

My Life

LEWISHAM'S MAGAZINE FOR THE OVER 60S

**SAFE IN YOUR
OWN HOME**

**FANCY A FREE PC?
COULD YOU BE
A VOLUNTEER?**



**FREEDOM
PASS**
See London
for free!



I'M IN CONTROL
thanks to Direct
Payments



**OUT AND ABOUT
IN LEWISHAM**

Do you need help repairing your home?

If you have owned and occupied your property for more than three years, and it needs repairs, you may be eligible for money to improve it.

Help may be available if you are on a low income, particularly if you are over 60, have dependent children under 16, are disabled or living with a long term illness.

To find out more contact the Housing Grants team on 020 8314 6622 or email housingassistance@lewisham.gov.uk



Welcome to My Life

They say that 60 is the new 40, and it's certainly true there are lots of opportunities for older people to remain active, contribute to their communities and be a part of everything that Lewisham has to offer.

We hope *My Life* will highlight some of the varied activities there are available for people over the age of 60 as well as provide information on keeping healthy, safe and independent.

We'd love to hear what you think about *My Life* – so do fill in the form on page 20 and let us know. Pam Ayres, the well-known poet, has her own take on being 60. Go to page 15 and see if you agree with her!

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Take off with your FREEDOM PASS

Don't forget to renew your Freedom Pass before 1 April 2008. Then you can carry on travelling for free on London's buses, tubes and trains.

If you have a Freedom Pass you must renew it during February and March, even if you've only had your existing pass for a few weeks. If you don't renew your pass, you won't be able to travel for free after 1 April 2008.

How do I renew my Freedom Pass?

Renewing your Freedom Pass is easy. Collect an application form from any post office. Complete the form and take it back to the post office with proof of your name, age and address (the application form tells you what sort of proof is needed).

You'll need to bring your current Freedom Pass too, so that a new sticker (with the date 31 March 2010) can be added. You won't need a new photograph unless you're applying for a Freedom Pass for the first time.



When should I renew it?

You can renew your Freedom Pass any time after Monday 4 February but you must renew it by Monday 31 March if you want to continue travelling for free.

I don't have a Freedom Pass, what should I do?

If you are over 60 then you are entitled to a Freedom Pass. Simply obtain an application form from the post office and follow the instructions to start enjoying free travel.

If you have any queries call 020 8314 6560 or visit www.freedompass.org

TAKE A TRIP TO TOWN

With your new found freedom, why not take the train to town? You could enjoy a free lunchtime concert on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays in St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square. This splendid 18th century church is only a short stroll from Charing Cross Station (about 20 minutes by train from Lewisham). It also has a recently refurbished café.

St Martin-in-the-Fields,
Trafalgar Square,

Tel: 020 7766 1100
www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org

If you are over 60 you could join the thousands of older people who travel free off-peak on London's buses, trains, tubes and trams every day.

'Without my Freedom Pass I wouldn't get out so much. I'd be sitting at home more.'
Mrs Titmus, Catford

'I use my Freedom Pass every day. I can't walk far so it's very useful.'
Kristina Chudzynska,
Sydenham

'I'd be skint without it.'
Kenny Howes, Lewisham

FREE BUS TRAVEL

ANYWHERE IN
THE UK

From 1 April 2008, your new Freedom Pass will also give you free travel on any local bus anywhere in England. So you can use it on buses outside London too.

Want a free PC?

Age Concern London is offering free computers to anyone over 50 who lives in London. It's part of a project part funded by computer recycling company, Maxitech and hopes to open up the online world to older people.

Robert Oseman, 71, from Sydenham thought the offer was too good to refuse. Since his computer arrived last April, Mr Oseman has learned how to send emails, write letters and even buy things on ebay. 'I'm sometimes on the computer 2-3 hours a day,' says Robert. 'I email my sons and a friend in Wales. I'd never got used to a computer before but now I love it.'

If you would like to receive a computer call Age Concern London on 020 7820 6770.



DID YOU HAVE JAZZ IN THE 1940S?

Would you like to take part in a fascinating project to increase understanding between the generations?

If you'd like to take part in a new project to bring together older and younger Lewisham residents then we'd love to hear from you.

'We're particularly keen to hear from older people who are actively involved in a group such as a support group in a sheltered home, a veteran's association or voluntary group,' says David Savill of Age Exchange, the organisation behind the new project.

The aim is to bring together young and older people to increase understanding between the generations.

Shared interests

Older people who still love to dance might, for example, pair up with someone younger who shares their passion. Or older people who lived in children's homes in the 1940s and 50s might meet up with young people who have recently left care.

Younger and older people will each learn interview skills to discover more about each other's lives, and possibly visit together places in Lewisham that mean a lot to them.

The exchanges will be recorded in writing and also on film – creating a DVD that will be sent to every school in Lewisham to help with citizenship studies. The film might also be used to train social workers.

Respect

'You can't ask young or older people to respect each other unless they understand each other's lives,' says Councillor Peggy Fitzsimmons, who got the idea for the project when she heard two talented young Lewisham musicians, who had just performed to a group of veterans, ask if they had jazz in the 1940s.

'It made me realise how little we sometimes know about each other's lives,' says Peggy. 'There can be so much misunderstanding. This project aims to do something about that.'

If you would like to take part, or know someone else who would, contact David Savill, Age Exchange, on **020 8318 9105** (davidsavill@age-exchange.org.uk) or Paula Banks on **020 8314 6023**.

LOOK AFTER YOUR LUNGS

I make sure I take a walk every day, rain or shine.’
Phyllis Longhurst, who was diagnosed with COPD in 2003.



Are you coughing and wheezing, feeling breathless and prone to chest infections? If so, you are certainly not alone.

You may have a condition called Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) that is common in older people. COPD is a long-term condition that affects the lungs and is usually caused by smoking, but can also be triggered by exposure to dust and air pollution.

Taking control

The good news is that, although there is no cure for COPD, it is a treatable condition and people with it can make a real difference to the way they feel by taking control of their lifestyle.

Frances Borrowman, a nurse practitioner in Lewisham who specialises in COPD, says: ‘COPD is very prevalent and is often undiagnosed. If people take control of their own health it will minimise the chances of complications. Every little helps – a daily walk will get the lungs going and make a huge difference.’

Kick the habit

The single most important way in which you can help yourself feel better is to stop smoking. This can be difficult, but getting help will increase your chances of quitting.

Don’t feel guilty about having smoked but think about how giving up will improve the rest of your life.

If you are overweight it will be difficult for your lungs to work properly. But whatever your weight, a well-nourished body is essential for staying fit and active. Eat a balanced diet with plenty of foods rich in starch and fibre, plenty of fruit and vegetables and not too many sugary foods.

You may be anxious about becoming breathless and feel that exercise may be harmful. This is not true. Exercise is vital in keeping your lungs healthy and the more active you are, the more you will improve the quality of your life.

Positive attitude

Phyllis Longhurst, 69, was diagnosed with COPD in 2003. ‘I have good and bad days, but since I stopped smoking my condition hasn’t got much worse and I cope very well. I try to walk every day, even if it’s only for 20 minutes. I go to the shops rain or shine, whether I want anything or not.

‘My advice to anyone with COPD is to stop smoking, exercise as much as you can and take control. Don’t let the diagnosis take over your life – learn how to manage your symptoms and keep a positive attitude.’

For further information on COPD, ask your doctor or practice nurse, who can do a special test to see if you are at risk or have the condition.

SMOKING

YOU REALLY CAN QUIT

Have you decided it’s time to quit smoking? Then contact Lewisham Stop Smoking Service for free support and advice, including advice on nicotine replacement therapy. People who get support from a ‘stop smoking’ service are four times more likely to succeed. So call Lewisham Stop Smoking Service free on 08000 820 388 or visit stop.smoking@lewishampct.nhs.uk Don’t forget to tell them you read about the scheme in *MyLife*.

HELP IS AT HAND

Thousands of older people in Lewisham are taking advantage of a scheme that allows them to stay in their own homes, secure in the knowledge that help is at hand if they need it – 24 hours a day.

They are subscribers to the borough's Linkline service, which means that at the push of a button they will be put through to someone in a local communications centre who will assess the problem and call for help if necessary.

For a small monthly charge an alarm unit will be fitted in your home and you can wear an alarm button on a pendant around your neck. If you are in sheltered accommodation or living in a private home and would like to find out more call Linkline on 020 8690 0440.



BEATING BOWEL CANCER



Did you know that bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK? The good news is that it is highly treatable and if it is caught early, there is a 90% survival rate. So from this year, if you are aged between 60 and 69, and live in south east London, Lewisham Hospital is inviting you to take part in a bowel cancer screening programme.

Within the next two years, you will be sent a home testing kit which contains a leaflet called 'Bowel Cancer Screening – the facts' together with instructions on how you can do a test in the privacy of your own home.

You will be asked to collect a small sample from three separate bowel motions. You then need to send these to a laboratory in specially designed pre-paid envelopes that are sent with the home testing kits. The samples will then be analysed and if they are clear, the hospital will write to you. You will then be contacted every 2 years until you are 69 in order to collect new samples. If there are any problems, you will

be asked to go to the hospital for further tests.

Dr John O'Donohue, a Consultant at Lewisham Hospital is keen for Lewisham residents to take part. "We know many people are reluctant to talk about their bowels because they are embarrassed. We really hope that giving people a test they can do in the privacy of their own home will help overcome this. I am strongly encouraging everyone who receives the kit to use it. It could save your life."

People aged 70 and over can also request a testing kit by calling a freephone helpline on **0800 707 60 60**.



WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SEE?

You're never stuck for fascinating places to visit in Lewisham. Here's a selection of interesting things to do and see this year.

Be entertained in Blackheath

Blackheath Concert Halls hosts a popular afternoon tea dance once a month with a live band, tea and cakes. Usually on Tuesdays. 2–4pm. £5.

Blackheath Concert Halls,
23 Lee Road, Blackheath,
SE3 9RQ. Tel: 020 8463 0100
www.blackheathhalls.com

Uncover a secret at Manor House

Tucked between Lee High Road and Manor Lane, this 18th century landscaped garden provides a pretty setting for a much-loved public library (currently closed for renovation) and café. A lake, fountain and walled garden are a tranquil haven, and the historic ice house (open 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month, April to November, 3–5pm) is one of Lewisham's best kept secrets.

Manor House, Old Road, Lee,
SE13 5SY. Tel: 020 8852 0357

The Laban Centre, Deptford

Visit one of London's most striking modern buildings and an internationally famous dance school. The attractive grounds, attractive café and some areas of the building are open to the public. Guided tours are also available.

Laban, Creekside, Deptford,
SE8 3DZ. Tel: 020 8691 8600
www.laban.org

Catch a show at the Broadway Theatre

Catford's 1930s Art Deco theatre stages a range of popular shows including music, comedy, drama and pantomime. The main theatre hosts popular family shows, and the studio theatre more intimate dramas. Also film screenings (tickets cost a maximum of £5).

Broadway, Rushey Green,
Catford, SE6 4RU.
Tel: 020 8690 0002
www.broadwaytheatre.org.uk

Share your memories Lewisham Memorial Group Bellingham

Join this informal group of ex-servicemen and women to share memories and experiences. Meets every Wednesday from 1–3pm. Transport can often be arranged if required.

British Legion Hall,
Allerford Road, Bellingham,
SE6. Tel: 020 8690 6772

See the stuffed walrus at the Horniman Museum

...or the African masks, the historic musical instruments, the moon jellyfish in the refurbished aquarium or the busy bees. This charming, eclectic museum has something for everyone. Set in beautiful gardens with a great view towards the City, you may also be lucky enough to catch a concert on the bandstand in more clement weather. Free.

Horniman Museum,
100 London Road, Forest Hill,
SE23. Tel: 020 8699 1872
www.horniman.ac.uk

Go wild in Forest Hill

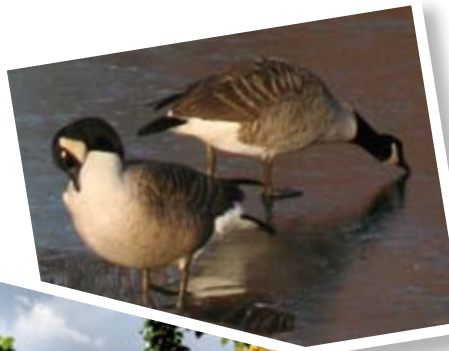
The four kilometre railway cutting running from New Cross to Forest Hill is one of London's most important nature reserves. The most accessible section is the Devonshire Road stretch in SE23, open on the last Sunday of every month from 2–5pm (or dusk in winter). The site has a few steps.

Visitor Centre, 170 Devonshire Road, Forest Hill, SE23.
Tel: 020 8314 2007

Get fit for free

The borough's new state-of-the-art leisure centre in Downham includes a 25m swimming pool and fitness suite with plenty of classes for all ages and abilities. Pensioners can use the facilities for free with their Lewisham Plus card. Or just visit the library and café. Open Monday–Friday 7am–10pm, weekends 8am–8pm.

Downham Health & Leisure Centre, 7–9 Moorside Road, Downham, BR1 5EP.
Tel: 020 8461 9200



Chat while you knit in Hither Green

Friendly Hither Green florist and café *You Don't Bring Me Flowers* also runs an informal knitting and crochet group for all ages and abilities on Tuesdays 4–6pm. Free.

You Don't Bring Me Flowers, 15 Staplehurst Road, Hither Green, SE13 5ND.
Tel: 020 8297 2333
www.youdontbringmeflowers.co.uk



Join the jazz crowd

Forester's Arms, now the All Inn One, in Forest Hill, hosts well-respected jazz nights on Saturdays. Attracts a wide age range. Free entrance.

All Inn One, 53 Perry Vale, Forest Hill, SE23 2NE.
Tel: 020 8699 3311
www.allinnone.org.uk

Beckenham Place Park

The rolling park is also one of the borough's prettiest and best for wildlife – you may even spot a kingfisher down by the river. Seniors can play golf in the park for £8 on weekdays, £10 at weekends, or take advantage of lessons, a practice area and putting green.

Beckenham Place Park and Golf Course, Beckenham Hill Rd, Beckenham, BR3 5BP.
Tel: 020 8650 2292
www.glendale-golf.com



Get nostalgic at the Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre

Inside Blackheath's unique Age Exchange you may be surprised to find a replica 1930s shop, and many objects and documents from the first half of the 20th century including wartime memorabilia and a wind up gramophone with records. The centre also has exhibitions, a café and computer courses for older people. Open Monday – Friday 10am–5pm, Saturday 10am–4pm. Closed Sunday and Bank Holiday Weekends. Free.

Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre, 11 Blackheath Village, Blackheath, SE3 9LA.
Tel: 020 8318 9105
www.age-exchange.org.uk



'I'M IN CONTROL THANKS TO DIRECT PAYMENTS'

Does it sometimes feel that you are planning your lives around your carers? Direct Payments can put you back in control.

As we get older, many of us need care and support around the house in order to keep our independence. But sometimes it can feel like we're planning our lives to suit our carers – rather than the other way round.

That's where Direct Payments can help. Instead of receiving care services from the Council, we will give you money to arrange your own care services. So you get exactly the services you need, at a time to suit you.

You decide

Arthur Verney, 64, decided to use Direct Payments when he started to need more help around the home. 'I'd been assessed as needing 35 hours of care a

week to help with things like cooking, washing and getting me to bed,' says Arthur, who uses a wheelchair.

'My social worker told me that instead of receiving care services from the Council I could get money to arrange my own care. I thought that sounded right for me.'

More flexible

Arthur likes the flexibility of Direct Payments. 'I can choose the hours I receive care – it doesn't have to be the same every day or each week. Also, because I'm employing my own carers I get the same people each time. I don't have to cope with lots of different people.

'I think some people find the idea of employing their own carers a bit frightening but it's really not that difficult,' says Arthur.



Arthur Verney with Ethlyn Crooks, who has been one of Arthur's carers for over five years.

'There's a bit of paperwork but for me the advantages of Direct Payments are so huge that it's easily worth it.'

NEW LEAFLETS

There's a new series of leaflets to help all older people live as independently and safely as possible. The leaflets cover topics such as getting healthy, social support, adult education, transport, Black and ethnic minority communities, and bereavement.

If you have access to a computer visit www.lewisham.gov.uk and type 'Better prospects' into the 'search' box. You can print the leaflets out to use yourself or pass them to someone who needs them.

AM I ENTITLED TO DIRECT PAYMENTS?

Have you have been assessed by Lewisham Council as needing care services? If so, you are entitled to Direct Payments. To find out more simply call 020 8314 8866 or ask your social worker.

ARE YOU A CARER?

Then you might be entitled to Direct Payments too. Call 020 8314 8866 for more information.

'I NEVER THOUGHT I WAS A CARER'

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WHO LACK CAPACITY

Like many people who spend hours each week looking after a partner, relative, child or friend, Marion never thought of herself as a carer.

As well as looking after her elderly mother, Marion also cares for her son when his rheumatic condition flares up and he can't walk or bend. 'I was struggling to cope and getting more and more withdrawn,' says Marion. 'I didn't speak to friends. I just thought I had to cope alone.'

Across the UK there are over six million people like Marion – unpaid carers who often give over 50 hours a week looking after their partner, relative or friend. Many don't even think of themselves as carers and therefore miss out on support.

Coping alone

Phyllis, 69, looks after her husband, Edward, who has dementia. For months she coped entirely alone. But just recently Edward started going to a day centre a couple of days a week, following an assessment from social services.

'At first I felt guilty about sending him to the day centre because I thought it was my job to care for him,' says Phyllis. 'But he's happy there and I benefit from having the time to myself – to clean the house or maybe go out.'

Many people are a reluctant to seek help, says Cathy Collymore of Carers Lewisham, which supports over 4,000 carers across the borough. 'Many people think it's their job to just get on with it. They feel guilty about asking for help. But it can be a real struggle.'

Getting a break

Carers Lewisham offers a popular 'occasional sitting' service to give carers a short break. Someone sits with the person being cared for, while the carer gets a little time to themselves. 'At first people are sometimes a little reluctant to have someone else in their home but we can do taster sessions so that people can just try it out,' says Cathy.



Carers Lewisham also offers regular coffee mornings for carers and also helps them find other support – including help with claiming benefits and accessing other services such as respite care.

Marion admits she's become a 'new woman' since contacting Carers Lewisham. 'I saw a poster about Carers Lewisham at my doctors and at first I didn't think it was relevant to me. I never thought of myself as a carer. I thought they meant people who were being paid to care. But I'm so glad I contacted them.'

If you are looking after a partner, relative or friend and would like to talk to someone about your situation, call Carers Lewisham on **020 8699 8686** or Lewisham Council on **020 8314 6000**.

If you are caring for someone who lacks the mental capacity to make decisions then you should know about the Mental Capacity Act, which came into force last year.

The act is designed to protect people who are not able to make decisions about what is in their own best interests. Now, for the first time, carers are required by law to follow certain guidelines to show that they are acting in someone's best interests.

Similarly, doctors, social workers and other professionals are required by law to consult with a member of the family or carer before taking certain decisions on someone's behalf.

The Act also makes it easier for people to plan ahead and make decisions in advance about their care. You can now, for example, sign a Lasting Power of Attorney to give a carer, relative or friend the power to make health and welfare decisions on your behalf. You can also make known your wishes to, for example, refuse certain types of treatment in the event of your losing capacity.

For free information booklets explaining the changes, visit www.dca.gov.uk and type Mental Capacity booklet into the search facility or call 023 8087 8036/38.

STAY SAFE AND SECURE

The doorbell rings and you don't know who it is. What should you do?

You haven't seen anyone all day and it might be a surprise visitor. You open the door to find a smiley young man from the water board who wants to do a pressure check. But he has no identity card. Should you let him in?

The answer to this question is a very definite no. While you are running a tap for him in the kitchen, your friendly-faced visitor might be rifling through your belongings in the lounge.

But there is a lot that you can do to protect yourself and stay safe. The best advice is not to open your door unless you can check the identity of the caller. Any genuine caller will be happy to show you an ID card so that you can check their

identity and call their office if necessary.

Work on your home

Watch out, too, for bogus traders offering to do work on your home. The best thing you can do is not to agree to have any work done by someone who knocks at your door.

If you do agree to have your hedge trimmed or your roof mended, then the law gives you the legal right to change your mind within seven days of the contract.

The trader is obliged to give a written document, containing the business's name and address, explaining your right to change your mind. Failure to do this is a criminal offence.

The number to call

If you notice someone knocking on doors offering to sell goods or carry out work, then call the trading standards department at Lewisham council on 020 8 314 7759 with a description and vehicle registration number.

The best advice is to not open your door unless you can check the identity of the caller.

And if you do need work doing on your house, the Council keeps a register of builders who agree to abide by fair trading practices.

SIX WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR HOME

1. Fit a security chain and use it every time you open the door.
2. Always ask for identification that you can check.
3. Check the identity of the caller by ringing his or her employer. Don't ring the number that the caller gives you. Keep your own list.
4. Do not agree for anyone to do work in your house until you get a second opinion as to whether it needs doing.
5. Never keep large sums of money in the house and keep purses and wallets out of sight.
6. Keep a list of numbers of your credit cards and important documents somewhere safe.

Advice issued by Lewisham Council Trading Standards



Let's read together.

Reading needn't be a solitary experience when you join a reading group.

If you love books and sometimes wish you could talk to someone about a book you've read, then a Lewisham reading group might be just the answer.

There are monthly reading groups at libraries across the borough where you can share your views on a range of books, as well as being introduced to some books you might otherwise not have picked up.

The reading group at Lewisham Library, for example, meets once a month with members taking it in turns to choose the book under scrutiny. Recent favourites have included:

- *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon
- *Diary of a Nobody* by George and Weedon Grossmith
- *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz
- *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing

The library can normally get books for everyone and will order extra copies where necessary.



Anne Hart, a regular at the Lewisham Library crime reading group.

'It's very relaxed and informal,' says Anne Hart from Brockley, who joined the crime reading group at Lewisham Library in 2006. There's a mix of people of all ages and everyone's very welcoming of new members. And because the library provides the books it doesn't cost a penny!

Where's your nearest reading group?

Blackheath Village Library

First Thursday of the month,
6.30–7.30pm **Tel 020 8852 5309**

Catford Library

Starting soon. Contact the library if you are interested in being part of the inaugural session.

Tel 020 8314 6399

Downham Library

Weekday reading group
Second Tuesday of the month,
6–7pm **Tel 020 8695 8886**

Crime reading group

First Sunday of the month, 2–3pm
Tel 020 8695 8886

Lewisham Library

General reading group
First Saturday of the month,
10.30am–12 noon
Tel 020 8314 9800

Crime reading group
Third Saturday of the month
10.30am–12 Noon
Tel 020 8314 9800

Manor House Library

Last Thursday of the month,
2.15–3.15pm (currently meeting
at Blackheath Village Library)
Tel 020 8852 0357

New Cross Library

First Tuesday of the month,
6.30–7.30pm **Tel 020 8694 2534**

Sydenham Library

First Tuesday of the month,
6.30–7.30pm (The library will close
as usual at 7pm).

Tel 020 8778 7563

Torridon Road Library

Second Monday of the month,
11am–12 noon

Tel 020 8698 1590

Wavelengths Library

Third Saturday
of the month, 11am–12 noon

Tel 020 8694 2535

LOOKING FOR A LIBRARY?

Then try our Wordsearch and see if you can spot all Lewisham's libraries.

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

Find the names of the libraries in Lewisham. Library names can be found across and down, forwards and backwards:

Blackheath
Crofton Park
Downham
Forest Hill
Grove Park
Lewisham
Manor House
New Cross
Sydenham
Torridon Road
Wavelengths

[Solution on page 18.](#)

Lentil and vegetable soup

This is a tasty and nourishing soup – great for a cold day and substantial enough for a main meal. Serve with crusty bread for a delicious meal.

Ingredients

(serves six)

2 pints of stock
 125g (4oz) lentils
 2 large carrots
 Half a small swede
 1 large parsnip
 2 large leeks or small onions
 Teaspoon mixed herbs
 Dessertspoon olive oil
 Knob of butter

Cooking instructions

1. Heat the oil and butter in a large saucepan.
2. Peel and slice the vegetables into small pieces (the size may depend on whether you want to blend the soup and make it smooth or keep it chunky).
3. Add the prepared vegetables to the saucepan, turn the heat down low and allow to sweat gently for about 10 minutes. Stir from time to time to make sure they don't stick.
4. Add the lentils and stir everything together.

5. Add the stock. Bring to the boil then simmer for about an hour or until the vegetables are cooked. Check for seasoning and add salt and pepper if required (though there may be enough salt from the stock).
6. Either blend for a creamy soup or serve as it is. If the consistency seems thick, add a little water.



Note: You do not have to be exact in the type and quantities of vegetables. You can use whatever you have! Adding celery, turnip, even a tin of tomatoes can make some lovely alternatives.

THE PENSION POEM

**On 14 March 2007, I was 60 years old.
One morning, shortly before my birthday,
I opened the post and had a shock...**

A letter came this morning and it fluttered to the floor,
I picked it up and read, as I've done countless times before.
Well I laughed! I doubled up! I stamped my foot and slapped my thigh,
I couldn't get my breath, the tears were streaming from my eyes.
I mean, they'd got the right address, they'd even found my proper name,
But the heading said 'State Pension – it's time to make your claim'.

State Pension! Well I ask you! You know I'm not one to scold,
But this was meant for some old dear, with silver threads among the gold,
Some doddering old fogey long ago turned out to grass,
With enormous varifocals and her gnashers in a glass.
Some elderly old personage who shuffles around the shops,
With a little tartan shopping bag and porridge round her chops.

Well, it's not me, I assure you! Not to whom this claim refers,
I won't be a pensioner for ages! Years and years!
My life has hardly started! It's not finished, that's for sure!
I've only got two kids ... well, I might have a couple more!
I've got a sense of humour, but they ought to take more care,
Someone in Human Resources needs one up the derriere.

Imagine sending that to me! It must have been a prank,
It's probably my husband, yes, it's him I've got to thank.
I'm not getting old, I'm staying young like Peter Pan,
So don't you 'pension' me like some incontinent old gran.
Take back this application with no further ifs or buts,
And think along the lines of where the monkey puts his nuts.

A pensioner! A pensioner! Well that would be a treat,
Imagine my excitement as I sit and soak my feet,
A timorous old biddy with a handrail up the path,
And a ruddy great device to get me in and out the bath.
A pendant round my neck which I just have to press and then
Haring up the stairs come General Custer and his men.

Well that's not me! That is not me! Look, I've kept my youthful figure!
These aren't age spots upon my face, they're freckles... only bigger!
Not so long ago strong men competed for my honour,
So let's have no more nonsense! I'm a goer not a goner!
For ME to be a pensioner, I say with some relief,
I'd be sixty in 07!... Wait a minute...
Oh GOOD GRIEF!

The Pension Poem from Surgically Enhanced by Pam Ayres, published by Hodder and Stoughton 2006. Reproduced by permission of Sheil Land Associates Ltd.

The *experience* of a **LIFETIME**

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and use the skills and experience you've spent your life developing.

Do you miss the socialising of your younger years? Would you like the chance to be a valued part of a team? Then volunteering might be just what you're looking for.

Many organisations are looking for older people who have a bit of spare time. It needn't be a full time job – a couple of hours a month will still make a difference. You can even volunteer from home – maybe helping out with admin.

There are lots of opportunities for volunteering, depending on your skills, personality, fitness and amount of free time.

You could work as a receptionist, archivist, prison visitor, Scout leader, English teacher for refugees, bingo caller, charity shop salesperson, a management committee member...and much more.

If you like working outdoors, you could become a garden helper, assisting people no longer fit enough to maintain their own gardens, or help a local wildlife project.

If you have access to the internet, log on to www.do-it.org.uk where you can type in your postcode and interests and it will give you a list of suitable opportunities in your area.

Contact the Volunteer Centre Lewisham and find out about hundreds of opportunities for volunteers locally. Come to the 2nd Floor Showroom, HE Olby, 307-313 Lewisham High Street or call 020 8613 7113.

Trevor Lartice, 61, volunteers at the North Downham Training Centre for change to six days a month, helping people learn IT skills. 'It's a people thing for me. I love meeting people and talking. I get a lot of fun out of it. I think it helps keep me young and help my brain keep ticking over.'



Mac To, 70, volunteers at the Federation of Refugees from Vietnam in Lewisham. 'It is my second family here.'



Kathleen Edkins, 79, volunteers at the Blackheath Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre for a few hours a month. Her work includes talking to groups of school children about her experiences of World War II. 'I love seeing the children's faces when we tell our stories.'

GOING DIGITAL

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Are you confused by how the TV switch-over will affect you? Here's some help...

Over the next few years all television signals in the UK are being switched from the traditional analogue system to digital, a way of transmitting TV pictures and sound as digital information. This takes up much less space in the airwaves so there is room for more channels.

In Lewisham, and the rest of London, the old signal will be switched off sometime in 2012. After 2012, you will need a TV capable of receiving a digital signal in order to carry on watching TV.

Is your TV ready?

If your TV receives more than five channels, it is probably digital already. If you receive only the

traditional five channels (BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Five) you will need to change your equipment. But there's no hurry – you can do it any time between now and 2012.

To get ready for the digital age you could buy a new television, or you can also adapt your existing TV by connecting it to a set-top box which receives the digital signal and sends it to your existing TV.

Any TV can be adapted by connecting it to a set-top box. You will need to adapt every TV in your home, and also any video or DVD recorder you use to record from TV. You don't need to adapt or replace every set at the same time.

Choosing your supplier

You can choose to receive digital TV via an aerial (using either a digital box or digital TV), through

a satellite dish, through a cable or through a telephone line (broadband). There are a number of companies offering these services.

If you do want to buy a new TV, look for the digital 'tick' logo, which means the set can receive a digital signal and you won't need to change it later on.

Who will help me choose?

If you are over 75 or receive an attendance allowance or a disability living allowance you will be offered special support. You will be sent more information well before the area goes digital.

For additional advice on what services are available ring digitaluk on Tel 0845 6 505050 or visit www.digitaluk.co.uk



Linkline

Feel safe in your own home

Linkline provides practical assistance and reassurance in emergency situations 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Help and assistance just seconds away – at the touch of a button.

To find out more about how Linkline could work for you, call 020 8690 0440

Linkline
Roseview
122 Marsala Road
Lewisham SE13 7AF

RENT-A-CAR!



streetcar®

Fed up with the hassle, guilt and sheer expense of owning a car? Then you might want to rent one by the hour instead.

If you're under 75, you can now rent a VW Polo or Golf by the hour, day, week or month from locations all over Lewisham, run by a company called Streetcar. You can pick up cars from central locations in Lewisham

town centre as well as spots in New Cross, Forest Hill, Hither Green, Blackheath, Catford and Deptford.

Cars are available round the clock. You can book by calling 0845 644 8475 or at www.streetcar.co.uk. You don't have to book in advance either. If cars are available you just book and drive.

It costs £49.50 to join Streetcar for one year and hire charges start at £3.95 an hour.

The company claims that using a Streetcar for two trips a week would cost you £707 per year compared with £2,749 for owning a car.



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

Highlighted are the answers to the Wordsearch on page 14.

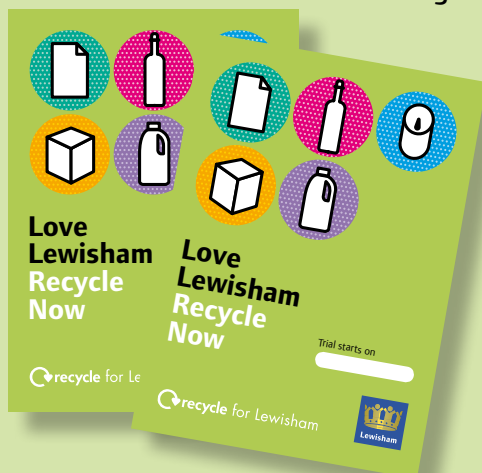
SAVE MONEY

AND HELP SAVE THE PLANET TOO

Some tips on going green that will help you save money

- Don't leave the light on if you're not in the room.
Possible saving = £27 a year
- When filling the kettle, only boil as much water as you need, don't fill it to the brim. **Possible saving = £25 a year**
- Don't leave appliances such as TVs, radios, and kitchen appliances on standby as this means they are using energy even when they're not in use. **Possible saving = £39**
- Set your heating to turn off 30 minutes before you leave the house or go to bed. The house can retain enough heat to keep you warm for that time. **Possible saving = £16 a year**
- Draught proof your windows and doors.
Possible saving = £20 a year
- Put silver foil behind radiators. This will reflect the heat back into your room.
Possible saving = £13 a year
- Set the washing machine at 40 degrees rather than 60 degrees. **Possible saving = £10 a year**
- Unplug electrical chargers (eg mobile phone) when not in use. **Possible saving = £4 a year**

Find out more at www.lewisham.gov.uk



Other green tips

Recycle at home

All Lewisham residents are entitled to weekly kerbside collections of paper, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, tins and cans and plastic bottles. To request a recycling box, contact the Council's recycling department on Tel 020 8314 7171

Say no to plastic bags

When you go out shopping, take some old carrier bags with you to carry everything home. Or why not buy a stylish eco-friendly Shop Local canvas bag (£2) that you can use over and over again. Further details from Tel 020 8314 3674

Composting

As a Lewisham resident you can get compost bins at heavily subsidised prices.

A 220 litre bin (35 inches tall and 29 inches in diameter) costs £8 and a 330 litre bin (39 inches tall and 31 inches in diameter) cost £10. These can be delivered to your home, but do check that you have room for it before you order. Tel 0845 077 0757 www.recyclenow.com

Block up your chimney

If your house no longer has a real fire, close off the chimneys. You can buy a chimney balloon to stop cold draughts coming down or the warm air from your room being lost. Buy online at www.chimney-balloon.co.uk.



Tell us what you think of *My Life*

We value your comments and feedback. Let us know what you think by filling in the form below and returning to: Communications Team, 4th floor, Town Hall, FREEPOST, (LON1021), London SE6 4BR.

Q1 How did you get hold of this issue of *My Life*? (Tick ONE box ONLY)

- In the post
 At my local library (please state which)
 At my GP's surgery
 Other (please state)
-

Q2 Overall, how do you rate *My Life* magazine? (Tick ONE box ONLY)

- Very good Average Good
 Very poor Poor No opinion

Q3 How long do you think you might keep your copy of *My Life* (Tick ONE box ONLY)

- Less than a week
 More than a week but less than two weeks
 More than two weeks but less than a month
 More than a month
 More than two months

Q4 Are there any articles in *My Life* you particularly enjoyed Please state

Q5 Is there anything else you would like to read about in *My Life*?

Q6 Did you find out about any new Council services in *My Life*?

- Yes No

If yes, please state

Q7 What else would you like to see in *My Life*?

These final few questions tell us whether we are reaching all parts of our community with our publications.

Q8 Are you:

- Male Female

Q9 Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

- 16-24 25-34 35-44
 45-54 55-64 65+

Q10 What is your ethnic origin

(Tick ONE box ONLY)

- White British
 Irish
 Other white background (please specify)
-

- Mixed
 White and Black Caribbean
 White and Black African
 White and Asian
 Other mixed background (please specify)
-

- Asian or Asian British
 Indian
 Pakistani
 Bangladeshi
 Other Asian background (please specify)
-

- Black or Black British
 Caribbean
 African
 Other Black background (please specify)
-

- Chinese or other ethnic group
 Chinese
 Other background (please specify)
-

Q11 Do you consider yourself disabled?

- Yes No