

The Baring Foundation

# Ageing Artfully:

Older People and  
Professional Participatory  
Arts in the UK

David Cutler

Foreword  
Dame Joan Bakewell





## The Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation was set up in 1969. Its purpose is to improve the quality of life of people suffering disadvantage and discrimination. It aims to achieve this through making grants to strengthen organisations which serve disadvantaged people and by bringing added value to this process, especially through learning from grant making.

By 2009 the Foundation has given almost £100 million.

In September 2009 a new Arts Grants Programme was launched to provide in the region of £3 million over five years in core costs grants to arts organisations working in a participative way with older people in the UK.

Two other grants programmes aim to strengthen the UK voluntary sector's independence from government and to build the capacity of NGOs and community-based organisations in sub-Saharan Africa working on migration. Three smaller Special Initiatives support parents with learning difficulties and their children, give awards for intercultural dialogue at the grassroots level and explore the role of the non-environmental third sector in responding to climate change.

## The Author

David Cutler has been the Director of the Baring Foundation since 2003 and before that was the Director of the Carnegie Young People Initiative.

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# Foreword

I have always believed in the power of the arts to transform lives. So it comes as no surprise to learn that art still has the power to move, inspire and thrill us as we each get older. What is surprising is the extent of the work that is already going on in this country, both among professional arts organisations reaching out to older participants, and less formal bodies providing engaging activities for those who are getting on in years.

The Baring Foundation sets out in this major report a picture of the situation that exists across all art forms – dance, music, drama, painting – as a way of engaging and invigorating the older generation. In so doing it draws attention to work done abroad, in America and in Ireland, and the research that shows the benefits of the arts to us all.

I have always believed that arts need no other justification than their own intrinsic value, their capacity to lift the spirit and give us experiences of transcendental and inspirational power. And that remains true. But there are adjacent benefits that hold particular force in the lives of the elderly. This report makes the case that participation in the arts increases our personal sense of wellbeing, often in some cases actual physical improvement. Stiff limbs and muscles brought into renewed use in dance, help keep people mobile and improve our sense of balance, an important consideration when falls are such a risk among the old. There is evidence from America that participation by those suffering from dementia offers positive benefits. There are case histories closer to home that demonstrate how the arts bring communities and generations closer together, help relieve the isolation so many old people suffer, and bring new friendships into their lives.

This report sets the agenda for how we can move forward. Its range and detail describe not only how the old in the UK already enjoy the arts, and of how arts institutions reach out to this growing constituency, but also draws attention to the many opportunities that await us in the future. Its vision is of an ageing population able to enjoy the riches and pleasures of our abundant cultural life. I commend its thoroughness and the concept of public good that informs its pages.

**Joan Bakewell**

Dame Joan Bakewell is a journalist, broadcaster, columnist, novelist and, since 2008, the Government's 'Voice of Older People.' She is the author of numerous books including *The View from Here*; *Life at Seventy*.

# Summary

In 2009 the Baring Foundation launched a new fund for arts organisations in the UK working in a participative way with older people. This mapping study primarily looks at the kind of work that could be supported by this fund.

The report begins with the broad context of our ageing society, the discrimination and disadvantage faced by older people and at the voluntary sector organisations that serve them.

It moves on to give a picture of arts organisations working with older people based on 120 short case studies, most of them appended at A. It reviews the history of the field which emerged in the 1970s, analyses the case studies using a typology (degree of specialisation, setting, art form and benefits) and notes the lack of specific arts policy and therefore the lack of dedicated funding. Although museums and galleries rarely offer participative work, their highly significant role is acknowledged. A section on geography considers the distribution of activity across the four countries of the UK as well as the importance of rural provision. In addition to work by professional arts organisations that use participation, it is important to remember that older people also enjoy the arts through being audience members as well as involvement in voluntary or amateur arts and that local authorities and some health and social care settings also make their own provision.

The following section examines in a little more depth the personal and societal benefits of the arts that go beyond the intrinsic worth of creative expression itself. These can be divided in a number of ways but the simplest approach is used here of two inter-related dimensions, health (mental and physical) and personal and community relations. There is some research evidence from the USA on the positive overall effects of participation in the arts on health and there is an increasing body of activity related to dementia. Intergenerational work is growing in the UK and provides a bridge between generations and sometimes cultures too.

It is concluded that this is a neglected issue and while the reasons for this are not obvious, ageism may play a part. The following areas are identified as key to developing this field: research; policy and funding; scaling up of activity; festivals; local authorities and health trusts; partnerships; the regulation of care; networking between arts organisations; practice development, training and standards; major venues; publicity; leadership of older people; coordination and sector advocacy.

In addition to UK case studies categorised by art form (cross media; performance, dance, drama and theatre, music and song; and visual), short accounts are given of work in the Republic of Ireland, dominated by the Bealtaine Festival in May and in the USA where the National Center for Creative Aging provides a model of coordination and sector development. A short list of selected resources is provided.



# Contents

Introduction	4
Context	6
A Picture of Arts Organisations Working with Older People	9
Personal and Societal Benefits	21
Conclusion	26
Appendices:	
Appendix A: Case studies of arts organisations in the UK	33
Appendix B: Work outside the UK	59
Appendix C: Other resources	63



# Introduction

## Purpose

This report was written primarily to inform the Baring Foundation in preparation for the launch of its new programme for arts organisations working with older people in the UK. Therefore it concentrates on activity that could be funded under that programme. It is being disseminated more widely both as a background document to potential applicants but also because no mapping study of this area, seeking to cover the UK, has been published before.

## The Baring Foundation Arts Programme

The Foundation is an independent grant maker which has supported the arts since its inception. In recent years this support has taken the form of core costs grants to arts organisations within a theme which is followed over a number of years. The purpose of all the Foundation's funding is to strengthen voluntary sector organisations which try to improve the quality of life of people experiencing disadvantage or discrimination. From 2004 the theme chosen by the Foundation was arts organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers. From 2010 this will change to older people, and funding guidelines for the new programme are available from the Foundation.

The starting point of the Foundation's new arts programme is that people continue to be creative as they age but that in some circumstances may need specific support from arts organisations to unlock and develop these talents. Older people have dreams and aspirations and can go on contributing to and improving society. The arts can play a unique role in older people's lives, especially through actively creating and presenting artistic work.

## Scope

This report concerns itself with professional arts organisations. Non-arts organisations also use the arts to work with older people and the importance of this is acknowledged but investigated less fully.

The Baring Foundation has tended to support arts in educational or community settings and participation in the arts rather than audience development. This report will follow that pattern, especially as it is the case that in general older people (50-70 years old) attend artistic events disproportionately to the general population. The Foundation interprets the arts broadly and as utilising a wide variety of artistic forms.

Being an older person is a relative concept. It is rarely used officially to mean someone under fifty and usually refers to retirement age and above. The Baring Foundation's funding will largely be directed to organisations working with people over 60. Older people are, of course, a highly diverse group.

The presence of ageism in society means that all older people are potentially the object of discrimination. However it is also the case that many older people enjoy fulfilled lives. Therefore this report concentrates on older people who face some additional form of discrimination or disadvantage. This tends to be: poverty; isolation; health problems; racism and sexism; but could extend to other issues such as public transport provision. The report uses the concept of a Third and a Fourth Age, discussed below.



## Methodology

This report is mainly the result of interviews with people in over 30 arts organisations working with older people and correspondence with more than 70 others. This took place largely between March and July 2009 and included trips to Dublin and Washington, DC. The author is extremely grateful to all those who so willingly spared their time. As a stock-take of this activity has not previously been published it was decided to briefly record all the examples of relevant work identified through this process. It has not been possible to assess the quality of work of each organisation.

There is very little published academic or policy orientated literature on this topic and this has been reviewed. There is a larger body of relevant materials produced by arts organisations and many of these have been considered. It has not been possible to examine the enormously greater literature on ageing and older people's position in society.

## Structure

After looking briefly at the general context for older people in the UK, the report attempts to paint a picture of current activity through the analysis of over a hundred short case studies of work by arts organisations (appended at A). This is accompanied by a briefer analysis of complementary work by non-arts organisations. This forms the basis, along with published evidence, for a description of the personal and societal benefits of this work. Finally, conclusions are drawn as to how this activity be taken forward, including by using international models (described in Appendix B). Additional resources can be found in Appendix C.

Throughout 2008 Equal Arts ran a 3D knitting project involving 40 older women from Newcastle working with two artists and a writer. The women created installations which represent aspects of their lives – everything from bikes to bins, hammers to handbags. The exhibition is being toured throughout the North.



# Context

## Demographics

It is well known that the UK has an ageing population. For the first time there are now more people of pensionable age than are under 16. In 2003 there were 20 million people aged 50 or over and it is predicted that this will be 27.2 million by 2031. The fastest increasing age group is 85+, now 4.5% of the population at 2.75 million, an increase of 45% in a half century. Although older women outnumber men this gap is reducing. Life expectancy at birth for men in 2001 was 75.9 years and for women was 80.5.

Older women are more likely to live alone than men and this proportion increases with age. 60% of women aged 75+ live alone in comparison to 25% of men. Older women are also more likely to live in communal accommodation (e.g. a residential or nursing home) than men. In 2001 4.5% of all older people lived in communal accommodation. At 90+ this rises to 20% of men and 34% of women.

## Disadvantage and Discrimination

The Economic and Social Research Council defines isolation as a person who has less than weekly contact with family, friends or neighbours. Although the overwhelming majority of older people are not socially isolated it does affect an enormous number. It is estimated to affect around 2.1 million people aged 60+ in the UK and 1.3 million of these have less than monthly contact with family or friends. A MORI survey conducted in 2000 showed more than 1.5 million older people feeling trapped in their own homes, with women twice as likely to feel this as men and there was also a strong correlation with income, meaning that those on low income were twice as likely to feel trapped. Access to, and quality of, public transport is highly relevant.

A useful concept here is that of Third and Fourth Ages. Third Age is used to denote an older person who remains physically and mentally fit and in full possession of all their capacities. Fourth Age suggests someone who has begun to experience significant limitation to these capacities. Beyond the fact that both terms are applied to older people they cease to be chronological. So, for instance, someone aged 90 in excellent health would be in their Third Age while another person could be 60, suffering dementia and mobility problems and be in their Fourth Age. Physical and mental health are not however the only determinants to a full life. So someone in their Third Age could feel that the arts are not open to them due to their class or ethnic background. These categories are not necessarily static though, someone can move back and forth between Third and Fourth Age due to changes in health. These concepts will be explored later on in this report.

## Public Policy

Public policy regarding older people is immensely complex and has become more so since the devolution of many powers within the UK. So for instance the funding of care is quite different in Scotland than in England. *All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population* published in 2007 gives a fuller description of the policy position there.

In England in 2006 the Social Exclusion Unit published *A Sure Start to Later Life – Ending Inequalities for Older People* which advocated the Sure Start model that it had pioneered for young children, but this appears to have run out of steam after eight Link Age Plus pilots. The Comprehensive Spending Review the following year had a Public Service Agreement on ‘tackling poverty and promoting greater independence and wellbeing in later life’. The 2006



pensions White Paper proposed a package of reforms that would improve pensioners' financial situation, though not immediately, for instance by increasing basic state pension in line with average earnings inflation from 2012. The Department for Communities and Local Government has published a new strategy for housing and older people *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*. The Audit Commission in 2008 came to the view that only one in three English Local Authorities are well placed to deal with an ageing society.

In England, the Government has sought to create a more effective and coordinated approach with the Department of Work and Pensions taking a lead on *Opportunity Age; Meeting the Challenges of Ageing in the 21st Century*. This paper referred briefly to libraries and to museums but not to the arts at all under its short sections on leisure and learning. This approach was followed precisely four years later in July 2009 in the follow-up strategy *Building a Society for All Ages*. This stands in contrast to an appreciation therein of the value of sports and exercise for older people, for instance 'by commissioning the 46 national governing bodies of sport to help create a world leading community sport system including plans to encourage the over 50s to participate'. Although this report had nothing to say about the role of the arts in ageing it did have a raft of other commitments including: a review of the Default Retirement Age; all-in-one cards provided by local authorities to access opportunities and entitlements; a Families and Relationships Green Paper; digital inclusion projects; a grandparents summit; initiatives to improve attitudes by employers; a Care and Support Green Paper; a new National UK Advisory Forum on Ageing; a programme to make all buildings and neighbourhoods friendly and liveable for people of all ages, and many more work strands.

## The Voluntary Sector

The voluntary sector for older people is similarly complex and varies throughout the four countries of the UK. At its simplest it can be divided into two categories: generic and specific; national and local.

The overwhelmingly dominant national and generic organisation at the time of writing has yet to find a name but has been formed through the merger of Age Concern and Help the Aged. There are also a number of much smaller but still very important other national generic organisations such as Independent Age and Counsel and Care. In addition there are some more national organisations that have a more specific role such as Contact the Elderly, Friends of the Elderly, Carers UK and Care and Repair.

Again at the local level the most significant players, by far, are the many branches of Age Concern. But there are many other distinct local organisations, including many with a faith background. Occasionally an older people's organisation can focus on the arts, such as Bedscarf, the Luton Senior Citizen's Art and Recreational Forum.

## Focus on Arts Activity by Age Concern

Age Concern Cheshire has run 'Wearpurple Arts' since 2001 and is supported in this by Cheshire West and Chester Council. It gives people over 55 the opportunity to work with professional artists. This has taken place in local groups, day centres and residential homes across West Cheshire with a dedicated website giving examples of much of the resultant work.

Examples of projects include:

- 'Creative space' – an arts on prescription project. This gave 12 people with mental health problems, meeting in Winsford, the chance to work with two artists, Caroline Slifkin and Sharon Lelonek in classes suitable for beginners covering a range of basic arts and craft techniques. A selection of the arts produced was exhibited at Castle Park Arts Centre.
- Artist in residence in residential and day care centres. Beginning with a pilot project in 2005, 'Wearpurple Arts' has run a programme across Vale Royal covering a range of media including dance, poetry visual arts and music. The model uses a lead artist and a shadowing artist to work for ten half days over ten months. The course empowers staff and older people to continue to develop artwork independently after the project.
- Toolkits. These folders are aimed at day care and residential staff. They give basic information on how to deliver creative activities.
- Music in day care and residential centres. These have been funded by the Cheshire Music Partnership. The first of these involved two musicians and a video artist delivering 36 sessions in six centres. These involved a mixture of conversation, discussion and reminiscence as well as singing and discussing songs from different eras. This was followed the next year by a training course for musicians wanting to gain experience of working in day centres and residential homes. The subsequent year training programme was run for volunteers wanting to work with the programme.



Age Concern Cheshire's Wearpurple Arts – mosaic making class in progress.

*Feedback from the music project:*

***'Care staff commented on the positive effects that music has, including: triggering memories of the past, opening up discussion and encouraging the participants to join in group activities.'***

Many other examples of local action are documented in the Age Concern *Good Practice Resource Guide* published in 2001.

Other voluntary organisations, although not explicitly for older people, may in practice almost exclusively serve them. There are a number of well known examples among health charities, e.g. the Alzheimer's Society.

# A picture of arts organisations working with older people

## History

Arts organisations working with older people as a specific group of active participants appears to be a recent phenomenon. It is hard to discern activity before the 1970s when it seems to have been one aspect of a larger movement to draw different sections of society into the arts, sometimes described as the community arts movement. For instance, David Slater, Director of Entelechy Arts and for three years Artistic Director of the Capital Age Festival, recalls starting his career in that period at Plymouth Arts Centre when the Calouste Gulbenkian UK Trust was funding community arts. He undertook outreach work, including reminiscence and intergenerational work at Wosley Residential Home which, within living memory, had been a workhouse.

Several of the better known specialist organisations in the field became established in the 1980s: Age Exchange (1983), Green Candle Dance Company (late 80s) Magic Me (1989). Since then there seems to have been a gradual growth in activity and interest. This appears to have been more a matter of individual enthusiasm by particular artists rather than any policy or funding drivers. However it was an era when there was increasing public recognition that the population was ageing. An example of this was the work of Peter Laslett who helped establish the University of the Third Age.

## Typology

Creative work in this field resists easy categorisation but tends to have the following main differentiating elements: degree of specialisation; art form; setting; personal or societal purpose.

### ***Degree of Specialisation***

There is a small number of arts companies solely devoted to working with older people, including on an intergenerational basis: Age Exchange; Connaught Opera; Equal Arts; First Taste; From Here to Maturity; Golden Oldies; Green Candle; Ladder to the Moon; Lost Chord; Magic Me; Sandwell Third Age Arts; Semitones; Sing for your Life; Silver Singing; Striking Attitudes; Third Age Arts and The Zimmers. Some of these (for instance Ladder to the Moon) started off with a different client group or more generally, before becoming specialist.

There is then a much larger group, probably most of the organisations described in this report, which as a larger or smaller part of their work, has an ongoing strand of activity dedicated to older people. It is difficult to be precise as some of the organisations might close their current work once funding finishes, but this must account for at least another 60 case studies here. This can only be a guess, but there could well be as many organisations again which this report has failed to identify.

This fringes into what must be a much larger group of organisations (doubtless many more than described here) which have had the occasional project with older people when one-off money became available. A good example would be the work of the National Gallery in London. It is very likely that many of these organisations would wish to continue their work in this area if they were able to secure long-term funding.



## Setting

Work can also be classified by where it tends to take place:

- Arts or cultural venue;
- Community setting (e.g. a community centre) including public spaces and festivals;
- An individual's own home;
- Day centre;
- Residential Home;
- Nursing Home;
- Hospital;
- Hospice.

To some degree, setting correlates to whether participants are in their Third or Fourth Age. Someone using an arts venue or community setting is much more likely to be in their Third Age, while people in their Fourth Age may find themselves in a residential home, nursing home, hospital or hospice. This is not a hard and fast rule though. People in residential homes can be taken to community or art venues and someone in a hospital may quickly recover and go home. Also the strong policy drive to allow older people to live at home means that someone with considerable support needs, who 20 years ago would have been living in a residential home, will still be living at home.

### Focus on working in hospitals

At the Orpington Hospital in Kent, Josie Aston set up the 'ArtsEnhance' project which included a project in the Intermediate Care Unit. Two wards were equipped with arts carts and a fortnightly club was provided by two professional artists, Cas Holmes and Susan Amos. 105 patients took part with an average age of 83. Patients tend to spend 4-6 weeks on the ward which allows the involvement of carers, children and grandchildren. The resultant work has been displayed on the wards.

ArtsCare is the arts in health service at Salisbury District Hospital and was established in 1992. Much of its work is undertaken with older people. Examples of projects include: 'Village Tales' a series of events with storyteller Tim Laycock; 'Dance through Life' facilitated by Rebecca Seymour; and 'Music with Sarum Orchestra' where professional string players performed live for older patients.

There is a clear need for arts companies to reach out to day centres, residential and nursing homes and many do so. What is perhaps more surprising is how few of the best known arts venues have specific activity. Many might say that their audience includes a large number of people in their Third Age, though this misses the point that a specific effort at outreach is needed to involve people in their Fourth Age.

The visual arts offer a further benefit in providing a way to improve the physical environment where an older person finds themselves. This may reinforce their sense of themselves, for instance the production of 'memory boxes' that might be placed outside the bedroom of someone with dementia. The products of visual arts projects such as ceramics, textiles or painting can be displayed in a day centre or nursing home and make it more attractive, as well as giving a sense of personal achievement.

However there seem to be few projects which set out to create a piece of public art for places where older people live. A good example of this is Safer Productions based in Bootle. When five high rise blocks of flats were demolished in Norris Green in Liverpool, the residents, who were mainly over 50, had mixed feelings. The artistic team sat and listened to the residents and used

local history and their working lives to create works using mosaics suitable to the new housing they were moving to. Likewise the motivation for the Haven project, which led to Suffolk Artlink Creative Carers initiative, was making a neglected shared room more attractive in a care home in Suffolk.

## Focus on Museums and Galleries

Work in these settings is difficult to categorise. Much of the work is either audience development, bringing in older people who would otherwise not have visited, or reminiscence work using artefacts from the museum's collection from within an older person's lifetime, often without an artistic process involved. This, therefore, falls outside the scope of this report. However museums and galleries are enormously important cultural institutions and so some are included here.

A few go further to create art with older people (see National Gallery and Whitworth Art Gallery examples in Appendix A).

The national intergenerational programme called 'Their Past, Your Future' funded by the Big Lottery and managed by the Museums and Libraries Association has to date awarded over £1 million to 120 projects since 2004. The second phase of 'Their Past, Your Future' will continue to run until March 2010. Every project is different but all involve work with older and younger people exploring conflict. Hundreds of veterans have worked with thousands of young people to share their experience.

**Birmingham Science Museum** ran an exhibition in 2002, *Changing Times: Our messages from the past to the present*, which was developed by a diverse group of 10 local residents drawn from four different local community groups and organisations including older people's groups, a special school, and a local college. The group chose the theme of the exhibition (communication and music) and selected the objects from the stored collections at Birmingham's Museum Collections Centre. The group's reasons for choosing the objects both individually and collectively formed the basis of the exhibition's interpretation, and the group worked with a designer. The project succeeded in getting very different individuals to work together and create an exhibition full of resonant, personal interpretations of artifacts. Sustainable partnerships with local community organisations were developed, and the museum published a toolkit entitled *We Chose It! Connecting collections and communities*.

**The British Museum** is encouraging older local people to visit more often and for shorter periods. They have found the key to doing this is about providing supported visiting to enable an enjoyable experience and not just encouraging people to visit and then leaving them to it. Supported visiting is part of an 'over 55' strand being developed with a core programme of assisted visits, called Fledging.

The Virtual Gallery project at **The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum** in Coventry gives local people the chance to create their own online exhibitions using items from The Herbert's collections and photographs of their own objects. Herbert staff have worked with a range of community organisations to provide participants with the opportunity to gain new ICT skills, and to increase public access to these collections through the web.

**National Museums Scotland** is introducing a pilot programme of monthly, Sunday afternoon visits to museums and galleries in Edinburgh for lonely, isolated elderly people. It started in May 2009. The programme is being run in conjunction with the national charity Contact the Elderly which has been running monthly outings itself for many years. Volunteer drivers pick up participants from their homes and accompany them to different museums and galleries. There is strong emphasis on the social aspect of the visit, finishing with a chat over a final cup of tea.

**The Royal Cornwall Museum** is based in Truro. Over the last two years it has run a programme of reminiscence sessions at various venues for older people including care settings, Visually Impaired Clubs, Old Cornwall Societies and Women's Institutes. As well as increasing the self esteem of older people, in care settings the process allows carers with an opportunity to get to know their residents better. Thirteen themed handling boxes were produced through an appeal to the community for social history objects and purchased acquisitions. Themes included schooldays, entertainment and the great outdoors. Photographic resources were sourced through the Museum and the Cornwall Record Office. The boxes have been produced in accordance with conservation standards. There are further plans to produce manuals and DVDs, to create a loans service for older people and to create a reminiscence and object handling service training programme for care workers. The service is managed by RCM's Community Engagement Officer using two freelancers. Funding comes from the Museums, Libraries and Archives' Renaissance in the Regions programme.

*Participant feedback:*

***'I was feeling all flat before and couldn't be bothered but this has cheered me up no end.'***

***'I'm going to stay up now and have dinner downstairs instead of going back to my room. I am enjoying the company.'***

**Suffolk Museums'** 'Rekindling Memories' and 'Rekindling Memories at Home' are two reminiscence projects that have resulted in the creation of boxes available for loan. With Rekindling Memories, Museums have produced loan boxes that are full of objects and images to stimulate memories, conversation and fun. These can be borrowed directly from the museums. With Rekindling Memories at Home, eight Suffolk museums and the Alzheimer's Society have developed suitcases for use in people's homes. They can be borrowed directly from the Suffolk branches of the Alzheimer's Society.

**Tate Modern** has a Seniors Programme intended to combat social isolation experienced by older people in the London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth. Gallery sessions are led by artist educator Michaela Ross and are organised collaboratively with organisations such as Age Concern. The Community Team provided four Seniors' workshops per year each preceded by up to ten hours outreach at local community centres. **Tate St. Ives** runs a series of events for people over 60 called 'Tea and Tate'. There is one event for each exhibition normally attracting over 50 people with an additional event at the Barbara Hepworth Museum. After a tour of the exhibition the participants meet in the café to discuss it, to draw and enjoy social time together.

**Viewfinder Photography Gallery** in Greenwich is developing an outreach programme where groups of older people, for instance in residential homes, are invited into the gallery for a visit and discussion with the curator, as well as taking an exhibition to them, e.g. prints, on occasions where older people are unable to visit.

**The Wallace Collection** in central London has been working with day centres and residential homes since 2001. Indeed 'Out of the Frame' was one of the first outreach programmes developed by the museum. This began as a group talk given in one of these settings by one of the educators at the museum. This developed into a partnership with the City of Westminster's Elderly Services Manager, trialing visits to two care homes with people in the advanced stages of dementia, with 20 sessions taking place the following year. These sessions are on a one-to-one basis as it is felt that group sessions would not work and a lot of care is taken in selecting appropriate paintings. The painting should be easy to understand with a range of colours in high contrast. The images should prompt conversation and landscapes and narrative paintings tend to work well. The aim of the meeting is not art education but to have a discussion.



## **Art Form**

Age Concern's Good Practice Guidance gives a good list of art forms:

'painting; drawing; sketching; portraiture; printmaking; photography; digital imaging; illustration; cartooning; graphics; design; sculpture; pottery; ceramics; mosaics; modelling; woodcarving; silversmithing; engraving; enamelling; etching; metalwork; glassmaking; lace making; basketry; marquetry; batik; screen printing; embroidery; tapestry; papermaking; acting; theatre; mime; improvisation; drama; cabaret; musical; music hall; revue; vaudeville; circus arts; variety; puppetry; ballet; dance and music; singing; rock; rap; pop; folk; roots; reggae; choral; jazz; improvisation and sounds arts; composition; instrumental; recital; writing; creative writing; playwriting and screenwriting; poetry; storytelling; fiction; film-making; cinematography; video; animation; and creative work for television and radio.'

The arts are capable of many different categorisations. This report uses the following:

- Cross – media (combination of any of the other classifications);
- Performing ( subdivided into dance; drama including storytelling and film/video and work taking place in theatres; music and singing);
- Visual (drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, ceramics, textiles).

Appendix A lists arts organisations by art form on an alphabetical basis. In some cases it was hard to decide which category an arts organisation should fall under and its main area of activity has been chosen. The large number of examples in the cross-media category is probably a reflection of the strength of the community arts movement in the UK which has pioneered work with excluded people in many different guises. Dance is also highly represented, showing an awareness of the value of movement to older people and a wish to challenge stereotypes about who dance is for. Music and particularly singing involved some of the largest numbers of older people and its specific relevance for people with dementia is examined later on. Creative writing almost only figured as a part of drama or storytelling.

## **Personal or Societal Benefits**

In addition to the intrinsic and fundamental joys of creativity, artistic expression and entertainment, at its simplest the benefits from work in this area can be divided along two dimensions:

- Health – physical and mental wellbeing;
- Relationships – personal or immediate (family, friends, carers, staff) and societal or broader (community development).

These are examined in more depth in a subsequent chapter.

These categories are somewhat overlapping (e.g. improved inter-personal relationships with family and carers may have positive effects not only on mental health but perhaps physical health by encouraging more mobility). Also most projects would hope to have shown improvements under several categories.

There are correlations here to some degree with art form. Dance and movement have obvious benefits to physical health such as balance and muscular strength, while singing helps breathing and could be used well with people with dementia.

There are alternative ways to classify the benefits derived from this work. The categories used by the Age and Opportunity guide in Ireland are: personal fulfilment; the creation of meaning; life-long learning; social linkages; celebration; communication; dignity and self esteem; empowerment; and maintaining and improving health. Perhaps the aspect of arts work with older people least well captured by the health/relationships categorisation is the affirmation of identity well represented through reminiscence work.



On Wednesday 15 July members of the One Place Centre in Burnham on Crouch performed *All the Way There and Half the Way Back* a show based on personal memories and of life in the Dengie area of Essex'. There was an audience of over 100 at the Tractor Shed Theatre in Latchington. This was the end of a 14 week project by Age Exchange and The Dengie Project Trust funded by Essex County Council. Reminiscences performed ranged from an East London childhood to personal memories of the rural life of the area.

## Focus on Reminiscence

**Age Exchange** was founded in 1983. It has its centre in Lewisham in South London in the Reminiscence Centre which includes a museum, shop, community café and exhibition area. It is generally acknowledged to be the leading organisation specialising in reminiscence work in the UK and is internationally recognised. It coordinates the UK and European Reminiscence Network.

Age Exchange undertakes a wide variety of work. It has a Young People's Theatre Group and Older People's Theatre Group and puts on intergenerational performances. It has worked in over 300 care settings in Greater London. These workshops also train care staff in undertaking reminiscence work. Age Exchange organises additionally many training programmes. Specialised training is offered in dementia work.

Over the years it has published a number of books and other resources and some of these are included in the appendix to this report and many others are available via its website.

Age Exchange defines the benefits of reminiscence work as the following:

- It connects the past with the present ;
- It brings people and communities together;
- It helps us to see the other person's point of view;
- It passes on heritage between generations;
- It is a gift we can all give and receive;
- It gives us a strong sense of who we are;
- It helps us to look back and reflect on life;
- It helps us to recognise people as individuals.

Reminiscence work does not necessarily include the use of the arts so not all reminiscence work falls within the remit of this report.

## Arts and Cultural Policy

There is no explicit national policy framework for arts and older people. So, for instance, although Arts Council England has a specific policy for children and young people there is no comparable policy for older people. The Arts Council England does though have a policy on the Arts and Health, which has considerable relevance to some parts of this work. Similarly, the Welsh Assembly Government and Arts Council Wales have jointly published *Arts in Health and Wellbeing: An Action Plan for Wales*. The principles for a national policy can be inferred from anti-age discrimination legislation combined with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that 'everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts'.

## Funding

It is not surprising then that nor is there any specific funding programme for arts work with older people. Therefore, arts organisations need to obtain funding under other guises which can be used for these purposes. Arts Council England has a single funding stream called Grants for the Arts. This would not necessarily be a problem but it was very evident in the process of writing this report that many practitioners said that this was an area where it was especially difficult to find funding (in comparison to say arts work with young people). Many of the organisations studied are small and run on a knife edge of slender resources.



So if there is no dedicated funding in this area, how are resources found by more than 100 organisations? Sources of funding included revenue and project funding from the Arts Council, a number of more generalist foundations such as the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Tudor Trust as well as ones focusing on older people, such as Atlantic Philanthropies, City Bridge Trust, the Rayne Foundation and the Balance Trust which has now closed. Funding came from central government from a number of channels, such as urban regeneration. The Department for Communities and Local Government has recently created a welcome new fund for intergenerational work which should see a number of bids using the arts. Some earned income is derived through the delivery of contracts with the Primary Care or Health Trusts.

It is an interesting question as to whether the increasing personalisation of budgets for vulnerable people, theoretically allowing them great freedom to purchase the type of support they wish rather than the sort supplied by suppliers such as local authorities, will be a positive factor allowing older people to purchase provision that includes the arts.

## Geography

The devolution of administrative powers in the UK and the artistic traditions and arrangements of the four jurisdictions of the UK requires that each is treated separately below. Before turning to this an overarching point which needs to be made is that the geographical distribution of the population is affected by age. So older people are more likely to live in rural locations than the younger population and that this increases barriers to participation. Arts organisations are less likely to be located in these areas and the problems of transport are greater, hitting poorer older people or people with mobility problems disproportionately.

It was notable that almost all provision is at a county level or more local. Almost no organisations worked across a whole country and no organisation had a good representation across the UK.

### England

The great majority of case studies (95) were found in England. Although London was strongly represented considering that it has a relatively young population, the geographical spread was quite good with most counties being represented. In a number of important counties a regional arts development agency was acting as a linchpin for this work, e.g. Suffolk and Norfolk. However as in all other parts of the UK the scale of this provision is very small in comparison with the potential demand.

### Northern Ireland

Only a few case studies have been found in Northern Ireland (6) though it is likely that considerably more activity is under way than is recorded here. In 2000 the Community Arts Forum set up an Arts and Older People Network which has held a number of good practice events since then. A research study was undertaken and published in 2008 called *The View from the Hill*. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has run a campaign to encourage older people to attend arts events and has a premium funding scheme which has been used to transport older people to arts events and vice versa. Its disability baseline report has been useful in assessing the barriers faced by older people in accessing the arts. Northern Ireland is in a very good position to grow its work given the excellent work which could be learnt from over the border in the shape of the Bealtaine Festival (see Appendix B). Some work is already cross-border, for instance Voluntary Arts Ireland has produced a good practice guide on working with older people.

### Scotland

Few case studies (11) were identified in Scotland though it is evident additional work is being undertaken by non-arts organisations such as the Active Arts programme by East Lothian Arts Service and Generation Arts run by West Lothian Council. During this research the Scottish Arts Council expressed an interest in this work and plans to undertake more strategic intervention in

this area in the future. The RBS Centre for the Older People's Agenda is leading the National Forum on Ageing Futures Group to create a specifically Scottish strategy to ageing and this has a specific strand on creativity and the skills of older people.

### Focus on Research in Scotland

In 2002 the Scottish Arts Council commissioned an in-depth report entitled *Research into Lifelong Learning, the Arts and Older People* from Richard Gerald Associates.

In considering 'the older market' it conducted quantitative and qualitative research with arts organisations, funding bodies and local authorities. This important report identified the following key issues which are all relevant across the UK:

- There will be a significant growth in those over the age of 75 but at this age break the arts witness a rapid drop in attendance;
- There are many similarities between the young and the old (largely around transport);
- Don't underestimate the older person;
- Challenge the stereotypes and seize the day;
- We will all live longer and men will no longer be in the minority;
- Levels of income vary widely within the age groups and this will impact on an individual's ability to participate in the arts;
- Rural locations have a high proportion of older people;
- A person's housing situation changes;
- Out-of-home activities are gaining in popularity but educational activities (evening classes) are not growing;
- Formal qualifications don't inspire the older person;
- Equality of access is still uneven;
- The arts offer many benefits for those engaging in them;
- A lack of time or interest, not cost, is the key barrier to participation;
- Local authority policy and provision is fragmented and focuses on younger people, primarily because the government has focused on this group and funding has been unavailable;
- The arts are not considered a priority when the majority of older people's organisations are fighting for basic rights in relation to pensions, travel subsidy and long term health care.

### Wales

Eight case studies were identified during the course of this work, though it is likely that much more is taking place due to the influence of the Gwanwyn Festival described below.

Gwanwyn, the Wales-wide festival of arts and older people was inspired by the Bealtaine Festival in the Republic of Ireland (see Appendix B). Gwanwyn is Welsh for springtime and the festival runs throughout May. It is organised by Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales and took place for its third year in 2009.

In 2008:

- 182 sessions took place;
- 6,200 participated in or attended events organised by 61 community groups and arts organisations;
- Events took place in residential and care settings as well as arts and community venues.

Some of the highlights of the festival included:

- A Tea Dance for groups of dancers from South Wales featuring live music provided by musicians from the National Opera of Wales held at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Bay;
- A digital storytelling showcase hosted by the TONIC group of older people that meets monthly at Galeri, Caernarfon.
- *Remains To Be Seen*, a film produced by the Striking Attitudes dance group;
- A performance of *Tales from Small Nations* by one of Theatr Clwyd's resident companies to an audience from local residential and care settings.



'Inner Landscape Quilt': 49 women aged 16 to 80 years designed and hand-stitched a panel depicting 'landscape', to mark the 20th year of Arts Alive, a Welsh participatory arts organisation.

## Overall Scale of Activity

It has not been possible to quantify the amount of activity taking place. In most cases the arts organisations are themselves small and are working with small numbers of participants, right down to working with an individual in their own home. The largest single programme may be Live Music Now's Active Music, Active Minds scheme to reach 60,000 older people over three years.

It is important to acknowledge that the focus of this report on professional arts organisations working with older people in a participative way excludes a great deal of other worthwhile activity. Provision outside the scope of this report includes:

## Mainstream audiences

Arts Council research published in 2008 found that the largest attendance by age group was people in their 50's and 60's with a very slight decline from this peak at 70 and over across all art forms, though most strongly for orchestral concert halls, theatres, opera, ballet and galleries.



## Voluntary or amateur arts

Again to a disproportionate extent, people in their Third Age will choose to take up as a hobby creative pursuits such as painting or amateur dramatics without the involvement sometimes of a professional artist. On some occasions these same groups will then want to reach out to people in their Fourth Age for instance by having concerts in day care centres or nursing homes. The University of the Third Age has been important in promoting this sort of activity as has the Workers' Education Association.

### Focus on Voluntary Arts

Voluntary Arts Network (VAN) is the development agency for the voluntary and amateur arts in the UK and in Ireland. It has focused to a considerable extent on the arts and older people. In addition to a number of articles in its quarterly magazine it has worked on the Gwanwyn Festival in Wales and published a briefing in 2007 *Older People and Voluntary Arts – Steps to Meaningful Participation*.

## Local authorities

Many local authorities will employ one or more Arts Officers (and these are networked through the National Association of Local Government Arts Officers group – NALGAO), or equivalent bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Many of these will take a local lead on this issue and seek to make specific provision for older people, sometimes using professional artists and local arts venues.

### Focus on Local Authorities

**Epping Forest Arts**, part of the District Council has led an intergenerational project called *makedo&mend* with partners the London College of Fashion and Alder House, a residential home for people with disabilities. The project, culminating in an exhibition at Waltham Abbey, uses the austerity fashions of the post-War period as a comparison to our current concerns over recycling, climate change and recession. The project is multi-disciplinary, using music and film.

**Erewash Borough Council** in Derbyshire ran a pilot project called 'Arts at the HeART of Wellbeing'. It was a partnership between the County PCT and the Council's Arts Development Service. The service was for people over 55 living in isolation and/or using mental health services. Sessions were run in residential homes and in people's own homes.

**Nottinghamshire County Council** supports Dance4's Young@Heart (see Appendix A); the 'Visible' programme in Sherwood and Newark to challenge stereotypes about ageing and show the impact of high quality arts on wellbeing using arts organisations such as the Broadway Cinema; and 'Growing Bolder' in Mansfield which offers short courses for instance at Mansfield Palace Theatre.

**Poole Borough Council** as part of its Flourish programme has been developing three projects with older people. The projects are delivered with local arts companies such as Lighthouse, Poole's Arts Centre and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Projects include; a dance group for people over 65 with mental health needs; tea dances and ballroom classes; two musicians working on dementia wards of a local hospital; an established photography group and a singing group called 'Zing!'

A project by **Salford City Council** arose from a collaboration by a series of agencies including the PCT and New Prospect Housing, as well as the Arts Development Service of the local authority. It was funded by an Arts Council grant. It began with an extensive consultation with the older people themselves as well as a number of professionals and other stakeholders. This led to an initial focus on two sheltered housing units, De Traffords in Irlam and The Meadows in Cadishead, chosen for different reasons. The purpose of the work was to decrease isolation, offer a means for self expression, increase confidence, affirm identity, celebrate existing skills and nurture new ones. Over a period of more than two years, seven artists have worked with more than 60 older people. It has had a number of results such as an exhibition of digital photography by the residents in a local library with a drop in session with professional photographers. Another example grew out of the involvement of a poet Mike Garry who noticed that some residents had worked in the local margarine and steel works, and some of them had met their spouses there. A Marge and Steel public art piece ensued including a poem from Mike and a CD to commemorate the launch. One other project is a reminiscence art session from the West Yorkshire arts organisation, verd de gris. The theme has been a sense of place. It will create a legacy piece involving local schools. The project will consist of a portable reminiscence box with a built-in soundscape of stories, memories and childhood songs.

**West Lothian Council** in partnership with a number of other organisations offers a regular programme of creative movement, poetry, visual arts in nine clubs for older people under the banner 'Generation Arts'.

**West Sussex County Council's** Arts Service is leading a three year dance and creative movement project for older people with a large number of partners including the health service and older people's groups. The first year's work in day centres will lead on to an Open College Network accredited training course for practitioners and a conference in the third year.

## Day Centres, Residential and Nursing Homes and Hospices

Some care homes will organise their own programmes. This may have a number of elements, mainly not involving professional arts organisations. An Activity Coordinator in a home will probably be part of the National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People – NAPA, which has around 2500 members. He or she may undertake activity themselves, as well as use local amateur groups, for instance of singers, and sometimes individual freelance artists.

The Society for All Artists has distributed among 300 BUPA care homes 'Guidelines to Arts' first developed 18 years ago by John Whyman when volunteering in hospices. These kits help novices draw and use watercolours. The initiative has been positively evaluated by the University of Nottingham.

An example of work in hospices is the 'Arts for Life' programme run by St Christopher's Hospice. It worked in a variety of settings both at the hospice and in the homes of patients and carers and used a range of art forms. It involved partnerships with arts organisations such as Trinity College of Music and Dulwich Picture Gallery. The work contributed to a publication '*The Creative Arts in Palliative Care*' edited by Nigel Hartley and Malcolm Payne.

# Personal and Societal Benefits

Participation in the arts has many benefits; the intrinsic value of creative expression, the affirmation of one's sense of self and the process of acquiring and developing skills which sometimes provides a livelihood. Beyond this the literature in this field tends to focus on two interrelated dimensions: health, both physical and mental; and relationships, both personal with family, friends and professionals and across the community.

## Physical Health

The physical benefits of participation in the arts are most obvious in dance or movement work. The Green Candle Dance Company, in one of its projects, lists the following benefits for health and fitness: greater flexibility in tendons and joints; better cardiac functioning; muscle strength; resistance to osteoporosis and lessening of joint and muscle pain. Benefits to breathing are also a side effect of singing. Playing a musical instrument can also improve breathing or keep fingers supple. Falls prevention in older people is a major focus for the National Health Service and dance and movement has an obvious contribution to make.



Dance4Health – a two day training course lead by Fergus Early – Green Candle Dance Company (Leading dance with older people) in Warwick.

Other types of arts projects may also have some physical health benefits, for instance if a participant feels motivated to walk to a community venue.

Importantly physical activity has an effect on mental wellbeing promoting a reduction in stress and depression.

## Focus on Movement

The principal motivation of the founder of the Green Candle Dance Company, Fergus Early, has been the right of all to enjoy and participate in dance. Although his work started in 1987 with children and people with learning difficulties, it moved to the area of older people, as it was clear that they were denied this right. For many older people dance had been part of their lives, for instance it had been traditional to meet a partner at a tea dance. The Company now focuses on work with older people.

The organisation is based at Oxford House, a settlement in the East End of London. It organises touring productions which are accompanied by workshops and provides sessions in day centres, residential centres and hospitals primarily in the East End. Workshops recognise the value of social interaction as well as physical exercise and stretching. The current touring production, *Falling About*, addresses the complex issues surrounding falling physically and emotionally. Each week the Green Candle Senior Dancers hold a free weekly session open to women and men, with or without previous dance experience.

The following are some of the aims and objectives for a one hour session run over twelve weeks at a day centre and demonstrate the wide potential benefits of dance for older people:

- To develop skills in dance and movement, including coordination, balance and motor skills, body and spatial awareness;
- To improve emotional wellbeing and combat isolation through socialising and cooperating in shared endeavour, finding new and personal means of self-expression;
- To improve mental capacity through demands on memory, decision-taking and problem-solving;
- To have fun!

A training course was run by Green Candle in the Republic of Ireland in 2007 over a period of seven weekends over seven months to train nurses and care workers in the use of dance with older people. A variety of training courses are held each year in the UK both for care workers and for dance artists. A new DVD *Falling About and Moving About* includes both a recording of a touring production and two demonstration workshops, one for seated participants and one for standing participants.

*Feedback:*

***'It breaks up the day because it gets very boring in here.'*** Patient, Mile End Hospital.

***'From this training I have gained a lot of confidence and feel that I can do stuff with the residents that will make them feel livelier and they will get a sense that they are not neglected.'*** Staff member at the Mile End Hospital.

***'I forgot how much fun I used to have when dancing'.*** (Day centre participant).

***I feel invigorated and relaxed in the group. I enjoyed the steps of the Cuban dance – it stimulates your mind.'*** Senior Dancers participant.

## Mental Health

At the most basic level, most arts organisations working with older people will cite an improved sense of self esteem and self confidence as a result of their work. This may have a number of sources. It is common to feel happier when being given attention from someone else. New or improved personal relations will certainly improve morale. Skills can be learnt or refreshed. Perhaps less obvious though, and more specifically an aspect of artistic work, is the identity of an older person being validated. This can particularly be the case when it comes to performance, and many companies will emphasise that they want the work to be to as high a standard as possible and to take place in an environment that celebrates the older person.

The arts projects here may also have other benefits. Some will ensure that time is given for relaxation exercises. Others will concentrate on decision taking, using memory and other cognitive skills.



## Focus on Dementia

There are around 750,000 people in the UK suffering from Alzheimer's which is the most common form of dementia. Very few people under 50 would suffer from dementia but one in five people over the age of 80 have it. The common form of the disease reduces the ability to communicate and express emotions, leaves people frustrated, isolated and bewildered. This can lead to a loss of self-esteem and depression with potentially similar effects on carers.

**Lost Chord** was founded in 1999 by Helena Muller and specialises in music for people with dementia. It operates across South Yorkshire and has satellite schemes in London and Wales.

It produces more than 850 sessions per year. The same residential homes are visited each month in order to build on responses to concerts. Lost Chord works with the fact that aural memories are often the last to be impaired in people experiencing dementia and that long-term memory works better than short term. Lost Chord uses music, singing and dance. Training is run not only for the professional musicians it uses but also for volunteers and carers. Some of the following achievements with patients are cited by Lost Chord:

- some speaking for the first time in months;
- some with violent or aggressive tendencies being calmed;
- being able to sit and listen where this was not possible before.

As well as the work of professional arts organisations, the Alzheimer's Society among others also uses the arts to tackle dementia. An example cited in *Strike A Chord* (2007, New Philanthropy Capital) is the West Berkshire Alzheimer's Society. For over two years, weekly sessions have been run for people with dementia and their carers and numbers have risen to 35- 40 people per week. The project is called 'Singing for the Brain' and is run by Chreanne Montgomery-Smith, the Society's Development Officer and was devised with the Head of Education at Reading University. In each session after refreshments, the group leader starts singing – the songs can be old favourites or unfamiliar. Sessions may also include singing in rounds and some form of movement and dance. An article published in 2008 in *The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Public Health* reported a 'traceable development in the alertness of many of the people with Alzheimer's, increased confidence and that carers felt that the sessions were of value. The Society has gone on to devise a training programme 'Singing for Health', a series of five day long workshops run by various professionals and practitioners.

Among many projects in the USA, the **Museum of Modern Art** in New York has trained some of its staff to make its collection accessible to people suffering from Alzheimer's disease and published a guide. Another project takes people with Alzheimer's to the cinema. The National Center for Creative Aging has a series of resources on line for artists working with people suffering from dementia, including *Arts and Dementia: a resource guide* (see Appendix C).

## Overall health

Finally there exists some empirical medical research from the USA relating, in particular, to mental health and wellbeing and to a lesser extent physical health. This is published in Cohen et al, 'The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on the Physical Health, Mental Health and Social Functioning of Older Adults,' *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 46, no 6. 726-734. The study was initiated by the National Endowment for the Arts. The programmes studied

included: painting, pottery, dance, music, poetry and drama as well as material culture and oral histories in a creative context. It included 300 subjects with a median age of 80. One group was involved in arts programmes and the control group was not. In findings that were statistically significant, the study showed that the arts participants had:

- Better health;
- Fewer doctor visits;
- Less medication usage and;
- Increased activities and social engagement.

In particular the reduced use of medication indicates a possible saving to the public purse. An estimate of a saving of \$6.3 billion per year is given.

## Personal Relationships

A number of case studies either deliberately identify improved relationships between a professional carer and an older person or with family members or friends as an outcome or see it as an important by-product. The older person can be seen in a fresh light, in particular reminiscence work can reveal fascinating aspects of a biography and personality, perhaps generating a new respect and understanding. Training for carers in creativity clearly improves their job satisfaction too. In many case studies older people emphasise social contact, usually with other older people as a significant bonus for them.

## Societal Relationships – Community Development and Social Capital

It is possible to live in Britain in considerable segregation from different generations. This can be especially true for older people living in residential or nursing homes. Equally children without living grandparents can grow up with little contact with people over the age of their parents. This contributes to what sociologist Robert Putnam has famously called a decline in 'social capital.' An extra factor in multi-cultural Britain can be segregation on racial lines according to generation. So the older generation in an area might be predominantly white in a locality where people under, say 40, are predominantly from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. This heightens the need to find ways to bridge generations. The Baring Foundation funds annual 'Awards for Bridging Cultures' for work at the grassroots level some of which has an intergenerational approach (see [www.bridgingcultures.com](http://www.bridgingcultures.com)).

There are many benefits to an intergenerational approach to the arts. These have been described by a leading organisation (Magic Me) in the field as including:

- An exchange of experience, of skills and knowledge, of ways of being and behaving;
- An opportunity to discover the real people behind the stereotypes;
- A chance to value the differences between people as well as discover the common ground;
- A change of pace and energy for all participants;
- An excuse to play, and to experiment, to be creative, to make a fool of yourself!
- Non- family members with whom to build a relationship.

## Focus on Intergenerational Work

Magic Me was founded in 1989 and has offices in the East End of London. It has become internationally famous for its work using arts to bring together young people (9+) and older people (55+). Its founder, Susan Langford was chosen by Prime Minister Gordon Brown for his book *Britain's Everyday Heroes*. She set up the organisation after hearing about similar work in Baltimore in the USA. In addition to a small staff team, Magic Me draws upon around 20 freelance artists and all work is led by performing, literary or visual artists experienced with working with both age groups. Each year it brings together around 450 people in around 20 venues.

The organisation was one of 11 which piloted standards in intergenerational practice coordinated by the Centre for Intergenerational Practice. It runs a Continuing Profession Development programme for artists and has extensively documented this experience.

Its publication *Sharing the Experience* (2001) along with over ten years of experience uses four diverse projects to draw lessons: older people living in nursing homes; Bengali and Somali older people; older people living with dementia. Magic Me emphasises that the reality of intergenerational work in east London is that it is intrinsically also intercultural. Another publication *Getting Everybody Included* (2001) looks specifically at working using the arts with people living with dementia.

*The website of Magic Me describes in detail over 20 current and completed projects. Some feedback on Magic Me's work:*

**'I never knew that older people had aspirations'** Secondary School Student.

**'When you come we know that we are not forgotten.'** Nursing Home resident.

**'I never knew any of the children in my block, but now they recognise you smile and say 'hello' and so do their Mums'.** Older resident on a housing estate.



Getting together: 'Meet the Neighbours!' media project by Magic Me artist Anita McKenzie St Hilda's Community Centre, Summer 2007. HATHA Girls' youth group and pensioners group.

## A Virtuous Circle

These outcomes are highly interlinked. Improved physical and mental wellbeing is highly likely to improve personal relationships making someone more confident and outgoing and vice versa. It is hard to overstate the connection between social isolation and health: 'Perceived loneliness has been found to be one of the strongest predictors of health and the use of health care services among institutionalised seniors. Loneliness has also been found to be associated with diabetes, heart disease, ulcers, respiratory conditions, headache, lower back pain and abdominal pain.' (*Social Isolation and Loneliness*, Research Snapshots, Ross Peters, Centre on Aging, January 2004).



# Conclusion

## The Case in a Nutshell

Although Arts Council research shows that people aged 50-70 are more likely to attend arts events than the general population, there are still very many older people who need targeted support to participate in the arts. This includes people who are living in their own homes but are isolated and perhaps frail and on low incomes, as well as people in hospitals, sheltered accommodation, residential and nursing homes. And this need will grow considerably in coming decades as the population of the UK continues to live longer. It will also alter with demographic change with more older men and an increased number of older people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Cultural expectations of participation and artistic forms will change as teenagers from the Swinging Sixties begin to retire in the next ten years.

In addition to creative expression, the arts offer a whole range of personal benefits for older people themselves and to the wider community in its relationship to older people. It is even possible that use of the arts could decrease expenditure for the NHS. As in other areas of the arts it is difficult to quantify these social effects and to put an economic value on them. However the current economic climate makes it even more important to try to do this where possible and there is a need for more rigorous evaluation.

The Rural Media Company's community film, *Still Life*, involved over 300 residents of Bromyard, Herefordshire, aged 6 and 80 years in a wide range of creative activities. See [www.ruralmedia.co.uk](http://www.ruralmedia.co.uk) for details.





## A Neglected Issue

This report records the pioneering work of over 100 arts organisations working with older people across the UK using every art form. Their work has received little in the way of official encouragement or support. There is a dearth of policy and funding. Given the quite strong evidence base for the benefits of this work, it is worth speculating why this area has been neglected by funders in comparison to, say, young people and the arts. The most likely answer is that older people who have developed a taste for the arts can use their Third Age as a golden one to enjoy new found time for their creativity. But this benign picture has ignored the potential of people in their Third Age who have yet to discover the arts and perhaps more importantly the needs of people in their Fourth Age to be creative.

A less comfortable explanation for this neglect might be ageism by both funders and arts organisations. Are companies generally more willing to 'reach out' and have specific programmes, say for children and young people and for Black and Minority Ethnic communities, than to visit a nursing home for people with dementia? The guide to working with older people produced by Age and Opportunity in Ireland asks arts practitioners to begin by examining their own attitudes. Certainly some dancers feel that they are discriminated against when they wish to continue in the profession beyond their thirties.

### Focus on Ageism in Professional Arts

Striking Attitudes is a professional total theatre company that works with dancers who can act and actors who can dance. Striking Attitudes uses dance, text and visually compelling imagery to create richly imaginative and original choreography. It is based in Wales. Its mission statement (below) raises the question of ageist attitudes towards professional dancers.

'Celebrating the older dancer, and providing performance opportunities that highlight their unique attributes, is one of the main aims of Striking Attitudes' work. Whilst not only working with the more mature dancer, much of our work provides a platform for them, believing that they do not need to have a short shelf-life nor should recede silently into the shadows as they become dancers of a "certain age".

Is there such a thing as physical wisdom? We believe there is and that physical wisdom is as poignant and necessary as emotional and psychological wisdom. Striking Attitudes asks why is it that the ageism endemic in our society does not value these qualities of maturity and why must perceptions of age always diminish confidence?

If, as we age, we can no longer physically reproduce the "form", then surely we must change the form. It is with this in mind that Striking Attitudes is exploring these themes in film and live performance and excitingly combining professional dancers with community dancers.

Grace, vitality, vigour, experiential power, and spiritual poise – it is Striking Attitude's belief that the experienced dancer has something monumental to offer. Striking Attitudes aims to fly the flag for the mature dancer offering continuity of purpose and careers explored further not terminated.

We aim, as a company, to be a force for change at a time when the number of older people in our society is rapidly growing.'

The company has recently produced a film, *Remains To Be Seen*, available on DVD of a work in this context. Eight professional dancers and eight community dancers aged 42 to 75 took part.

## A Way Forward

Thirteen areas are identified below that together could produce a step change in the role of professional participative arts and older people in the UK. They are: research; policy and funding; scaling up of activity; festivals; local authorities and health trusts; partnerships; the regulation of care; networking between arts organisations; practice development, training and standards; major venues; publicity; leadership of older people; coordination and sector advocacy.

### Research

It is highly desirable that Dr Gene Cohen's research into the overall beneficial health effects of participation in the arts by older people in the USA is replicated and built upon in the UK. Greater research into the effects of the arts on personal and community relations would also be helpful.

### Policy and funding

These tend to go hand in hand and policy is the right starting point. The development is needed of a specific policy by the Arts Councils and greater inclusion of the benefits of creativity and the arts in policies on ageing by relevant government departments across the UK, especially given their omission from *Building a Society for all Ages* relating to England. The tremendous pressure on public finances for a long time to come is evident to all, so cuts seen, for instance, in life-long learning in Wales may be a worrying harbinger of worse to come. But there is at least some evidence that spending on the arts for older people would mean much greater savings in health budgets as well as a much higher quality of life for vulnerable people. The potential of personalised budgets in this area needs further exploration.

### Scaling up of activity

Although this report has uncovered a considerable body of work, the scale of potential need is much greater. In order to begin to reduce that gap all the following means need to be pursued:

- 1). More professional arts organisations should be involved;
- 2). Arts organisations should employ more older people or use more older volunteers;
- 3). Greater provision by the older people's voluntary sector;
- 4). Greater provision by relevant settings such as day centres, residential and nursing homes, hospitals and hospices.

Regarding the latter, a few arts organisations (e.g. Art Shape in Gloucester and Artlink Suffolk) have already started to develop courses for workers in the care services to be equipped to use the arts. Also the Foundation for Community Dance has recently launched a training course for practitioners of 'age inclusive dance'.

## Focus on Training for Carers

Artlink Suffolk is based in Halesworth, has been operating for 15 years and has been a charity since 2006. It manages a number of projects aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable people, including two for older people.

In 2003, Suffolk County Council identified the need to improve the skills of its care workers in delivering activities in homes and day centres. Research and a pilot project were undertaken by Suffolk Artlink. With the contribution of artists Caroline Wright and Helen Rousseau this developed into the 'Creative Carers' programme. Key aspects are a focus on process over product and an understanding of the limited time and resources realistically available to care workers along with an emphasis that the course releases the carers own creativity and improves job satisfaction.

The programme starts with a training day on creativity and planning, followed by three artist-led best practice workshops. The programme is delivered in-house to ensure it fits the needs of the centre. Two trainer-supported sessions are then carried out in the centre with the carers planning and delivering an activity which they have designed. At the final stage all carers come together to share experience and initiate a self-supporting network.

As well as the satisfaction experienced by older people themselves, carers and managers have reported the following benefits from the programme:

- A decrease in requests to see the doctor;
- A decrease in possibly attention-seeking behaviour such as requests to go to the toilet;
- A more humanised relationship as carers and older people share the creative process;
- An increase among carers in confidence, job satisfaction and creative skills.

In addition, dementia mapping, an internationally recognised technique for measuring wellbeing in people experiencing dementia, was used to evaluate sessions and all participants in the group had an increased wellbeing score at the end.

In total Artlink has worked on the programme with a total of 15 centres across Suffolk so far. Staff from residential centres, day centres and more recently Occupational Therapists have taken part. A decision has been taken to mainstream into the course a specialist project for working with people experiencing dementia. Given sufficient funding, Artlink is hoping to replicate the Creative Carers course in other counties through partnerships with local arts organisations.

Separately, Artlink has been running Culture Club for older people not in care homes. It is run across the county through a network of other partner art organisations and libraries. Examples include a reminiscence project at the National Horseracing Museum and at the Museum of East Anglian Life and performances at the East Anglian Traditional Music Trust. The project has considerable reach with over 1000 participants in one year. Culture Club has had a number of projects in terms of DVDs and publications. For instance *Full of Life*, a collection of poetry edited by Michael Laskey founder of the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival was published in 2008.



Taken as part of Take Art's 'Time to Move' Project.  
Photographer Peter Slade



## **Festivals**

The Bealtaine Festival in Ireland described in Appendix B gives a powerful example of the ability of well run festivals to act as a motor for an issue and a platform for new and developing arts practice. Participation in Bealtaine has increased ten fold to roughly a tenth of the Irish population in the course of twelve years. It now has a sister in Gwanwyn in Wales and there are already a handful of others; 'Capital Age' across London, 'Silver' in the London Borough of Southwark and the 'Full of Life' Festival in Manchester. (Until 2009, the Baring Foundation has been funding arts organisations working with refugees and the beneficial impact of Refugee Week in that area has been evident too). Festivals across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland would amplify the involvement of older people in the arts.

## **Local Authorities and Health Trusts**

This report has discovered some good work by local authorities but given their centrality to provision for older people much more needs to be done. More striking though has been the relative absence of Hospital Trusts and Primary Care Trusts given the awareness of the links between arts participation and health in general and with older people in particular.

## **Partnerships**

Arts organisations and service providers for older people mostly live in two different worlds. Given the pressures on both, this is not surprising but there could be great potential in more working together. There are a number of examples of this throughout this report at an operational level, such as a number of the projects run by Age Concern. There are a few examples of this at a more strategic level, such as the City of Manchester's involvement with the Hallé and others and the presence of Equal Arts on a number of partnership boards in the North East of England. Artists working older people would often benefit from training in how to work in health or care settings.

## **The Regulation of Care**

This varies across the UK. There is at least some appreciation of the role of culture in care settings but this could be greatly enhanced. It is possible to imagine that the provision of arts or cultural activities could be one factor that inspectors include when approving care provision. Certainly it would be helpful for regulators and care providers to meet arts organisations with expertise in this area to better understand what is on offer.

## **Networking between Arts Organisations**

To a large extent, arts organisations work in isolation in this field. There have been a small number of recent events (for instance: the Clod Ensemble's meeting in May 2008, 'What Tammy Needs to Know About the Art of Ageing'; a series of events by Southwark Art Forum such as the one at Oval House Theatre in April 2009 on the benefits of theatre and performance to older people; a series of seminars in Northern Ireland and a conference organised by Take Art in June 2009 on dance and older people). More could be done at both a national and regional level. Virtual networking through a central website would go a long way and might lead on to greater coordination and advocacy.

## Practice Development, Training and Standards

Practice is in many ways well developed as a group of companies have blazed a trail with innovative work over three decades. There is quite a lot of good written guidance on specialist areas such as intergenerational work and reminiscence, though less when it comes to more general principles of how to work with older people. Some principles for practice, such as prior research and listening, are true for any group of people. However there is a list of likely factors that would be specific to, for instance, working in a nursing home, that need to be better documented and disseminated. Ethical issues need to be explored more, such as the degree to which artists working with vulnerable older people, especially in closed communities such as care settings, need to challenge poor practice or worse. This is something well understood in child protection but often less clear cut with older people who have legal autonomy.

Linked to more networking by arts organisations could be training for artists new to this work. An example of this was the course run in 2007-8 by Equal Arts. In a parallel field Escape Artists has created an accreditation process for arts courses for arts practitioners and organisations that meet social needs. Practice development and training might ultimately develop into a voluntary code of conduct or set of standards but these would need not to stifle creativity.

## Major Venues

With honourable exceptions such as the Wigmore Hall, English National Ballet, Sadler's Wells, the Wales Millennium Centre, the National Theatre and The Sage Gateshead, it has been surprising how little activity has been revealed by this report in the UK's best known venues, in comparison say to their work with young people. This work has almost exclusively been the preserve of local community based arts development agencies. Association with beautiful and prestigious venues naturally gives added credibility to work and further enhances the confidence of participants.

## Public Profile

The documentary in June 2009 by the BBC as part of the 'Grey Expectations' season on the excellent work of the Company of Elders at Sadler's Wells brought welcome and very positive attention to this field. However overall the attitude of the media tends to be a negative one to older people and the arts and older people remain largely unsung.

## Leadership by Older People

There is much more scope for older people to take a leadership position in the development of this nascent movement within the arts. Older people's own testaments as to the effects of the arts are the most persuasive and they have a unique understanding about what will work best. However few arts organisations involve them in steering groups or other ways. There are limits to the degree to which this is possible for people in their Fourth Age but it is surprising how little it is used for people in their Third Age. Older artists could take an active role in arts organisations either as volunteers or in paid positions.

## Coordination and Sector Advocacy

The model here is not only the National Center for Creative Aging in the USA described in Appendix B but arts umbrella bodies in the UK such as the English National Youth Arts Network. A successful example in a related field has been the Centre for Intergenerational Practice. Such bodies can exercise many of the functions described above advocating with funders and other bodies on behalf of the sector.

# Appendix A

## Case studies of arts organisations in the UK

All the relevant arts organisations identified in this research are briefly described below, sometimes including feedback from participants. For the sake of completeness, organisations are listed regardless of whether they have done a great deal of work in this area or relatively little. No attempt is made to assess the quality of their work. The case studies are listed alphabetically and divided into three categories:

- Cross-media (combination of any of the other classifications);
- Performance (subdivided into dance; drama including storytelling and film/video and work taking place in theatres; music and singing);
- Visual (drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, ceramics, textiles).

### Cross-Media

**Animate Arts Company** is a community arts organisation based in Canterbury that works with all sections of the community on multi-disciplinary arts projects. Artists from Animate worked for a week in a residential home in Sevenoaks. The result was a memory restoration project using textile collage called 'Memories in Colour.'

**Arts Alive** is based in rural South Wales in Crickhowell and serves Powys, the Eastern Valleys and the English borders. It uses the natural and built environment as a creative resource. Examples of work with older people include: a textile project for women aged over 50 along with a group of teenagers experiencing difficulties and anxieties; creative writing and oral history projects including one with a day hospital for older people with dementia; and school holiday projects with grandparent sessions.

**Arts Care** is an arts and health charity covering Northern Ireland and based in Belfast that was formed in 1991. It has a series of artists in residence in hospitals as well as hosting the Northern Ireland ClownDoctors. It has undertaken a number of projects with older people over the years, for instance a partnership with Health Trusts and Dance Northern Ireland called 'Dancing Our Story' which has held workshops with older people.

**Artsreach** is a rural development agency for the arts in Dorset. It organised 'Daytime Do's' a pilot project to provide daytime shows for older people. This was because the agency had found that many older people in rural areas did not want to go out after dark and were therefore missing Artsreach shows, which are normally held in the evenings. The Daytime Do's shows were taken to village halls on the Artsreach circuit in 2005-6.

**Art Shape** was formed in 1993 and is based in Gloucester, serving the wider county. It believes that everyone has the right to creative expression and focuses its work on disadvantaged groups. After running a pilot project with older people called Inspirations, Art Shape went on to run a three year project called 'New Horizons' funded by the Summerfield Trust and the Big Lottery Fund. Some of the lessons drawn from the Inspirations project were that older people liked working with other older people, though were open to intergenerational work; they preferred sessions being run in settings that they were familiar with, but Art Shape need to look beyond these for people who didn't access them; consultation is important to meet people's wishes and these are quite varied; it is important to celebrate and make visible the imaginative achievements of older people. Barriers to participation included: cost; irrelevance; inaccessibility; unsuitable learning environments and insufficient faith in the ability to engage.

The New Horizons programme included the following projects:

- 'Art on Wheels'; art activities over a number of sessions for independent older people working in groups;
- 'Out and About'; short creative experiences in everyday settings;
- 'On the Spot'; similar to the above but in health settings;
- 'Were Here'; 'Do It Again'; opportunities for older people to express their lives, situations and aspirations;
- 'Our Lives e-Memory Boxes'; opportunities for older people using new media, encouraging reminiscence;
- 'Our Lives Drama Group';
- 'Our Community'; intergenerational activities working with community organisations;
- 'Showing Ourselves'; showing and performing work.

In addition the project looked at ways to develop the skills of the facilitating artists, including apprenticeships and volunteering.

As a result of this and other work, Art Shape Gloucester has developed a course for carers called Creativity in Social Care. It has a number of aims:

- Encourage learners to discover their own creativity, using activities that are fun and build confidence;
- Give care staff a wide range of practical skills to enable them to work creatively with clients;
- Recognise and acknowledge the value of creativity, demonstrating that it is not the preserve of artists;
- Provide a formal qualification;
- Teach care staff to develop their own way of supporting all aspects of their professional practice through keeping diaries and portfolios, using mapping techniques, practicing leadership skills and group working with clear assessment and evaluation.

The course allows participants to work to accreditation at Open College Network level 2 or 3.

**Aune Head Arts** is a charity specialising in contemporary rural arts. It is based in Dartmoor where it has worked for over ten years. A recent intergenerational project 'Soundings' will create a sound artwork in three rural communities in Devon. It is being developed by artist Sue Palmer. The project which will include music as well as voices will be broadcast on several radio stations. It is a partnership with, among others, a number of health organisations.

**Corner 9 Arts Project** works from a disused shop in North Kensington, a poor part of London. Since 2005 it has provided high quality arts classes for different sections of the community, including older people and residents of local sheltered housing schemes. These classes are across a range of different art forms.

**Creative Arts East** is the Arts Development Agency for Norfolk. It has been piloting a fortnightly training scheme for 12 weeks for 18 Norfolk County Council Care staff. The project is called Out of the Box. It is intended to help care staff to integrate creative activities into Individual Care Plans for their clients. The project will build a network of carers who can assist others in this process. A creative resources pack will be produced for each care setting for continued use and each carer will have 'a box of tricks'. Training goes across a range of arts media including: writing; visual arts; dance; craft; puppetry; drama; photography; music and song as well as planning, presentational and evaluation skills. The arts activities were developed by four professional artists with a range of skills.

**The Crescent Arts Centre** in Belfast has prioritized work with older people in its participative outreach programme. It has worked in day centres, community centres and homes. It runs a number of classes with Highway to Health Older and Active Groups.





Throughout 2008 Equal Arts ran a 3D knitting project involving 40 older women from Newcastle working with two artists and a writer. The women created installations which represent aspects of their lives – everything from bikes to bins, hammers to handbags. The exhibition is being toured throughout the North. *Pictured: Rene Orton with her hammer.*

**Equal Arts** is based in Gateshead and is the Northern Region's arts and older people development agency. It has specialised in working with older people since the early 1990s and is one of only three such organisations in the UK to work across arts forms, along with Sandwell Third Age Arts and First Taste. It concentrates on older people who are less likely to be involved in the arts and seeks to combat social isolation through participatory arts projects. Work takes place in a wide variety of venues including hospitals and residential centres, as well as individual homes and community centres. A small central team uses a variety of professional artists to work on varied projects. It also engages strategically to include the arts into mainstream policy

for older people, for instance on regional forums on dementia and for older people. Equal Arts has a training programme for professional artists working with older people and a group called Carers' Cultural Adventures. Equal Arts has run over 100 projects in recent years including: *Knitted Lives* which combines personal history with knitted objects; *The Kitchen Suitcase* working in different media with Zayis Raanon a charity for Jewish women in two Gateshead wards; the creation of an improved garden in a centre for people with dementia; and 12 resin encapsulations of participants lives for the St George's Historical Society Archives.

**First Taste** is an educational arts charity based in Matlock and operating in the Derbyshire Dales. The charity works exclusively with older people. It typically works in residential and nursing homes. It also undertakes intergenerational work. Its programmes include reminiscence work and the 3Ms (melody, movement and music). Funding comes from the Arts Council East Midlands and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

**Greater Shantallow Community Arts** is based in Derry in Northern Ireland where it has been delivering community arts projects for almost ten years. As part of this it has developed a range of services for older people including: arts and crafts classes; ballroom dancing; creative dancing; drama; film and literature projects. Older people have been involved in planning the annual arts in the community programmes. Also there has been a number of exhibitions and events, for instance a recent Old Style Variety Show, over two nights, with 600 older people attending and young people from a local college acting as hosts.

**Haul Arts in Health** is based in Ceredigion in Mid Wales and was established in 1994. For ten years it has been creating performances and art works to raise the spirits of patients and staff in health care settings there. Until 2006 this was entirely through volunteers and in 2006 Haul gained a part-time paid coordinator. It is producing a digital story project with older people in the Communities First Areas of Ceredigion with a focus on reminiscence work with those socially isolated in rural areas.

**Hearts @ Minds** is a charity based in Edinburgh dedicated to improving the quality of life of people in hospitals and hospices through the performing arts. Since 2001 it has had a dedicated strand of work for people over 60 experiencing dementia called 'the Elderflowers'.

**Helix Arts** is based in Newcastle upon Tyne. It explores the role and potential of the arts in a social context, working across art forms and often using residencies and commissions. In a typical year seven to ten projects would use 30-50 artists. In 2005 writer Mary Lowe worked as an artist in residency in a programme developed in partnership with Age Concern Newcastle. She worked with a number of groups of older people across the city to develop stories and characters reflecting their interest and experience. This was then recorded in a book called *The Magic Patchwork*.

**High Peaks Community Arts** is a multi-media community arts agency based at New Mills in Derbyshire. Over the years it has undertaken a number of intergenerational and community projects with older people. In recent years it worked in three residential or nursing homes in Buxton: The Gables, The Argyll and The Hawthorns. The sessions included music, singing, dance and poetry.

**Kala Sangam** is a South Asian and Global Arts company based in Bradford. It was commissioned by Bradford and Airedale Primary Care Trust to pilot a weekly programme for older people. This resulted in 'Dance for Fun' sessions held in 2008-9. The work targeted participants from the white community. Dance styles ranged from Bisakha Sarkar (Creative Asian), to Salsa and Scottish Highland Dancing. A film of the group was shown on BBC's 'Look North'. In addition 'Kala Sukoon' a partnership creative arts programme for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities with mental health needs is largely engaging older people.

**Lime** is a charity working across Greater Manchester delivering creative arts projects within healthcare. A recent project has involved 60 residents of the Victoria Square sheltered housing

scheme in the production of a book. Creative lead Kim Wiltshire ran 20 workshops on all aspects of the creation of the book from photography to research trips.

**The Media Workshop** is a community arts organisation based in Southampton formed in 1978. Media Workshop works with a wide variety of people who are often excluded from the arts and has undertaken a number of pieces of work with older people over the years. 'I'm Quite Comfortable Here' was a project with the Black Heritage Group of people over 55 involving drama, video and photography to create an interactive CD-Rom about Caribbean folk tales and games. 'People, Places, Play' was an intergenerational project looking at how play has changed over the three generations in the Thornhill area of Southampton using photography and digital imaging. 'Down Memory Lane' was an oral history and photography project culminating in a series of digital murals in the Weston area of the city.

**People United** is based in Canterbury and uses the arts and creativity to demonstrate and celebrate kindness and positive connections between people. One strand of its work has been intergenerational learning.

**Pioneer Projects Ltd** is an arts and health charity based in Lancaster. It has a healthy living centre called Looking Well, established in 1996 in an isolated rural area on the borders of North Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumbria. It sees the needs of older people living in rural areas as one of its priorities. Current work includes:

- 'Archive Alive' – intergenerational local history project;
- 'In the Same Boat' – for people facing cancer and other long term health conditions;
- 'Singing Well';
- Art classes.

**Prism Arts** began in 1987 and provides arts activities for people from excluded groups across Cumbria. Since then it has run over 350 projects. The roots of their 'Spinning Yarns' programme for people aged 55 and over can be found in two such projects run by local Age Concern projects and by the feedback that Prism Arts was getting from its taster sessions. Spinning Yarn groups have been established in: Appleby; Barrow; Brampton; Egremont and Langtown, with more occasional work elsewhere. An extremely broad range of activities is run including; sculpture; calligraphy; poetry; digital photography; reminiscence work; mosaics; making paper; jewellery; weaving and, of course, spinning. All this work has led to a number of exhibitions and in addition older participants have gone on to volunteer in activities working with children and young people.

**St Donats Arts Centre** in the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales has a wide range of community and educational activities. One strand is for older people with events taking place during the day, such as tea dances and ballroom dancing. It has tried to ensure that its performances are accessible, for instance by having matinees for older people and included a social element such as free tea and cake after a café concert. Examples of activities have included *Looking Over the Hill* where older people wrote poems and prose on the subject of the present and the future, as part of the Gwanwyn Festival, and a community choir rehearsing each week.

**Sandwell Third Age Arts (STAA)** based in the West Midlands works with older people with mental health problems or dementia and with their carers. STAA has a team of ten freelance artists working across a range of disciplines, including dance, creative writing, making glass, knitting and textiles, photography, painting and drawing. The organisation emphasises that it produces art and while it sees art as therapeutic, its artists are not trained art therapists. Most of its income comes from its founder charity, the Sandwell Community Care Trust. Referrals are made by Health or Social Services or by older people themselves. Work either takes place at an individual level in someone's home or on a small group basis in a day centre or care home. Examples of work includes *Fountain's Jolly Inn*, a pub themed display created in a care home (and filmed as a DVD).



Harold Nibblett made the following statement about his work on *Danger Men at Work* a piece created with five other men in a residential home:

***'I started off doing a drawing of a football scene. We did this on material using hot wax on cotton fabric. Then I painted the picture using different colours. I chose a football scene because I used to play football. The next thing I did I drew a picture of a plane and some buildings and cars. I then traced the picture onto metal and embossed it using a punch and hammer. I made up my picture using different metals and also tacks. The picture shows a plane, it's a German plane called a 'Stuka'. I saw lots of these during the war. Out of all the work I have done I enjoyed doing the picture of the plane using the metals. I am proud of it. I would do something like this again. I have enjoyed myself.'***

**SeaChange Arts** is the arts and regeneration charity for the Borough of Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. It has been in operation since 1996. Great Yarmouth is the fifth most deprived area in the UK. In 2008 it began discussions with Age Concern, Help the Aged, Ageless Opportunities and the Alzheimer's Society on delivering a programme of work with older people including on an intergenerational basis. Plans include targeting existing work to people over 50 as well as beginning new work.

**Southwark Arts Forum (SAF)** was founded in 1981. It has around 2,500 members, composed of a combination of organisations and individuals. Organisations vary from small, unstaffed community groups to world famous venues like the National Theatre, the Southbank Centre and Tate Modern. SAF has three strands of work: information; advice; and networking. One of its networks, the Seniors' Creative Network has been funded for three years by The City Bridge Trust and now by a collection of smaller funds. It has a membership of over 200 and is for people aged 60 and over. The Network has a user group to steer its work. It does two things. Several events are held each year involving artists, representatives of arts organisations and older participants on subjects such as theatre, visual arts, dementia and dance, and 'considerate' art activities for older people. Secondly, weekly arts workshops are held at two day centres and two sheltered housing complexes on movement and relaxation; fun with fabrics; painting and drawing; and visual arts and crafts.

**Streamarts** is based in Greenwich and works with artists in a range of media to produce commissions connected to local communities. Two examples of work with older people are 'Under Their Skin' in 2007 where Mutiny Arts and Tom Keene worked with a youth club and a group of people in a sheltered housing scheme on prejudices and stereotyping, resulting in drama, collaborative dances and a short film and 'Bonpo' where artist Helen Marshall worked with housebound older people recording conversations verbatim to produce a stream of consciousness piece.

**Studio Voltaire** was established in 1994 and is based in south west London offering affordable studio spaces including to two resident groups of artists with learning difficulties. It has a reputation for supporting artists at a pivotal stage in their career through a programme of exhibitions, commissions, live events and offsite projects at national and international level. The Collaborations Programme works with the local programme. *Barby's Karaoke* is a new work by artist Barby Asante commissioned by Studio Voltaire with financial support from the Arts Council, London and The City Bridge Trust, assisted by Lambeth Council and Age Concern London. It focuses on the experiences of Caribbean people who moved to London in the 40's and 50's. It was produced by meeting for over a year every Monday afternoon at the Oval House Theatre in South London with members of Stockwell Good Neighbours. It features photography,



Karaoke videos and a documentary from filmmakers Chocolate Films. It encourages the viewer to join in a karaoke evening by sharing songs and memories. Chocolate Films followed this with the documentary 'Dominoes and Bingo' taking a closer look at individual lives.

**Third Age Arts** based in Coleraine and operating along the North Antrim coast aims to 'advance the interests and wellbeing of the elderly in residential and nursing homes and sheltered care by providing classes in creative arts and crafts'. It runs over 150 classes per year.

**Westminster Arts** is a community arts group based in the heart of London that undertakes or commissions a wide variety of projects each year. In 2007 it commissioned a project called Arts + Minds which took place in three care settings for older people in the City of Westminster.

The video project took place in a shared flats setting with seven clients all of whom had profound degrees of memory loss and difficulty in communicating. Artist Helen Marshall worked with clients, one at a time, to make a ten minute documentary film. The filming led to a number of illuminating discoveries about the clients' lives and life histories.

The photography project took place in a setting for clients who need some support because they live alone, are frail or have early stage dementia. It was led by Deborah Padfield. The group made a series of photograms of the buildings nearby in Pimlico. Deborah made portraits of the clients. Staff were also involved and the project included photography, drawing, painting, 3-D modelling and collage, culminating in a public exhibition at the centre.

The music project took place in a residential home for 42 residents. It took place once a week for three weeks with four sessions in the final week. A mixture of staff and residents participated, the numbers rising to 30 at the end. The composer Fraser Trainer was supported by clarinettist and saxophonist Peter Whyman. The workshops were designed to draw on the lives and personalities of residents and care workers. A final performance was given for relatives and an audience. A CD was produced for all participants.

**The Whitworth Art Gallery** at the University of Manchester has a public engagement programme and began its work in 2008 with older people with the Whitworth Social. This was developed the following year in a project with an Age Concern group of Lesbian, Gay and Transgender people over 50 who have a social group called Out in The City. The project entitled On an Unknown Day was created on a participative basis with the artist Jason E Bowman and academic Dr Jon Binnie of the Manchester Metropolitan University. The group worked together for four months to research and create a new drama that re-enacted the notorious Lavender scare trial of 1936 that saw 29 men from the North West tried and given hard labour. This was then performed at the Police Court Museum with the only evidence provided by the court artist documenting the proceedings.

## PERFORMANCE

### Dance

**Activate** is the theatre and dance development agency for Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth. 'Dance Generations' was a project run in conjunction with Dorset County Council for people who do not normally have opportunities for dance including a group of older people in a residential home. The project was evaluated and found to have benefits for participants in terms of mood and self esteem; social interaction and engagement; increased flexibility and confidence in movement.

**Attik Dance** began life in 1998 and is now based in Plymouth. Their 'Time to Dance' programme facilitates ten regular dance sessions for active and vulnerable older people each week. Some of the groups are for specific health concerns, e.g. strokes. Attik Dance has also recently developed a training course for those wishing to learn how to work with older people on dance and movement called 'Dance into Old Age'.

**The Carl Campbell Dance Company 7** was formed in 1978. It is based in South London and was the response of its founder to negative reactions to Black people in the arts. The gloriously named 'Recycled Teenagers' is a group of older people mainly from Southwark who meet for dance classes each week at the Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre. They have engaged in a number of intergenerational projects with local schools and CCDC7 is now trying to establish a Recycled Teenagers club in Jamaica.

**Dance City** is the dance development agency for the North East of England and is located in Newcastle. The 'Still Moving' programme ran for five months in two care settings in Gateshead; Live@Home in Rowlands Gill and the Fountain Court Care Home. Each Monday lead artist Mona McCarthy, along with guest musicians and performers ran creative movement sessions for participants aged 60 - 95.

**Dance4** is a national dance company with a reputation for experimentation that extends internationally. It is based in Nottingham. Dance4 has undertaken a project in Newstead Village, a deprived area in Nottinghamshire. It was centred on the Healthy Living Centre there. The project called Young@Heart began in November 2008 and its membership of older people rose to 28, predominantly women. It offers a weekly creative dance session, health information and a subsidised meal. Initially the group was led by a Dance Development Worker from Dance4, who then trained a nurse to take over this role. The project has been evaluated by researchers from the School of Nursing at the University of Nottingham which concluded that it had strongly positive results in terms of physical and mental wellbeing.

*A poem written by a participant:*

#### **'I Like Tuesdays**

I wake up in the morning and think what shall I do today?  
Then think again, and realise that today is Tuesday.  
I join my friends at Young@Heart, so now our exercises can start.  
We have fun and laughter in the group.  
We have a good, happy, friendly troupe.  
We tell our names and how we feel, then we have come to heel.  
Exercise our neck, arms, eyes and feet, then relax and breathe in deep.  
So now you know about our group, why not try our troupe?  
I am relaxed now so I can say, that is why I like Tuesday.'

**Dance Base** is Scotland's national centre for dance and is based in Edinburgh. It has been working with another Scottish organisation, Artlink, in the Royal Victoria Hospital also in Edinburgh. Dance Base has had a long trackrecord of working in hospitals and responded to a request there from occupational therapists working on a ward for women with dementia. This has developed into a group for 15 patients, two staff and two relatives. Dance Base has worked on many occasions with older people in community settings. An example of this is work in supported accommodation in the Stenhouse area of Edinburgh run by the Dunedin and Canmore Housing Association.

**Dance in Devon** is the county's dance development agency. It was established in 2004 and is based in Exeter. It employs a dedicated part-time worker for older people. 'Time to Dance' sessions are held each week in Plymouth with Attik Dance.

**Dare Dance** is based in Barrow in Furness and since 2000 has organised dance sessions using 30 professional dance artists from around the world who have engaged with over 12,000 people. The 'Mature Movers' project is for people over 55 with participants up to 87 years old. The programme includes general movement and exercise, Salsa, Line Dancing, Egyptian and Flamenco among others. Other developments include a chair-based exercise programme created by Bishar Sarker and intergenerational work. The work is supported by the Borough Council, PCT, Rural Coordinator and Age Concern.

**Dance Initiative Greater Manchester (DiGM)** has undertaken a variety of work in this area, including until recently being a grantmaker with a specific strand for work with older people. In March 2009, the Greater Manchester Older People's Dance Celebration was established, convening six older people's dance groups.

**Dance and Theatre Cornwall Ltd** is based in Truro and is the dance and theatre development agency for Cornwall. As part of 'Feast', an arts programme for Cornwall's towns and villages they are working with Arts For Health Cornwall. They will work in 16 different settings with older people ranging from self help groups to residential homes. They will train both dance practitioners and care staff how to undertake this work. A series of social dances are also planned culminating in a Grand Finale Tea Dance in Bodmin.

**East London Dance** established in 2000 a dance and performance group for people aged 50 and over called Leap of Faith. Ages in the group have ranged between 52 and 91. It has worked with a number of well known dancers and choreographers, including Ann Dickie of From Here to Maturity, Jasmine Pasch, Jamie Watton and Lisa Kendall.

A good example of their work was a project begun in 2004 with artist Cheryl McChesney called 'Dancing Days'. It was funded by Newham Healthy Living Network and was developed in conjunction with Stratford Circus Arts in Health programme. It targeted frail over 60's living in Daken House, a nursing home where 42 residents all have a combination of dementia and other physical illnesses and Kendon House, a sheltered housing scheme where more active residents live independently. 'Dancing Days' started with a performance at the homes by Leap of Faith along with an introductory workshop. Then there were twelve follow-up sessions at each centre. The project concluded with an event at Stratford Circus for older people and their friends and family where a series of pieces were presented by different older people's dance groups. The project was evaluated independently by Rachel Fell on behalf of the Arts in Health programme. Benefits included; increased physical and mental awareness and pro-active behaviour; improved muscle strength; mental stimulation including memory; increased mobility and balance and reduced risk of falling.

**The English National Ballet** has been running an initiative called 'Dance for Health' which offers a series of practical dance sessions for older people who are mobility impaired. The dance workshops are accompanied by a musician and often explore works from the ENB's repertoire. The initiative is currently funded by Westminster City Council to run two six week courses in four

centres: Pullen Day Centre; Covent Garden Day Centre; Glarus Court; and Sherbourne Day Centre. Each course ends with the opportunity to attend an ENB performance. Four additional sessions will also be offered as part of the Shoreditch Festival. ENB list the physical health benefits of the work as: exercise to increase heart rate; hand-eye coordination tasks; stretches to improve posture and muscle tone; weight bearing exercises; and movement to increase circulation.

**From Here to Maturity Dance Company**, is based in London and was founded by Ann Dickie in 2000. Since 2000, FHTM has commissioned and toured a number of pieces of work at major venues for older professional dancers. It has also focused on community projects working with older people and employing older professional dancers. Ann Dickie is concerned by ageism in dance and writes:

‘...yet most (dancers) enjoy a professional life that is relatively brief and most careers are over by the time a dancer reaches 30. Dancers use their bodies to interpret emotions, ideas, moods, music and drama; and whilst a mature dancer may not be able to leap quite as high, turn as fast or as often, or raise a leg as far as they used to does that mean that they have nothing to offer as an artist? Indeed many dancers and dance teachers refer to an ‘emotional peak’, a point at which a professional dancer reaches a certain ‘roundedness’ as a performer – but rarely reached before 40 by when a performer has ‘lived a life’, giving them an ability to express subtleties of meaning in dance that will have eluded them in their younger years, when technique was paramount and expressive ability secondary.’

**The Island Arts Centre** in Lisburn, Northern Ireland has a performance dance group for people over 65. It is led by Anthea McWilliams and has weekly classes.

The **Language of Dance Trust** is a small charity based in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea providing dance activities for a wide range of the community particularly in the poorer North of the borough. In 2008 LODT participated in the national ‘Big Dance’ week. Free intergenerational workshops were mainly attended by older people leading to subsequent classes called ‘Dance Wise’. Each session is a practical movement class, offering a gentle approach to improving flexibility, joint mobility, balance and coordination. What is different about these classes is that LODT has developed a Dance Movement Alphabet. Each idea, such as travelling, flexing and extending is represented by a visual dance symbol, so stretching the mind as well as the body. As the project progresses, participants are encouraged to use the symbols to create their own movement sequences and dances. This enables them to create ‘memory books’ of their choreographic experiences. Some funding has been given by the Concertina Trust and the local PCT.

**Lincolnshire Dance** runs the Freedom in Dance (FiD) programme specifically for people over 50. It has four elements: commissioning work which challenges stereotypes of ageing; weekly classes; community projects; Open College Network accredited training classes for dance leaders who want to work with people over 50. It is designed to emphasise work with individuals rather than a set programme of activity. It recognises not only the great health benefits of dance but also the opportunity to make new friends.

**Mean Feet Dance Company** is based in Glastonbury. Projects have included intergenerational pieces and working in day centres and residential homes. As a result a group in Wedmore has constituted itself as the Sugar Water Curls over 50’s dance group.

**Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI)** has been working with older people for a number of years, beginning with the piloting of ‘Growing Old Disgracefully’. This dance company for professional and non-professional dancers aged 40 and over has become self-sustaining and has participants aged up to 70. The regular ‘50 Moves’ sessions at the MDI studio is held for a similar age group. In the past activity has also been developed in residential settings in Merseyside.



**Scottish Ballet** also has worked for many years with the 'Encourage' programme run by the Institute of Senior Studies at University of Strathclyde to provide talks and information workshops to the older community. This has partly inspired the more recent national roll out of Lifelong Learning Illustrated talks programme now on offer on the website - <http://www.scottishballet.co.uk/education/access-and-interpretation/talks-and-lectures/lifelong-learning.htm>

'Regenerate' is Scottish Ballet's 60+ performing company. Formerly called Gener8, the company was launched in September 2001 with funding from the Scottish Arts Council. Due to the popularity of the class, the company has developed and flourished over the years. The group meets weekly throughout the year at Scottish Ballet's studios.

The classes aim to provide the stimulus for exercising the mind and body harmoniously through dance. The company regularly works towards performance pieces and to date has performed in the Robin Anderson Theatre, Motherwell Concert Hall and Glasgow's Theatre Royal.



Sadler's Wells 'The Company of Elders' performs *In Fine Shape*, choreographed by Cheryl McChesney.  
Photo by Belinda Lawley

**Sadler's Wells**, London's Dance House has a strong commitment to working with older people. Its community outreach priorities include older people – challenging assumptions about who can dance. Its 'Company of Elders' (recently featured in a documentary as part of the BBC's 'Grey Expectations' series) was established in 1992, emerging from an over 60s club. It currently includes dancers aged 61 – 85. Their performances take place across the UK and at international dance venues. Professional choreographers are invited to create new works for the 'Company'. Sadler's Wells also run the Lilian Baylis Arts Club for over 60s (begun in 1988 and with a membership now of over 200) and two over 60s dance classes in day centres in partnership with Age Concern Islington.

**Spiral Dance** is a community dance charity working predominantly in Rochdale and Greater Manchester. The Big Lottery Fund has supported a three year project called Every Body Dances and which is now being delivered in partnership with the Local Authority, PCT and Leisure and Culture Trust. Dance sessions were held in four areas in Rochdale. Different kinds of session were held as people of varying age and ability were involved. Some dance sessions were held in community places, such as a leisure centre or community or arts venue, while others took place in residents' lounges in sheltered accommodation. Sessions include the opportunity for social exchange and relaxation. One group, 'Holistic Pathway', was particularly keen to take part in performances and took part in a celebration event, then an event at Spiral Dance and finally at the Lowry Theatre in Manchester. The project has gone on to deliver accredited training with people working with older people to include dance as well as a specific project on dementia. Spiral Dance has recognised from its project evaluation that older people want to be seen by younger people and in response is starting an intergenerational project.

*Participant feedback:*

***'Very good for depression... Maxine alone was enough to lift anyone's spirits.'***

***'I think that the exercise has to be beneficial and this was fun as well as fitness... everyone mixed in together and had a laugh.'***

**Take Art** is an arts development agency serving Somerset and created in 1987. It began as a village performance group, touring to 10 villages. The organisation has expanded not just geographically but into five service areas. Since 2006, the agency has been running the 'Time to Move' programme to engage and celebrate older people dancing in Sedgemoor and West Somerset. The initiative has been developed with a number of partners, including Somerset County Council and Primary Care Trust, Reminiscence Learning (a specialist Somerset charity) and Age Concern. The work has three strands. Six training courses have trained 90 practitioners, including volunteers, carers, nursing and residential home staff, dance and movement practitioners. Weekly creative dance and movement sessions have taken place in nine areas of Sedgemoor and West Somerset, led by specialists and reaching over 300 people. Dancers from 'Time to Move' have performed at many events including the re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall at London's Southbank Centre. In terms of advocacy, three films have been produced and Take Art has hosted three major events.

In July 2009 Take Art held a two day national conference celebrating older people dancing.

*Feedback:*

***'My hip is GREAT and I feel stronger and I have more movement than I ever expected to have. I practice the steps at home.'*** Hilary, Minehead.

***'Liked the idea of doing something that wasn't 'fuddy-duddy' or 'bop bop'. This has been a breath of fresh air. It's so rare to have an opportunity like this in our village.'*** Jan, Porlock.

***'By the time I leave I know I'm going to feel better. I'll be walking taller. My whole attitude is changed. It's worth more than money.'*** Participant, Cheddar.

**Tilted Productions** is a professional dance theatre company based in Chelmsford and led by artistic director Maresa von Stockert. Since 2007 it has been working with the over 50's group Act V based at The Mercury Theatre. A series of workshops were run with older people with Dance East in 2007, and in 2008, Maresa and dancers choreographed *The Big Chair Dance* at the Royal Festival Hall in London. A project is currently underway with the Jaywick Martello Tower to gather older residents stories and memories.

**Touch Trust** is one of nine Arts Residents in the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff. It is a creative movement and dance charity primarily working with people affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders and those with complex needs and challenging behaviour. It also runs a monthly session called 'Keep Moving' for older people and has participated in the Gwanwyn Festival.

**The Work Room** is open to professional artists of all ages and is based in Glasgow. The organisation provides a creative space for the support of 'Independent Dance'. Diana Torr was an artist in residence at The Work Room for five weeks as part of a long-term creative development. She is developing a new piece of work entitled *Turning Sixty*, which is specifically about finding the 'sexy' in dance for a woman in her sixties. Her project aims to provide a retrospective of movement vocabularies for each of her previous six decades, whilst defining a movement vocabulary for the seventh.

See also in the main report: Green Candle Dance Company and Strike An Attitude.

## DRAMA AND THEATRE

**Acta Community Theatre** in Bristol worked with a local group of older people, the Malcolm X Elders. The show was performed at the Malcolm X Centre. It was inspired by the group's disappointment at the attitude of some of their grandchildren to recent arrivals from Somalia. The show centred on their own experiences of arriving in Britain from the Caribbean in the 60s. The group has gone on to work with a group of young Somalis. Older People's Arts is based at the actacentre and is designed for people over 55. It has recently performed a puppet show for local primary school children. Much of acta's work is intergenerational, for instance a community play about a mainly elderly white working - class community receiving families from new communities, often asylum seekers. A production called *Forgotten* about living in long-stay institutions was developed with older people with learning difficulties. Acta is also planning a five year long initiative for older people called 'My Generation' to be launched in 2010.



acta Community Theatre's Older People's Arts (OPA) group from Bedminster in Bristol, with their *On The Street* puppet show created for local school children, in July 2009.



**Arc Theatre** is a small scale receiving venue in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Afternoon film sessions, with an attendance of 12-25 people, are designed for older customers. Arc ran an integrated dance group for all ages for a year and is about to start tea dances. The theatre has identified transport as a problem in getting an audience to an out of town venue.

**The Big Telly** is a professional theatre group formed in 1987 which tours the regions of Northern Ireland. It has had two year funding from Atlantic Philanthropies for a project it has called 'Spring Chickens'. This engaged older people, including in residential and day centres, and will culminate in October 2009 with simultaneous performances across five venues in Northern Ireland. These have been written, directed and performed entirely by older people.

**Brunton Theatre**, Musselburgh, has acted as host for an East Lothian Council scheme called Active Arts. In 2008 a group of older people worked with Stills Photographic Gallery in Edinburgh on digital photography and later teamed up with another older people's group, 'Better Than Figs', to participate in Edinburgh's 48 Hours Film Project. The short film made from start to finish in 48 hours was screened at the end of the year.

**The Byre Theatre** is a receiving venue in St Andrews in Scotland and the main arts centre for the town. Around eight years ago the education officer of the theatre visited 'Heydays', the longstanding initiative for older people at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. Subsequently Byre was successful in gaining Lottery funding for its own programme which is called 'Haydays'. Taster sessions are run on a six weeks basis for people over 50. Classes are run by professional artists. These happen every Tuesday at the theatre. A small charge of £15 for six sessions is made for participation. There are currently 160 participants, including 'three brave men', and the catchment area runs up to Dundee. At the end of each six weeks there is a variety programme and in some cases there has been an intergenerational element with local schools. Examples of classes include: drumming; painting miniatures; arts and crafts; singing; calligraphy and digital photography. 'Haydays' has also helped the Byre Theatre develop its audience.

**Citadel Arts Group** was formed in 1995. It has been developing and performing plays across Central Scotland. Although working with writers of all ages it has especially sought to create opportunities for older Scottish writers to see their work performed in the community. An example was *The Father of the Man* by San Cassimally written after reminiscence work with a Leith resident and using memories of growing up there during the Second World War and work on the Forth Bridge. In 2005 Citadel Arts developed a project called 'Magic Moments', developing five short plays for older people by mature writers using memories as a starting point. This then drew further funding from Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Community Foundation. This allowed the plays to reach around 3000 people in care homes and residential accommodation in the Edinburgh area.

**The Clod Ensemble**, based in North London, was formed in 1995. It is a performance and theatre group using a wide range of media and with a strong emphasis on music and movement. It originally shared a building with a day centre for older people which caused it to develop a strong strand of work which it calls 'Extravagant Acts for Mature People.' This is a series of free lunch time arts events and performances for people over 60. Since it first began, the series has included concerts and performances by internationally acclaimed artists including the London Symphony Orchestra, Fran Landesman, Lois Weaver, Apples and Snakes, Little Angel, John Wright and the London Bulgarian Choir. The Clod Ensemble has also run projects with smaller groups of senior citizens in Islington, including a range of drama and film workshops, as well as a large intergenerational project which resulted in a huge Swing Night at Battersea Town Hall, a film *Doodle Bug* by Helen Marshall and a ceramic art work *Salvage* by Amy Shelton.

**Collective Encounters** is based in Liverpool and was established in 2004. It uses theatre as a tool for social change and runs participatory programmes which enable local people to develop new skills, exploring the issues that concern them, resulting in new work. It has produced a number of pieces of work with older people. *Regeneration Generation* explored the impact of



regeneration. *(dis)connected* built on this with a piece of intergenerational work exploring stereotypes. A weekly 3rd Age Theatre met weekly for three years producing shows including *The Liverpool Saga* and *A Necessary Evil* on the credit crunch. Their latest piece *Doctor, Doctor, We Need to Talk* uses forum theatre to engage the audience in ways to solve problems and has played to the National Pensioners' Convention and to local NHS workers.

**Entelechy Arts** is based at the Albany Theatre in Lewisham, South London. It has an informal network of 300 members and works with excluded people including older people, younger people and people with learning disabilities. It seeks to bring together different worlds and different imaginations in a wide variety of settings from a park to a health centre. Its main strand of work with older people is called 'Beyond the Tea Dance'. This comprises weekly arts activities and large scale performance events, often on an intergenerational and intercultural basis.



Entelechy's Seven Ages company use theatre, dance, new writing and video to explore the themes of identity, diversity, memory, risk and change.' Photograph: Shelly Ammann

The programme includes:

- 'Rampage' – an intergenerational dance project at the Peckham Pulse, a local leisure centre;
- 'Tuesday Afternoons at the Peckham Pulse' – music, dance, stories and song. The group membership is currently 40 strong and there is a waiting list of people wanting to join. Some people come with support staff, many of whom are also musicians and participants, so often there are 50 people. The group hosts a number of large-scale tea dance events. ·
- 'Orchestra' – an eclectic encounter of musicians, including older people;
- 'Tea Dance' – a programme of performances involving music, song, dance, poetry and story telling.
- 'Journeys' – a programme of cultural and social visits and events for members;
- 'Consultation and Conversation', responding to requests for older people's views about, and experiences of, the arts.

'Lewisham Voices' was a community history project, forming part of 'London Voices', a three year programme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project was a collaboration between The Museum of London and Lewisham Libraries Service and involved contributions to a community archive from people who live in Lewisham. Entelechy Arts worked with the existing partners to enable people with learning disabilities to be included in Lewisham's community archive. Entelechy's work focused on enabling the project to include people who have different ways in which they talk about their stories and experiences.

**Fevered Sleep** creates new works of arts in a number of media but often drama or movement. Work is created for adults and for children. A new production *On Ageing* is a theatre piece about ageing. Extensive research is being undertaken with people over 70 and under 13 as well as with medical experts. It will premiere at the Brighton Festival in 2010 before going on to the Young Vic.

**1st Framework** is 25 years old and was formed by Peter Avery. It is based in London and has an 'empty studio' policy, assembling teams for specific projects. It has a strong emphasis on intergenerational work. Its 'radical' over 60s theatre group is called '3rd Thought'. This quite new company was preceded by fifteen years of work with people over 60 at the Mary Ward Centre. An example of recent work is a trilogy of plays by Martin Crimp called 'Fewer Emergencies'. 3rd Thought has toured internationally.

**Glas(s) Performance** based in Glasgow is an experimental theatre company committed to using real people in the place of fictional ones. They produced a show with a reminiscence group in Glasgow where a community hall was transformed into the dance hall it used to be to revisit participants' memories and stories of former times. A new production in development called *Life Long* looks at the story of a 52 year long marriage.

**Glass Shot** in Wales produced a community theatre project in 2008 as part of Age Concern's Gwanwyn Festival. It used professional actors to dramatise the situation of older people in relation to care situations and dementia. It was shown in venues across Wales from community halls to residential homes and to a variety of audiences. After seeing this, the Director of Age Concern Gwynedd commissioned them to undertake a follow-up project called 'Giving the Elderly a Voice'. The company researched and rehearsed issues identified by older people, at the same time training volunteers as drama facilitators. 19 afternoon workshops were held and a film produced which was then presented to groups of service providers and Age Concern Forums.

**Ladder to the Moon** is a theatre company based in London. It began as a street arts group working with young people and noticed that older people were often in a similar situation with nothing to do. This led them to specialise over the last five years in working with older people in care homes and hospitals in London. Professional actors, trained in interactive theatre come into the health care setting as 'key characters'. The actors treat patients or residents, staff and visitors as part of the same 'virtual world' they are creating in their piece and respond in character. A piece is created through prior research and consultation with the members of the organisation and produced to operate at different levels so that it is accessible to someone with dementia. Examples of pieces have included retellings of the film *Casablanca* and plays by Shakespeare.

**The Library Theatre Company** in Manchester, through its Community and Education Department, has, for some years, identified work with older people as a priority and delivered a range of projects. The theatre participates in the city's 'Full of Life' Festival offering free city-wide workshops. The Valuing Older People Cultural Programme for a two year period both offered residencies to older people's groups and shared the theatre's experience with other arts organisations. A series of chair-based dance and fitness sessions have been delivered in sheltered accommodation in partnership with Age Concern. Monthly play reading sessions for people over 50 are often oversubscribed. These are followed up on demand by more in-depth activity days on specific topics. A Memory Map was created with older people in Clayton and Openshaw working with visual artists. A number of intergenerational projects have also been run. This work is the focus of a study by Keele University.

**The National Theatre** on London's Southbank has run a pilot year of a 'Discover for Life' programme for older people funded by Prudential and in partnership with Age Concern Hackney and the Greater London Forum for Older People. One project was to invite applications from aspiring playwrights over 55 for an idea for a new play they would like to write based on a favourite classic. A shortlisted group of 12 then went on to develop the first act. Another strand of the programme involved workshops with the National's scenic painters and a further project was an intensive two week workshop on a musical for a cast comprising people under 12 and over 70.

**Oldham Coliseum Theatre** is a repertory theatre which can trace its history back to 1885. It has a range of community and educational activities. One strand of this is its Full Circle Group for people aged fifty and over. It meets once a fortnight for a combination of theatre activities and talks.

**Re-live** is a theatre company based in Cardiff which has been working with older people for a number of years in two ways. Older people are brought together to reflect on their lives and to share memories. This is the beginning of a process that culminates in the performance of a theatre piece to an audience in a professional venue. The second approach is to seek out older people who would not be able to take up this opportunity. Re-live has worked in a number of care homes across Cardiff and by adapting the exercises employed they have begun to work with people with advanced dementia. These sessions use drama and reminiscence.

**The Rural Media Company** was formed in 1992, is based in Hereford and is a media education, development and production company. Four recent films it has made on an intergenerational approach (all of which can be viewed on their website) are: *Fieldwork*; *Travellers' Remember*; *Crafta Webb*; and *Still Life*.

**The Scottish Storytelling Centre** is based in Edinburgh. A specific strand of work for older people and their carers is called 'Life Stories' and has run since 2003. It uses reminiscence work as well as storytelling. Sessions have taken place in a range of settings including church groups, lunch and social clubs, community and day centres, early dementia groups, sheltered housing complexes, residential and care homes.

**Shakespeare Link** is a charity based in the Living Willow Theatre in the upper Wye valley in mid-Wales. As part of its activities the theatre has for the last six years been running 'have-a-go' Shakespeare sessions with a group whose ages range between 60-90 and which meets fortnightly to read, act and discuss Shakespeare's plays. The group takes part in the Gwanwyn Festival.

**Spare Tyre** is based in London and describes itself as 'community theatre without prejudice'. In addition to work with older people it is undertaking work on homophobia and with people with learning difficulties. The Elders Theatre Community (ETC) taps into the talents of older people who suffer prejudice, misunderstanding and isolation. ETC includes Hotpots which is an ensemble for artists aged 60 and over who are keen to tackle issues around old age and isolation. Examples of work include the touring production *Dangerous Games* which charted the 'technology takeover' in Britain from 1953 -2007 and its effects on older people. *Alice* is a comedy addressing retirement that was devised and performed at Teatro Technis in Camden and Oxford House in East London. Camden PCT and St Pancras Hospital have commissioned Hotpots to develop a multi-disciplinary staff training programme on dignity and respect. Spare Tyre also holds weekly film, dance, drama and storytelling sessions in resource centres in the London Boroughs of Islington, Camden and Tower Hamlets with isolated elders under the banner of Link Elders.

**The Square Chapel** in Halifax, West Yorkshire has been converted over the last ten years into an arts centre. One strand of its Artsreach programme is to work with older people. Weekly classes at the Square Chapel are held on art forms such as tapestry, calligraphy and oil painting and these are also taken out to day centres.

**The Wonderful Beast Theatre** Company was formed in 1997 by Alys Kihl and has brought together actors, musicians and writers to recreate myths and folk tales and to tell stories. In 2005 it moved from its London base to Suffolk and has since worked extensively with Suffolk Artlink on its community strand of work focusing on older people. It has delivered outreach work to older people in care centres and almshouses in remote rural areas. This has evolved into performances based on memories and local folk tales such as *The Dead Moon – A Smuggler’s Tale* and *Behind the Scenes at Mary Warners*. An intergenerational project is in preparation involving residents in almshouses and local primary school children working with an Indian dancer and musician among other professionals.

**West Yorkshire Playhouse**, can claim one of the longest continuing examples of work with older people in the ‘Heydays’ group which has been meeting every Wednesday for the last 19 years. Membership now stands at over 400 and many of the original members continue to return. Several members of the existing drama group have created their own ‘Feeling Good Theatre Company’. This has created work on issues of ageing and has been commissioned to produce shows by the West Yorkshire Police and the National Osteoporosis Society. Both shows have toured including in residential settings. New work by the Company is showcased at the Playhouse. The Heydays group also gets special offers to performances at the Playhouse which therefore helps build its audience. But in addition to drama, ‘Heydays’ participates in a very wide range of artistic activity using the facilities of the Playhouse, including street dance, singing, portrait painting, play reading, DJ-ing and Hip Hop. At the end of each term members stage a celebratory performance, concert or exhibition.

## MUSIC AND SINGING

**The Action Transport Theatre** is based in Ellesmere Port in Cheshire and is a new writing theatre company working with young people in the North West of England. Its new production called *Generations* is a musical. The performance is by people from Ellesmere Port aged 11-87.

**Connaught Opera** has arranged and performed around 200 concerts for older people in and around Greater London since 2003. Most concerts are performed by two singers, Maria Arakie and Glenn Wilson accompanied by a pianist. Concerts often take place in nursing homes, hospices, day centres, hospitals and community venues. As part of the Year of Heritage and Culture, older people were transported to concerts at heritage sites. Mindful of the diversity of London, songs come from a wide repertoire in addition to musicals and operetta. Funding comes from a wide variety of sources including the Arts Council, many London boroughs and The City Bridge Trust.

**English Touring Opera** is working in collaboration with Turtle Key Arts and the Royal College of Music on ‘Turtle Song’, which has been running for the last three years. It is an opportunity for people with dementia and their partners or carers to compose or sing their own songs working alongside professional musicians. Over the past two years the participants have met once a week over ten weeks at the Royal College of Music in London. Sessions have been led by Tim Yealland and Rachel Leach supported by five students from the Royal College of Music. The project is unusual and possibly unique among work with Alzheimer’s sufferers in that participants are encouraged to write their own songs rather than exclusively sing the existing repertoire. Songs are repeated and built on over successive weeks, ending in a public performance. It was piloted with the ‘Singing for the Brain Group’ run by West Berkshire Alzheimer’s Society. Funding permitting, ETO will roll out this approach in new areas.

**Folk South West**, an arts development agency which promotes the music, song and dance traditions of South West England, has a community choir, the majority of whose participants are over 60 years old. The choir makes regular visits to lunch clubs, day centres and residential centres. In addition it has recently been funded by the Arts Council to set up an oral history training programme in Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire.



**The Golden Oldies Charitable Trust** is based in Bath and was formed in 2008. A Golden Oldies session consists of a sing-along to the music of the 50s, 60s and 70s led by an enthusiastic session leader. In its first year 230 free day time sessions were facilitated, which is set to rise to around 1400 in its second year. Funding has come from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Comic Relief and Tudor Trust.

**The Hallé Orchestra** based in Manchester has run a number of initiatives with older people over the years. In 'Musician On Call' sessions, two players visit people unable to come to the Concert Hall, perhaps in their own homes or in a residential home. Larger scale creative music projects in care homes have culminated in 'Good Old Days' style performances. A project in partnership with Pendine Care Homes aims to involve a small number of participants in a music and visual arts project on the theme of water. The Hallé is working closely with Manchester City Council on a strategy for culture for older people.

**Live Music Now** is a national organisation set up in 1976. It aims to make high quality music as widely available as possible and to promote standards of excellence in young musicians and their leaders. It has had many projects working with older people and recently Bank of America has funded a three year programme called Active Music, Active Minds. This will enable LMN to extend its reach in the day and residential care sector to bring live music performances and interactive workshops to over 60,000 older people across the UK.

An example of another project is 'Musical Memories' that took place in three nursing homes in Northern Ireland (Ballynahinch, Dromore and Belfast). Two sopranos, Niamh Lavery and Roisin O'Grady with traditional Irish musician Lorna McLaughlin and storyteller Fra Gunn asked residents about their musical memories. From this source material a 'Singspiel' (a form related to opera) was created. Some of LMN's programmes with older people are being accompanied by evaluative research.

*Some feedback:*

***'It was truly fantastic. People got up off their chairs and moved and everyone (even the most frail) had great smiles on their faces. The feedback people gave was all excellent.'***  
Stevenage Road Day Centre.

**The London Mozart Players (LMP)** is a professional chamber orchestra, currently resident in Croydon. It has been giving informal concerts in this London borough since 1989 and this has now reached beyond London. In many venues, repeated visits are made and strong links built up over time. The musicians intersperse the music with anecdotes about their lives as performers and give short introductions to the music. Many concerts have been given in day centres and care homes over the years. The aim is to create a relaxed atmosphere where there is the possibility of conversation and reminiscence.

**The Opera Group** has commissioned a new opera called *The Lion's Face*. It is being created in partnership with Professor Simon Lovestone's team at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. Through opera and poetry it will explore the experience of people with dementia, their carers and research scientists. It will be on tour throughout the UK from May 2010 and will be performed at the Royal Opera House. Pre and post show discussions, carer symposiums, in-school events, science festival events and workshops will all be used to raise awareness of dementia.

**The Oxford Concert Party** is a group of musicians which tours the UK. Funded by the Arts Council England South East and in partnership with Age Concern, from November 2008 it put on a six month tour of ten communities in and around the Vale of Aylesbury. The Oxford Concert Party worked with a writer, Pat Winslow and put on concerts, workshops and activities for older people in day centres and residential homes, including an intergenerational performance involving primary school children.



Silver Singers at The Sage Gateshead, July 2008. Photograph: North News and Pictures

**The Sage Gateshead** has developed 'Silver Singing' initiated by 20,000 Voices (see below) into a further 16 additional strands to form a 'Silver' Programme engaging over 750 people over 50 years old each year. The different groups include: 'Silver Breves' (early and sacred music); 'Silver Guitars'; 'Silver Folk'; 'Silver Divas'; 'Silver Gospel'; 'Take Note' (digital photography); and 'Men Allowed'.

**The Semitones Music Group** is an ensemble of volunteer musicians who give concerts in care homes, hospices, and sheltered accommodation around Newcastle. The group consists of performers of all ages, both singers and musicians. Concerts take place on Saturday or Sunday afternoons and the Semitones may return to the same venues, understanding that this





encourages more personal relationships. Concerts last around an hour and are interspersed with information about the pieces.

**Sing For Your Life** is a charity established in 2005 which aims to support the wellbeing of older people through participation in musical activity. Its core activity is regular singing sessions in what it calls Silver Song Clubs. The charity was set up as a pilot by The Sidney de Haan Research Centre for the Arts and Health, part of Canterbury Christchurch University, named after the founder of the Saga group who suffered from dementia in later life. The Research Centre worked on the project in conjunction with Making Music South East. There are now 40 Silver Song Clubs across the South East of England with plans in 2009 to expand into London,

Oxfordshire, the Thames Valley and the South West of England. At least 2000 people participate each month. Sessions take place in many types of venue including hospitals, day centres and residential homes and are run by trained facilitators supported by volunteers. Sing for Your Life reports the following benefits for participation in a Silver Song Club: 'improves overall rating of physical health; alleviates loneliness; better morale; fewer doctor visits; less medication use; fewer instances of falls; improved respiratory function.' The Silver Song Clubs was one of three projects evaluated by the Centre for Health Services Studies at the University of Kent as part of a national enquiry into evidence based guidelines on health promotion for older people, part funded by the European Commission.

**Sinfonia 21** is an arts organisation based in London which mainly offers interactive concerts to older people living in supported accommodation. Working with professional musicians and actors, it combats the isolation of older people who would not normally be able to access the arts and provides education, recreation and creativity. It currently has projects at the Sundial Centre in Bethnal Green, East London, East Buckinghamshire and Chichester District.

**Spitalfields Music** based in the East End of London has been developing links both with day centres in Tower Hamlets and with the LinkAge Plus Network to support older people to live independently. Projects have worked in the Sundial Centre and Sonali Gardens for musicians to bring the golden age of Hollywood and Bollywood to life through stories and song. Spitalfields Music has also partnered with local intergenerational arts agency Magic Me.

**The Three Choirs Festival** taking place in Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester has an outreach programme which started in 2007. Called 'Mindsong', it delivers music therapy to groups of service users in care homes in Gloucestershire using registered music therapists assisted by trained volunteers. The latter were originally from either the Festival Chorus or Gloucester Choral Society and received training prior to the project. This was undertaken by Jane Crampton, a State Registered Music Therapist, a consultant geriatrician and a representative from the Alzheimer's Society. As a result singing groups have been set up in care homes in addition to formal music therapy. So far music therapy or singing group sessions have been held in ten day care or nursing homes with almost 100 people taking part, including relatives and staff.

**20,000 Voices** set up in 1992, created the 'Silver Singing' programme, an initiative in the North East of England. The programme is now a partnership with the major music venue, The Sage Gateshead (see above). It began in November 2005. It is designed for people over 50. The four choirs throughout Northumberland meet weekly during the day, attracting a wide age range and diverse abilities. The group sings a mix of world music, popular songs, folk songs, spirituals, Geordie songs, anything from Cole Porter to Annie Lennox. There is a 'Big Silver Sing' monthly where all the groups come together.

Some of the benefits described by the majority of singers include improvements in breathing, memory and concentration.

***'Friday afternoon has become an important point in my week when we meet up in Alnwick for our regular singing session which is always friendly and enjoyable. We learn a variety of attractive songs taught in a step-by-step manner using a minimum of music theory. I find it all very rewarding and I leave with a sense of accomplishment. An unexpected by-product is that many of us have made friends in the choir and some of us have performed at local music events which I have been pleased to take part in'.***

(A participant's letter to a local newspaper).

**Wigmore Hall**, one of the most prestigious concert venues in London, is especially known for its work with soloists and chamber musicians. Its 'Music for Life' project develops interactive music workshops for people living with dementia. Work takes place in residential homes, hospitals and day care centres. It has three interlinked strands: small group workshops with people with dementia and their carers; work with nursing and care staff, enhancing their communication and



observation skills; training professional musicians to work in this area. It was founded by Linda Rose in 1993 and began by working in Jewish Care settings.

**The Zimmers** was formed in 2007 and is the oldest touring band in the UK with a song in the UK Top 40. They were formed when Tim Samuels toured the country in the BBC's 'Power to the People' series investigating the feelings of powerlessness and isolation experienced by many older people. He recruited pensioners to make a record to air their grievances and the Zimmers were born. The 40 strong band had a 90 year old singer. They have had a number of hits but are best known for the YouTube hit a cover of the The Who's *My Generation*.  
*See also in the main report: Lost Chord*

## VISUAL

**Arts in Healthcare** works across Scotland. It has a collection of 1200 original, modern Scottish art works for rent at a nominal amount to hospitals, surgeries, care homes and clinics. It also advises and assists hospitals that wish to commission their own work. Many of the people benefitting from the work of this charity are older and in addition they will soon be introducing an audience development programme to hospitals and care homes where trained volunteers will lead gallery tours of the works displayed.

**Bridging Arts**, based in London, presents issues through art, design and photography. It aims to connect cultures and communities and encourage interaction and understanding. Their most recent project with older people has been 'Stitch Wandsworth' funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It looks at Islamic traditions of pattern, studying ways that they interact with British traditions. Sewing groups are run and most of the participants are older women. This has resulted in a giant wall hanging called *A Stitch In Time*, which is available to tour for exhibition.

**Charnwood Arts** is a community arts and media organisation based in Loughborough in the East Midlands. It prioritises work with disadvantaged groups and works across most art forms. 'Drawing on Age' in 2007 was the name of a pilot project drawn up in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council, with additional support from Charnwood Borough Council. It was coordinated by Catherine Rogers for Charnwood Arts and employed a number of artists to set up and run sessions for older people who were using County Council services as well as drawing in other older people. In all, 40 sessions were run, and they ranged in form from film showings and discussions, story telling and creative writing to visual arts. It is hoped to develop the pilot into a more sustained approach once funding is found.

**Cubitt Gallery** in Islington, North London works on a regular basis with a local over 55's centre, Claremont, in conjunction with two local primary schools. In its 'Insider Art' project, the Claremont project members visit Cubitt on a monthly basis and work alongside Cubitt-based artists in their studios. Recently a purpose built space has been created for the Claremont members to use as a drop-in studio to develop their own projects.

**Digital:works** is an arts and educational organisation, which started 15 years ago and became a charity in 2008. One of its projects was a commission from Poole Older People's Project (POPP) to teach a group of older people photographic skills and to create an exhibition. Several years later this has led to the group formally constituting itself, and with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, work is underway on an exhibition exploring working lives looking back over a period of 60 years. The local authority is a key partner and a dedicated website [www.ourworkinglives.org](http://www.ourworkinglives.org) has already been set up.

**Engage**, the national association for gallery education is working to develop its work with older people. A project in Wales by Engage Cymru has undertaken two training seminars on how galleries can engage with older people. Short research projects are to get underway with six local authority/gallery partners to be completed by March 2010, preceded by a mapping report in September 2009.

**Fabrica** in Brighton is based in a former Regency church and commissions contemporary visual art installations specific to the building. Fabrica has received funding from Arts Council England South East's 'Rendezvous' scheme to research with older people how to remove the physical and psychological barriers that can impede their engagement with contemporary art. The research is ongoing.

**Hands On Oxfordshire's Heritage (HOOH)** helps people explore the past by providing and facilitating the handling of themed collections of historical objects, photographs and documents in settings convenient to its users. A Creativity in the Community pilot involved a total of 45 older people from three settings: Highlands Day Centre, Chipping Norton; Charlbury Close, Kidlington; and St Mary's Court, Witney. Funding came from Oxfordshire County Council Adult Social Care Services. The delivery team consisted of two HOOH facilitators, Peter Killick and Gill Munday and two artists, Adam Guillain, (storyteller/writer/ musician) and Davina Chapman (visual artist). Each group of participants was involved in three creative sessions. In an independent evaluation participants reported significant benefits in terms of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

*Feedback:*

***'It gave me a real lift'*** participant, Highlands Centre.

***'What I most liked about the project was feeling part of a group,'***  
participant, St Mary's Court.

***'It has widened my horizons and given me a good laugh,'*** participant, St Mary's Court.

**The National Gallery** in London is a collection for everyone but the organisation has been conscious that effort and funding has almost exclusively concentrated on encouraging involvement by children and young people. In order to redress this, two pilot projects were run in 2008 with older people under the title 'Ageing Creatively'.

In the first, 'Fabric Forms', the artist Al Johnson collaborated with two day centres run by Haringey Council in North London. The Haven Day Centre provides a day care facility for people who are socially isolated or who have some degree of sensory or mobility impairment. The Grange Day Centre serves people with varying degrees of dementia. Eight participants contributed from each day centre. A number of the participants came from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.

The project started with a visit to the National Gallery followed by three practical workshop sessions at one of the day centres. These sessions included discussions using high quality reproductions of the paintings. Sessions were delivered by the artist supported by an Outreach Officer. The participants focused on the representation of costume in the National Gallery's collection and created their own sculptures using wire and plaster impregnated with bandage.

The second project was led by the artist Marc Woodhead supported by an Outreach Officer in collaboration with Ageless Opportunities which produces a directory of social activities for people over 50 in Great Yarmouth. The borough has a relatively elderly population (41% in 2004). 60 residents applied for the 18 places on the course.

Over three sessions, participants again looked at high quality, large reproductions of works in the National Gallery, this time to do with the sea. Participants were encouraged to share thoughts and response to the works. They then experimented with different materials and techniques to represent the sea. Finally the group visited the National Gallery. As a result the group has set up its own art appreciation society, the Priory Gallery.

**The National Museums Liverpool** have run a number of projects with older people. In 2002 it worked with the Liverpool Housing Action Trust on the 'City Memories' project with older residents of dilapidated tower blocks. Some participants went on to volunteer at the now closed Museum of Liverpool Life. A 'time tunnel' was created as a permanent art installation in a new housing development. Reminiscence has been explored as a therapeutic tool for older people suffering brain injury or dementia. The social history collections have been used to trigger memory through the 'Stroll Through Time' programme.

**Paintings in Hospitals**, a national charity, ran 'Artbridge' in care homes across London between 1999 and 2002. 18 artist residencies were held.

**The Serpentine Gallery** in Hyde Park in London has been involved for many years in work with older people. As part of its 'Learning Through Art' education programme, the Serpentine provides special artist-led workshops for community groups, many of which are designed to increase access to the arts for older people through working with care organisations, day centres and community groups, such as Forrester Court Nursing Home, Open Age Project and Amberley Club Room. Each workshop is designed in consultation with group leaders to meet the individual needs of each group and is led by two artists in collaboration with our education team. Workshops reflect the themes and techniques of each exhibition at the Serpentine, for example working with film, sculpture, painting or drawing to explore issues of identity, memory and contemporary life. In 2008/09 over 2,500 people aged over 60 took part in the education programme, from boroughs across London.

Aside from this ongoing work, the Serpentine is currently undertaking a special two-year project working with older people, called 'Skills Exchange'. This project, which is due to finish towards the end of this year, is bringing together younger artists, architects and social housing professionals with older residents in Westminster, Hackney, Southwark and Camden to share experience and skills in tackling social exclusion, the exclusion of older people in decision-making, examining and capturing the histories of older residents in housing developments, and developing improved social housing for the future. The project is taking the form of five artists' residencies working with groups of older residents to produce a variety of works which will be presented or performed in the communities.

**Sound Architect** uses digital technology to promote creativity, awareness and education. It tries to offer sessions free of charge where possible and has worked with a number of charities, for instance Mencap and the Royal National Institute for the Blind, as well as Age Concern. A 'Rural Activities Programme' in Cranbrook, Kent, was funded in 2008 by Town and County Housing and Kent County Council. Both WRVS and Age Concern were part of this partnership. 10 morning sessions of IT were offered, followed by lunch and sessions of creative reminiscence. For the latter, notes were taken by facilitators Claire Whistler and Jane Metcalfe, as people told their stories, which were drawn together and scripted into a performance.

**SPACE** was founded in 1968 by the artists Bridget Riley, Peter Sedgley and Peter Townsend. It supports the development of art and artists by providing over 600 affordable studios across 18 sites in London, complemented with an artistic programme that widens public access to contemporary art and supports the next generation of artistic talent. The 'Bow Older People's Programme' is a three year project in association with Old Ford Housing Association, Age Concern, the Idea Store, St Pauls Gallery and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A singing group, the SPACE age Sirens has performed in public led by Laka D, vocal animateur and jazz musician. In July 2007 The Geezers Group, participants in the 'Bow Older People's Programme', took part in a field trip with artist Brandon Ballengee at Gunpowder Park in the Lea Valley. The Geezers studied the varied life forms in their natural habitats and discussed Ballengee's combined science and art practice with him. SPACE is working with Brandon Ballengee as part of a long-term project in partnership with The Arts Catalyst, Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Gunpowder Park.

**Tramway** in Glasgow is an internationally recognised centre for the performing and visual arts. Its visual arts workshops for women over 55 present an opportunity to explore a range of materials and develop new skills. In August 2008 the group enjoyed an occupation of Tramway 2 where they developed a series of individual works exploring time, space and contemporary culture.

**Turner Contemporary** is a visual arts agency based in Margate which celebrates the contribution and tradition of the artist JW Turner. A new gallery space is under construction. Over a period of seven months from February – August 2008, a group of older people were invited to attend a series of 'Tea and Talk' events. The group met once a month to view and discuss exhibitions of contemporary art and the role that the forthcoming gallery could play.



# Appendix B

## WORK OUTSIDE THE UK

### Republic of Ireland

Activity on arts and older people in Ireland focus principally on a month long festival held in May since 1996. The Festival is called Bealtaine and is organised by Age and Opportunity, a national charity promoting greater participation in society by older people which is itself run by a steering group of older people. The Festival is staffed by a part-time artistic director and a coordinator. Its main funding comes from the Health Service Executive and from the Arts Council. A recent example of its work on empowerment is a major project funded by Atlantic Philanthropies called 'Get Vocal' which will give grants to groups of older people to encourage participation in public decision-making and campaigning.

In recent years the Festival has had a theme. In 2009 for instance this was 'Open the Door' taken from a poem by Miroslav Holub. The Festival has enlisted as ambassadors distinguished older Irish artists, such as the travel writer Dervla Murphy. It takes place at a range of venues from the famous Abbey Theatre in Dublin, to a nursing home in a remote rural location, or out of doors on a beach to celebrate the sunrise.

The Festival has expanded greatly. In 1996 it had 52 events with around 7000 participants which had increased by 2007 to at least 1300 events and over 51,000 participants (around 10% of Ireland's older population). It works across all art forms and in all Ireland's 26 counties as well as with a number of national arts institutions. Ireland has a system of local Active Retirement Clubs and around 100 take part as well as over 100 day centres and nursing homes.

In 2009 an evaluation of Bealtaine was published by the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, part of the National University of Ireland in Galway. It was undertaken by Aine Ni Leime and Eamon O'Shea. Organisers and participants were asked to score the Festival's impact. It is noticeable that the values given by participants were consistently even higher than those of organisers, for instance 87% of participants thinking that it encouraged engagement with the community and 95% thinking that it improved social networking. The evaluation also concluded that the Festival had had 'a profound and visible effect on arts practice at the national and local levels'. It has expanded audiences for the arts and enhanced self esteem and confidence. The report concludes that Bealtaine has managed to achieve this on very slender funding (although it leverages at least double this amount) and in the absence of any national policy on the arts and older people.

Examples of activity in 2009:

- 'Magpie's Nest' – the artist Michael Fortune worked with six participants in the National Library of Ireland. They curated an exhibition of items there, using as starting points magpies on the Wexford Coast, photos of the Coolgreany Eviction of 1880 and pottery and delft fragments from an 1850's shipwreck of Rosslare.
- 'EnvisAge' – a cross disciplinary project using artists, older people and workers in residential care to imagine the ideal residential home.
- 'Swans' – a group of 16 older people using the book *The Black Swan* by Nassim Taleb as a starting point to create a new dramatic piece for the Abbey Theatre.
- 'CoisCeim's' professional choreographers offered a six week course centred on the music of Edith Piaf and culminating in a performance at City Hall.
- 'Beautiful Tomorrow' – an intergenerational specially commissioned piece by mother and daughter team Anne-Marie Dolan and Tine Verbeke with junior and senior choirs coming together at the Regional Cultural Centre, Donegal.



- Serendipity Theatre performed in residential care homes and senior clubs in Wicklow with a programme of poetry and songs from Ireland, France and Germany.
- The Active Pulse Theatre Group performed two one act plays for Active Retirement Groups in Cork.
- Bantry Hospital's St Joseph's Ward, Care of the Elderly Unit, held an intergenerational paint and multimedia workshop with Sharon Barker from Arts for Health.
- Galway Arts Centre held workshops in residential and day care homes followed by an exhibition of work at the centre.
- 'Blow the Dust off Your Trumpet' – with the help of some professional musicians a group of older people either new to music or who have not played an instrument for a long time created a concert that was performed at the National Concert Hall.
- The Irish Film Institute ran a four week course on Irish Film. IFI has a 'Wild Strawberries' group of older people for film appreciation.
- The Inishowen Gospel Choir closed the Festival by singing as dawn rose on the Inishowen peninsula.

The other relevant major initiative of Age and Opportunity has been a pilot project in the Midlands Region called Creative Exchanges. This started with a conference on arts in residential settings in 2000 in a theatre in Portlaoise which created great interest. As a result a training course was created for staff in residential homes to make the arts intrinsic to life there in a sustainable fashion. The course emphasised the importance of the creative process over the piece of work created. The core elements were drama and visual art. The courses took place in 2001 and 2008 using health board funding. Evaluations were very positive, citing improved interaction between staff and residents, interaction with local communities as well as benefits for residents and the development of staff. Age and Opportunity is currently looking for further funding for this programme.



"Silver Stars by Broken Talkers and Sean Millar, a song cycle based on the life-stories of older gay men, commissioned by Age & Opportunity's Bealtaine Festival, Ireland's nationwide celebration of creativity in older age – [www.bealtaine.com](http://www.bealtaine.com)"

Photograph: Colm Hogan



## United States of America

The movement for the participation in the arts of older people in the USA appears to have shared origins with the UK in the development of community arts in the 1970s, itself probably a product of radical activism in the 1960s. To a large extent the work in the USA bears many similarities to that happening in the UK.

Two significant contextual policies on ageing there are that of 'aging in place', asking how can the community remain a suitable place for older people, which is championed by Partners for Liveable Communities and a cognate policy of 'universal design' which seeks to make the built environment accessible to all with general benefits but clear ones for older people. A couple of observations about arts policy would be that, as in the UK, a great deal of focus has been given to the relationship of the arts to health. A difference with the UK though is the concentration on and validation of 'folk art', that is work by untrained artists as well as 'visionary arts' where an artist may use mental health services.

The federal public body, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has taken an interest in participation by older people led by its Director for Accessibility, Pauline Terry. In 2007 it published a list of organisations using best practices in this area which included many of the leading organisations in the field in the USA:

- Alzheimer's Poetry Project, Santa Fe, New Mexico;
- Arts for the Aging, Inc, Bethesda, Maryland;
- Burbank, Senior Artists Colony, California;
- Cornerstone Theater Company, Los Angeles, California;
- Elders Share the Arts, Brooklyn, New York;
- Golden Tones Chorus, Wayland, Maryland;

- Intergenerational Orchestra of Omaha;
- Kairos Dance Theatre, Minneapolis, Minnesota;
- Levine School of Music's Senior Chorale, Washington DC;
- Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Tacoma, Maryland;
- Luella Hannan Memorial Foundation, Detroit, Michigan;
- Memories in the Making, Cincinnati, Ohio;
- OASIS Institute, St Louis, Missouri;
- Seasoned Partners, Birmingham, Alabama;
- Stagebridge, Oakland, California.

The list shows strong similarities with work in the UK including: a range of art forms; most organisations specialising in one art form and a few in all; geographical spread; an interest in physical and mental health benefits especially regarding dementia; intergenerational and reminiscence work.

In 2005, the NEA convened a mini-conference on Creativity and Aging. Every decade, the White House holds a conference on ageing which makes policy recommendations to the President and to Congress and is the key part of a process of renewing on a regular basis legislation on ageing. The mini-conference concentrated on: arts and healthcare; lifelong learning and community; and universal design.

In 2009 the NEA went on to make a small pilot fund of grant awards under the title of Creativity and Aging in America. Grants of \$25,000 were given under the categories of literature and music to 14 organisations. Whether this will be extended is not clear, although President Obama has significantly increased funding for the NEA.

A very significant figure in the development of work on arts and older people in the USA is a medical doctor. Dr Gene Cohen in 2001 published *The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life* and has made out a case more recently that the arts are a uniquely powerful method which allows the brain to continue to develop and remain effective in old age. The NEA with others sponsored a study designed by him in 2001, on the impact of professionally conducted cultural programmes on older adults. A group of 150 people participating in programmes run at three sites (Elders Share the Arts, the Center for Elders and Youth in the Arts and the Levine School of Music) were compared with a control group of people of the same age who did not participate in arts programmes. The so-called intervention group reported better health and reduced use of medication. This is believed to be the first scientifically valid study of the relative health benefits of participation in the arts for older people.

Dr Cohen, along with Susan Perlstein of Elders Share the Arts, established in 2001 the National Center for Creative Aging at George Washington University in Washington DC. NCCA is now run by its Executive Director, Dr Gay Hanna. The Center is a membership body for arts organisations and individuals working with older people. It currently has 3000 individual members and 50 organisational members. It acts as a national advocate on the issue, bringing together the separate worlds of arts and ageing policy and organisations. Its website includes a directory of organisations working in the field as well as good practice material and research. One of its principal functions is training, mainly directed at artists wishing to work with older people, but with some participation of professionals from the field of ageing and senior services too. Another major activity is a public education campaign on the benefits of creative ageing.

An interesting practice difference is the greater use of artists in residence in the USA in day centres and residential homes. An excellent example is IONA Senior Services in Washington DC under the leadership of Gallery Director, Patricia Debroof. Visual artists work with service users, creating high quality pieces for display and a poet in residence has added a further level of interaction.



# Appendix C

## OTHER RESOURCES

### A Selection of Written Toolkits, Handbooks, etc

*Age and Opportunity Guidelines for Working with Older People in the Arts: A Resource for Bealtaine Organisers and Others Involved in the Arts and Older People*, Orla Moloney, 2006, Age and Opportunity, Ireland

*The Arts and Dementia Care; A Resource Guide*, 2008, National Center for Creative Aging, Washington DC

*Arts and Older People – Good Practice Guidance – Resource Pack*, 2001, Age Concern England.

*The Arts and Older People – A Practical Introduction*, Fi Frances, 1999, Age Concern

*Age Exchanges*, Pam Schweitzer, Age Exchange

*Creativity Matters; the Arts and Aging Toolkit*, 2008, National Center for Creative Aging, Washington DC

*Getting Everybody Included*, Angel Cotter with Fiona Fraser, Susan Langford, Linda Rose and Val Ruddock, 2001, Magic Me.

*Reminiscence in Dementia Care* edited by Pam Schweitzer, Age Exchange

*The Reminiscence Handbook*, Caroline Osborn and edited by Pam Schweitzer, Age Exchange

*Reminiscing with People with Dementia; A Handbook for Carers* by Errollyn Bruce, Sarah Hodgson and Pam Schweitzer, Age Exchange

*How To Help Reminiscing Go Well: Principles of Good Practice in Reminiscence Work*, Bernie Arigho, 2006, Age Exchange

*Older People and Voluntary Arts – Steps to Meaningful Participation*, Briefing 104, 2007, Voluntary Arts Network

*Sharing the Experience: How to Set up and Run Arts Projects Linking Younger and Older People*, Susan Langford and Sue Mayo, Magic Me

## A selection of DVDs of work

*Alice, Hotpots, Spare Tyre Theatre Company*

*The Big Chair Dance, Capital Age Festival*

*Celebrating Creativity in Older Age, Gwanwyn*

*Falling About and Moving About, Green Candle Dance Company*

*In My Father's Footsteps, Age Exchange*

*'Listen to What I'm Saying' Person Centred Care and the Single Assessment Process, Age Exchange*

*The Long and the Short of It, Age Exchange*

## Training courses and professional development

Age Exchange Reminiscence Training. Training from 1 – 5 day courses. Designed for: health and social care staff; community arts workers; teachers; librarians and museum workers. Can be on-site or at the Age Exchange Centre.

The Creativity in Social Care course run by Art Shape in Gloucestershire. The course is designed for staff working with older people in social care settings. It provides an OCN qualification at level 2 or 3. Its accreditation units cover five areas; confidence in your own creativity; creative work in the workplace; observation, listening and recording; creative work in groups and session planning and leadership skills.

The Creative Carers training programme. This is run by Suffolk Artlink for carers of older people in residential homes and day centres.

The Foundation for Community Dance as part of its newly launched National College for Community Dance, is developing accredited professional standards for work in community settings including specialist training for work in 'age inclusive' dance.



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