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Plenty of reasons to leave the car at home

WE HAVE all heard of the mid-life crisis; a man deciding to swap his car and/or wife for a younger model is a scenario that is familiar to many of us.

Men hit 45 and start to panic; time is running out and there is so much left undone.

The stress of juggling work, love, family and money becomes too much.

Thinning hair, expanding waistlines and the ever-present tick-tock tick-tock of time rushing by puts them in a panic.

Hitting 30 is also a big occasion for many people.

It is a natural milestone at which to evaluate one's life and set certain goals. There is nothing new about this but I have noticed a new phenomenon.

I don't know if we can call it the quarter-life crisis, but it is certainly afflicting a large number of us. It hits around the age of 25 and can last a good few years.

It makes us question why we haven't achieved as much as we should have. In this age of modern technology and communication, we are expected to achieve more and achieve it faster.

We are expected to have traveled the world, have a fantastic career, a flashy flat, a trendy wardrobe complete with the latest iPod and, of course, a beautiful partner.

Who is responsible for setting such high standards?

Glossy magazine and adverts? Statistical surveys telling us how well our peers are doing?

Or is it that WE are the ones responsible? With a new year comes resolutions and of course we all want to be thinner and richer but my resolution this year?

To be easier on myself.

Kia Abdullah is a 24-year-old author from Limehouse.

Her first novel, *Life, Love and Assimilation*, was a huge success and she has already embarked on her second book, a crime thriller. Send your comments to kia.abdullah@gmail.com

By **CARLY MAKIN**
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HUGE transport improvements are in the pipeline for Greenwich Peninsula.

According to Lend Lease and Quintain Estates, who are leading the regeneration of the area in north Greenwich, the changes are essential for the new riverside community which will be centred around The O2.

Significant upgrades are being made to the existing transport infrastructure to encourage existing residents, visitors to The O2 and future locals and workers at Greenwich Peninsula to use public transport and reduce their reliance on cars.

Some £30 million will be invested by Lend Lease and Quintain over the next 15 years as part of their commitment to Greenwich Peninsula, which is being

supplemented by the other Peninsula stakeholders: English Partnerships, the Government's national regeneration agency; Transport for London; Greenwich Council and AEG Europe.

Some of the improvements will be in place for The O2 opening in July when the majority of visitors will be expected to use public transport.

David Ward, a spokesman for Lend Lease and Quintain said: "Greenwich Peninsula will be a place where the emphasis is on public transport, on cycling and on walking, where the car is an occasional guest rather than a necessity."

"These transport upgrades are good news for the existing community and future visitors to the area. Further transport enhancements are also planned during the delivery of the project."

Improvements include extra capacity at North Greenwich Station and a new 129 bus service has already been introduced to directly link West Greenwich to the North Greenwich transport interchange.

A shorter route for the 108 bus service has also been made possible thanks to the delivery of a new bus gate, giving access from Westcombe Hill onto Woolwich Road roundabout.

In addition, improvements are under way to highway junctions to the south of the Peninsula and north of Blackwell Tunnel, and new traffic messaging signs aim to aid traffic flow and improve bus priority.

Capacity of the North Greenwich transport interchange taxi rank will also be upgraded to accommodate 140 taxis an hour.

AEG Europe has acquired a majority stake in Thames Clippers and will be running boats every 15 minutes from the Queen Elizabeth II pier, close to The O2, to central London, from July.

In line with the long-term regeneration proposals for Greenwich Peninsula, the London Underground car park at North Greenwich Tube station has been reduced in capacity.

Don't miss historic tour

TAKE a look behind the scenes onboard the world's last remaining steam coaster docked in West India Quay.

The SS Robin Heritage Tour will take place on Saturday, January 14, and will give visitors a chance to explore east London's most important maritime landmark, including areas which are usually off-limits to the public.

Tickets are £6 for adults, £3 for children and £15 for a family ticket (two adults and two children).

For safety reasons tours are restricted to able-bodied adults and children over 10.

It starts at 2pm and lasts for an hour.

For more information visit www.ssrobin.org or email tours@ssrobin.org.

DID YOU KNOW..

The Radiohead song "Fake Plastic Trees" is about Canary Wharf – although the trees on the estate are real.

The song seems to have been written about the world of mass marketing and mass consumption.

According to singer Thom Yorke, it is about the famous financial district.



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