



pioneer press

THE NEWSLETTER FOR TENANTS AND RESIDENTS OF WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING

Fire safety review: your top concerns and our response

Fire safety has understandably become a big issue for you, and it is foremost in our minds too. Estate services manager **Jamie Beckwith** sets out improved plans for your safekeeping

Our thoughts continue to be with all of you affected by the awful tragedy at Grenfell Tower. The fire has rightly raised a lot of questions about fire safety in our housing sector and the formal enquiry will, we hope, lead to some much needed changes.

Under scrutiny

Since the fire, we have put our own fire safety precautions under the microscope to make absolutely sure we are doing all we can to keep you safe from the risk of fire.

One priority for us was finding out your concerns. We held two *Meet the managers* forums for you in July.

The point of the forums was to explain measures already in place and our ideas for strengthening them, and to listen to any worries you had.

Not surprisingly, a lot of you turned up. One of your biggest concerns

was a fear that you might not hear an alarm. Some of you also worried you might not be able to move quickly enough to get out of the building if a fire broke out.

Please see below for what we can do to address these two concerns.

Many of you have since contacted us to say how much you appreciated the meetings and to tell us you do notice that we regularly check and test fire equipment in your buildings.

A reminder that the safety of everyone in your building needs your cooperation. Our rules exist for your safety. All follow the advice of fire safety experts who have learnt about fire risks the hard way.

Thank you for helping us to keep you and your home safe.

► See page 9 for more on our tougher fire safety measures

HEARING A FIRE ALARM

If you are worried you may not hear a fire alarm please contact your housing officer, estate services officer or scheme manager. We will then see what we can do to make you feel safer. For example we could give you a *pillow that vibrates* when an alarm is sounded and/or install highly visible alert panels.

GETTING OUTSIDE QUICKLY

If your concern is about getting outside quickly, please tell your housing officer so we can help. As a general rule we say if you regularly leave the building you should be able to get outside in a reasonable time should a fire break out. *The important thing is to leave the building safely rather than quickly.*

Inside this issue

2 HELP TO FIND WORK

Sign up to these ClementJames Centre courses for free

3 WPRA NEWS

New chair Lizzie Spring calls on women to make themselves heard

4,5 THE OLD WHITE CITY

Tenant Jacqueline Shaw goes back in time to a marvellous display of Franco-British collaboration

4 KEEPING A JOURNAL

Keeping a record of life's lessons

6 HERITAGE RESEARCH

Volunteers wanted to help with our suffrage history project

6,7 PIONEERING WOMEN

Pioneer Press interviews amazing new centenarian Mary Search

8, 9 HOUSING NEWS

New staff, *Meet the Managers* and and rethinking tenant engagement

9 FIRE SAFETY contd

Keeping you safe at home

10 FITTING BLINDS

Getting to grips with rollers

11 THE LIGHTER SIDE

Autumn quiz, and a fail-safe recipe for vegetarian friends

12 FREE EVENTS

Helping hand for jobseekers

Free employment skills workshop

SUPPORT & WORKSHOPS FREE



If you're trying and struggling to find work we'd like to invite you to a **free employment skills workshop** from **2pm to 4pm** on **26 October** at the **ClementJames Centre**

At the workshop you'll get practical advice designed to give you the best opportunities to find your way back into the workplace.

Its six-week *women's empowerment programme* gives local women a safe space to build up their confidence and develop personal goals.

Solid track record

The ClementJames Centre has been giving advice, guidance, and education and employment support to local people for over 15 years. It will take an all-round pastoral approach to your personal development.

ClementJames also has a range of other support programmes that might interest you. *IntoWork* offers more in-depth one-to-one advice and support. You'll be invited to sign up to this at the workshop.

All programmes are free of charge.

See right for who to contact or call Women's Pioneer housing inclusion manager Aidan McCarthy on ☎ 020 8749 7112 or email info@womenspioneer.co.uk

ClementJames Centre
95 Sirdar Road, W11 4EQ
☎ 020 7221 8810
www.clementjames.org

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS WORKSHOP 26 OCTOBER FROM 2PM TO 4PM

Find your way back to work

INTOWORK PROGRAMME

One to one advice and support

To book a place on the workshop, or discuss the IntoWork programme, please call ClementJames Centre on ☎ 020 7221 8810 or email Howard Taylor: howard@clementjames.org

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

Six-week plan to help you build confidence and develop your goals

For more information on the women's empowerment programme please contact Maeve Slattery on maeve@clementjames.org

Tenant scrutiny panel chair hands over the reins

TSP chair **Marcia Davies** is standing down after over a year in the 'hot seat'. She reflects on what the panel has achieved in that time and why she thinks it is making a difference

I enjoyed my time as chair of the tenant scrutiny panel very much. It was definitely a challenge, a level of responsibility I hadn't had before. But it was a great pleasure to take the role on, and I hope I managed it okay.

Though the TSP is fairly new, we have achieved really positive things so far. I'm particularly pleased with the new complaints process. It has been made more straightforward since we reported on it, and I was

very encouraged by how engaged you all were when we reviewed the service charge process.

We are due to present our report on how WPH manages empty flats at the November board meeting.

Although I'm stepping down as chair I will remain on the panel. From my point of view, it's a very positive and constructive way to make a difference to how Women's Pioneer Housing works.



Kasia Kwilecka is to take over as TSP chair. Marcia says: 'Kasia is an excellent choice and I'm sure the panel will go from strength to strength with her in the hot seat.'

We still need new members on the panel and I would encourage anyone who is interested to get in touch with Matthew Wicks.

If you are interested in joining the tenant scrutiny panel, or finding out more, please call housing manager **Matthew Wicks** for a chat about how the panel works and the work involved on ☎ 020 8749 7112 or email info@womenspioneer.co.uk

WPH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Women's voices: getting ourselves heard

New WPRA chair **Lizzie Spring** explains why she believes that an effective residents association benefits all of you

Hi everyone. I have become chair of our residents' association (RA) after Penny's excellent two years in the role. All tenants and leaseholders will find a warm welcome at the RA. Our aim is better communication, so residents' voices are fully heard and represented. In July we focused on

WPH's services, costs and value for money, disability and ageing-related issues and transparent, meaningful scrutiny.

In this piece I'd like to share my personal view as an older tenant, to explain why an effective residents association is so important.



PHOTO: MING DENASTY

Women getting heard: Lizzie, right, and friends on a bus en route to Greenham Common in 1983

Women tenants over 60 are unlikely to be able to choose to move out of rented housing because, on average, we've earned much less than men, have maybe been lone parents or unpaid carers, live with disabilities or have limited savings – in other words we're often poor.

But we're also tough! Our foremothers were tough too. In 1920, when women got the vote and WPH was formed, my grandmother was 30. She had gone into service in Chelsea at 13 as a scullery maid. Her generation's legacy was the determination that their children's lives would be better.

Most girls of my 1950s generation left school at 15 and went into shops, factories, offices, childcare or health. I was one of the minority that went to

university, then headed back to lovely scruffy, slummy 1970s Notting Hill, renting a room for £1.09p a week.

Revolution

A compellingly optimistic feminist wave flowed across west London then. We would start a revolution, have equality and fun, save womankind from patriarchy, smash racism and change the world. I'll concede 45 years on: that plan didn't go too well.

In 2011, the concept of gender equality was used to delay to age 66 pensions for women in our late 50s, despite our lifetime of unequal low pay. We have also borne the brunt of austerity - those were nearly all 'women's jobs' that were cut. Many older women now have zero-hour

contracts, if they're in paid work at all. These are just the recent changes. In the 1980s it became more acceptable for fathers to cite liberation and dance off to pastures new, leaving the women to raise children alone. We didn't have professional job shares or free childcare. We helped each other and got on as best we could.

Our children are now adults, some still in their childhood box rooms as there is no other affordable housing. The growth in opportunities built up over four generations has stalled, as have our choices about housing.

What happened to the social contract where tenants rent homes for life, and are respected as we contribute to society through work, volunteering, parenting and caring? People in 'social' housing are stigmatised on all sides now and it is so hard to challenge.

Short tenancies have become normalised. To get and keep a home you must demonstrate 'vulnerability' as if this is a permanent characteristic, not just part of human life whatever your housing tenure. Is this infantilising system accepted because so many tenants, of all ages, are women?

Like many of my neighbours, I've always worked in the voluntary and public sectors. My colleagues have mostly been women, a high proportion renting from housing associations.

Despite our diverse experience and expertise, where tenants' voices are heard at all it is not as decision makers. Can we change this? It's partly up to the WPH team to let us in through more doors, I suppose, and partly up to us tenants to walk through them. Please, let's!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

St Peter's Church, Kensington Park Road, Notting Hill, 6.30-8.45pm
* 16 November
* 8 December **Christmas party**

TO GET IN TOUCH WITH WPRA

Call Maggie on ☎ 020 7229 8471 or email womenspioneerresidents@gmail.com

Lessons for life: remember the best advice by keeping a personal journal

Keeping a daily journal, writes property & estate services support officer **Cameron Robertson**, is a good way to recall lessons learnt and friendly advice that could prove useful later in your life

I was reminded of this recently when I looked through a journal of my travels as a 19-year-old in South-east Asia.

I recorded one page every day and, while some would say this a little self-indulgent, the result is a book full of anecdotes and a snapshot of my personal history.

Daily debrief

Each day I had to reflect on what had happened, digest the events and convey them to the pages in a way that made sense.

The process was like a daily debrief, and helped keep my mind in order through some fairly turbulent experiences.

As well as having a purpose then, the journal is now a source of ideas and motivation. The lessons I learned, and recorded in it have a bearing on how I compose myself today.

I'd especially recommend keeping a journal if you take a trip. You may find re-reading it later more personal and pleasing than looking through photos.

TOP TIPS: KEEPING A JOURNAL

If you decide to keep a journal, you may find these tips useful.

- ✿ Be disciplined: write every day but don't limit your style or creativity.
- ✿ Note down any thoughts and feelings, snippets of advice you were given or inspiring comments or compliments.
- ✿ Draw things if you feel like it or even just doodle.
- ✿ Make it special, make it yours.

HISTORY SPOT

White City's glory: a celebration of early inventions

Many things may come to mind when you think of White City. Gorgeous probably isn't one of them. But as Pioneer Way tenant **Jacqueline Shaw** found, it used to be spectacular

White City gets its name from the *Great White City* exhibition grounds – white palaces, lagoons, waterways, amusement rides and gardens built for the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition.

Right royal welcome

The 140-acre site, formerly farmland, stretched from Uxbridge Road to modern-day Du Cane Road. It was opened in pouring rain on 14 May by Prince George V and the Princess of Wales, in the Court of Honour.

Eight years earlier the Prince of Wales (Edward VII from 1901-1910) had visited the Paris Exhibition. He'd been impressed by its buildings, the Eiffel Tower and a display of industry and products from around the world.

Back in London he discussed it with MPs and others, saying a British exhibition could display French, British and Empire products and promote the Entente Cordial between the two

countries. It took a further five years for talks to start with the French.

That year Britain was also invited to stage Olympic Games originally scheduled for Rome. A stadium was built into the complex and a marathon was run over the Olympic course, starting at Windsor Castle and ending at Shepherd's Bush Stadium.

First prize initially went to an Italian, but he was disqualified for being helped to stand after falling over in the stadium. An American instead got the £100 prize. Britain's team managed 56 gold medals that year, well ahead of the USA at 23.

The task of creating the exhibition went to Hungarian Imre Kiralfy, who had been involved with the successful Earl's Court Exhibition. Another 13 architects helped design the halls.

The halls were about 70 feet wide by 400 feet, built of steel frame and concrete to be fire-proof, then

- ✿ Of more than 100 buildings, the largest was the Machinery Hall, where electricity was generated to light up the exhibition. The Court of Honour alone used 160,000 light bulbs.
- ✿ Construction went on day and night, with an estimated 12,000 workers employed at the peak.
- ✿ Nearby trains, trams and buses could between them bring to the exhibition 80,000 people hourly.
- ✿ Judging all the 16,000 exhibits took 10 days.

- ✿ Entrance for adults was one shilling (roughly £5.50 today), and sixpence for children.
- ✿ A children's day in September saw 1,141 schools issued with 50,000 admission tickets. Pupils spent a morning at the exhibition and the afternoon doing sports, followed by a swimming gala.
- ✿ There were 5000 permanent staff when the exhibition opened, with 1000 remaining on site at night.



In the lagoons, above, visitors rode swan boats or the electric launches.

A dizzying view of the 1908 exhibition as seen from the 'flip-flap'. Each of its two 150-foot arms swung 48 passengers past each other in mid-air

decorated in fancy plaster mouldings and painted white to protect against the weather. Gardens were laid out and trees planted along the avenues.

Visiting royals relaxed in their own pavilion, furnished in Louis XV and Georgian styles, with a sunken bandstand and specially commissioned waltz, *Round the Exhibition*.

Visitors had use of both a bank and a post office, where they could send telegraphs or exhibition postcards.

The well-to-do lunched in the drawing rooms or ladies' boudoirs of the Garden Club. Membership of this club included any-time admission to the exhibition for two guineas (£276 today) for women and three for men.

J Lyons & Co, which held general catering rights, served 10,000 people daily – coffee at 46p in today's money or whisky for 92p.

The exhibition halls were many and varied. The British sections included liberal arts, nutriment, education and science. The French covered social

economy, agriculture, horticulture, fine arts and textiles.

Pavilions built for the governments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India and others are remembered today in local street names, like South Africa Road and Canada Way.

The Senegalese and Ballymaclinton Irish villages were not to be missed. And a mile-long mountain railway, running at up to 50mph, passed every style of scenery.

There was a Canadian toboggan, built in the style of a switchback, a scale model of London before the Great Fire, a realistic recreation of the 1889 Johnstown flood, in which 5,000 drowned, and one depicting the peaceful town a day earlier.

At the *Daily Mail* pavilion, visitors could see a newspaper in production. Firework displays took place right up until the final evening.

Nearly 8.5 million people visited these popular amusements, with the exhibition raising £420,000 in total.

Farmer's market sets up stalls at old BBC site

WEDNESDAY MARKET

For those of you who'd rather get your food from a farm than a supermarket, a farmers' market will shortly be trading in the grounds of the BBC Media Village, set back from Wood Lane. More details to follow.

WHITE CITY AFTER THE GREAT EXHIBITION

Exhibitions continued annually until WWI. They were followed by British industries fairs until 1937. During both world wars, the exhibition halls were used by the Department of War, with parachutes made here in WWII.

In 1949, the BBC bought 13 acres in Wood Lane, transmitting its first televised programme from here in 1960.

Before the stadium was knocked down in 1984 it was put to varied uses, like greyhound racing and horse shows. Hammersmith Council bought the land and built the flats and houses now there.

Wood Lane Station was used until the 1950s then replaced by White City underground.

The BBC's overseas service, once broadcast from buildings across the road from Women's Pioneer's Wood Lane offices, is being replaced by a new campus and student flats for Imperial College. We'll tell you more about new facilities planned for the campus that will be open to the public in the next Pioneer Press.

Women's work: call out to join our history research project

Earlier this year a group of U3A volunteers helped us carry out a four-month pilot study into Women's Pioneer's early history. As many of you know, we were set up by women suffragists in 1920. With that sort of heritage, we were sure we'd come across some very interesting stories.

We asked our group to find out who'd lived in your homes in the interwar years. Using old electoral registers, they identified over 1200 tenants, including some very unexpected surprises. They also found some exciting information about our early founders.

We are now in the final stages of preparing a funding bid for a much more ambitious project, using archive documents found in our own safe. We also want to properly research new material that we think indicates that Women's Pioneer deserves a much more prominent place in feminist and housing history.

Do you fancy joining our history research team? There are so many tasks to do and we're sure you'll find the work as gripping as our U3A team did. The project is likely to start in January and will carry on throughout the year.

If you'd like to know more about volunteering for our history project, email researcher Lisa Thompson at thompsonstwo@icloud.com or leave your details with us on ☎020 8749 7112.

Our researchers were all retired members of the University of the Third Age, recruited through Royal Holloway's Citizens project.

Remarkable women Mary Search: 100 years a Londoner

THE PIONEER PRESS INTERVIEW

By the time *Pioneer Press* reaches you, Holland Park Avenue tenant **Mary Search** will have celebrated her 100th birthday. Lisa Thompson met Mary shortly before the big day

Mary has perfect recall of the day she first saw the flat she would make home for the next 39 years. Her old flat in Highgate was for single working women but, with her 60th birthday just weeks away, Mary would soon join the ranks of retirees.

'It was a Thursday afternoon and there were two already on the steps. We duly waited until Sue [Hockett] brought us in. It was vast but there was no light so you didn't know what the bathroom was like.

'One woman, very nicely dressed, said, 'I couldn't possibly live in here'. Another said, 'I couldn't live here either. All that noise!' I thought 'keep going!' because there were five of us.

'I'd been paying a monthly rent so asked Sue how much it would be. She told me and wrote my name down on the back of an envelope.

'On the way back to the hospital I thought, when she gets back to the office that envelope will go in the bin. I was having kittens.' There was an agonising wait before a letter arrived telling Mary she'd got the flat.

It is a happier tale than some of Mary's earlier memories. An only child, her parents had married in 1916. Father William, an officers' steward then on HMS Dido, missed her birth. Instead, her mother Dorothy booked herself into the women-run Clapham Maternity Hospital in Stockwell, founded by pioneering doctor Dr Annie McCall.

Mary arrived in the small hours. 'It was very very hot and the nurse

asked my mother if she'd like a cup of tea. Then she came back and said, "You can't have one. Milk's gone off".

As Mary tells it, this rather set the tone. 'She was a very good mother but there was no affection. I think I was in my 40s before we 'gelled'. I was well trained and always nicely dressed but she was terribly strict.'

Mary's father rarely came home, posted overseas by the navy after the war. 'I saw him about four times in my life so never missed him.'

Inside Big Ben

On a more cheerful note, she recalls a favourite uncle, her mother's younger brother Signa, whose wife Annie was a chef at the Palace of Westminster. 'My uncle took me and my mother to visit her when I was five and I was taken up part of Big Ben.' To this day, she says, people think she's imagining it.

Uncle Signa also took her to Hyde Park and Mary recalls with delight an elderly man who had trained sparrows to fly to the railings when he called each bird's number. 'People believe that with a pinch of salt,' she says.

School, she says, was best left forgotten. 'It was very bare and there was nothing to fire you to really want to learn more.' At 14, girls of Mary's class would change school for training in domestic service or 'the clerical'.

Mary was told she'd get clerical but fate had other plans. 'On 22 December I went to the fever hospital with scarlet fever. When I came out at

Easter I was like a plucked chicken and had to learn to walk again.' Mary had picked up multiple infections. 'Every conceivable complaint bar diphtheria.'

She never did go back to school, instead taking a job at a medical practice that employed, at a smaller branch, a GP who, in turn, employed her mother as caretaker.

'I probably didn't want to go back to school but took myself to evening classes and got shorthand and typing.'

When World War II broke out Mary signed up for the WRENS. But her childhood illnesses had taken their toll - she failed the medical.

In outer London's Hayes, where Mary and her mother lived, there was little direct enemy action but it did come too close for comfort one evening. 'In the evenings the teacher in the flat upstairs would come down and we'd knit socks for the soldiers around the kitchen table.

'One night, and I don't remember it, I suddenly shouted 'DUCK!' and a landmine fell, not far from us, but all that happened was a clock came, not off the shelf but right to the edge.'

They were hard years but Mary recalls 'a certain excitement in London,

in a queer way'. 'You didn't go about thinking perhaps I'll be bombed.'

VE Day was, of course, huge cause for celebration. Invited by her teacher neighbour Florence to join the merry-making, the young women headed into town. 'We didn't know anybody but everyone joined in - soldiers, sailors, every nationality.

National celebration

'You just walked about and joked and I still can't believe I did it. Four soldiers scooped us up and took us to dinner. It was all very pleasant and we came home with the milk train.

'It was quite a day. We didn't come across any unpleasantness. They'd hug you and give you a kiss but that was it. You didn't feel uncomfortable.'

Shortly after the war, Mary found work at University College Hospital. 'I can still remember my first lunch hour.' At her table, she was the only one who hadn't seen active service. 'It was very uncomfortable because they didn't know the circumstances.'

Two years later in 1948, the NHS arrived. 'I'll never forget the day. The world and his wife came - from China, Poland, you name it.'



“

Phillip called something across. I can only think it was cheeky because he'd quite a dirty laugh.

Mary on meeting the Queen and Prince Phillip

RUN-INS WITH ROYALTY

Mary has been totting up encounters with royalty, the first with Princess Alexandra at the official opening of her old Highgate flat. 'They were the first built for the YWCA and very nice.' The conversation was brief. 'She said, "And what is your colour scheme?". I said I hadn't got one. I'd got all my mother's stuff.' More recently she met the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, courtesy of the 60th anniversary of her church being restored after bomb damage in World War II. As the oldest mobile parishioner, Mary was pushed to the front pew but isn't sure what the queen said ('she spoke very quietly'). She's sure Philip was less than reverent. 'He called something across. I can only think it was cheeky because he'd quite a dirty laugh.'

Given a choice of career what would she have done? 'I wanted to be a surgeon. When I was six I had a tiny oak armchair that I'd sit in by the fire in winter, using two pieces of wood from the bundle for the fire to carve up my doll. I couldn't bear dolls.'

Denied the chance to swap kindling for scalpels, Mary instead became a hospital clerk. 'I enjoyed working and those were the happiest days. I had to decide whether [people] saw the medical or surgical casualty officer. I don't think I made many mistakes.'

Since retiring Mary has travelled extensively with younger friends Joan and Margaret Collings, who she met at the National Trust for Scotland's London members' centre.

Together they've been abroad and around the UK, including many trips to stately homes and repeat visits to a Devon donkey sanctuary.

As her 100th birthday approaches, Mary wishes she'd made better use of her legs when they were still reliable. 'London's a very interesting place. I wish I could still go around it. I'm alright with a stick but not confident. I need someone with me.'

Her ideal birthday, she says, would be a few days in a hotel in her favourite destination - St Andrews in Fife. But she adds: 'Joan and her sister have got something up their sleeves. I haven't a clue what!'

All of us at Women's Pioneer send Mary our warmest congratulations for her 100th birthday and hope she enjoyed the treat laid on for her by Joan and Margaret.

❁ Meet the managers

Is there anything you'd like to get off your chest?

MARY SMITH COURT
17-21 TREBOVIR ROAD
EARL'S COURT, SW5 9NF
3PM TO 6PM 25 OCTOBER

Our next **Meet the managers** event will be on 25 October. As always we'd be delighted to see you for a chat over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Our middle management team will all be there between 3pm and 6pm. They are: housing manager Matthew Wicks, finance manager Sangeeta Kakati, estate services manager Jamie Beckwith, corporate services manager Susan Bernard, asset manager Roger Barton and housing inclusion manager Aidan McCarthy.

We suggest you book ahead to make sure you get to speak to the managers you most want to talk to. To book a slot, please email us on info@womenspioneer.co.uk or call us on 020 8749 7112.

Starting a real conversation

We have invited tenant engagement experts Tpas, who we worked with to set up the tenant scrutiny panel, to help us refresh our approach to engaging with all of you. We want to move beyond using letters and noticeboards to communicate with you, instead starting what we hope will be a two-way conversation. As part of this new approach, we will soon carry out phone surveys with some of you. We would be very grateful if you could give your caller as much time as you can spare.

NEWS FROM OUR TEAMS



New faces in our property services and finance teams

ROGER JARMAN
HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

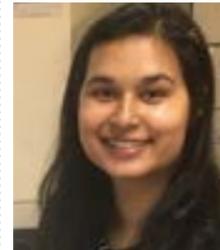


I joined in late July on a one-year contract to review how Women's Pioneer is governed. I will be looking at the way the board works with the executive team to see how we can further improve your services.

I am also looking at how we can gear up for a new regulatory regime as the business grows. I have worked in housing for over 35 years and am looking forward to helping Women's Pioneer take its next steps.

I love living in London and spend most weekends exploring its parks, museums and galleries, dining out, reading, going to exhibitions and engaging in current cultural affairs.

SANGEETA KAKATI
FINANCE MANAGER



I'm Sangeeta and I am your new finance manager. I've audited lots of housing associations as well as other organisations and this is my first permanent role outside of audit.

I'm really excited to get the most we can from the resources available to us, to deliver you the best service possible in the most efficient and resident-friendly way possible.

In my spare time, I like vlogging about history shows (like *The Crown* and *Victoria*). I also like writing stories and learning French.



OUR NEW CLEANERS:
DIANA GALVIS, right, & WANDERLEIA DA SILVA

Wanderleia: I am Portuguese and joined Women's Pioneer in May as a cleaner in Notting Hill. I really enjoy working here. I am delighted to have found a role at Women's Pioneer and hope to contribute to the value of our services. My interests outside work are enjoying the times with my two kids, cinema, dinner with peers, travelling and reading.

Diana: I have worked for Women's Pioneer since March this year and am really happy to be working here. I enjoy spending my spare time with my family and I am very active with my local church. From October I will be taking on new properties and increasing my hours, which I am looking forward to. I want to provide the best service to the tenants.

▶ continued from page 1

Fire safety review: your top concerns and our response

BETTER FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

All but three of our buildings have alarm systems covering the parts shared with your Women's Pioneer neighbours. We have been fitting these since 2009, when doing our planned 'cyclical' building repairs.

Of the other three buildings, one had already been scheduled to have a system fitted this year and we have fast-tracked the other two.

What does the system do?

Fire detectors fitted all through the shared parts of the building link to a fire panel. This triggers an alarm to alert everyone in the building in the unlikely event of a fire starting in any common area.

The lesson of Grenfell is that we need the alarm to ring if a fire breaks out inside one of your flats.

Our plan, therefore, is to fit an alarm in each flat's hallway and link it to the fire panel. *That way the fire alarm will be triggered if a fire breaks out anywhere in the building.*

If we did the cyclical maintenance for your building this year or last, and there wasn't a fire alarm system already installed, you will now have the new 'integrated alarm' system.

Budgets allowing, we will have these improved systems installed for all of you in 2018. We'll tell you more about our plans in the Christmas issue of *Pioneer Press*.

Health and safety inspections

We have since 2013 had a target of giving every property a full health and safety inspection every month. In practice 99% of your buildings get a full inspection done every week, either by an estate services officer (ESO) or sheltered scheme manager.

All but 10 buildings are served by an ESO. By next January we hope to have the service extended to all of you. We will shortly consult those of you not now served by an ESO.

Trained to spot risks

All ESOs, scheme managers and housing officers are to get extra training in detecting and cutting safety risks. This will mean we more than meet all legal standards for fire safety. Technical officer Jo Edwards and I will be trained to the government HHSRS (housing health and safety rating system) standard.

Practice evacuation drills

We have been carrying out random fire drills in all our buildings. We don't know who is at home when we trigger the alarm but think it highly unlikely that no one will be home.

It is therefore very worrying that at some buildings no one has left any of the flats. **Please always play safe.** If you hear the alarm, do not assume it is a test. It may be the real thing. Leave the building until you are absolutely sure there isn't a fire.

Cutting the risk

To make your homes safer, we are:

- ❖ replacing older cork noticeboards with new lockable, fire-retardant noticeboards
- ❖ replacing wire basket or wooden letter boxes with metal letter boxes
- ❖ putting locks on bin sheds so no one can dump bulky rubbish
- ❖ making sure all locks in common parts are of the same standard.

SAFE ESCAPE ROUTES: why halls, landings, stairs and cupboards have to be kept clear

Among the many horrifying stories about Grenfell were those from residents who did manage to escape.

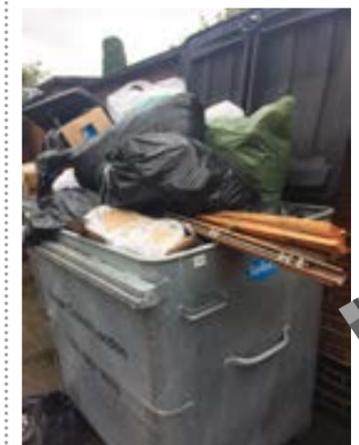
They described the thick, choking smoke that filled the halls and stairs, making it impossible to see a way out. Most had to feel the way forward with their hands, while also trying not to breathe in the noxious fumes.

This is why we do not let you keep anything in the parts of the buildings you share. All possible routes out of the building must be kept clear. Just one obstacle could cause a fatal delay.

It also adds to the fire risk – almost anything can catch fire. That is why we don't let you store anything in cupboards in the shared parts.

Our health and safety checks regularly find both rules being broken after repeated warnings.

We cannot ignore this risk. If we find anything left in any shared part of the building we will take it away: that means bikes, pushchairs, shopping trolleys, scooters, clothes – anything. You have 28 days to claim them back. If you don't, we will get rid of them.



Bulky rubbish like blinds should not go in your bins and is a fire risk. Your council's bin service will not take bulky items. Please call the council if you need any large items collected.



robertson's repairs roller blinds

IN YOUR TOOLKIT

You'll need a measuring tape, pencil, drill, bradawl, spirit level, hammer and – if the blind needs cutting to size – a small hacksaw and sharp scissors.

WILL IT FIT?

Measure your window before you buy a blind to make sure it will fit. If you want it to fit inside the window frame, and not on top, you will need a little space on either side. Some blinds can be cut to fit.

IS IT SAFE TO DRILL INTO THE WALL?

Always check before you drill into anything. If there are any hidden pipes or wires you could seriously hurt yourself and damage our property. *If you aren't sure - don't do it.*

POSITION THE BRACKETS

Work out where the brackets to hold the blind have to go and mark the position of the upper corners with a pencil. Use the spirit level to make sure they're not squint.

CUTTING A BLIND TO SIZE

If your blind is too large for the space, do a little research. Both John Lewis and B&Q offer video tutorials online and you can also find some fairly clear instructions on the internet.

FITTING THE SIDE BITS

Fit the 'side control' (chain winder) into the end of the blind on the side you want to open and close the blind from and push the dummy pin into the other end. Press them against a hard surface or tap gently with a hammer.

FITTING THE BRACKETS

Put the control bracket on the side you want to use to raise or lower the blind. Push the point of the bradawl hard through the screw holes in the bracket. Hold the bracket in place and drill a screw into each of the little holes left by the bradawl.

FIX THE BLIND

Slot the blind into the two brackets and test that it works freely.

SAFETY WARNING

If you have young children in your flat, please take care to keep all loops and chains well out of their reach. Young children have been strangled by blinds. You can buy useful safety devices. For advice on blind safety from John Lewis see <http://tinyurl.com/y6v7jcoc>

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FITTING BLINDS

From B&Q
<http://tinyurl.com/ya8n53ge>
From John Lewis
<http://tinyurl.com/yc5cuo9j>

EMERGENCY REPAIRS OUT OF HOURS

If you have a genuine emergency when our office is closed please call the number below for the type of repair you need. Please let us know when our office reopens if you needed help in an emergency.

Plumbing, electrics, or other problems that need to be dealt with by a builder:
Just 24/7 ☎020 8979 2220

Broken windows or if you're locked out or have lost keys (you will have to pay for this):
Just 24/7 ☎020 8979 2220

Power cut to the whole house:
UK Power Network ☎0800 056 6341 or ☒0333 32 32 105

Gas leak – if you smell gas or suspect a gas leak:
National Grid ☎0800 111 999

Lift breakdown: 21st Century Lifts
☎020 8676 5700

Heating and hot water system for all flats in your property:
S&S Burners ☎020 8330 7992

Gas fires and boilers that we have installed in your flat:
Daynight ☎07860 234 899

Faulty fire alarm in a shared part of your building: Chameleon
☎01757 244 511. Leave your name, address and phone number, and a brief description of the problem. The duty engineer will call you back at once.

TV aerials and entry phones: this is not an emergency situation and can wait until we reopen.

DON'T LOOK NOW: ANSWERS TO OUR SUMMER QUIZ

- 1 Jubilee line
- 2 Mansion House, South Ealing
- 3 Parsons Green, Turnham Green and Stepney Green
- 4 Leicester Square and Covent Garden (Piccadilly line)
- 5 Two
- 6 Grange Hill
- 7 Harry Beck
- 8 Tottenham Court Road
- 9 The Great Bear
- 10 They are all disused.

GOING UNDERGROUND: McCARTHY'S AUTUMN QUIZ

More awkward questions to test your general knowledge. Housing inclusion manager **Aidan McCarthy** trawls the tunnels for obscure London Underground trivia



- 1 Which is the only Underground line to cross the Thames four times?
- 2 Name either of the two Underground stations to contain all five vowels in their name (a bonus point if you can manage both).
- 3 Which three District line stations have the word 'green' in their names?
- 4 The shortest distance between two stations on the Underground is 0.3km – can you name them?
- 5 How many stations are there on the Waterloo and City line?
- 6 Which station on the Central line shares its name with a television programme set in a secondary school?
- 7 What is the name of the designer of the iconic London Underground map?
- 8 The film *An American Werewolf in London* features a sequence filmed in which central London tube station?
- 9 What is the name of the 1992 artwork by Simon Patterson which features a map of the Underground with the station names replaced by the names of famous people?
- 10 What do the following Underground stations have in common: British Museum, York Road, Down Street, Brompton Road?

INTO THE KITCHEN AT FORK-POINT



Field mushroom tortilla

created by housing administrator John Palmer



Tasting menu: busker Andrew Costa tucks into John's tortilla

INGREDIENTS

- 20g butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 potatoes
- 200g mushrooms (any type will do)
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 125g spinach
- 4 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- Sea salt and black pepper



METHOD

- 1 Cut the potatoes into small cubes and par-boil for 10 minutes. Drain.
- 2 Heat the butter and olive oil in an ovenproof frying pan, add the potatoes and brown on all sides.
- 3 Add the mushrooms and cook on both sides for 5 minutes.
- 4 Sprinkle in the garlic and add the spinach.
- 5 Mix the eggs and milk together, season and pour into the pan. Cover and cook gently for 5 minutes.
- 6 Preheat the grill to medium-high.
- 7 Grill the tortilla for 6-8 minutes, until golden on top. Check that the egg has set, then serve hot or cold.

free events

October to December

Saturday 7 October **WELLBEING DAY**

At Centre 151, 151 Whiston Road, E2. From 10am to 5pm. Food, workshops, performances, arts and crafts, massage.

Tuesday 10 to Sat 21 October **2017 RENAISSANCE** **PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE**

At Getty Images Gallery, 46 Eastcastle Street, W1. From Mon-Fri 10am to 5.30pm, Saturday from 12 to 5.30pm. Outstanding work from emerging and established photographers. Fundraiser for young women with breast cancer.

Saturday 14 October **SX15 TALKS: WOMEN** **IN MILITARY HISTORY**

At the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, SW3. From 1-5pm. Research by female academics specialising in military history topics.

Sunday 15 October **DIWALI IN LONDON**

At Trafalgar Square from 1-7pm. Celebrate the Hindu, Sikh and Jain festival of lights. Lively music and dance, authentic street food market, craft stalls, yoga and much more.

Weds 18 to Sunday 22 October **BLOOMSBURY FESTIVAL**

Bloomsbury, WC1N, all day. Most free. Bumper programme of arts, science, literature, talks, outdoor arts and family events. www.bloomsburyfestival.org.uk

Thursday 19 to Sat 21 October **LONDON SURF / FILM FESTIVAL**

At Regent Street Cinema, 309 Regent St, W1B. International surf/ film/art/ culture, with music, talks, pop-ups etc. www.londonsurffilmfestival.com

Friday 20 to Sat 21 October **BEEFSY: A STUDY IN SAUSAGE**

At 15 Bateman Street, London W1D. From 9am to 6pm. Re-creating in meat art works from the likes of Tracy Emin and Andy Warhol. Plus original works by some of our most promising artists.

Thursday 26 October **HOW TO SPOT A** **ROMAN EMPEROR**

At Museum of London, EC2. From 6pm. Lecture by Mary Beard, Cambridge professor of classics, on identifying images of Roman emperors.

Sunday 12 November **AFTERNOON POEMS: BYRON,** **THE SHELLEYS & FRANKENSTEIN**

At Keats House, 10 Keats Grove, NW3. From 2-3pm. Poetry and prose explore the darker side of romanticism, the Gothic and macabre. Best to book <http://keatsevents.eventbrite.co.uk>

Tues 14 to Sat 17 November **RUNNING CLUB REGENT'S PARK**

Meet at tennis court coffee shop from 6.30-7.30pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays, for a free taster session to improve your running style, speed and stamina.

Until Friday 17 November **UNCONSCIOUS ARCHIVES //** **EMOTION + THE TECH(NO)BODY**

At the Austrian Cultural Forum, SW7. From 6-9pm. Sound art, experimental film, software programming, laboratory culture, sculpture, radio, ephemeral art, instrument building, post internet art.

Until Saturday 18 November **WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE**

At Bartha Contemporary, 25 Margaret Street, W1. Tues to Friday from 11am to 6pm, Sat from 12-4pm. Jill Baroff and Stefana McClure's first joint exhibition.

Sunday 19 November **AUTUMN GARDEN ART**

Family day at Keats House, 10 Keats Grove, NW3. From 1-4pm. Gather foliage, ferns and beech leaves to create autumn art to brighten up grey days.

Fri 24 to Sat 25 November **SKILLS LONDON 2017**

At the east entrance, ExCeL London, One Western Gateway Royal Victoria Dock, E16. From 9.30am to 4pm. London's biggest jobs and careers event for young people aged 15-24.

Saturday 2 December **WINTER ARTS FESTIVAL**

At the Half Moon Theatre, 43 White Horse Road, E1. From 10am to 5pm. An affordable arts and crafts fair featuring local artists and children's book illustrators.

12

POOR SERVICE OR UNFAIR TREATMENT?

If you think we have treated you unfairly or one of our services has been below an acceptable standard, please call us to ask for a complaints form or to make an appointment so we can discuss the matter.

☎ 020 8749 7112

✉ info@womenspioneer.co.uk

If you would like independent advice contact your MP or councillors or call the Housing Ombudsman Service on ☎ 0300 111 3000.

www.housing-ombudsman.co.uk

Ordering repairs

Call the team direct on Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 5.30pm: ☎ 020 8743 4422
Email: repairsresponseteam@womenspioneer.co.uk

For a serious risk to health and safety or to our property out of hours, see page 10 for numbers to call in an emergency.

These numbers are only to be used for a situation that cannot wait until our office reopens.

Contact us

Our Wood Lane offices are open from Monday to Friday, from 9.30am to 5.30pm.

Call in or write to: **227 Wood Lane, London W12 0EX**
Phone us: ☎ 020 8749 7112

Contact us by email or internet: info@womenspioneer.co.uk

www.womenspioneer.co.uk
Repairs: ☎ 020 8743 4422