

# GATEWAY COMPANION

Our newsletter for the over 60s



Residents at the heart

April 2010 - Issue 3



## Getting the musical habit

A superb initiative has given us a chance to get very much into rhythms and melodies under the delightful guidance of Juliet, Lucy, Sam and others from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

These not-to-be-missed sessions have been a feature of life at Rochester Court and John Tucker House (both venues equally enjoyable, I guarantee) since last autumn.

Whatever awful noises we think we make to begin with, Lucy and Juliet turn them into something we all like to hear more and more of, with boxes of castanets, maracas, and chime bars to add to our voices. It's never too late for newcomers to add to the band of happy songsters!

Now we're all saying, "Look out Barbican! Here we come!"

**Join us at our concert:**

Wednesday 5 May, 3.30pm  
at the Barbican Centre

Ask your scheme manager if you'd like to attend, or contact Maxine Sharp on 020 8709 4300.

by Roger Bardet of Appian Court

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## Welcome to the latest issue of the Gateway Companion



We have been working hard to put together this newsletter – we hope you enjoy it. There have

been a lot of great events and activities for our older residents over the past six months, and we look forward to even more over the spring and summer!

Remember, you can attend most events and activities even if you don't live in sheltered housing, just contact us to find out more.

And send us your contributions and stories for the newsletter – you don't have to be a writer, just tell us and we'll write it down for you!

Thanks to our great team of residents without whom we would be able to produce this newsletter, especially Alan, Roger, Marie and Dave.

Jo Lambert  
Communications Officer

April 2010

## Age Concern Newham opens new trading outlet



Age Concern Newham has launched a new trading outlet to provide its customers with a wide range of insurance services. Based at Vic Johnson House, 74 Armagh Road, E3 2HY, it is open Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 10am and 12.30pm.

Hulya Lazenby, Trading Manager said: "We are thrilled to be able to offer an additional trading outlet which demonstrates our commitment to continually adding and improving upon the services we offer customers."

Age Concern Newham provides a range of products and services specifically to meet the needs of the over 50s, including: Home, Travel and Car Insurance, Funeral Plans, Lifebook, Motor Breakdown policies, Escorted Holidays and energy packages.

Customers can still visit Age Concern Newham's head office at 655 Barking Road, E13. Office opening hours are Monday to Thursday 10am until 3.30pm (closed for lunch 1pm-1.30pm).

Telephone enquiries for both offices remains 0844 800 9335.

### Farewell

Jeanette Spinks (left), scheme manager at Hugh Platt House for many years, retired in December 2009. We wish her well in her retirement.



### *Sue and Bill - 61st Wedding Anniversary*

Thank you to Sue and Bill for putting on a tea-party for all of us at their 61st wedding anniversary. From all at Hugh Platt House.



**F**ACE  
HAS THEIR FACE  
FALLEN ON ONE SIDE?  
CAN THEY SMILE?



**A** RMS  
CAN THEY RAISE  
BOTH ARMS AND  
KEEP THEM THERE?



**S** PEECH  
IS THEIR SPEECH  
SLURRED?



**T**IME TO  
CALL 999  
IF YOU SEE ANY SINGLE  
ONE OF THESE SIGNS



WHEN STROKE STRIKES, ACT **F.A.S.T.**

# A life changing experience

One man's challenge to turn his life around

*“The doctor told me that if I didn't stop drinking, I would die”*

Dave Williams' journey to living in John Tucker House was a long and eventful one.

When Dave's mum died he started using “alcohol as a crutch”. He drank more and more until he lost his job, split up with his partner and eventually ended up homeless.

After living on the street, Dave got a place at **Edward Gibbons House**, for people with alcohol issues. While Dave was there, one day he drank so much he ended up in hospital.

“Being in hospital was a real wake-up call. The doctor told me that if I didn't stop drinking, I would die”, remembers Dave. “So I made a decision to stop drinking. I went back to the hostel and stayed in my room so I wouldn't be tempted to drink.”



Dave Williams with his sister Sheila

Dave started going to AA meetings and was re-homed at **Riverside House**, a Salvation Army dry-house in Poplar. He got really involved in their work and made a commitment to the Salvation Army by becoming a ‘soldier’. Dave also started working with Age Concern and through them became aware of Gateway's sheltered housing.

After three years, the time came to move on from Riverside House and Dave started looking at the options

available to him. He was coming up to 60, and sheltered housing seemed a good idea as it provided support.

“I could have jumped in the air when they offered me a place at John Tucker House. Everyone has been so friendly and I feel very welcome here.”

Dave hasn't touched a drop since he made the decision not to drink; he is an inspiration to us all.

**Are you worried you, or someone you know, is drinking too much?**

Find out more about alcohol and alcohol dependency by visiting [www.drinking.nhs.uk](http://www.drinking.nhs.uk) or phone 0800 876 6776.

## Fern Street settlement – Fern Street, Bow, E3 3PS

**Are you fed up at home all day? Why not join our club?** We have a lunch club where you can get a meal of dinner, sweet and a cup of tea (or cold drink) for £2.35.

### Monday

10am - 2pm  
Therapist  
1 - 3pm  
Short mat bowls  
1 - 3pm  
Card making

### Tuesday

12.30 - 2.30pm  
Singing class



### Wednesday

10.30am - 11.30am  
Keep fit class  
1.30 - 3pm  
Darts  
1.30 - 3pm  
Manicurist

### Thursday

10.30am - 12pm  
Basket work  
1.30 - 3pm  
Bingo  
5.15 - 6.15pm  
Keep fit (all ages)

### Friday

10am onwards  
Quizzes,  
board games  
or handcrafts  
1pm  
Tesco shop

If you are interested, please speak to Pat or Tracy on 020 7987 1949 Between 9am - 3pm, Monday - Friday. After these hours please leave a message on the answer machine.



## The tour of Christmas party circuit

I want to follow the report from last year written by my friend and fellow ex-soilder, Dave Barras from Edith Ramsay House.

I began at the season's traditional opener, the St Andrew's Day party at John Tucker House. The food, company and general atmosphere at this scheme are well known throughout the Gateway sheltered 'family' and this party lived up to that reputation. During the evening I sang my duet with the scheme manager, Joyce, who's swinging arms and great personality usually leaves me bruised and battered and I caught a cab home rather than walk 50 yards to the bus stop! Thanks to you all, particularly Dave Stackable, who works too hard to enjoy himself.

I then went to a do at Red Dragon in Mile End Road, where the party was mainly for people who are involved with Gateway. The only point I wished I had not gone was when I received the photos that were taken, and despite not having a drink, I looked more you know what than usual!

On the same evening as the Red Dragon do, I went to the much

praised Edith Ramsay House (see below). There must have been 80 people there, and a great time was had by all. There was a great variety of foods from all walks of life, and the orange juice flowed – yes, still off the drink. I sang a song with no backing, and I know you all enjoyed it as I counted at least six rotten eggs as they whipped past my head. Thank you to Agit and her family and the man I mentioned earlier, Dave Barras. Was I the only one to notice the first song by an Elvis impersonator was in fact a Cliff Richard number?

The party at Vic Johnson House was quieter by comparison, but just as enjoyable. The combined effort of three scheme managers, Nicky, Debbie and Joyce, made the difference. Did you notice I said Joyce again; I managed to get away that day without first aid treatment.

The party at my own scheme, Lawrence Close, was well attended, that is compared to previous years I'm told. About 35 were there, including family members, and we had a good time. The leftover booze was put forward to a do on New



Year's Eve and some of us went to bed at 3am! Thank you for the efforts put in, especially by Vi, Vera, Iris and Gladys – also Brian, who did most of the buying.

My final visit was to the Carpenter's Arms in Bethnal Green, where a combined effort was put on by St John's, Ted Roberts' and some from John Tucker. I had the unusual main meal of salmon steak with Yorkshire pudding and gravy. I have been promised that next year they will put proper tartar sauce on the turkey! The atmosphere was great, especially us all shouting 'SEVEN' each time a couple finished a dance.

Then it was off to the family, and if you think you lot are bad...

**See you all next Christmas – it's only 8 months away!!!**

*Alan Pullen*



Hugh Platt House Christmas meal

## Edith Ramsay Christmas party

A thank you to Agit Kaur, Scheme Manager, at Edith Ramsay House, Duckett Street for inviting us at Hugh Platt House to their wonderful Christmas party on Friday 11 December.

We were entertained by Elvis and made very welcome by her family. And put a spread on for us that we could not believe.

There were jellied eels, mussels, pease pudding and plenty more. A banquet for everyone. We all had such a lovely time. And must not forget the curry. We so enjoyed it.

Thanks Agit.

*Marie Higginson*

## Today I'm 80

*Today dear Lord I'm 80, and there's much I haven't done,  
So I hope dear Lord you'll let me live until I'm 81,  
But then if I haven't finished all I want to do,  
Would you let me stay a while until I'm 82?*

*So many places I want to go, so very much to see,  
Do you think that you can manage to make it 83?  
The world is changing fast, there is so much in store,  
I'd like it very much, to live until I'm 84.*

*And if by then I'm still alive I'd like to stay til 85,  
More planes will be up in the air so I'd really like to stick,  
And see what happens to the world when I'm 86.*

*I know dear Lord it's much to ask (and it must be nice in heaven),  
But I would really like to stay til I'm 87.*

*I know by then I won't be fast, and some times will be late,  
But it would be so pleasant to be around at 88.*

*I will have seen so many things, and life has been really fine,  
So I'm sure that I'll be willing, to leave at 89.*

*Maybe!*



## Innovations

A national Government toolkit called Inspirations featured Gateway sheltered housing! Research carried out by Niace and the Learning Revolution included our projects in 'Enhancing informal adult learning for older people in care settings'.

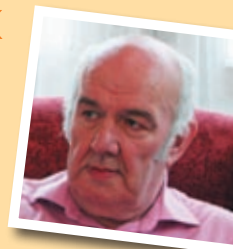
The document was launched by Kevin Brennan MP, Minister of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, in February 2010. Baroness Estelle Morris (pictured) spoke at the conference and visited Gateway's stall to look at photos of Mosque Tower's successful Signature project and the Gateway Companion.

*Siraj Salekin, scheme manager at Mosque Tower*



## Sheltered Housing Forum feedback

Chair of the Forum, Alan Pullen, writes:



As the Chair of the Sheltered Housing Forum, my role is to visit all the schemes to encourage you to attend the Sheltered Housing Forum. I was pleased to see that most of you thought it was a good idea at the TIGs.

At my first meeting as chair, held at Ted Roberts House on 24 February, we had two guest speakers from outside Gateway, and had a good general discussion. I know some of you thought we could have discussed more subjects, and some even thought that the Forum is not for them.

That was my first meeting, and I hope that you all give the committee a chance. Quite a few matters that were brought up were dealt with the following day.

### The next meeting

Wednesday 19 May  
at 12 noon at John Tucker House.



**Please be there, I look forward to seeing you all.**

We are still looking for a volunteer to take up the position of vice-chair. Anyone fancy that? You could make a difference.

## How to make a living will

You can make a 'Living will' which means you can state your wishes (in writing) about what you would like to happen if you get a serious illness or lose mental capacity in the future.

For more information, please ask your scheme manager or a solicitor specialising in mental health or community care, Mind Legal Advice 020 8519 2122, (2.00 pm to 4.30 pm, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays), your doctor or the Citizens Advice Bureau. Or visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk).

## Active energy — wind turbine

A wind turbine powering a temporary lightwork was recently installed on the roof of Age Concern at Appian Court to provide tell the people of Bow about renewable energy.



The installation was designed by the Geezer Club (a group of local older men) and Bow Boys School, who worked with an artist, engineer and ex-rocket scientist to show other ways of energy production.

The installation was unveiled on Wednesday 24 March and was in place for 10 days.



## Changing times

A senior citizen is one who was here before the pill, television, frozen foods, credit cards, ball point pens and computers.

Job-sharing was not invented, time sharing meant spending time with each other. A chip was a sliver of wood or something you ate with fish.

Hardware was pots and pans or the like, software was not even a word.

We were here before tights, lycra, dishwashers, washing machines, central heating, mobile phones, CDs, DVDs, internet.

Satellites and men walking on the moon could not even be imagined. We were even around before vitamin pills, disposable nappies, pizzas, instant coffee, tea bags and Chinese takeaways.

We got married first and then lived together. Girls wore peter pan collars, swimsuits were one-piece and we thought cleavage was something butchers did.

In our day smoking was fashionable. Grass was something you walked on and needed to mow. Pot was something you cooked in. If a person was 'gay' they were the life and soul of the party. Aids were beauty products or help for people in trouble.

We are today's senior citizens, a hardy bunch when you think how the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make.

*Contributed by Sybil Yates, Wapping Pensioners Group*

## Silver surfing

We are setting up computer projects in three schemes: Appian Court, Mosque Tower and Ruth Court. We will buy equipment and show you how to use them. You can even go along even if you don't live in those schemes.

**Computers can make your life much easier once you know how to use them.**

- Shop online - get shopping delivered to your door
- Chat or write to friends and relatives all over the world
- Send and receive photos from family in far flung places (or just round the corner!).

To find out more, please contact Mo Ali on 020 8709 4381 or [mo.ali@gatewayhousing.org.uk](mailto:mo.ali@gatewayhousing.org.uk).



## Are you over 60 and pay full council tax?

Tower Hamlets Council are offering a £100 discount for residents who are over 60 and don't receive Council Tax benefit.

Simply call the Council Tax team on 020 7364 5002 for more information. You will need to give them your date of birth, your freedom pass number (if you have one) and your phone number. Your or your partner's name needs to be on the bill.

## Keep fit classes!



Vic Johnson House is supporting healthy living with a weekly exercise class for the Young at Heart (50 plus) - sponsored by Age Concern Newham

**Where**  
Vic Johnson House  
74 Armagh Road  
London  
E3 2HT

**When**  
Tuesday mornings  
11am – 11:45am

Contact Debbie on  
020 8981 7536

## Free swimming

Tenants at Bustaan Radaa have been attending free swimming at York Hall for the past month as part of the 'Change 4 Life' keep fit grant campaign.

Some of the women have never been swimming before so it was a real eye opener to get in a cold pool. One the ladies told me at the beginning, "I have a shower at home so why do I need to go swimming?" which we all fell over laughing at. The same lady has been to every session and says swimming is helping her with her joint pains and general fitness. The rest of the tenants have all benefited and want to attend every day.

*Amina Hussein*

Scheme Manager at Bustaan Radaa

## Moving Home

Georgina Phillips was decanted to Rochester Court when William Guy Gardens was assigned to be redeveloped. She wrote to us to let us know about her experience.

### Dear Gateway

I felt I had to write to you regarding the decanting of William Guy Gardens. First and foremost, a special thanks for my housing officer, Karl Clayden, for his help and reassurance at such a time. Moving, uprooting, call it what you may, is no picnic. However, from the time the final whistle blew, the time had come for all to leave William Guy, it was all systems go.

The opportunity to visit other schemes and to meet the scheme managers helped me immensely as to where my next home was likely to be.

Within four weeks I had actually been moved out of William Guy. I just could not believe my luck, apart from the scheme being modern and up to date, the location was an added bonus.

Thank you to Gateway Housing. Last but not least, many thanks to the guys who moved me from A to B.

**Georgie Phillips**

## Staying Safe & Sound workshops

We are running a series of workshops to raise awareness about elder abuse and how to avoid scams.

### Bethnal Green

at Rochester Court

**Schemes:** Mandela House, Rochester Court, Hugh Platt House, Bustaan Radaa, Ted Roberts House.

**Date:** 25 May 2010

**Time:** 10.30am – 12.30pm

**Bow** at Vic Johnson House

**Schemes:** Vic Johnson House, Appian Court, Regency Court, Ruth Court, Lawrence Close.

**Date:** 13 July 2010

**Time:** 10.30am – 12.30pm

Please contact your scheme manager for more details. If you don't live in sheltered housing but are over 50 and would like to attend, please contact Rachel Newland on 020 8709 4369 or email [rachel.newland@gatewayhousing.org.uk](mailto:rachel.newland@gatewayhousing.org.uk).

## USE YOUR VOTE

On **Thursday 6 May**, all adult Londoners who are registered to vote will be able to vote in local elections. There will also be a general election on the same day.

This year, in Tower Hamlets, there will also be a second vote to decide if Tower Hamlets should have an elected mayor.

This is a simple YES/NO decision - if the majority says NO, that is the end of the matter. If the majority says YES, then there will be a further election later in the year to choose the new Mayor.

In 2010 the over 60s will cast more than four out of every ten votes. You are the generation who could decide the next election.

**Please use your vote – don't waste it.**



## Free passports

If you were born on or before 2 September 1929 you are entitled to a free passport.

All British citizens born on or before 2 September 1929 no longer have to pay for a UK passport. This is in recognition of the sacrifices made by World War 2 veterans and civilians.

**24-hour Passport Adviceline:**  
0300 222 0000  
[www.ips.gov.uk/passport](http://www.ips.gov.uk/passport)



## Contacting Gateway



### Customer services

020 8709 4300

### Maintenance Freephone

0800 052 9922

- 24 hour

### Sheltered housing team

020 8709 4369

You can ask for this information in **large print**, in Braille, on audio tape or in your language. We will also provide an interpretation service. Please contact us on 020 8709 4300 to arrange this.

আপনি এই লেখাটি বড় ছাপায়, অডিও টেপে, ব্রায়েল লেখায় বা আপনার ভাষায় পেতে পারেন। এ ছাড়াও আমরা অনুবাদ সেবা প্রদান করি। এই সেবার জন্য দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন ০২০ ৮৭০৯ ৪৩০০ নম্বরে। [Bengali]

Waxaad dalban kartaa macluumaadkan oo ku daabacan farta waawayn, ama ku daabacan farta loogu talagalay dadka indhaha la, ama ku duuban cajeladaha maqalka ama ku qoran luqaddaada. Waxa kale oo aannu kuu fidin karnaa adeeg ah tarjamad. Fadlan nagala soo xidhiidh 020 8709 4300 si aannu kuugu qabanqaabinno. [Somali]

Quý vị có thể xin cấp thông tin này bằng bản in chữ to, Braille (dành cho người mù), trên băng ghi âm hoặc bằng tiếng nói của quý vị. Chúng tôi cũng cung cấp dịch vụ thông dịch. Xin liên lạc với chúng tôi theo điện thoại số 020 8709 4300 để thu xếp việc này. [Vietnamese]

你可索取這份資訊的大字印刷體、盲文、錄音帶或你的語言譯本。同時，我們也提供傳譯服務，請致電 020 8709 4300 與我們聯絡安排。 [Chinese]