

B-E-E CARING

Produced & Distributed by **Carers of Epsom**
Supporting Carers in Banstead, Epsom & Ewell



JULY 2008

Summer



Welcome to our July edition of our monthly newsletter.

Inside this month you will find some pictures of our 20th Anniversary Lunch and an invitation to and details of an outing to Cherkley Court and gardens.

We hope you will find the information inside this edition helpful and enjoy some of the other articles.

Please remember this is your newsletter and we will be pleased to include any hints, tips, etc. which you may like to share with other carers.

CARERS CALENDAR

1 st July	Banstead Coffee
3 rd July	Carers Lunch
8 th July	Epsom Coffee
17 th July	Ex Carers Lunch
30 th July	Evening Meeting
5 th Aug	Banstead Coffee
12 th Aug	Epsom Coffee
19 th Aug	Cherkley Court

BANSTEAD COFFEE BREAK

The Squirrels, The Horseshoe, Banstead.

1st Tuesday of each month 2-4pm

EPSOM COFFEE BREAK

Ebbisham Centre, Epsom.

Meeting room varies, check screen at reception

2nd Tuesday each month 11am - 1 pm

MEET FOR LUNCH

At The White Horse Pub, Dorking Road, Epsom (next door to Epsom Hospital) at 12 noon.

RELAXATION SESSION

Meet in the Spa Lounge, Ebbisham Centre, Epsom. 11.00 -12.30

EVENING MEETING

The Haywain Pub, Dorking Road, Epsom. 8pm - 10pm

Meet in the bar for lively chat and a glass of something.

Our meetings are for all carers.

Please feel free to join us on any date you wish and be sure of a very warm welcome.

SUPPORT MEETINGS

If you would like to join us at any of our meetings but have difficulty getting to them please contact us as we may be able to arrange transport for you.

CARERS LUNCHTIME MEETINGS

Our next meeting will be on

**Thursday
3rd July**

at The White Horse Pub, Dorking Road, Epsom. Next door to Epsom Hospital.

EVENING MEETING

Meet Jean & Maria in the Haywain Pub, Dorking Road Epsom on

**Wednesday
30th July**

For lively conversation with other carers.

CAFÉ WEDNESDAY

We are sorry that we have had to discontinue our coffee meetings at this venue for the time being due to low attendance numbers.

We will be happy to re-start these meetings if requested.

WE'LL BRING THE BISCUITS



Do you live alone with the person you care for?

Are you the sole carer?

Is it very difficult to get out and socialise?

Would you enjoy a bit of company and a chat?

If you answered yes to the above, why not invite Jean or Maria round for a cup of tea and a gossip?

Tell them what your favourite cakes or biscuits are and they'll bring them along. Don't be shy just call

01372 722269

now and make a date, Jean & Maria are waiting to hear from you.

CHERKLEY COURT & GARDENS **TUESDAY 19th AUGUST**



Why not join us for the afternoon at this local beauty spot?

We will be taking a stroll around the gardens and then tea & cake on the terrace of the Orangery, while enjoying the view over Mole Valley and Norbury Park.

For more information and booking form see enclosed leaflet.

TAKE A BREAK



We administer this scheme to help carers get an all important break.

The scheme runs all year round and you may apply at any time.

If you haven't had a break for a while and would like help to organise a break please call us at the office and we will arrange for our Support Worker to talk through your situation with you and help you get a break.

FREE HOLIDAYS FOR CARERS

The over 50's specialist Saga, has announced that it will offer free holidays to 100 carers every year.

The group is setting aside £200,000 to fund a new trust, and any person over 50 who has been caring for anyone for a year - from a disabled child to an elderly relative - will be eligible to apply, provided they have not taken a holiday for 12 months.

The company said that the holiday could be "anything from a few days away in the UK to a fortnight's cruise to the West Indies". For more details, visit www.saga.co.uk.

HARD OF HEARING?

WHY NOT TRY

LIPREADING?



If you feel that everyone nowadays mumbles

If you have difficulty following conversations in a noisy environment

If you find it difficult to hear the television at a level the family wants

If you sometimes miss the punch line of a joke or funny story

If you have discovered that if people look at you, you can hear them better

A LIPREADING CLASS COULD BE JUST WHAT YOU NEED!!

Join the Epsom & Leatherhead Lip-reading Group.

These classes aim, through lip-reading, to improve the communication skills of the hearing impaired Adult - whether you wear a hearing aid or not.

Information on environmental aids is offered. These classes may also be of interest to hearing people who have a hearing impaired person in their family, workplace or social circle.

Classes are held on:
Tuesday afternoons at
Leatherhead Institute
67 High Street
Leatherhead, KT22 8AH

Friday mornings at
The Ebbisham Centre
6-7 The Derby Square
Epsom, KT19 8AG

For more information contact the Tutor:

Judy Morgan
60 Warnham Court Road,
Carshalton Beeches
Surrey SM5 3LZ
Telephone 020 8661 2107

Are you worried about your hearing?

You can phone the RNID on 0845 600 5555. This puts you through to a pre-recorded test that asks you to listen to numbers and sounds that you then respond to by pressing the numbers on your phone.

It takes just a few minutes and then indicates to you if your hearing is within a normal range or if you should seek further advice.

THE PENSION SERVICE

VISIT TO

Pensions for women

What you can get, and when

In the Pensions Act 2007, changes were made to the rules for building up a State Pension.

Different rules apply depending on when you reach State Pension age.

Most of the changes made by the Pensions Act 2007 will affect people who reach State Pension age on or after 6 April 2010. This applies to women born on or after 6 April 1950 (or men born on or after 6 April 1945).

The main changes made by the Act include the following:

- The number of qualifying years needed for a full basic State Pension will be reduced to 30 for women and men. A qualifying year is a tax year where you have paid, are treated as having paid or are credited with a minimum amount of National Insurance contributions. Currently, women normally need 39 qualifying years to get a full basic State Pension (and men normally need 44 years). Just one qualifying year of paid or credited National Insurance contributions will give you some basic State Pension. Each qualifying year of contributions will be worth one-thirtieth of the full basic State Pension.
- Home Responsibilities Protection (which reduces the number of qualifying years needed to get a full basic State Pension) will be replaced with National Insurance credits if you are:
 - Getting Child Benefit for a child aged under 12
 - An approved foster carer, or
 - Caring for at least 20 hours a week for someone or people who are severely disabled.

These credits will count towards basic State Pension and Second State Pension.

- If you have built up years of Home Responsibilities Protection before 6 April 2010

under the current rules, these will be converted into qualifying years of National Insurance credits.

These changes will mean that people with very few qualifying years, particularly women, will be able to get at least some basic State Pension.

The existing rules for building up a State Pension will continue to apply to people who reach State Pension age before 6 April 2010.

For more information on Pensions visit The Pension Service website www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk Telephone 0845 60 60 265

Alternatively we have a supply of booklets from the Pensions Service in the office, if you would like one please call us.

CHECK YOUR COUNCIL TAX

You may be entitled to a reduction in Council Tax if you are a carer and:

- You live with the person you care for
- You give at least 35 hours care a week
- The person you care for is getting a higher rate disability benefit
- The person you care for isn't your spouse, partner or your child who is under 18

Council Tax is charged as a rate on a property, however if only one person lives there a discount is given. As a carer you may be disregarded for Council Tax, so the discount is given as if there is only one person in the property. A reduction of 25%.

If there is more than one carer in the property they can both be disregarded for Council Tax.

A person who is considered 'severely mentally impaired' may also be disregarded for Council Tax.

Under the disability reduction scheme you may be able to get a reduction in Council Tax if a resident is 'substantially and permanently disabled' and there is an additional bathroom or kitchen for the disabled person or a room is needed and mainly used by that person, or a wheelchair is used indoors.

Council Tax reductions can be backdated, if you can show eligibility, as far back as 1993.

As you can see from this very brief overview it is a complicated area, and even Councils do not always get it right.

Carers UK have a helpline. For further advice you can call CarersLine on 0808 7777 (Wednesday and Thursday 10am-12 noon and 2pm-4pm.)

Help with Council Tax may also be available to you through Council Tax Benefit. This is a means tested benefit.

If you have an entitlement to Carer's Allowance, you may be able to get extra help paying your Council Tax.

New Social Area for Carers and Care Sector Workers



A new website and forum has been developed for Carers, whose domestic situation can often be isolating and those who work in the care sector for whom unsociable hours and stressful situations may well affect their social life. By sharing experiences with others who understand, we hope to lighten the load and have some fun, an ingredient often missing when undertaking a caring role.

Full Membership of the site which includes access to the forums, live online chat, and private messaging is free.

For the website see:

www.carersconnect.com

For the forums see:

www.carersconnect.com/community

To Register Free right now:

www.carersconnect.com/community/index.php?action=register

This article was reproduced from the MS The Link Newsletter - our thanks to them.

**ARE YOU LOOKING AFTER
YOUR BACK**

Simple Back Pain

If you've ever suffered with back pain, you'll know just how much it can affect your quality of life.

Everything becomes an effort, you take less exercise because every movement hurts, you put on weight, which places even more strain on the back, and the whole thing becomes a vicious circle. And you're not alone.

Around eight in ten people in the UK are affected at some time in their lives, although fortunately, most of those affected will recover completely within six to eight weeks, and this is referred to as simple back pain.

One of the most common causes of simple back pain is poor posture. Other causes include standing or bending for long periods of time, lifting or carrying heavy loads, sitting for too long in a chair without sufficient back support, or falling awkwardly.

The sedentary lifestyle we lead these days doesn't help our posture, and the fact that many of us spend a long time at computer keyboards is another significant cause of back pain. Sitting for long periods has the effect of tightening the muscles at the front of the body, leaving the upper back weak and overstretched, and as we age, there's an added tendency to develop poor posture which has the same effect, making us feel older and heavier. To counteract all this, and keep our backs in good shape, the experts agree. Exercise is vital. Abdominal strength is essential to back strength, and weakness or tightness in the muscles of the lower back can pull the back out of alignment, so that exercising every part of the body is necessary to keep your back strong.

The spine is a complex collection of small bones, separated by discs which give the back its amazing flexibility. These bones and discs are supported by muscles and ligaments, which support the spine along its length. These muscles help to keep you upright, and if they're strong, they don't tire as quickly. If they become weak, the spine becomes more vulnerable to injury.

Protect yourself from back pain

Stretch every day. For flexion, sit with your knees bent, your bottom on your heels and your arms stretched out in front of you. For extension, stand tall, put your hands on your lower back for support, and arch your back, gently tightening your abdominal muscles for support.

Walk every day

Wear shoes which are comfortable and support your feet properly.

Be sensible

Don't attempt to lift loads which are too heavy.

If you don't think the load is too heavy, take the time to consider how to lift, and do it properly. Keep a wide base of support.

Bend from the knees and hips only.

Keep your upper back straight

Lift by straightening your knees and hips. Don't twist your back as you lift.

Put the load down carefully, squatting with the knees and hips, but without bending your back.

Check your mattress

Is it firm enough to support your body properly. If it sags in the middle, consider changing it.

Consider Keep Fit classes

These will help you understand how the body works, and will counteract the effects of ageing.

The above article has been reproduced from the Retired & living in Surrey magazine.

BACK CARE ADVISORY SERVICE



Our Back Care Advisory Service is open to any carer who feels that they could benefit from advice on lifting, moving and handling. We give practical advice on how to look after your back.

If you would like more information on Back Care or to make an appointment with a Back Care Advisor, please contact us on 01372 729947.

ARE YOU FEELING MOTIVATED?



Watching Spring Watch this year has motivated many people to do something for wildlife in their garden. Here are just a few simple ideas that could make a difference.

You could:

Make a woodpile to create a mini nature reserve in your garden. Just gather some old wood, branches and logs and pile them up in a quiet corner of your garden, then leave the rest to nature.

Provide water for the birds. If your garden looks thirsty then the birds are thirsty too. Provide a shallow container in a safe spot, away from cats, and enjoy watching the birds come.

Encourage Bees by planting as many flowers as you can.

Plant daisies for Hoverflies, or take the opportunity to reduce the mowing by leaving a patch to grow long so flowers can develop. Don't forget the gardener's friend, the Hedgehog that eats large quantities of slugs and snails. Avoid using chemicals to kill slugs as these can be harmful to wildlife.

NONSUCH MANSION



Did you know that there is a Victorian Museum in the Service Wing of Nonsuch Mansion?

In it there is a fascinating display of the world "below stairs".

The Museum is open from 2.00pm to 5.00pm on the second and fourth Sunday of each month from April to September, Bank Holidays Mondays, Heritage Sunday and Open House London Saturday which will be held on 15th September 2008.

There is a small charge for admission, except on Bank Holidays and the two special opens days, when entry is free.

There are car parks inside each park gate and near the mansion and there are footpaths across the park.

THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT 2007

The Mental Health Act 2007 changes parts of the current Mental Health Act, but leaves a lot unchanged.

Most of the changes come into force on 3rd November 2008.

What are the main changes?

- Supervised Community Treatment (SCT)
- New Independent Mental Health Act Advocacy (IMHA)
- More safeguards for electroconvulsive therapy
- Under 18's who go into hospital will be entitled to facilities appropriate to their age
- Changes to the definition of mental disorder
- Changes to the criteria for detention under the Mental Health Act
- New professional roles
- Changes to the Nearest Relative role
- Better access to Mental Health Review Tribunals

What is supervised community treatment?

Supervised community treatment allows people to be discharged from hospital into the community on conditions agreed with them.

What will happen if I don't like the community treatment/care and I don't want it?

If you are under SCT you will be in close contact with your care team. If you are unhappy with your care you should share this with the team.

However if you refuse care agreed under SCT, you may be brought back to hospital. This might happen if you refuse the treatment you need, which would make you unwell.

What will my rights be, how will these be protected and will there still be an appeals process?

There will still be an appeals process to the Hospital Managers (also known as Mental Health Act Managers) in the Trust or to the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT). This includes people on SCT. There are also more safeguards for people receiving electro-convulsive therapy.

What are Independent Mental Health Advocates?

Independent Mental Health Advocates will support people detained under the Mental Health Act in understanding their rights and being involved in decisions about their care. They will be specially trained and will be available from April 2009.

Can I choose who my nearest relative is?

The Mental Health Act defines who your nearest relative is. This person may not be your next of kin or your carer. However, if you are unhappy with the person identified as your nearest relative you can apply to a County Court to remove them. Civil partners will also have the same rights as married partners.

What are the new professional roles?

Two professionals are key to the existing Act, the Responsible Medical Officer (RMO) and Approved Social Worker (ASW). These roles which are only open to doctors (RMO) and social workers (ASW), can now be undertaken by specially trained nurses, occupational therapists and psychologists. They will be known Responsible Clinicians (RC) and Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP).

Has the new Act affected my responsibilities as a carer?

There is no legal responsibility placed on carers, unless they have also been identified as the 'Nearest Relative' under the meaning of the Act.

Aren't Community Treatment Orders just a way of shifting responsibility for the care of people from hospitals onto unpaid carers?

No. It's about not keeping people detained in hospital when they don't need to be there. Supervised community treatment will not 'pass the buck' to carers but should ensure that patients continue with their treatment after discharge.

Article reproduced from Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Newsletter.

Government launch new vision for carers

The following was taken from an email issued by Carers UK on 10th June 2008.

The Government's National Strategy for Carers '**Carers at the heart of 21st Century families and communities**', was published during Carers Week in June.

The Strategy sets out a ten year vision and does reflect what carers said they want to see. We feel that government has finally got the message that caring is a critical issue and they have taken on the challenge caring poses to society.

The principles behind the vision are:

- Carers should have a life of their own
- Carers should not be forced into financial hardship
- Carers should be treated with dignity and respect

What's in the Strategy?

Income

- No immediate changes to Carer's Allowance
- Promise of a full review of carer benefits

Health and Social Care

- More money for breaks
- More support from NHS

Employment

- Improve support offered to carers by Jobcentre Plus
- Awareness raising about the right to request flexible working.

Information

- Money for national helpline
- Money for local information provision

For more information go to www.carersonline.org.uk

Eye Tests in your home



Lloyds Pharmacy provide this service in association with The Outside Clinic.

If you have difficulty getting to a high street optician without assistance and fall into one of the categories listed below, you are eligible for a Free NHS Eye Test in your home.

- Aged 60 or over
- Under 16, or under 19 and in full time education
- Register blind or partially sighted
- Diagnosed as having Diabetes or Glaucoma
- Aged 40 or over with a direct relative with Glaucoma, or have been advised by an ophthalmologist that you are at risk of Glaucoma
- Prescribed a complex lens

To find out more about the service and to make an appointment please call

0800 9549 100

You will need to quote the branch number when booking an appointment.

Lloyds Pharmacy,
Epsom Cottage Hospital
Epsom KT17 4BL
Branch number 6329

MENCAP LEISURE SERVICE IN SURREY

**For people aged 18 years and over
with a mild to moderate learning
disability**

Epsom & Ewell College Social Group

The Mencap leisure Service in Surrey invites you to come and take part in your own after college social activity group.

Some of the activities available are: Cinema, swimming, bowling, golf, meal out.

Membership fee: £4.40 per session
(23rd April - 30th July)

**6th and 14th August
10am - 4 pm**

Mencap invites you to take part in their fun and exciting summer scheme.

Some of the activities enjoyed in the past are a trips to the zoo & Brighton; Bowling; Cinema; Train trips.

Each day will cost £15 (carers vouchers are accepted)

If you are interested in attending either of these groups and would like more information please contact the leisure team on:

01737 230149

Mobile: 07795 110425

Email: brian.day@mencap.org.uk



As you know, we celebrated our 20th anniversary with a lunch at Ewell Court House, last month, and would like to thank everyone, the founder members, carers, ex carers, board members, guests and members of other organisations, who attended and helped to make it a very special occasion.

We had a lovely afternoon, the weather was warm & sunny, allowing us to spill out into the gardens, the room looked lovely, the caterers were excellent, the cake was beautifully presented and the jazz trio superb!

Our thanks to everyone who helped to organise the day and helped on the day to make it a success. Also thanks to Founder Member Pam Walters and her husband, Fred, who battled on through a long and difficult train journey to be with us.

Opposite are a few pictures of the day.

1. **Founder members
Margaret Leatherby and
Pam Walters cutting the
cake.**
2. **Backcare advisors, Candy,
Emma Shires, Emma Cope
& Tanya.**
3. **Cynthia Gifford -
Chairman**
4. **The Carers Support Team
Jean, Maria, Heidi &
Margaret**
5. **Guests**
6. **Guests**
7. **The Jazz band**



NEXT MEETING

**Thursday 17th July
12 noon
The White Horse Pub
Dorking Road,
Epsom**



If you are a new ex carer why not come along to this lunch and meet new friends?
Maybe you will find someone to enjoy a shopping trip or an outing to the theatre or cinema.

All Ex Carers are very welcome to attend our ex carers lunches and we will be very pleased to welcome you at any of our meetings.

**20th ANNIVERSARY
LUNCH AT EWELL COURT
HOUSE**