



From left: Chloe Meredith from Ambitious for Autism, Joyce Tomlinson, Dennis Healy and Sainsbury's store manager Richard Bannister.

Ambitious for Autism

Eye brows raised in admiration for Dennis Healy: not the politician, but one of the workforce at Sainsbury's, Muswell Hill. He raised £440 for Ambitious for Autism by completing a BUPA-sponsored 10k run in Green Park. Though running at the height of the heatwave, he recorded a time of just 44 minutes.

What Matters

By Dennis Evans

This is what matters:

Watching the world wake up, in early morning light; and late night silence.

Looking, unobserved, at a blackbird in the garden; a friend at my table sharing a meal.

Questions from my grandchildren, and being shown a special box containing their treasures.

Singing with friends.

Listening to the sick and bewildered.

Gardening in the depth of winter, wrapped against the cold.

(I used to think that neighbours thought me silly)

Weeping; moved by the plight of the dispossessed and suffering.

Sitting in my favourite café drinking coffee, watching the world go by.

Talking to babies.

Sharing my experience with young people.

Joking with friends.

Being taken to a place that words cannot describe when listening to the Egmont overture.

And hearing a poem in my head that wants to be written.

Men inspired to cook

Fun cookery courses from Age UK Barnet are being set up for men over 55. The idea is that they'll have a handful of nutritious and delicious dishes they can knock up with ease.

"We'll start with simple recipes and, as participants gain in confidence, they'll learn to experiment with different ingredients," says Age UK Barnet's Karen Williamson. "In a nutshell, we'll add a few twists to classic dishes."

Age UK have run cookery clubs for men in other parts of the country and they've been hugely successful. "Some men are caring for their spouses and need to cook for the first time; others simply want to pick up a few skills," says Karen. "Participants learn to like cooking and the camaraderie means many keep in touch after the course."

Age UK Barnet's first course will start in October (date to be decided) at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2 8LT. The aim is to keep costs low so participants will only have to pay for the cost of the ingredients. If you or anyone you know is interested in this or future courses, please contact Karen Williamson on 020 8150 0967 or email eatwell@ageukbarnet.org.uk.

Don't get scammed on the phone

By Janet Maitland

Did you see the police poster campaign about the phone scam that's tricked hundreds of people into tapping their PIN into their phones and then handing over their card to a courier because they think they are following instructions from their bank?

Scam mark one

In case you didn't, the trick works because the police officer who calls you to tell you there's a problem with your bank card doesn't hang up when you do. And he isn't a police officer. So when you phone your bank to sort out the problem, you are in fact speaking to accomplices of the fake policeman, who has the technical know-how to create fake dialing and ring tones on your still-open line.

You probably think you're too savvy to fall for anything like this, but think again because there's a brand new version.

Scam mark two

Here's how it works. Someone calls you and says they are from 'Visa Card Services'. There's a problem with your card apparently, so you're asked to ring the number on the back of your bank card. Your bank tells you that your card has been cloned at a particular ATM, one that you know you recently used. They also confirm your address.

Now that your confidence has been gained, you believe it when you're told that the cloned card has already been used, especially as they can give you precise details of where and when. You key in your PIN when asked

so that the card can be blocked immediately, and when the courier from the bank arrives you hand it over at the front door so that the chip can be analysed.

The bank even helpfully rings you a few minutes before the courier is due to give you the car's registration number. But the bank is not a bank. And the person at the 'bank' you spoke to only knows the ATM you used, and your address, because he watched you use the machine with his accomplice and then followed you home.

If you ever get this kind of call, hang up and ring the police from a different phone. Remember that real police, banks and credit card companies will never ask you for your PIN or ask to collect your card.

Society talks

The Finchley Society holds its next meeting at 8pm on 26 September at Martin Primary School.

The programme will include '100 years of Martin Primary School' as well as 'Finchley Outward Bound', a slideshow presentation of a walk from East Finchley along the disused railway line to Ally Pally.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Cost of Coffee

It's that time of year again, a time when the Morning Mule claims that exams are getting easier, the sun's getting hotter and we're about to be swamped by East European foxes coming over here to eat our leftover kebabs. And now someone with a degree in frightening people says that drinking coffee doubles your chance of dying.

Someone has discovered that anyone under 55 who drinks more than four cups of coffee a day is in serious trouble and will die from a heart attack, stroke, cancer or general purpose weirdness far faster than tea drinkers. It's the sort of news that causes the PG Tips chimps to celebrate with an extra cuppa over the final proof that tea has won. Or is it?

Well, there may be a lifestyle reason for the rapid demise of the Starbucks generation. The mad scientists have discovered that coffee drinkers smoke more, drink more, take more mind expanding drugs, drive faster, sleep less and probably have more sex. All of which sounds pretty good to me. They've also found out that coffee is addictive, which makes it another drug for me to add to my collection. It's probably why half the episodes of Friends were set in the local coffee shop.

That brings us back to Starbucks. And from there the only place to go is back to the beginning. And that means Southern Arabia and the 15th century when someone first had the bright idea to start cultivating it.

Within 200 years the stuff had made it to Europe; London got its first coffee shop in 1654, about 325 years before Seattle got its first Starbucks. And coffee was the rebel brew, associated with political opponents, poets and, well, café society. Eventually it made its way to America and the rest is more about cowboys and beans than cool and edgy bohemia.

It was the Italians who gave us coffee as we know it. They invented the espresso machine in 1945 without which there would have been no 2is coffee bar in Old Compton Street and British rock'n'roll would have had to have been born somewhere else. I might not recommend drink, drugs and rock'n'roll insanity to anyone, but they've always worked for me, especially when washed down with a double espresso.

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