



OPEN AGE

Members' Newsletter

Second Half Centre • New Horizons • Avenues • St Margaret's
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New roles for two

After almost seven years in the post, Open Age's esteemed Chief Executive Officer Iain Cassidy left our charity at the end of September to take up a new job—CEO of the University of the Third Age.



Iain Cassidy

The u3a movement, for anyone unfamiliar, aims to encourage groups of people no longer in full-time work to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning subjects of interest to them. It has no minimum age and no exams, but covers a wide range of topics and activities chosen by members.

His Open Age replacement is being sought and should be appointed early in the new year, following interviews with applicants. Thanks and good wishes were extended to Iain by those who attended the Open Age AGM held in person at The Avenues on 20th September—see page 2 for details.

In the interim months, an acting CEO has been appointed in the form of Deryn Bath, currently Head of Physical Activities for Open Age since 2019.

She started working for the charity in October 2012 to develop and implement Steady and Stable mobility classes in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, and within a couple of years expanded these to Hammersmith & Fulham, and took on a managerial role.

Born in South Africa, Deryn graduated with a PE degree and then studied Biokinetics, which involves the rehabilitation of those with musculoskeletal injuries

and the management of chronic, neurological, and respiratory conditions.



Deryn Bath

She worked as a Biokineticist in South Africa for over two years, initially in a retirement village and then a sports centre. On moving to the UK, she worked in Occupational Health, rehabilitating musculoskeletal conditions to help staff stay at work and perform their job roles, before joining Open Age.

Of her interim role, Deryn says: "My main purpose is to steer the organisation through this time of change, ensuring

that we keep delivering our services to a high standard, whilst keeping our members healthy, happy and having fun."

In her absence from her previous role, two staff members from the Physical Activity team will be stepping up to cover her work.

Lauren Earle will act as Clinical Exercise Manager, looking after Steady and Stable, Osteo Blast and Healthy Lungs, while Armand Botha will be General Physical Activity Manager to oversee such classes as Chair Exercise, Pilates, Yoga and Dance.

**Mayor
bakes
cakes**



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AGM brought forward

Nearly 40 people attended the latest Open Age AGM in person at The Avenues on September 20th to hear reports and watch a slide-show review of the year—and for some it was the second time in less than a year that they had taken part.

Normally the AGM happens in January—in fact the last one took place on Zoom on January 16th 2024, covering the year 2022-2023—but its successor was brought forward to the current year and not just to avoid delay.

It was mainly down to the weather, because chilly January is often a deterrent, whereas summertime is much more likely to attract members in person.

It also allowed CEO Iain Cassidy to say his farewells before leaving Open Age at the end of September (see page 1). He told his audience he had stayed in the post longer than any other job because he loved interacting with the members.

In a letter, he had told everyone: “I cannot express how much I have enjoyed my time at Open Age. Our members are what makes Open Age so special, and I would like to thank you all for your support during my time at the helm.”

One of the slide-show pie charts showed that the biggest percentage of members fall into the age group 70-79 years, and the next largest group was aged between 80 and 89 years, showing that older people were healthier, happier and having fun for longer.

Although its income of more than £2.5 million including donations and legacies totalling over £550,000, Open Age was showing a slight deficit. This did not cause concern, but demonstrated that seeking new sources of income was vital.

Asked whether the charity was considering increasing its fees for activities, Iain said that they had not changed for the last ten years. When a selection of members was consulted, some were in favour of an increase, and some were concerned that people might struggle to pay.

He added: “It’s a live conversation, and it will be up to my successor and the board of trustees to decide next year.”

For more about the AGM, see the annual report on the [Open Age website](#).

Cards, cakes and poems

The annual Silver Sunday national day for older people took place on October 6th this year, but there were lots of Open Age events in the weeks before and after to interest local residents.

One was an intriguingly named Teabag Origami Cardmaking workshop at the Second Half Centre on Friday October 11th—see story below.

At St Margaret’s (see page 2 picture), a group tried their hand at Make and Bake: Cupcake Decorating with Senior Centre Coordinator Hannah Munns (Tuesday October 8th), and no less a person than the Lord Mayor of Westminster Robert Rigby came to help.

Hannah said Councillor Rigby’s visit was not arranged by Open Age. She explained: “His office would have picked it out of a few options to visit for

the Silver Sunday celebrations. He was a really nice gentleman, and he got fully stuck in all afternoon!”

At The Avenues (see page 2), special activities included another cardmaking session and a Dance-a-thon, where members could take part in various styles of dancing.

At New Horizons, a Haiku session attracted a group of poetry lovers who wanted to try writing one of these mini Japanese poems with a special structure. They were guided through the difficult process by Creative Writing tutor Tracey Hammet, who asked them to focus on the theme of nature.

Once composition was complete, members were able to write up their finished poems neatly on to handmade decorative paper to take home.

Teabag origami cardmaking

Origami, the Japanese art of paper folding, uses small light squares of paper including tissue paper. It is thought to have originated in China and been brought to Japan by monks in the 6th century.

Teabag folding is similar because it uses teabag paper. In Europe, tea bag wrappers are often colourful and have decorative designs. These wrappers can be cut to size and used to make beautiful medallions.

Nearly a dozen members of Open Age gathered at the Second Half Centre for an afternoon workshop in cardmaking.



Tina John, who attended the workshop on Friday 11th October, said: “We folded paper into patterns as part of the Silver Sunday programme and turned them into greetings cards for birthdays and Christmas.

“It is also a way of exercising one’s fingers and brain, because one has to remember different types of folds in order to complete the project. Those who attended the workshop really enjoyed it and went home with beautiful cards, helped by our instructor Lucy Woo.”

It is no surprise that Tina enrolled for this workshop, as she must be one of the most active and creative

members of Open Age, attending classes every day of the week except Tuesday. She first joined New Horizons in November 2009.

Her classes are:

- Monday mornings: Advanced Jewellery Making class, which she herself runs at New Horizons
- Monday afternoons: Crochet class at Second Half Centre
- Wednesday mornings: Painting & Drawing at Second Half Centre
- Wednesday lunchtimes: Newsletter Group at New Horizons
- Thursday mornings: Mosaic class at Second Half Centre
- Thursday afternoons: Art class at St Margaret’s
- Friday mornings: Crochet class at New Horizons on Friday morning
- Friday afternoons: Games at St Margaret’s

Tina, who was born in Dominica in the Caribbean, goes to church every day of the year except for two days, and is a eucharistic minister and a minister of the word.

As this newsletter went to press, a fortnightly glass painting class using nail varnish was being planned at New Horizons on Fridays, so if Tina can manage her time, she will join that too!



Walking for health—the OA Mile



Last year he was a pantomime dame. This year Iain Cassidy ran the mile as Wonder Woman, complete with red and blue costume, red boots and star-studded headdress, and raised £250 through the Just Giving website.

And the Open Age mile on August 31st was virtually the last public appearance of the charity's CEO, because at the end of September, Iain left his post to take up a new job as CEO of the University of the Third Age (u3a). Before that he attended the Open Age AGM (see page 2).

Jane Chanakira, who is Project Co-ordinator for the Time For Me carers' project, but has been helping with this year's Open Age Mile, writes:

The **Open Age Mile** is our yearly event to promote health and community through fundraising, to continue to enrich the lives of older people. This year's 2024 event was held at Holland Park, within the Sports Field (three laps equated a mile).

Members were encouraged to invite family and friends to make

it a bigger event than before and to continue the intergenerational link established last year. The idea was to promote the walk for all to take part in and enjoy a relaxed social atmosphere through games and activities.

Members were invited to practise earlier with the Physical Activity team leaders to prepare for the Mile. Two sessions were held prior to the event, designed to give them an idea of what to expect and get them accustomed to the grounds.

A total of 33 people took part in the walk and nearly £2,200 was raised through sponsorships, donations and a bake sale.

Open Age's presence at the Sports Field attracted passers-by who were keen to know more about the event and the organisation. An older couple said it was a shame that it was not advertised locally, as they would have loved to take part. Both were given Open Age membership forms.

Another pair, perhaps in their early 30s (*en route* to a fitness class) also approached staff

members and expressed their approval and admiration.

A third couple, on their way to the outdoor gym apparatus, asked for more information about the event and Open Age, later revealing that they live in New York and would love to replicate a service that offers wellbeing activities for their older population.

One stroke survivor (see page 5) walked unaided outdoors for the first time in five years.

A 90-year-old signed up as an opportunity to do more walking—which he loves but is not able to do on his own. The Mile offered the security of knowing that if anything did happen to him, he would get immediate support and care from staff and members around him.

One lady who could not walk herself but came to cheer on the participants said she found joy and inspiration in watching the event, meeting new people and hearing their stories.

Event photos can be accessed on the [Open Age website](#) under 'News & Member Blog'.

Life after stroke

In late December 2022, my husband, Robert, aged 82, suffered a massive stroke whilst we were travelling in France. We had just arrived at the house of French friends. Fortunately, they knew that to call an ambulance would take too long to respond, so they called the fire brigade, who are also medical first responders in France.

He was rushed to a community (equals NHS) hospital in Aix en Provence, where he was immediately admitted to the critical care unit to be treated. However, by then he had already suffered a complete paralysis of the right hand side of his body and could not walk, talk, swallow or eat, so the fight back to as normal life as possible began.

Following a 41-night stay in the French hospital (where, compared to a UK NHS hospital, the treatment was very minimal because he was not given daily rehab treatments as required after a stroke), on 8th February 2023 we travelled back to the UK on an 18-hour ambulance journey to the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. From then on, he received the excellent treatment that was essential to his recovery.

In December 2023, following five months in hospital and another five months in a nursing home, he was allowed back home. Since then, he has been taken for a walk every day by a community carer, has taught himself to become as self-sufficient as possible with bathing and dressing, and has even learned to use his right arm to do some ironing. He also manages to cook simple meals.

This progress has been down to the dedicated rehab teams in the UK hospitals and his determination. He is now attending at least 4 classes a week for improving his strength and balance—one is the Steady and Stable class at New Horizons, which he has found to be really beneficial.

As a way of helping to increase his confidence further, I registered him to join the Open Age Mile Walk, on condition that he did so without using any walking frames, crutches or sticks for the first time. Amazingly, he completed the walk, and apart from the experience which definitely helped him realise he could take on other challenges in the future, he raised a large sum of money for Open Age through donations from friends and relatives.

But hopefully and very importantly, it has proved that there can be 'Life after Stroke' and that he will have inspired other people with incapacitating disabilities to take up the challenge, because it is possible.

Sheila Newsum



BE FAST

Do you remember this reminder of stroke signs (sometimes shown on TV)?

B—Balance

Is the person suddenly having trouble with balance or coordination?

E—Eyes

Is the person experiencing problems with vision?

F—Face Drooping

Is one side of the face drooping or numb? Ask the person to smile.

A—Arm Weakness

Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S—Speech Difficulty

Is speech slurred, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence like, "The sky is blue."

T—Time to call 911

If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get them to the hospital immediately.

My art adventure

My journey as an artist began midway through the pandemic when I lost my job; I worked in travel and, of course, everything had come to a complete stop. To help fill the empty days, I joined my husband in some of his Open Age fitness classes on Zoom and found myself enjoying Ballet Fit and Soca.

Trying to do the 1970s Disco Fever class in our tiny front room without crashing into the fireplace, the settee or each other was challenging (and caused much laughter on and off the tiny Zoom screen).

Then, on a whim, I signed up for a Beginners' Drawing course. I was lucky that by the time I lost my job, Open Age had adapted their tuition for members to access a wide variety of classes online, and I soon regained a structure for my days.

Although my degree in Renaissance History had included some art history, I had never done art classes at school. My career was in advertising, then as a specialist tour operator working with obscure South American destinations, and finally with Orient-Express, that oh-so-glamorous train. My tentative steps as I picked up a pencil and paper for the first time felt exciting, with the glimpse of a whole new adventure ahead.

I did another Zoom course with Clare, Open Age's ever-resourceful art teacher, this time on Sketching in Sculpture Parks where we travelled virtually and sketched all around the world—it was brilliant.

Once the various lockdowns were lifted, I was able to join Clare at New Horizons, where I enrolled for watercolour painting—that was so exciting! The Avenues offered sketching classes in different museums and galleries each week, a new (very sociable) activity I loved. London was again my oyster and I was hooked on creating art myself.

Meanwhile, I had learnt to build my own website (on Zoom during lockdown, with Open Age) using photos of my fledgling art. My contents list grew as I incorporated work from Sewing and Mosaics classes into the site.

When I realised I would not be looking for another job (having now reached a certain age), I joined a Community Art class, run by Grand Junction and Westminster Adult Education Services (WAES).



The tutor there suggested I enrol on a more structured art foundation course such as a Level 2 UAL Diploma in Fine Art, so I eagerly signed up with WAES.

It was an intensive year of study and practice and I loved every minute, learning and producing so much (luckily Neil is very supportive of this new obsession). I am delighted and extremely proud to say I passed with Distinction! One course project was how to mount a solo exhibition—a fictitious event but fascinating to follow the process.

I enthusiastically visit galleries at every opportunity to sketch and improve my work. I don't have much talent, but I could see improvement! I am very happy to have found a challenging passion at this stage of my life and am so grateful for the opportunities with Open Age that came out of a dark and tricky period for us all.

I feel blessed to live in West London with access to all that Open Age has to offer—it is such a marvellous organization. Thank you, Open Age, for sending me on my art adventure!

Jill Forgham

Jill's first exhibition

Jill Forgham's art suddenly became a talking point in June when a local café close to The Avenues hub—named W10 Coffee & Deli, Harrow Road—asked her to put together a little exhibition to attract more customers.

Mounting the summer show was a challenge, as the café owner did not want nails in the walls. But Jill successfully curated it with a talented friend from the WAES course, Anne Bouvier, who has now joined Open Age and enrolled in Clare's ACL Watercolours class at New Horizons.

Other Open Agers added contributions, including Marcy, Belen, Elsy, Meng and Flo. Visitors included staff members Tina Lavenu and Marinne Laurent, Danielle Capretti the Disco Diva ACL tutor from the Second Half Centre, and various Open Age chums.

Says Jill: "I sold two artworks!! One was my collage of the sculpture *Draped Seated Woman* (done for my dissertation at WAES and featured in the photo of Neil) and the other was a pen and ink picture of Amsterdam (done in Clare's class).



Jill's collaborator, Anne Bouvier, with trolley display

"The show certainly drew additional footfall into the café over the six weeks, and introduced it as a lovely canalside place to visit to people who would never previously have considered popping in."

Anne is bravely continuing at WAES and has just started Level 3, but Jill feels she needs to take a

break, explaining: "I found it very hard work and time-consuming, and I need to pay attention to my long-suffering husband and elderly parents. So I am delighted to be back doing the Open Age classes this year, where there is no pressure to perform."



The Amsterdam picture, held by visitor Vicky Sanders



Jill's husband Neil Forgham, with collage



Jill has now sold a third picture—Sunflowers, using real petals



Meng Lim and tutor Danielle enjoy a coffee

Declutter your home



Do you have cupboards and drawers full of things you will never use again?

Keeping up with the latest electronics, gadgets, and even clothes and food, can result in 'clutter' from unused and outdated possessions.

How many times have you opened a drawer or a cupboard in your home to find something you need, but are attacked by so many other things that you do not need?

Many of us are so terrified of throwing out a cable or plug that we even transport this tangled mess when we move home. But there are ways to consolidate.

1. Cables, Plugs, Fuses and Batteries

Sort through these items by type. Keep two or three of each. Neatly coil the cables and secure them with cable ties or rubber bands, store them in plastic takeaway containers or Ziploc plastic bags. When each type is identified, label them immediately. There will always be two or three that are unidentifiable—dispose of them.

2. Gadgets and Devices

Gadgets often come in large boxes, so if you are short of space, store the gadgets in plastic takeaway containers or Ziploc plastic bags.

Photograph the boxes before throwing them away, including any important codes. Store these, together with instructions, alongside the gadgets. Discard any gadget that you have not used in the past six months. Before discarding, back up any important data. If applicable, factory reset devices and remove them from any associated apps. Organise your stored gadgets and devices by category, on labelled cupboard shelves or drawers.

Periodically search kitchen cupboards, office drawers, bedside tables and shelves to free up space and make it easier to access frequently used items. Remember, gadgets and devices depreciate over time and need replacing.

3. Clothes & Shoes

Open your wardrobes and chests of drawers and remove anything that you have not worn for over a year, or anything out of fashion. These can all be given to charity or taken to shops that have a collection bin for used clothes.

Whilst sorting through these areas, check for any moth infestation, particularly in clothes that are rarely used. Dispose of these immediately.

Check all shoes you have in store and if you have several pairs of a similar type, decide which pairs you could dispose of and donate to charity. Also check for shoes that might need repairing, and give these to charity, because shoe repairs often cost at least the price of a new pair.

4. Food and Frozen Foods

Check all food cupboards for out-of-date items and dispose of them. Sort dry food cupboards and store in areas for similar types of food. For example, put flour, bicarbonate of soda, cake mixes, yeast granules, cornflour, bread mixes, gelatine, raisins, currants and sultanas all on the same shelf.

Likewise, put gravy mixes, meat gravy cubes, packets of soup, sauce mixes, packets of stuffing, and bread sauce mixes together separately on a shelf. Put all tinned foods on the same shelf, with longest sell-by dates at the back.

Check through your freezer to see how long items can be kept frozen for. Anything in a freezer for over three months should be thrown away.

5. Cookware

Throw away metal saucepans, baking trays and tins that are rusty or with worn non-stick surfaces.

6. Makeup

Dispose of lipsticks, mascara wands, eye liners that are worn down or have thickened up. Check that they cannot be replaced with refills.

Sheila Newsum

Wildlife around the world

Members at the Second Half Centre were in for a treat on 3rd September when keen wildlife photographer lanthe Weerasooriya gave a presentation about her nature photography and videos from around the world.



lanthe with her display of work

Calling the event *What Dreams Are Made Of*, lanthe spoke about her childhood growing up in a tea plantation in Sri Lanka, going to boarding school at the age of four, and looking forward to end-of-term holidays when her passion for visiting wildlife parks began.



Tribal women in Ethiopia

Over the years she has travelled extensively, especially in Africa, visiting Zambia, Namibia, Ethiopia, Chad, The Congo and Zimbabwe to name just a few, with further trips to South America. She worked on many interesting hands-on voluntary projects



Mother leopard grooming her cub

involving wildlife and community, gaining glimpses of indigenous people of the forest, with music.

After the Open Age event, self-taught snapper lanthe was off again to Argentina, continuing through Brazil, where she hoped to visit the Pantanal wetland and grasslands region, study the world's largest waterways, and photograph jaguars, capybara, giant otters and giant anteaters, plus ocelots and more.

"I enjoyed sharing my experiences, and the comments I received after the show from the attendees were positive and very encouraging," she says. "Our senior coordinator Andrea Carrington called it 'amazing' and took many photos of the display. The comments made me so happy."

Public interest in her hobby started when she was working at the RBKC Town Hall, and her workmates asked her to do a presentation of her travels.

"The guy who helped me said I had the best camera—my eye! Recently when I went over the presentation, it brought me lot of joy, so I decided to share it to make others happy."

lanthe, who is of Sri Lankan and Scottish descent, finds her photographic interests have also given her comfort in adversity. She says: "I lost my husband unexpectedly, and not having any kids or relatives in the UK, I went through trauma. Running away to faraway places was an escape.

"It makes me very sad that my husband did not achieve all that he wanted to in his life. I don't have much or need much, but I do love the sounds, the smells and the sights of the bush, so I travel to fulfil my dreams."

Beat the doorstep caller scam



THE SCAM—an official-looking person with a uniform and ID badge turns up on your doorstep. They might say they are there to read the gas meter, conduct a survey for the local council, are from your housing association, or work for the water board.

THE REALITY—their ID could be fake. They want to get into your home or trick you into divulging personal information that can be used for ID fraud.

The Met Police explains how to protect yourself:

- Be on your guard: always be suspicious of anyone turning up at the door uninvited—regardless of their story.
- Keep your home secure: don't let any stranger into your home. Keep doors locked with the chain on.
- Look for ID: ask to see callers' ID cards and call the company to see if they are genuine. To be safe, look up the company number yourself, rather than trust the number on their ID card.
- If you feel uncomfortable or have any doubts, don't let them in. It's your home. Tell them you're not interested, or that now is "not convenient" and ask them to come back at a different time (when you can have a friend or relative with you).
- Nominate a neighbour: if you have a relative or friend who lives close by, ask if they'd mind being on standby in case you get any suspicious callers. Before letting a stranger into your house, give your neighbour a call and ask them to pop round.
- Consider smart security devices: smart doorbells incorporate a camera and can enable you to speak to a caller without opening the door; some can also send a message to a relative notifying them that you have a visitor.
- Take a photo: if you're suspicious, ask the caller if you can take their photo on your mobile phone. Then send it to a close friend or relative. If the caller is genuine, they probably won't mind.
- Call the police: if a caller is really persistent and refuses to leave.

SPOT THE MESSAGE SCAM

Here are some quick checks if you've received a message that looks a bit dodgy:

Emails

1. Click on the actual email address it comes from. If it contains a spelling error or contains a random assortment of letters and numbers, it's scam.
2. Is there a mix of US and UK English? Does it use different font styles or even random sizes?
3. Are the dates and logos correct?
4. Does it ask for personal details?
5. Does it say the matter is urgent, or the account is about to be closed?

Phone calls

1. Is the call unexpected?
2. Is the caller evasive?

3. Are they threatening you with legal action or penalties?
4. Are they asking for sensitive details?
5. If you suspect bank fraud, dial 159.
6. But wait 20 minutes for the line to clear before complaining. If you don't, the scammer may still be on the line and pretend to be the bank.

Text calls

1. Is the text irrelevant—e.g. claiming you have won a competition you did not enter?
2. Never click on a link—it might be fake.
3. Link-shorteners such as Bitly are often giveaways. Avoid text messages that come from an unrecognised number.
4. Is it a different style to previous messages?

Guadix memories

Open Age member Sue Kaidi, who wrote the poem on this page, spent a wonderful summer 2024 touring Morocco, the country of her husband and his family. They then returned to Tangier for the annual Tanjazz Festival.

Later in September, the family began travelling back to Britain through Spain, and one of the high spots was staying in an incredible cave house in Guadix, a historic city near Granada with a magnificent cathedral.

Sharing photos of her journey on Facebook, Sue wrote:

"This breathtaking city located on the northern slopes of the Sierra Nevada in Andalusia, is one of the oldest inhabited regions in Spain. Humans have lived in caves here since Neolithic times, and the city has a cave dwelling area unique in all of Europe.

"We have been living inside a beautiful cave house at the highest point of the city. From here the views are almost other worldly. Across the horizon, we can see cave dwellings with their white chimney structures ventilating the homes.

"From prehistoric history to ancient history, the Phoenicians first settled here and then the Carthaginians. It was later an important Roman colony, called Julia Gemella Acci—then later the Moors that occupied this region of Spain for 800 years built the Citadel and Kasbah which still stands today.

"Guadix is believed to be one of the oldest diocesan seats in Spain and tradition has it that the diocese was founded by Saint Torquatus of Acci in the first century A.D.



Guadix Cathedral

"The cathedral sits on the site of an earlier Visigothic church built in the 10th century, which was then changed to a grand Mosque during the Islamic period.

"As is customary with Spanish Catholic tradition, it is very ornate with exquisite wooden carvings, gilded icons, and paintings dating back to the Renaissance period.

"I was surprised and slightly shocked to see a large painting from the 1600s of Jesus wearing

a skirt! We learned, however, that this style of art became very fashionable during the 1600s in Italy, and several artists from this region travelled to Italy, learning this style from the Renaissance masters."

Tales of Tangier

Sitting on my terrace top,
My eyes gaze across the sea.
The deep turquoise hue, with
no cloud in the sky,
Brings me joy and sets my soul
free.

To my left is Tangier, within its
old city walls,
Steeped in history of bygone
years -
The old whitewashed town,
whose citadel stands strong,
Filled with traders selling their
wares.

The kasbah's been standing for
900 years
And is one of UNESCO's world
sites.
The city has depth and a unique
worldly charm,
Like the tales of Arabian nights.

Writers and poets and artists
galore
Have all been drawn to Tangier.
Hemingway, Burroughs, Matisse
and Dior
Have all made their homes over
here.

The El Minzah hotel was a
favourite for
Winston Churchill and Roosevelt
too.
Politicians and spies, world
leaders and rogues
Have all had a room with a view.
But for now, as I gaze across to
the right,
The coastline of Spain is so clear
just 12 miles away, Europe's
southerly point,
Is but 35 minutes from here.

Sue Kaidi



Rooftop view from a cave dwelling

Gift of thousands

Open Age was delighted to receive a very large cheque in the summer, following the sale of art works from the annual exhibition at the Second Half Centre organised by the Centre's founder and former manager.

The cheque for £84,538 was presented on 10th July by Lady Jill Shaw Ruddock CBE. Lady Ruddock set up the Foundation to establish the Second Half Centre more than ten years ago and ran it for 18 months, before gifting it to Open Age to run.

Roughly every year since then, Jill has organised and run the Second Half Exhibition, which this year was held in March (see story in the May 2024 Members' Newsletter). Ten distinguished artists, all aged over 50 years, exhibited a great array of art works, including ceramics, sculpture, glasswork and photography, many priced at thousands of pounds.

If anything is sold, the artist gets half the price, then the other half goes to Jill's Foundation. The Foundation in turn donates its share to Open Age.

Tina John



Jill Ruddock and former CEO Iain Cassidy hold the cheque. In the middle back is Tina John. At the right is Head of Member Experience Tina Lavenu.

Canine question

Where in Britain can you find a Grade II listed dog kennel? The answer is Ightham Mote, near Sevenoaks, Kent, which former RBKC resident Yonita Macgregor once visited and thoroughly recommends for a magical day trip.



The stunning National Trust property is a medieval moated manor house surrounded by beautiful gardens, lakes and woodland walks. Yonita says: "Like all these places, once is not enough. Listening to the guide is one thing, then one needs to do it oneself slowly."

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