hand on top. Do several times.

6. Make a fist, squeeze as tightly as you can and hold for 3 -5 seconds and release slowly, then stretch your fingers as far apart as possible. Do the same with the other hand and repeat 5 times for each.

7. Find some rubber bands of different lengths and put over your finger or fingers so that they are tight enough to make enough resistance for you to have to work hard to spread your finger(s).



### *Did you know?*

Recent research has shown that well-functioning hands and fingers are associated with stronger mental skills, including flexible thinking, self-control and working memory. This means play-like hand activities will help your brain as well! Knitting, sewing, drawing, writing (try with both hands) card games, jigsaws and origami all help. **Phone 020 8203 5040 for details of Age UK Barnet's Knit & Natter group, art classes and bridge groups.**



**RIDDLES**

- Q1: What do the numbers 11, 69, and 88 all have in common?  
 Q2: If 2 is company and 3 is a crowd, what are 4 and 5?  
 Q3: I add 5 to 9 and get 2. The answer is correct, so what am I?

**SODOKU**

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

**Across**

- 1 Thoroughly soaked (7)
- 5 Greek letter S (5)
- 8 Souvenir (5)
- 9 Exploded (5,2)
- 10 Learner (7)
- 11 Devoutness (5)
- 12 Embraced (6)
- 14 Tree providing wood for cricket bats (6)
- 18 Circular (5)
- 20 Absconds (7)
- 22 Italian child (7)
- 23 Interior (5)
- 24 Simple song (5)
- 25 Clients (anag) (7)

**Down**

- 1 Withdraw from a contest (7)
- 2 Lively Bohemian dance (5)
- 3 Enrage (7)
- 4 Gallows (6)
- 5 Exclusive news story (5)
- 6 Polite, refined (7)
- 7 Put to use (5)
- 13 Epicure (7)
- 15 Slope (7)
- 16 Spendthrift (7)
- 17 Obnoxious (6)
- 18 Dressed (5)
- 19 God or goddess (5)
- 21 Frenzied (5)

**CROSSWORD**

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8						9						
10								11				
12		13						14	15			16
						17						
18				19		20				21		
22								23				
24						25						



**What you will need**

Clay pot

Mod Podge (you can also use white PVA glue - you may need to thin it slightly with a small drop of water)

Fabric

Scissors

Paintbrush

**Instructions**

Start by cutting a length of fabric that will wrap once around your pot. Leave extra room for folding it over on the top and bottom.

Cut slits in the fabric around the top, to avoid puckering as you make your way around.

Begin by coating a small section of the pot with Mod Podge. Stick the beginning of your fabric length to the pot and, once it is in place, coat the fabric with Mod Podge.

Continue doing this all the way around, without worrying about the top or bottom of the pot.

When the outside of the pot is finished, trim your fabric so that less than an inch hangs over the top and bottom.

Begin at the top, folding the fabric into the pot in pleats so that it lays nice and flat around the rim. Coat in Mod Podge and let dry.

Do the same for the bottom, folding the fabric in pleats so that the bottom edge of the pot remains smooth.

Coat any loose flaps of fabric with Mod Podge. Let the pot dry completely before using.



**HINT** - If you want to use these plant pots for plants, you'll want to use a spray sealer on the inside before beginning. This will make certain that the water doesn't come through from the inside to the outside and cause staining. This is especially important if you are giving them as gifts.

I also recommend washing and drying your fabric before doing this project (don't use fabric softener). This allows you to remove the sizing from the fabric (which causes staining sometimes). It's not absolutely required, but it makes the fabric easier to apply as well.

How we enjoyed the summer sunshine with family and friends on those long summer days....



## HOW CAN WE HELP?

## AGE UK BARNET SERVICES



- For advice about benefits, grants, housing and money concerns, phone our **Later Life Planning Service** on 020 8432 1417.
- For scams advice and support, call our **Scams Prevention Service** on 0208 432 2217.
- 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.
- 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 may be a charge for this service



## OUT & ABOUT

## AGE UK BARNET EVENTS



**Talk: Changing Times – Wednesday 10 July 2024 (7-8pm).** Professor Catherine Loveday on the mysteries of time – everything from why time speeds up as we get older to why first week of a holiday always seems so much longer than the second week. Takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT. To book contact Teresa on 0208 432 1421 or email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

**Boost your Wellbeing event: Monday 29th July 9.30am for 10am start, finishes at 12pm.** Held at St Mary's Church, 49 Church End, London NW4 4JT. Join Age UK Barnet for a morning of talks and activities on a range of wellness topics including heart health, cancer awareness and mindfulness plus there'll be an exercise taster. FREE entry and FREE refreshments. Easily accessible on bus routes serving Hendon Paid parking available on side roads. Contact Salima Jiwa to register: [Salima.jiwa@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:Salima.jiwa@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or ring 07503 353157. You can also register on Eventbrite

**Talk: How we can use negative emotions for good - Weds Sept 11 (7-8pm)** Neuropsychologist Professor Catherine Loveday on how we can use sadness, anger and frustration to actually make us feel better. To book your free place, contact Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

**LATE SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL** Our music event due to take place on 13 July has been postponed until **Saturday 21 September 2024 - the last day of summer!!** Join us for a day of live music, stalls, food and drink. Any questions, please contact [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or 07502 989 403.

## WHY IT'S GOOD TO SOCIALISE!



Dementia Day Club member Salim, who has Parkinson's and dementia, explains why mixing with others in our day clubs has transformed his life: 'As my speech started to slow down, my social life became harder. I was becoming more or less housebound, withdrawing from social situations and not meeting new people. 'But joining here has helped me. It's relaxed, there's no pressure and everyone is friendly. For me it was good being pushed out into the real world and I would really recommend anyone to do the same and have experiences you wouldn't otherwise have. I have new grandchildren and I need to be as happy, active and chirpy as I can be and this club is just what the doctor ordered. 'I enjoy the activities and chatting to other people about new things.'

**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 hints that cake may be key to the creative process.**

There was great excitement at our Creative Writing Course meeting this week. My friend, Sheila-Round-The-Bend (so called because she lives round the corner from me – to distinguish her from another friend of the same name known as Sheila-Down-The-Road – for obvious reasons) and I are members of our local University of Third Age (U3A) and one of Sheila's articles had been accepted for publication in The Oldie magazine.

This is a tremendous achievement for an amateur writer when you think of the number of people who consider themselves authors and continually send stuff to magazines, usually in vain. We all gave Sheila a round of applause and broke open a carton of green top for tea to have with the cherry bakewell tart she had baked and brought along to help us celebrate the start of her new literary career.

I thought the cake was a bit stodgy at first, so I had to have a larger second slice to confirm my diagnosis, and I was right. It was a bit stodgy.

Sheila read out her soon-to-be- published piece and it was actually quite charming, featuring herself as a small child getting lost on a beach - or something. I couldn't really concentrate because someone had cut the cake at an angle so it looked uneven, which irritated me, so I had to pick up the knife and cut myself another small slice to 'tidy it up'.

The group leader encouraged us all to write a memoir to hand down to our grandchildren and future generations. 'You might think your life is mundane', she said, 'But your great-great grandchildren will be fascinated by your experiences. For example, how you laid flowers at Kensington Palace when King William's mother died, and how you used to drive a 'car' – on the road! They won't believe it!'

We looked a bit dubious but agreed it seemed like a nice idea. I trimmed a bit more of the cake and popped the 'trimmings' into my mouth until I was satisfied the remaining cake formed a perfect 45 degree angle.

Each week we were given 'homework', which was to write a short article on a subject of our choice. I read out my very amusing (I thought) piece about my cat, Parsley and her brother, Basil, and waited for someone to suggest I send it in to a magazine to be published. No one did. They just kept eating the stupid cake! I grabbed the knife and cut a further tiny sliver before those greedy women could polish it off!

Sheila said to me, 'You can take the rest of it home if you like' but I declined, saying it was a bit too stodgy.

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



## WHY IT'S GOOD TO GET OLDER



Whatever you feel about ageing, it's always better to feel good about it. According to Harvard research, people with more positive attitudes about growing old tend to live longer and healthier lives than those with negative thoughts about ageing.

In a recent Age UK Barnet talk, neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday shared what she has learned about memory after working with Claire who developed amnesia after a viral infection at the age of 40.

### Lesson 1: Tap into your strengths – and make our memories a habit.

Memory comes in different forms, including conscious and unconscious, so tap into your strengths.

- If you're not very good at remembering facts and figures, use other ways to access those memories. For example, learn to use that automatic unconscious part of our memory system by repeating something until it becomes automatic. This is what we do when we learn to drive.
- Create useful habits. If you need to take a pill, turn it into a habit. For instance, set a reminder alarm until it becomes a habit.
- Play to your strengths. If you're an intuitive person, then go with your feelings.
- Don't worry if you have to look things up – there's no evidence this weakens your memory.

### Lesson 2: A healthy memory is a flexible one

When Claire tells a story it's always the same. Most people change and reshape their memories over time when they recall experiences. This flexibility is healthy as most of us tend to reshape a memory into something that is positive and better for us, particularly when we get older. It allows us to be happy.

### Lesson 3: All memories fade unless they are rehearsed

By showing Claire photos of what she'd been doing, she was able to form memories in a way she hadn't been able to before. Although it's healthy and normal to let go of most of what we do, we want to hold on to things that are important to us.

- Rehearse your memory – thinking about things we've said and done reinforces it and makes it stronger.
- Other ways to consolidate memory include writing a diary or making a scrapbook.
- Share and talk about the books you read or the programmes you watch.
- Write down things that have happened that are important to you, lists of films you watch or books you read.
- Go back to these every now and again - whether it's a diary or a photo album, this is the key to reinforcing these memories.

### Lesson 4: Daydreaming is mostly good

Our minds go on a little journey when nothing is going on, flipping between things that have happened and things that might happen. Daydreaming is something Claire can't do but it's a sign of a healthy brain and a way of reactivating memory circuits. So finding opportunities for your mind to wander helps make memories.

- Give yourself rest and time to do nothing like sitting and staring out the window!
- Go for a walk in a familiar place so you don't have to think about where you're going.
- Do something repetitive like listening to music or knitting on your own – anything that stops you thinking about what you're doing.
- If you want to remember a special event, do nothing for an hour after – and have a good night's sleep.
- If it makes you miserable, then stop.

### Lesson 5: have a strategy to remember names

If you're meeting someone for the first time, really pay attention what they're saying and use their name and reuse their name to make the name part of that memory trace. Make associations if you can – do they remind you of anyone? Top tip is to write it down.

With names you already know, bring up an image of that person in your mind. Picture their face and anything to do with that person, then step away and come back to it. Going through the alphabet can help. Or look it up – there's no shame in this. You may remember it better the next time. We can make it easier for other people by introducing ourselves.

### Lesson 6: Organise your memories – and create systems

Don't have too many pieces of paper and notebooks. Claire suggests using one diary or notebook that goes with you everywhere. Post it notes and whiteboards detailing your timetable for the week are all useful too. Be systematic – keys and items you use regularly should be kept in one place. Label cupboards, if necessary.

To retrieve a personal memory, find out what works for you. Whether it's thinking of what you were wearing, listening to music, looking at old photos – everyone has a different way of accessing the past.

### Lesson 7: Curate your life in some way

The hardest thing for Claire is not being able to access her past memories. We should be curating ourselves because if we suffer from memory loss in future, it might become useful to the people around you. Only you know what makes you who you are. Make lists of films, books and objects that are important to you, perhaps. Maybe recreate your own desert island discs. You could curate photo albums – with comments – and save items of clothing that are meaningful to you. Creating a memory box of concert tickets or other memorabilia. Or you could write about your life – your autobiography.



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...

At the allotment I have planted out my sweetcorn plants and they have started to grow strongly. It didn't go according to plan this year as the three packets of seeds that I planted resulted in only 6 plants. I blame the cool damp spring for the poor germination. Fortunately I did manage to buy some lovely plants at a neighbouring allotment site plant sale.

I have also been 'earthing up' my potatoes. To do this, as the potato grows and more stem appears above ground, you need to mound up the soil so that more of the stalk is covered. If you have grown some in a container you can add more soil. This will encourage longer roots and allow more potatoes to form. When growing potatoes, they do need a good watering during dry spells, water is key to a good crop and potatoes in containers can easily dry out.



One of our plot holders grew some foxgloves one year. They looked great and produced striking spikes of flowers, they then happily self-seeded, popping up all over the site. I like to help out this process by shaking the ripe seed heads about when walking around.

### A few other jobs for July / August

- To keep summer plants and bedding plants at their best and encourage more flowering, it is essential to dead head the old flowers.
- Early flowering perennials can look a bit tired by July and their foliage is becoming tatty and brown. If these plants are cut back now, many will produce fresh green growth to liven up the border and sometimes even a second flush of flowers.



- Water new trees, shrubs and perennials planted in spring, to help them through dry spells.
- Keep sowing salad crop seeds and water well in dry weather for a continuous crop.



# LOVE & FRIENDSHIP

# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Our lovely cookery volunteer and art class participant Saj proved it's never too late to play the dating game when she took part in The Guardian's over 60s blind date special! She was paired up with musician Fred and over 6 months later, they are still going strong! 'It's so lovely to do cultural things together,' says Saj.

Fred regularly plays in the Ronnie Gordon Legacy Band at Maddens Bar in East Finchley - and Saj is one of his biggest fans. In fact, Fred performed at the first ever Glastonbury in 1970 when he was playing for the band Marsupilami.





**Age UK Barnet held its first ever drag bingo night to celebrate Pride Month and the older LGBTQ+ people of Barnet.**

The evening was a sold out event raising over £1000 for Age UK Barnet and Fighting with Pride, a charity supporting LGBTQ+ veterans.

Hosted by Manuka Honey, the most fabulous drag queen in town, everyone enjoyed a fun packed evening of cabaret songs, banter and bingo.

'This has been the first night out since my husband passed away and I haven't laughed so much for ages!' said one bingo goer.

Another said: 'This was such fun - can you hold one every month please!'

Wellbeing manager Fiona, chair of Age UK Barnet's equity, diversity and inclusion committee, says: 'It's important that we recognise the older LGBTQ+ community and through fun events like this we can bring people together and celebrate the wonderful diversity in our borough.'

'Events like ours break down barriers that make people feel that they don't belong – and it was fantastic to see people of different sexualities and backgrounds just having a great time.' We are hoping to host our next Drag Bingo event in December. Look out in future issues of Pigeon Post for more details.



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

**RIDDLE ANSWERS**

- A1: They all read the same way when placed upside down.
- A2: 9.
- A3: A clock. When it is 9 a.m., adding 5 hours would make it 2 p.m.

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



1	S	O	P	P	I	N	G	5	S	I	G	M	A			
	C		O		N		I		C		E		P			
8	R	E	L	I	C			9	B	L	O	W	N	U	P	
	A		K		E		B		O		T			L		
10	T	R	A	I	N	E	E		11	P	I	E	T	Y		
	C				S		T								E	
12	H	U	G	G	E	D		14	W	I	L	L	O	W		
								17	O		N				A	
18	R	O	U	N	D			20	D	E	C	A	M	P	S	
	O		R		E						I		L		A	T
22	B	A	M	B	I	N	O		23	I	N	N	E	R		
	E		E								U		N		I	E
24	D	I	T	T	Y			26	S	T	E	N	C	I	L	

