



Lifelong Learning

By Ann Bronkhorst

Learning, training, education...daunting words, for some people. For others they suggest hope for a change of direction, a challenge, a new chance.

So you're an adult – maybe retired – with a regular window of time (Tuesday evenings, say, or Thursday afternoons) and you're looking for the right course. You leaf through college brochures, timidly attend Open Evenings and tackle the weighty *Floodlight*, out now at £3.95 and covering 40,000 part-time courses.

Where to go?

Well, locally there's the Institute, with four venues, and Barnet College, with five. Southgate College is near the North Circular while City and Islington has twelve centres on or near the Holloway Road. There's the Working Men's College in Camden and the Workers' Educational Association with centres all over London. You could venture right into town to Birkbeck or the Mary Ward Centre, both near Goodge Street and Russell Square.

Further afield

A Freedom Pass makes it easier to choose a centre that's not local and/or a course involving visits such as Birkbeck's one-term *Discovering* courses: galleries, museums, architecture. Plenty of walking is entailed!

If you want to build up your fitness there are dozens of exercise classes, many targeted at the over-sixties. At City and Islington there's 'Chinese Exercise for Mind and Body' and a range of keep-fit classes for over-sixties – even one for the over-fifties, 'Large and Lovely'. And over-fifties of all sizes can do sports and recreations at Whetstone (Barnet College). At the Mary Ward Centre a well-established over-sixties programme includes debating, line dancing and bridge. Locally, through the Institute, over-sixties can 'Sit and Be Fit', with

a chair-based class to improve balance and mobility.

Comparing centres

It's useful to compare similar courses at different centres. Soft furnishing courses are offered at Southgate, City and Islington and Barnet but some last ten weeks and some thirty. 'Beginners' Modern Greek' at Barnet will take you thirty evenings; maybe you'd prefer to 'Get By in Greek' at the Institute in a mere five evenings. Just for women who love gardening Barnet WEA have five short courses, three based in students' own gardens while at Barnet College a six-month course leads to the RHS General Certificate in Horticulture – for keen amateurs of both sexes.

Weird and wonderful

Many course titles sound intriguing. I think I'll pass on 'Belly-dancing' (Mary Ward) and 'Balloon Artistry' (Southgate) but 'Weather for Outdoor Activities' (City and Islington) would prepare me for 'Fitness Walking' (Institute). Back indoors I could trace my ancestry at Southgate or plunge into Birkbeck's 'Heaven or Hell: the London Underground of the Literary Imagination'. Weird and wonderful or plain practical, the courses are astonishingly varied.

Do something

Most fees are reasonable, usually with discounts for over-sixties, and local libraries have lots of information. So, as it says on the cover of *Floodlight*, don't just sit there, do something!



Helen Mortimer (right) introduces her August class to the Internet. Photo by Erini Rodis

Stay Local at the Green Man

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Green Man was one of East Finchley's vanishing pubs, but you can still drop in to the community centre on the same site for a bit of what you fancy.

Computers

You will find a range of computer courses, for absolute beginners to the more advanced. At that stage, you can be tested for the ECDL (European Community Driving Licence – computers, not cars). Or an inter-active resource called Cash Crescent could help you make the most from your money. These Learn Direct courses, starting from the first week in September, run on a drop-in basis. You decide the time and number of hours to study. Call Helen Mortimer on 020 8815 0703 to arrange your programme.

Literacy, Numeracy and English

Barnet College courses resume on 22 September, with classes in literacy (Mondays

and numeracy (Tuesdays) – both 9.30-11.30am, and English as a second language (9.30am-1.30pm Wednesdays and 9.30-11.30am Fridays). When I helped out at another adult literacy class, one of our most enthusiastic members admitted it had taken her three and a half years to get up the courage to enrol. Once she had gained confidence in reading and writing, it really did open up a new world for her. Enrolment at the Green Man is on Monday 8 September, 9am-5pm. For more information, call Sharon on 020 8226 4169.

Tai Chi

Mind and body work together, and the Tai Chi / Chi Kung class, 1.30-3.15 on

Mondays, starting 22 September, offers a gentle workout for both – including anti-arthritis exercises. The class includes senior citizens and people with disabilities. You are welcome to go along to a class to see if it suits you, without commitment.

Colombian Dancing

Feel like partying? Try Nelsy's dance classes, which cover all Latin-American rhythms. She doesn't mind if you have two left feet. Ten-week courses, 8-9pm Tuesdays, start on 9 September. Call Nelsy on 020 8444 2012 for details.

The Green Man Centre, at the High Road end of Strawberry Vale, is open to everyone.

Filler File

Little boxes

Why are they called apartments, when they're all stuck together?

Brickbat

Why are they called buildings, when they're already finished? Shouldn't they be called built?

Plane view

When two airplanes almost collide why do they call it a near miss? It sounds like a near hit to me!

DIY

I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, "Where's the self-help section?" She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.

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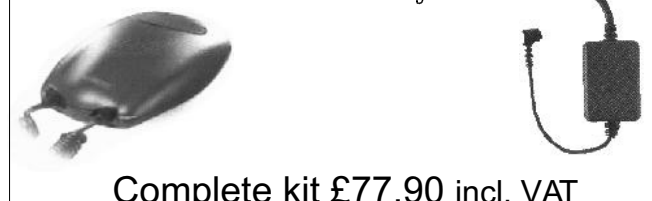
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