

My Life

Autumn 2010

LEWISHAM'S MAGAZINE FOR THE OVER 60S

Lewisham street markets

Everything you'll need

You said, we did
How does the Council answer you?



Remembrance Day
Memorial services
in Lewisham



Census time
Why does it matter
to Lewisham?



Seasonal flu vaccination in Lewisham



Who should have the flu vaccination and why?



If you are over 65, flu can lead to life-threatening complications. About 12,000 people in England and Wales die each year because of flu and this increases during a flu epidemic.

What harm can seasonal flu do?

Having flu is often much worse than a cold – you may need to stay in bed for a few days if you have flu. Some people are more susceptible to the effects of seasonal flu. For them it can increase the risk of developing more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia, or can make existing conditions worse.

If you are over 65, you should definitely consider having the free seasonal flu vaccination.

Don't wait until there is a flu outbreak this winter, contact your GP or practice nurse now to get your seasonal flu jab.

For more on the flu campaign in Lewisham, contact 020 3049 3239



BE MORE THIS WINTER

Your guide to the best events in Lewisham this winter.
Pick up a copy from your local library



welcome to

My Life



As the nights start to draw in, it can be difficult to keep moving and be active. We have a wealth of activities and events that should make it easier. Whether it's yoga, pottery or IT at Community Education Lewisham, free swimming at one of Lewisham's leisure centres or booking your pantomime tickets in good time, you'll find something to keep you busy.

Everyone is on a tight budget these days but eating fresh fruit and vegetables is a sure way to keep healthy. Lewisham's street markets offer an amazing variety of produce as well as flowers, fish, bric a brac – everything you could need in your weekly shop, at prices you can afford. Check out the details on pages 12–13.

What happens when you tell the Council what you think? If you want to know, read You said, we did on page 16 and see how seriously we take the views of our residents.

As always this is your magazine and if there is anything or any service you would like to see featured, just let us know and we'll do our best to help.



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If you have difficulty understanding this document in English please call the number below.

Për të marrë informacion mbi këtë dokument, ju lutemi telefononi numrin e mëposhtëm. Albanian

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Reduced-price courses for over 60s

Older people in Lewisham can enjoy a huge range of courses run by Community Education Lewisham at four main centres in Forest Hill, Sydenham, Grove Park and Lewisham Town Centre. Courses on offer include hat making, baking, yoga, keep fit, drawing, pottery, IT and much more. There are even special sessions for the over 60s in some subjects. It is never too late to study a new subject or develop a new skill. Learning keeps the mind active and

healthy and can be a great way to meet new people too. If you are over 60 you will be entitled to reduced fees on a number of courses. The next term starts on Monday 10 January, though you might be able to join sooner if there is room. To obtain your copy of the Community Education Lewisham prospectus, which lists everything on offer, call 020 8314 3300 or pick up a copy in any Lewisham library, or download a copy from www.lewisham.gov.uk



Get buzzy and sign up now!

Community Education Lewisham has announced three more of its popular beekeeping courses, to be held next March. The course, which was fully booked this year, covers everything you need to know about keeping bees and looks at bee development through to honey production. Courses will run at the Grove Park Centre (1–29 March 2011, 1–3pm); Brockley Rise (2–30 March, 10am–12noon) and Granville Park (5 March–2 April, 10am–12noon). For more information call 020 8314 3300 or email community.education@lewisham.gov.uk The Bromley Beekeepers' Association, who run the courses, also hold regular open meetings at their apiary on the Kent House Road allotments, Sydenham. Just turn up to find out more about keeping and even handle live bees. Find out more at www.kentbee.com/bromley And if you want to know how great Lewisham honey tastes, Catford beekeeper Gregory Boon sells his to local people. Contact him on beekeeper@catfordhoney.co.uk Aficionados such as Gregory regard urban honey as superior to country honey being free from pesticides, and richer in taste because bees draw their nectar from a broad range of garden flowers rather than industrial crops, such as rape. Many people also claim that eating your local honey can deter hayfever.



Remembrance Sunday

Two memorial services will take place in Lewisham this year to mark Remembrance Sunday – the day when the country remembers those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today. Everyone is welcome to attend. The largest ceremony will take place at the war memorial opposite Lewisham Hospital at 10.55am on Sunday 14 November, attended by dignitaries including The Mayor of Lewisham and local MPs Heidi Alexander and Jim Dowd.

The ceremony will include the marching band of the 1475 ATC Squadron, with music, last post and reveille played by Sedgehill School Band. The Lewisham branches of the Royal British Legion will attend with their standards. A smaller ceremony will take place at 10.55am on Sunday 14 November at the war memorial in Upper Brockley Road, at the junction with Lewisham Way. This event will be attended by dignitaries including local MP Joan Ruddock and members of the Deptford branch of the Royal British Legion. The music for the hymns, last post and reveille will be played by the Catford



Lewisham's war memorials
Did you know there are over 200 war memorials in Lewisham – inside churches or outside in our streets, parks and gardens. Details of all war memorials in Lewisham, including the names on each one, are being recorded by a project called **Lewisham Remembers**. Eventually the project hopes to record all the war memorials in the borough, giving their locations, the names recorded on the memorial and their histories. Ask at your library for more information or visit <http://lewishamwarmemorials.wikidot.com>

Salvation Army Band. Wreaths will be laid at both ceremonies and the police will stop traffic at 11am for the two minute silence. Programmes will be handed out to everyone attending.

Remembrance Sunday is marked by ceremonies at war memorials in cities, towns and villages across the UK. So please do feel free to come along to these events and be part of Lewisham's ceremonies this year.

Brockley Cemetery remembers

A unique and beautiful evening of Remembrance is planned in Brockley and Ladywell Cemetery on Thursday 11 November, 7.30–9.30pm. Poets, dancers and musicians will perform amid the illuminated trees and gravestones, along the softly lit path that passes several World War One memorials and graves. Everyone welcome to this free event. Wear sturdy footwear – you will need to walk for around 25–30 minutes – and warm clothing. Path accessible to wheelchair users.



Free swims to continue



Free swims for the over 60s in Lewisham swimming pools will continue until 31 March next year, despite government funding for the scheme being cut last June.

Lewisham Council has agreed to continue funding the scheme until March 2011, working with

leisure service providers Leisure Connections and Parkwood Leisure.

Commenting on the future of the scheme, Sir Steve said: 'I doubt that we will be able to continue this scheme after next year but I think it is vital that we keep it for as long as possible.' Free aquafit for 60 plus will also continue until 31 March 2011.

Our Lewisham, Our Say

From July to October 2010, the Council held its biggest ever conversation with residents all over the borough about its services and the money it spends on them. The Mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, and councillors were keen to hear views on how to face the challenges of the national spending cuts.

Facing expected reductions of around £60 million in its spending over the next three years, the Council has to look to change

fundamentally the way public services are delivered.

The Council wanted to know:

- what council services residents valued most
- what residents thought the Council could do less of
- where residents thought their friends, family and neighbours could help each other more to ease the pressure.

The Council held roadshows all over the borough, had discussions

with local assemblies and various community groups, attended Pensioners' Day at the Broadway in September, and took hundreds of responses on the Lewisham website.

The results of the consultation will be used by the Mayor and councillors as they make decisions on the coming years' budgets. The Mayor is due to consider the first wave of spending reductions, informed by this report, at a meeting of Mayor and Cabinet on 17 November.

Let's get physical

All over the borough, ten week physical activity courses are taking place for those who want to move a bit more and get a bit fitter.

The sessions are all free and are ideal for those who want to begin a new activity or ease themselves into fitness. And at the end of the ten weeks, you'll be given tips on how to keep your improved level of fitness and details of other

courses and programmes you might want to try.

There are lots of activities to choose from: you could try your hand at Pilates or how about some gentle stretch and tone. You could even take part in Zumba aquafit or Capoeira.

For details of sessions near you, call 020 314 9274 or visit www.lewisham.gov.uk/sportandleisure



Mayor's positive ageing promise

The Mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, has pledged to launch an elected Council for Positive Ageing next year to give older people in the borough more say in council decisions.

It will be modelled on a similar initiative in Brighton & Hove, where older people elect representatives to express their views to the local authority.

'We want the Council for Positive Ageing to represent the needs and views of older people in Lewisham,' says Councillor Peggy Fitzsimmons, Cabinet member for Older People. 'We need to make sure that the

views of older people are fully taken into account before decisions are made which affect people's everyday lives.'

Details of how the Council for Postive Ageing would work, including how people would be elected, will be the subject of consultations over the autumn. A final report is due to be presented to councillors for approval in December 2010. Look out for more details in the next issue of My Life.

If you would like to find out more, call Sarah Cooper on 020 8314 9880 or email sarah.cooper@lewisham.gov.uk

Housing benefit changes

If you have a query about Housing Benefit, you should now call 020 8690 8444 rather than queuing at the Council's office in Laurence House, Catford.

A trained adviser will either answer your query right away or make an appointment for you to talk to someone face-to-face. Appointments can be offered at locations in Catford, Deptford or Downham.

The new system is designed to make sure people with housing benefit queries receive a better, quicker service. When you arrive for your appointment, you should be seen within ten minutes of your allocated

time, so you won't be kept waiting too long.

You will also be told what information to bring to your appointment, such as evidence of address or entitlement, so that your query can be dealt with promptly. If you are making a new claim, for example, this will be assessed and payments arranged while you wait, to avoid the need for a second visit.

So, for any queries about housing benefit, don't make a special journey to the Council offices in Catford, simply call 020 8690 8444. Lines are open Monday to Thursday 9am-8.30pm, Friday 10am-7.30pm and Saturday 9am-1pm.



Volunteer for London 2012

Older people are being urged to become volunteer London Ambassadors during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

London Ambassadors will be the 'face of London' to the millions of visitors flocking to the capital in 2012. Ambassadors will help visitors to find their way around the capital and enjoy the hidden treasures that make London such an exciting city.

Around 8,000 volunteers of all ages will be recruited. There is no upper age-limit for volunteers and full training will be given.

'Volunteers will play a vital role in the success of the Games,' says Aparna Sapre of Volunteer Centre

Lewisham. 'Older people have skills and experience that could make them really excellent ambassadors.'

Application day

If you are interested in applying to be a London Ambassador, visit www.londonambassadors.org.uk or call Aparna at the Volunteer Centre Lewisham on 020 8613 7113. You'll need to volunteer for at least six consecutive days for five hours each day, be good with people and have a passion for London.

Volunteer Centre Lewisham is also running a London Ambassador application day on Monday 1 November, to help anyone who wants to apply. Come along



Get set to volunteer

between 10am and 4pm to the Volunteer Centre Lewisham, 307-313 Lewisham High Street, 2nd floor showroom, H E Olby, SE13 6NW. Call 020 8613 7113 for more details.

Can you remember the London 1948 Olympic Games?

Lewisham Council is collecting people's memories of the so-called 'austerity' Games held in London soon after the Second World War. Did you go to an event? Do you remember anything about what happened?

John Phillips remembers attending the opening ceremony with his friends from Athelney Secondary School, Bellingham. 'I took my sandwiches which my mother had made me

in my old gas mask box! I think we saw King George VI open the Games. For a boy of 15 years it was an amazing spectacle.'

If you have a memory of the London 1948 Olympic Games, call Julie Hall on 020 8314 8571 or write to her at Lewisham Library, 199-201 Lewisham High Street, SE13 6LG.

Your memories will be added to a special website at <http://lewishamlegacy.wikidot.com>

Try indoor bowls for free



Lewisham Indoor Bowls Centre is offering free sessions to anyone aged 50 and over. Come along on any Thursday, 3-5pm, to the centre at Westerly Crescent (off Kangley Bridge Road), SE26 5AQ. Tel 020 8778 1531.

Free short mat bowls sessions are also available at Millwall Community Centre, Zampa Road, SE16 3LN on Thursdays between 10.30am and 12.30pm. Call Janet Hedges on 020 8699 2911 for more information.

Whether you are an absolute beginner or more experienced player, everyone is welcome to come along for quality coaching, meet new people and have fun!

FRUGAL FILLING RECIPES

With winter approaching, why not try this deliciously simple recipe for minestrone soup. It's cheap to make, nourishing and will warm the cockles of your heart. And don't forget you can get all the veg you need for this recipe at Lewisham's excellent street markets (see page 12).

Minestrone soup

Ingredients (serves four-six)

- ▶ One-two tablespoons of olive oil
- ▶ One onion, peeled and chopped
- ▶ Two carrots, peeled and chopped
- ▶ Four large, ripe tomatoes quartered (or a tin of tomatoes is fine)
- ▶ Four rashers of bacon, cut into pieces
- ▶ Two cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- ▶ Two pints of vegetable or chicken stock
- ▶ One teaspoon dried basil (or a handful of fresh basil leaves)
- ▶ Two tablespoons of rice
- ▶ Two courgettes sliced
- ▶ A quarter white cabbage (or two leeks) chopped
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste



Method

1. Heat the oil in a heavy based saucepan and gently fry the bacon until the fat starts to run.
2. Add the onion, carrots and garlic. Stir them in with the bacon.
3. Add the tomatoes. Stir well.
4. Cover the saucepan and turn the heat down low so the vegetables sweat for about 15 minutes.
5. Add the stock and the basil. Stir well. Bring to the boil, then turn down to a low simmer. Leave for approx one hour.
6. Add the rice, courgettes and cabbage or leeks. Bring back to the boil. Simmer for 30 minutes.
7. Check the seasoning and add salt and pepper if required. Serve with crusty bread.

Sing your song



Most of us like nothing more than a good sing-along. It might be on our own in the shower or in the car; it might be listening to the radio or watching TV.

Lewisham Council wants to get more of us singing regularly! There are choirs all over the borough that accept singers of all ages and abilities. Often no audition is necessary either. You'll find a full list of local choirs and singing groups at www.lewisham.gov.uk/arts/music.

And don't be put off if you don't read music or choral music is not what you are looking for – lots of vocal groups sing by ear rather than sheet music and show tunes, world music, gospel and jazz are often included.

And if there's not a choir near you, have you thought about starting your own? You only need a few people to begin with and the Council can give you lots of information and tips to get you going.

‘Cancer screening saved my life’

Older people in Lewisham are being urged to use a simple testing kit and keep themselves safe from bowel cancer

Two and a half years ago, at the age of 69, Maureen Williams received a bowel screening kit through the post. She completed the test and sent it back because she thought it was a good idea. She is very glad that she did. After being diagnosed with early stage bowel cancer she was treated successfully and told that she had a 95 per cent chance of survival.

‘If it had been six months later for me, it may have been a very different story,’ she says. Maureen, from Sydenham, was diagnosed after the launch of the national bowel screening scheme which sees a testing kit sent to all people between the age of 60 and 69 who are registered with a GP.

Treated

Maureen was doubly lucky. She was the first

What you should know

- ▶ Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK
- ▶ Both men and women are at risk and the chances of developing bowel cancer increases with age
- ▶ If bowel cancer is detected early the chances of survival are almost 90 per cent

Symptoms of bowel cancer

- ▶ A persistent change in your normal bowel habit, like going to the toilet more often or diarrhoea
- ▶ Bleeding from the back passage without any obvious reason
- ▶ Pain in the abdomen
- ▶ A lump in your abdomen

Bowel problems are common, so if you have any of these symptoms it does not necessarily mean that you have bowel cancer, but you should visit your GP.

“ If I hadn’t used the kit, I just wouldn’t have known there was a problem ”

Maureen Williams



person in Lewisham to be picked up and treated after being sent a kit, which involves smearing a small sample of stool onto a piece of treated card and sending the card back in a hygienically sealed, prepaid envelope. The aim of the test is to be simple, hygienic and discreet. Results also come back by post within about a week.

The kit can detect tiny amounts of blood that you cannot normally see in your bowel motions. It won’t detect cancer but will indicate whether further tests are required. ‘I had no symptoms whatsoever,’ says Maureen. ‘If I hadn’t used the kit, I just wouldn’t have known there was a problem.’

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK and the second leading cause of cancer deaths. The risk of getting the disease increases as you get older. According to Cancer Research UK, eight out of 10 bowel cancers are diagnosed in people aged 60 or over. But the good news is that early diagnosis and treatment can result in a 90 per cent survival rate.

Full recovery

The type of cancer that Maureen was diagnosed with was confined to the lining of the colon and it was operated on at an early stage, which increased her chances of full recovery. ‘Within a week of coming out I had a call to say there was no need for further

growths of tissue on the bowel wall), which can be removed without the need for surgery.

Dr O’Donohue is encouraging all eligible Lewisham residents to take part in the screening. ‘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,’ he says. ‘It could save your life.’

He stresses the need to heighten awareness of the programme and improve uptake. ‘Less than half of Lewisham people invited return the test kit to us,’ he says, ‘so there is a lot of room for improvement.’

Supporter

Maureen is now a supporter of the campaign to increase awareness of the bowel screening programme in the borough is encouraging people to send back the kits. ‘I can understand that people don’t do it because they are embarrassed or frightened. But whenever I speak to anyone about it I say “Please just do the test”. I am so glad that I did.’

In the next few months Lewisham is hoping to extend the screening programme to cover those aged between 70 and 74, as well as those aged 60–69. At the moment people of 70 and older can opt into the scheme by calling Freephone: 0800 707 6060.

treatment. I didn’t have to have chemo or radiotherapy. I had three monthly check ups at first and now they are six monthly. I can’t praise Lewisham Hospital enough – I couldn’t have had better or quicker treatment.’

A positive test result, however, does not necessarily mean you have cancer. According to the NHS bowel screening programme, of the two per cent of people with a positive result to the test, only ten per cent of those will have cancer. A positive result will, however, require further tests – usually a colonoscopy, a detailed examination, so that a specialist can see inside your bowel and find what is causing the bleeding.

Awareness

Dr John O’Donohue, Consultant Gastroenterologist and Director of the South East London Bowel Cancer Screening Centre, says that of the bowel cancers found in Lewisham, most of them, like Maureen’s, have been at an early, treatable stage. Doctors have also found many pre-cancerous polyps (small

“ Less than half of Lewisham people invited return the test kit to us, so there is a lot of room for improvement ”

Dr John O’Donohue

Come to the market

Fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers and fish, bread and bric a brac; you'll find everything you need down the market!

With their familiar cries of 'Everything for a paaaaand!', and stalls selling anything from batteries to bananas, fabric to fish, London's markets are legendary. And Lewisham has three of the best.

Lewisham's markets are not just great places to pick up fresh produce at surprisingly cheap prices. They are also packed with character and characters – many of whom have been working the stalls man and boy (or woman and girl), following generations before them.

Alan Hogg's great grandmother would come here with a basket of wares to sell; now he and his wife Lillian have a thriving fruit and veg stall. Today it's piled with bowls of shiny red peppers, spring onions, (all £1) and the first of the season's apples that Alan has brought direct from farms in Kent. 'I've done nothing else all my life and I've loved it. The local people... the



atmosphere... every day is a pleasure.'

Further up the High Street, Malcolm Pulford is emptying red onions into a customer's bag. 'I started doing this as a boy and now I'm 40. It's all I've ever known. It's my life. I'm my own boss. I love it.'

Markets – when and where?

Lewisham

When: Monday–Saturday, 9am–6pm.

A more general market operates on Sundays from 10am–4pm for toys and household goods.

Where: Lewisham High Street, SE13.

What's it like? A traditional fruit and veg market with an increasing number of general stalls.

Best for: very cheap fruit and veg, especially seasonal produce from Kent and the home counties, but sold in large quantities.

Catford

When: Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

Where: Catford Broadway, SE6. Stalls in the covered precinct do not come under the Council's control.

What's it like? A short string of stalls behind the theatre. Busiest on Saturdays.

Best for: plants and flowers (Jeanie Prince); West Indian staples such as yams, ackee, scotch bonnet peppers and saltfish.

Deptford

When: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 8am–7pm (but go earlier for the pick of the flea market).

Where: Deptford High Street (from New Cross Road down to Iceland) and Douglas Way.

What's it like? An eclectic mix of general stalls selling whatever they picked up that day. You really never know what you'll find.

Best for: collectibles and bric a brac (Douglas Square), fabric, bed linen, kitchenware.

Appeal

Lewisham Market has been livening up the High Street since 1906. It's mainly a fruit and veg market, with seasonal produce bought in daily from Spitalfields Market, New Covent Garden or direct from farmers in Kent and Essex.

But since pedestrianisation in 1994, Lewisham market has been gradually broadening its appeal. As well as fruit and veg you can now find fabric, toys, flowers and most recently an old-fashioned sweet stall (Candy Sisters) selling classics like pear drops and mint imperials. Food stalls are beginning to appear around the clock tower too.

Competition

Like all street markets, Lewisham faces stiff competition from supermarkets which offer free, easy parking and a one-stop shop, and high-street pound shops that sell everyday toiletries and homewares unbeatably cheaply.

So why should people shop at markets rather than driving to supermarkets? 'The stuff here's fresher. It's better value,' says Malcolm Pulford. 'And people here are treated like customers not commodities. In supermarkets you now even have to serve yourself at the checkout. Generally we treat people with respect, give them a bit of banter. It's a very friendly place to come.'

Flea market

Deptford Market, meanwhile, is best known for its cheap kitchenware, fabrics, and a specialist flea market in Douglas Square. Collectors queue from 5.30am to get the best pickings. On a single visit you might find a Harrod's backgammon set, cameras and camcorders, golf clubs, a grandfather clock, and even a pristine wedding dress.

Vicky has been trading here for 20 years, running a small empire taking up one side of Douglas Square. Parking is a constant bugbear for her and for punters, but she loves the atmosphere. 'I sell anything I can get my hands on – perfume, DVDs,

Who's cheapest?

We compare the prices of selected items at Lewisham market and a local supermarket. Prices were taken over the fortnight between 6 and 19 September 2010. Prices vary with seasons and special offers.

Product	Lewisham market	Sainsbury's hypermarket, Sydenham
Pack of 4 Duracell AA batteries	£2	£3.49
Pack of 4 toilet rolls	£1	51p
Roll of 20 black bin bags	£1	£1.89 ¹
2 pack of pillow cases	£2	£5
28cm non stick frying pan ('professional')	£10	£13 ²
Iceberg lettuce	60p	84p
3 pack of 30% cotton men's argyle socks	£2.50	£5
King Edwards (from Essex)	60p per kg	£1.87 per kg
3 heads of garlic	£1	89p
Red peppers	50p each or 4 for £1	68p each
Salmon	£11 per kg	£10.98 per kg
6 oranges	£1	£1

¹.'Basics' range 73p for 30 ².'Basics' range 25cm pan £3.49

furniture. I get here about half past five and there are usually people waiting, trying to buy stuff.'

Down the High Street itself there is an eclectic mix of stalls, complemented by the neighbouring shops, which spill out into the market.

Inspected

Any clichés about dodgy dealers or counterfeit goods should be dismissed now – Lewisham's markets are all inspected by Trading Standards Officers, and on-site market officers have any fly pitchers or illegal traders swiftly and unceremoniously removed.

And if you don't know what you'd do with 12 fresh limes or a bowlful of red peppers, think about cooking something in bulk and freezing it, or suggest splitting a bowl with someone else in the queue.





is census day

Next March every household in Lewisham will be asked to take part in the 2011 national census. My Life looks at the history of census records and why they are so important.

On 27 March, every household in Britain will be asked to complete a national census – providing a snapshot of the nation in 2011. By law every household has to take part.

The idea of a census is nothing new. Ancient Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks and Romans all kept census records. And then there's the famous Domesday book, ordered by William the Conqueror in 1086.

But modern census records started in Britain in 1801, with a census taken every decade since 1841 (except 1941 during the Second World War). Every household is asked to fill in a form giving a snapshot of the country on a particular day. Questions are about your home (eg how many rooms it has) and basic personal information such as age, nationality, marital status and employment.

Planning services

Although the detail on census forms remains confidential for 100 years, the statistics from the 2011 census will be used from about 2013 to help plan council services.

'Understanding who lives in a borough helps the Council plan services', explains Lewisham Council's Statistics and Research Officer, Patricia Duffy. 'It is vital for the Council to



know how many people live in the borough and what their needs might be in order to plan what facilities and services to provide, things like schools and healthcare. The government will use the information to decide how much funding each borough gets, so it is really important everyone fills in the census.'

Viewing the archive

After 100 years, information written on census forms can be seen by anyone who wants to look. Census records are therefore a treasure trove for historians – providing a valuable picture of our changing population over the

“ During many years spent on research I have found the UK census returns to be an absolute gold mine of information ”

Local historian Godfrey Smith, author of *Hither Green – The Forgotten Hamlet*

past two centuries. They are also pored over by the growing number of people interested in tracing their family trees (see box).

The easiest way to view census records from 1911 or earlier is at Lewisham Library's Local History and Archives Centre, 199–201 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6LG (tel 020 8314 8501). Experts are on hand to show you how to use the sites, and you can also gain free access to other useful databases such as www.ancestry.co.uk, the Times digital archive, and the London Metropolitan Archives which holds the city's parish records.

You can view the records of the 1911 census at www.1911census.co.uk. Censuses taken between 1841 and 1901 can be found at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Census 2011

Your questions answered

When is the date of the census?

The next national census takes place on 27 March 2011.

When will the forms be distributed for the 2011 census?

Forms should arrive mid March. If for any reason you do not receive a form, call the helpline (number below).

How long do I have to fill them in?

Collectors will be coming round for about six weeks after the census.

Can you fill them in online?

Yes. Each form comes with its own personal internet access code. Fill in the forms online at www.census.gov.uk using this code.

Will people be calling door to door?

Yes. They should be readily identifiable by what they are wearing, but always make sure you ask to see their ID. If in doubt, turn them away.

Do I have to fill it in?

Yes, it is a legal requirement for anyone in the country on that day to complete the census. Failure to do so could land you with a fine.

Can I get help?

Yes. If you have trouble filling in the form, you can ask someone to help you. The door to door census officers will also be able to help. Large print and Braille versions will also be available.

What questions will be asked?

Questions are about your home (eg how many rooms it has) and basic personal information such as age, nationality, marital status, and work.

Who counts as my 'household'?

The census is a snapshot of the country on a particular day, so you will need to include visitors staying in your house on 27 March. If you don't want other members of the household to see your personal details (e.g. if you have/are a lodger, or there is more than one family at an address) you can request separate forms.

What if I am away from home on the 27 March?

If you are away from your usual home for less than six months eg on holiday, in hospital, visiting relatives, you will still need to complete a questionnaire for your usual UK address.

What happens to the information?

Forms are scanned and information held securely by the Office of National Statistics. Although the statistics it generates will be made public in about 2013, the actual personal information cannot be released to anyone for 100 years. This means that what you write down will not affect any legal cases, immigration cases, social security applications or council disputes you may be involved in.

For more information contact the census helpline: 0300 0201 101 or text relay 18001 0300 0201 160.

You said, we did

Lewisham Council is urging people to come forward with their feedback to help improve services.

If you have a comment, compliment or complaint about Lewisham Council then Jennifer Greaux wants to hear about it. She's the Council's Corporate Complaints and Quality Manager and her job is to listen to people's suggestions about how services can be improved. 'We recognise that we sometimes get things wrong,' she says. 'That is why we encourage people to let us know when we make a mistake and give us suggestions on how we can improve.'

She is pleased that overall, complaints about Lewisham Council's services have dropped by 24 per cent – from 3,723 to 2,840 for the same period last year.

As well as being told when it is getting things wrong, the Council is keen to hear when they are getting things right. 'Staff across the Council are committed to delivering excellent customer services and work hard to achieve this, so if you have received an excellent service, we'd like to hear from you too,' adds Jennifer.

When people do have a complaint, residents are encouraged to contact the manager of



the service they are complaining about and try and find a resolution. If this cannot or does not happen, then they can ask for their complaint to go through the Council's three stage complaint process, which guarantees you a response within a set number of days at each stage.

The corporate complaints and quality team offers support and advice when people are not happy with the service they receive. They can be contacted by calling 020 8314 7566 or by emailing yourfeedback@lewisham.gov.uk

Some of the changes made by Lewisham Council following comments from residents

- Following complaints about dog fouling, the Council has introduced a system of hand delivering information and guidance letters to all residents in the affected areas.
- After an article in Lewisham Life on how to compost, people asked for more workshops. The Council has now increased the number of workshops it runs.
- Customer satisfaction surveys revealed that people wanted the skips and scaffolding telephone service

- to be available before 9am. The service is now available from 7.30am (Monday to Thursday).
- A number of residents asked why they had to fill in a form if they lost or had their Freedom Pass stolen. Now people can call 020 8314 9844 or 0845 275 7054 to obtain a replacement.
- Some people said the Council's housing benefits claim form was too long and complicated. This is now being replaced with a face-to-face service which aims to give people a decision on the day.



Out and about

From opera to gospel music, Christmas concerts to pantomimes, artists' open studios, films and fireworks. So much to enjoy in the borough this season.

Music

7 November, 3pm

Giuseppe Verdi's Don Carlos
A concert version of Verdi's great epic opera. Sung in Italian with full symphony orchestra and leading soloists from British opera. Conducted by David Roblou.
The Broadway Theatre
Tickets: £10/£12/£15/18

17 November, 2pm

Rolling Back The Years
A stunning roller coaster ride of nostalgia. Featuring tributes to some of the world's greatest stars, including Glen Miller, Fred Astair, Buddy Holly, Cliff Richard, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Dolly Parton, Abba, and many more. Also a taste of the some of the greatest movies and musicals, such as 'Grease', 'Lord of the Dance', and 'The Sound of Music' to name but a few.
Blackheath Halls
Tickets: £9 (£6 concessions)

27 October, 7.30pm

Blackheath Goes Gospel
For the second year, Blackheath Halls hosts this popular project led by the London Community Gospel Choir. A community chorus and children from local schools join together in a rousing performance.
Blackheath Halls
Tickets: £8 (£6 concessions)

28 October, 7.30pm

The Royal Artillery Orchestra and Big Band
A special charity concert featuring both the Royal Artillery Orchestra and Royal Artillery Big Band in a night of exciting music from stage and screen, popular classics, big band swing and much, much more. Something for everyone!
Blackheath Halls
Tickets: £14 (£12 concessions)

17 December, 7.30pm

Christmas Concert
Enjoy the spirit of Christmas at Blackheath Halls with our ever popular concert. Local groups perform a variety of Christmas music in a magical setting – and you can join in with carols for all.
Blackheath Halls
Tickets: £13 (£11 concessions) includes a glass of wine and a mince pie

19 December, 7.30pm

Waterson: Carthy
A special seasonal celebration with England's first family of folk! Drawing from the calendar of English ritual and ceremonial song, Waterson: Carthy presents music rooted in folk beliefs and rural practices. Tonight they are again joined by Jim Causley, Lauren McCormick and Emily Portman.
Blackheath Halls
Tickets: £17 (£15 concessions)



4 December, 5.30pm

Junior Trinity Christmas concert
Festive fun with orchestra, big band and vocal music.
Great Hall, Goldsmiths, University of London
Free

15 December, 6.30pm

Carol concert
Music, readings, mulled wine and mince pies at this seasonal event.
Bandstand, Horniman Museum
Free

12 December, 3pm

Carol concert
A festive concert in the picturesque Horniman Gardens. Carols, Christmas craft market, hot and cold refreshments and Santa's grotto.
Horniman Gardens
Free

The Broadway Theatre Catford Road, Catford SE6 4RU © 020 8690 0002
Blackheath Halls 23 Lee Road, London SE3 9RQ © 020 8463 0100
Great Hall, Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross SE14 6NW © 020 7919 7171
Horniman Museum 100 London Road, Forest Hill SE23 3PQ © 020 8699 1872

Tea dances

9 December, 2pm

Tea dance with Jeff and Jo
£3. Includes tea and cake,
Age Exchange, Blackheath SE3 9LA
020 8318 9105

9 December, 2pm

Tea dance
The Albany, Deptford SE8 4AG
020 8692 4446 www.thealbany.co.uk

28 Oct, 2pm and 29 Oct, 7pm

A 21st century tea dance
Hosted by Ida Barr. Put on your dancing shoes and bring your

family, friends and neighbours for an unforgettable experience. Entelechy continues their legendary series of tea dance events with a mix of live music from resident swing band The Jive Five. Comedy, dance and theatre performed and curated by older artists.

The Albany Tickets: £9
(£6 concessions £3 over 60s)

17 November, 2pm

Blackheath Halls tea dance
Spend a magical afternoon in the wonderful, friendly atmosphere of a Blackheath Halls tea dance featuring:

sequence dancing, quickstep, cha cha cha and much much, more! An enjoyable way to keep fit and meet new people.

Blackheath Halls Tickets: £5

15 December, 2pm

Christmas tea dance
We close our autumn season of tea dances with a special Christmas tea dance, featuring live music from the Hugh Ockendon Trio. An enjoyable way to make the yuletide festivities go with a swing!

Blackheath Halls Tickets: £7

Christmas events

28 November

Lewisham Town Centre Christmas lights switch on

The annual Lewisham Christmas light switch on (by the Clock Tower) will be at 4.45pm. This is preceded by the lantern procession along Lewisham High Street and through the Lewisham Shopping Centre. There will also be free mince pies, children's activities and Santa's grotto.

Lewisham Town Centre
020 8314 8474

4 December, 12 noon–6pm

Hither Green Christmas Fair
Highlights include Santa's grotto, a market selling arts and crafts, delicacies, gifts, vintage clothing and records, and carols around the Christmas tree.

Staplehurst Road, outside Hither Green train station SE13
020 8314 8474

4 December, 12 noon–5pm

Forest Hill Christmas celebrations
Santa's grotto, craft market, mince pies and more.

Locations around Forest Hill

11 December, 11am–6pm

Deptford Christmas Festival
Special festive entertainments, activities, arts and crafts, and market stalls and Christmas lights switch on.

Douglas Way, Margaret McMillan Park and Amersham Vale
020 8314 7613

11 December 12 noon–5pm

Brockley Christmas Market
Christmas market, mulled wine and mince pies and Santa's grotto
Coulgate Street, Brockley SE4
020 8699 1064

11 December, 12 noon–4pm

Downham Christmas Festival
Festive fun for all ages, ranging from art and craft stalls selling Christmas gifts, to children's activities.

Downham Health & Leisure Centre, 7-9 Moorside Road, Downham BR1 5EP
020 3049 1980

11 December, 1–4pm

Christmas Crackers
Free festive events in our winter wonderland including carolling, card



making, story telling and a very special visit from Santa!
Fancy dress optional.

Catford Library, Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, Catford SE6 4RU
020 8314 9113

15 December, 12 noon–4pm

Bellingham Golden Oldies Christmas party
Bellingham over-50's social club hold their annual Christmas Party. All over 50s welcome.

Bellingham Leisure and Lifestyle Centre, 5 Randlesdown Road, Catford SE6 3BT
© 020 8461 2213

£5 includes Christmas lunch and live entertainment.

Blackheath fireworks



The Blackheath fireworks display is one of the most dazzling in London, bringing colour and light to the skies of Lewisham and Greenwich. This year's event will be held on Saturday 6 November at 8pm.

Lewisham Council and the event's main sponsors, GLC Ltd, have commissioned Pain's Fireworks to design an absolutely breathtaking display as a thank you to all of the local businesses, community groups and individuals who have made generous donations to keep this hugely popular event alive.

Make a donation by visiting www.lewisham.gov.uk/fireworks or calling 020 8314 7321.

Theatre

27–29 October, 7pm

For Queen and Country? Theatre of the Oppressed

Equal in her own right, Mary Seacole became famous for nursing British soldiers during the 1855–1856 Crimean war. Unlike Florence Nightingale, Seacole was refused enlistment, she nonetheless raised funds to travel to the war.

After her death in 1881, Mary has returned to find out HER-story has been forgotten from contemporary history books. This is a fund raising event. All proceeds raised will go to the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal.

The Albany
Tickets: £8

7–24 December

Three Little Pigs

Puppets, music, comedy and thrills. Funny and fabulous and popular with adults and children alike.

The Albany
Tickets: £9 adults, £7.50 children

9 November – 4 December, 7.45pm

Bloodline: Duty Dynasty Death

Set during the turbulent years of the Wars of Religion, in which thousands were slaughtered, Bloodline looks at how the future of England relied on just two people whose actions shaped Europe for generations to come. A world premiere of a new drama from award winning writer Linda Wilkinson and director/producer Simon James Collier.

The Brockley Jack Theatre
Tickets: £12, £10 concession

11 December–2 January

Beauty and the Beast

A Christmas panto special. This magical tale tells the story of Beauty, an inventor's daughter who longs for romance and excitement. Join all your favourite characters for an unforgettable adventure!

The Broadway Theatre
Check box office for times and price details.

Artists Open Studios

13 and 20 November, 12 noon–7pm
14 and 21 November 12 noon–6pm

Lee Green Open Studios

Paintings, prints, sculpture, textiles, photography, jewellery and more on display and for sale in artists' homes and studios.

www.leegreenopenstudios.com

3 December 11am–9pm
4 and 5 December 11am – 6pm

Cockpit Arts Open Studios

Meet talented designer-makers and discover distinctive hand-crafted pieces. Café available.

18–22 Creekside, Deptford, SE8 3DZ
www.cockpitarts.com



Film

Age Exchange Blackheath

11 Blackheath Village
Blackheath, SE3 9LA
020 8318 9105

17 December, 2pm
Holiday Affair

Janet Leigh and Robert Mitchum star in this little shown Christmas classic, set in New York.
£3 includes tea and cake

Deptford Film Club

Bird's Nest pub, Deptford Church Street, Deptford SE8 4RZ.
Every other Wednesday at 7.30pm

Deptford Film Club screens classic films, arthouse and world cinema in a friendly atmosphere. Upcoming films include Named Desire, Double Take, and Lourdes.
For all the latest information, look out for posters or visit www.deptfordfilmclub.org

Forest Hill Library

Dartmouth Road, Forest Hill
SE23 3HZ

28 October 5.30–6.45pm

A Charmed Life

Film screening and discussion
Patrick Vernon from Every Generation Media presents their documentary based on Eddie Noble, the Jamaican airman whose life had a major impact on Andrea Levy's classic, Small Island.
020 8699 2065

Free

Are you prepared?

Lewisham Council works closely with the emergency and voluntary services, utility companies and other London boroughs to plan for a coordinated response to major emergencies. In fact, the Council has a number of trained officers ready to respond. We have contingency plans to keep services going if an emergency strikes.



Preparing for winter

Last winter we experienced the most severe weather for decades. Whole communities, industries, schools, hospitals and other services were badly affected with widespread disruption. Lewisham Council has made robust plans to ensure that this winter we can keep the road network moving as much as possible, continue to provide services to the most vulnerable, and carry on gritting roads and, where necessary, footpaths.

But we cannot do everything. We need the support of our residents and businesses **to keep the borough moving by promoting community resilience**. Whether it's looking out for elderly and vulnerable neighbours or helping in other ways, if people get involved, this winter will be easier for everyone.

What do you need to know?

- If elderly or vulnerable neighbours might need your help.
- How you and your family will stay in contact in the event of an emergency.
- How to turn off water, gas and electricity supplies in your home.
- The benefits of insulation.
- How to keep warm. Fuel allowance and financial help advice is available on the Direct Gov website.
Go to www.direct.gov.uk and search for 'safety at home'

During an emergency

the latest information can be found on local radio and TV. Radio frequencies in the Lewisham area are:

BBC London 94.9 FM

LBC 97.3 FM

For further information and advice visit:

www.lewisham.gov.uk
and search for 'Emergency planning'

