



OPEN AGE

Members' Newsletter

New Horizons • Second Half Centre • The Avenues • and more

December 2021 • Issue No. 37

WOO HOO! WE'RE BACK!

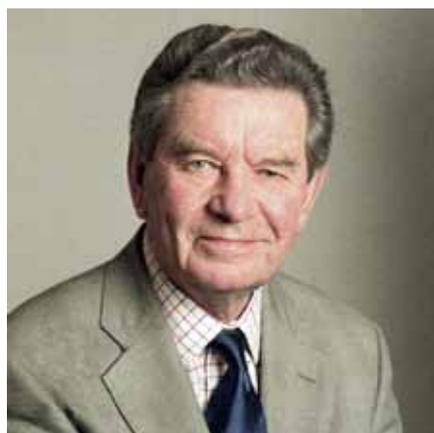
Life began to normalise in September, with an interesting local development. No, not the return of the Chelsea Flower Show after 14 months' absence—but the reopening of live classes at all Open Age centres.

Many members could not wait to rush back to their old activities, or discover some new ones, while others remained cautious and preferred to stick with Zoom classes.

Walks, films, dancing, art, IT—it was all happening, except for the lack of full café refreshments. Masks and hand-washing were still necessary, but most of us did not mind because we were so delighted to meet old friends.

Some tutors have not returned, due to finding new jobs, other commitments or retirement. One of them is John Edmunds, our stalwart leader of the Friday Shakespeare Group at New Horizons, who at the age of 92 decided that the long journey from the south coast plus continuing COVID issues were not worth the risk.

During his 12 years working for Open Age, including the Positive Age centre in North Kensington run by Elizabeth Martin, John's class has had several important names passing through, including the actress Gayle Hunnicutt and the late BBC TV newsreader Richard Baker, an old friend.



Richard Baker

Another retiree is Paul Cordsen, 87, who taught art for many years at the Samuel Lewis Art Group at Ixworth Place, Chelsea.

The guitar class has ended because tutor Alistair Mackenzie moved from London to Brighton, but the singing group, once called The Chelsea Belles, which he

also ran has returned with a new tutor—Josh Millais. Watch this space!



Alistair Mackenzie

In The News current affairs group has resumed at New Horizons under its new leader David Devore, who kept discussions going on Zoom all through the pandemic.

At the Second Half Centre, many classes have resumed but not the Buspass to Broadway group of dancers. We hope to see them back in the New Year.

At The Avenues, senior co-ordinator Geoff Brown relaunched the programme of films and talks by visiting speakers. Films are also shown at St Margaret's—see page 2.

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Down The Avenues with Geoff



The Avenues is not the only centre that shows films. Tuesday Morning Movies—or TV programmes—are also available at St Margaret's in Vauxhall Bridge Road, courtesy of coordinator Hannah Munns.

Says Hannah: "I let members pick what they fancy watching. On 30th November we watched *Homes Under the Hammer*, the week before it was the film *The Greatest Showman*, and before that they chose *Place in the Sun*."

As soon as New Avenues in Westminster reopened in September, senior centre co-ordinator Geoff Brown lost no time in relaunching the popular film club on Monday afternoons, beginning with the hilarious *Kinky Boots* on 27th September.

He has also reintroduced monthly talks by a visiting speaker. The first one was a local beekeeper, who brought along a hive—but luckily no bees!

Films are posted on a noticeboard, and cover a range of themes, with a charge of £1.50. October's titles included *Military Wives* (2020) and *Oranges and Sunshine* (2019), followed in November by *The Hundred Foot Journey*, *The Good Liar*, *Dream Horse*, *23 Walks* and *Wild Oats*.

December choices are *The Last Bus* (6th) starring Timothy Spall as a bereaved pensioner travelling from John O'Groats to Land's End by bus, and *Last Holiday* (13th), about a terminally ill woman who sets out to travel round Europe.

Speakers vary—they have included an art workshop presentation by the Royal Institute of British Architecture, and on 24th November a sing-along with a speaker who also runs a musical trio. Talks are followed by a social event with optional buffet lunch for £1 contribution.

"We ask members to book in advance for these, so we have an idea of numbers," says Geoff, who is based at The Avenues Monday-Thursday and New Horizons on Fridays.

"My job has been an amazing journey of day-to-day relationships with extraordinary people, and fabulous partnerships with organisations such as the National Theatre, but ultimately it's seeing others together enjoying life and learning something new that's a bonus."

Originally from Hertfordshire, Geoff's forte was performing arts and he later did a degree in Theatre Acting, getting involved in touring theatre and travelling pantos, before changing tack and studying psychology.

He joined Open Age as a Hub Facilitator in 2016 helping in social groups and community venues around Westminster, before being appointed to his present role in 2018.

During lockdown he coordinated Zoom classes from Spanish to cookery to online talks from museums, galleries, and health and social care providers. He also phoned members and coordinated phone groups.

"I tried to be as creative as possible in my own time, making short films and even writing the very first (I think) Open Age online panto—*Cinderella*," recalls Geoff. "We had some amazing performances from Open Age volunteers and staff, and performed live online on 18th December, the last day of term, to over 60 members."

"We literally only rehearsed three times over Zoom, but it was fun and all the staff and volunteers who took part to help were brill. I wrote it (and pinched gags off the internet!)"

If you haven't checked out The Avenues yet, it's just off the Harrow Road in Third Avenue and staff and members will give you a warm welcome.

Walking back to happiness

Open Age launched its first ever programme of regular walks in and around London this autumn for members with the energy and enthusiasm to exercise on foot.

Thanks to TFL funding aimed at getting older people more active, a range of outings to appeal to different interests and levels of expertise was offered in September and October, even spilling into November.

They included a meditation (mindfulness) stroll round Holland Park, a social saunter and quiz in the café at Regent's Park, an art amble through Ravenscourt Park for those keen on drawing and sketching, and a history exploration of famous buildings starting in Trafalgar Square.

The latter, which took in Nelson's Column, Pall Mall clubs, St James's Palace and even a live parade of guardsmen, was led by experienced Westminster Guide Fazilet Therani.

An extra history walk called *Plots and Politics around Westminster* was added on 5th November to mark the story of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot.



Armand Botha

For those keen to tackle a five-miler, there were two Capital Ring hikes around London—one from Osterley Lock to Greenford, and the second from Hackney Wick to Beckton.

All walks started at 10 a.m. every Wednesday, but for those looking for exercise rather than mileage, there were twice weekly Nordic Walking lunchtime events on Mondays and Fridays from the Second Half Centre and The

Avenues. These involve using two poles to provide cardiovascular exercise combined with a full body muscle workout.

Nordic Walks were led by a specialist instructor, while others were led or organised by Open Age's Physical Activities Co-ordinator and former fitness tutor Armand Botha, assistant to acting head of physical activities Jade Dalton at the Second Half Centre.

"Nordic Walking was really popular—we can take up to ten people and sometimes there was a waiting list," said Armand, who studied psychotherapy in Holland for five years and is also a Pilates teacher trained in South Africa and UK.

"We had 49 walkers participating finally, and the theme walks have attracted anything from three to 20 people, but we expect more when we restart the programme next April. We also plan to include cycling, and we would like members to volunteer if they can lead a walk."

To contact Armand, phone 07799 369733 or speak to the Second Half Centre.



Trafalgar Square area walk

Celebrating Silver Sunday

Silver Sunday was the National Day for older people to combat isolation and loneliness, with fun and free activities on Sunday 3rd October and all through the week of 1st to 8th October. It was an ideal opportunity to visit new places, meet new people and try new things.

A number of organisations and community groups hosted special events, from Science Museum activities to a music quiz, tea parties to concerts, and talks to walks, while Open Age had its own programme

online and in person. The Phone Club enabled housebound residents to join in from the comfort of their own homes.

A storytelling workshop at the Design Museum called The Wisdom Hour was held exclusively for Open Age members on Saturday 2nd October. Other attractions included a community gardens tour, walking football, and two Dance-a-thons at The Avenues and the Chelsea Theatre, plus various dance and fitness tasters.

Hampton Court tour

On Silver Sunday I went with a friend to Hampton Court as part of a guided tour for the disabled. I was last there as a child many years ago and have no memories of it at all, so I was reminded of it when I saw many young children being shepherded around by their parents. I was with a friend who could not walk very well.

It is definitely a place to visit again, since it is so big that one cannot take it all in. First, since there was no rain, we visited the gardens. They are magnificent and range from herbaceous bordered ones, to formal ones, to a greenhouse especially created for the Great Vine, which is meant to be the largest ever preserved.



White paper people

The Henry VIII rooms were well kept and I found it hard to visualise the number of people who would have been waiting to have an audience with him. One of the rooms had statues of people dressed very originally in an interesting white fabric. To my surprise, it was white paper. Their clothes were so much more voluminous than ours, so fewer people would have been in the room than one would have thought possible nowadays.



Yonita meets a wall repairer

The Queen's area was mentioned, but there was little about Henry VIII himself—more being written about William and Mary in another section of the castle. The chapel was particularly impressive and we were present for part of the service, half chanted almost as if in Catholic Latin—perhaps a reference to the fact that it was Henry who changed the services into English.

Yonita Fairfax

Let Julie translate you...

London-based artist and Open Age member Julie Bloom has a studio in Marylebone showing her current collection of mixed media artworks—a melange of abstract pop, contemporary fine art paintings and drawings, plus etchings.



Julie Bloom

Born in Nairobi and raised between Africa, Hong Kong, Germany and the UK, Julie spent much of her time before the COVID pandemic travelling the world, exploring cities and architecture and their relationship to the power and form of nature. As the daughter of an architect, architecture plays a large role in her works, but she has also worked in community settings and for charities.

Following the lockdown, she dreamt up the idea of TRANSLATIONS—a way of translating people's emotions and experiences into art via a ten-minute phone call. As they spoke, she translated what she heard direct to paper, creating an abstract piece in pen, watercolour or acrylic that was unique and personal.

"I wanted to be of service somehow, as well as keep up my artistic practice. I photographed the piece immediately and sent it to them whilst we were still

on the call, in order that I could explain the drawing I'd done for them," says Julie.

"I wish to do 'Translations' for as wide a range of people and cultures as will trust me to translate their lives in this way. Now out of lockdown, I am able to take the Translations in person. People find it very therapeutic. They feel they are being heard, and their feedback brings a lot of joy."

On 6th October, Julie was invited to offer her services free as part of the Silver Sunday week at New Horizons in Chelsea. She created each picture while sitting back to back with the client, and listening to them talk for 15 minutes about their lives, hopes and dreams.

Yours truly was invited, and I talked about my interests, New Horizons, editing the members' newsletter and the jazz and Latin band I manage in West London. The sketch that resulted was a busy potpourri of human activity—as you can see from the image at the top right. The sketches are developed later in more detail and painted—see the three lower images on the right for examples.

With her extensive collection of work, Julie plans to hold a live solo show in Pimlico soon with a chance for visitors to interact and collaborate.

She intends that the original paintings will be shown next year in an exhibition as well as a book, with participants choosing to be as visible or anonymous as they like. She invites them to share their stories or testimonies spoken in their own languages for the video/documentary she is making, and she will also be giving live 'Translations' at events.

Julie is open to live performances and welcomes visitors. A translation can be booked at the studio or via her website: www.juliebloomart.com/translations or email: info@juliebloomart.com She also has work on Instagram: [instagram.com/juliebloomart/](https://www.instagram.com/juliebloomart/)





Drama class tackles Zoom

Group improvisation session

Like many people, I had never heard of Zoom pre-pandemic. So when Open Age invited the tutors' team to put forward proposals for online classes, I first had to set about learning how to use the platform, which I did by taking a few online classes myself to see how it was done and familiarise myself with the technology.

It was a couple of months into lockdown before drama classes went online. And even though Open Age was offering "how to do Zoom" classes to members, there were still problems at first. At times it was like a séance—"Is there anybody there? I can't hear you/can't see you? You've disappeared." All a drama in itself, really!

Because of the limitations of the technology, we did a lot of work on speech and interpretation—from tongue twisters to poems and speeches from the Bard. Once I'd mastered the technique of screen sharing, this proved a real boon, solving the problem we have in live class of never having enough print outs of scenes.

Screen sharing also meant I could share videos and other material, which was relevant to our work. At one point, our tutor was Michael Caine, with his classic masterclass on screen acting!

Our original plan of creating a pantomime for the Christmas party 2020 had, of course, to be ditched but, inspired by the various short films professional actors had created for television under lockdown conditions using Zoom, we created our own "shot on Zoom" film.

While TV actors had the use of professional camera

and sound equipment, with the experts instructing their family members via wireless how to use them, the only shots we had to work with were those on the Zoom screen of our computers and other devices.

Even so, we developed in class a group of characters, who were in situations where they could only communicate with each other via Zoom. Then we wove them into a script in which their stories intertwined, and in the break last summer we shot our own lockdown movie.

The characters were a group of lifelong friends, one of them Asian, using the device that she was trapped by COVID in India on a family visit.

In another scenario featuring a bizarre duo, a man needs to get his ex-wife's lesbian partner out of Russia and has turned for help to Granny Hacker, Queen of the Dark Web! We don't mess about with drawing room comedy in our drama classes!

Only snag is, I am not very good at editing, and a year later I still haven't completed the film. So any offers of editing help would be gratefully received.

Now the autumn term has started, we are "back in the room", though still working under COVID precautionary rules. But with only weeks in the term before Christmas, there is not enough time to prepare that pantomime for the Christmas party—if indeed COVID lets us have a party.

Maybe Christmas 2022?

Carol Allen (tutor)



Lockdown pieces

Claude keeps busy



Claude Thomas

Amal the puppet outside the National Theatre

In his youth Claude Thomas was an entertainer, playing keyboard and organ for dance bands including one called The Outspans. When he came to England from Guyana in the 60s, he continued his interest in music and drama, so for him lockdown hasn't not been as traumatic as it has for some.

He has been an amateur actor at Shepherd's Bush Theatre and done stand-up comedy at Imperial College. As a member of the 'Public Acts' choir, he appeared at the National Theatre on the South Bank in October, along with other choirs, to welcome 'Amal' the giant refugee puppet from Syria and the Turkish border on its journey through Europe.

He first heard about Open Age after getting involved in a drama project at Bromley-by-Bow (he lives in Plaistow), and promptly enrolled in a Qigong class at New Horizons.

A year after lockdown, in March 2021, he wrote a monologue about COVID, and an actor performed it over the phone from the Hornchurch Theatre as part of a Tiny Plays project.

In the monologue, Claude mentions that one of the worst hit areas in Britain is performing arts, as well as pubs, bars, clubs and restaurants, which are struggling or facing bankruptcy.

Now he is back at New Horizons in person on Tuesdays as a member of the Drama Group, and is continuing with a Qigong course online. "I am always optimistic and like to keep busy," says Claude, who worked as an osteopath before he retired.

Rocking around the clock

After months of feeling trapped at home, it was a great sensation on 18th August to attend live theatre with an actual audience—and what could be more fun than a one-hour musical interlude called *Rock Around the Clock*?

The Rah Rah Theatre Company from South London is a charity that specialises in entertaining people in the community or residential care. Having booked the recently rebuilt Chelsea Theatre at World's End in the King's Road for their latest offering, they welcomed Open Age members and other locals to make up the audience for free. Delightful!

Only three cast members played all the parts, but they could sing and act with total professionalism. What's more, they encouraged us all to sing along—and even at the end to join in dancing—as they regaled us with popular songs from the 50s, 60s and even the 70s (*The Sound of Music*, no less).

The show had a typical girl-meets-boy-but-mother-

doesn't-like-him sort of story, but it was all done in the best possible taste—and afterwards the café was open for those who wanted refreshments.

At least half a dozen members, maybe more, from the New Horizons Centre had attended, and most of us sat round a table and enjoyed a good old chinwag over coffee and cupcakes.

It was great to meet Sarah (Dwyer), originally from Birmingham, who when a student went to Camberwell School of Art and Goldsmith's, Ginette, a French Canadian originally from Quebec, and Mary Rose and Elizabeth (Liz), both originally from Dublin.

Let's hope there'll be more of these outings and opportunities to chat to members from many parts of the world—whom one might not normally meet outside of classes!

Kay Shelley
(originally from Manchester!)

From Chelsea to NK

Former Centre Co-ordinator at New Horizons centre Sara Ferreira switched jobs within Open Age in July 2021 and is now the ACL (Adult Community Learning) Administrator at the Second Half Centre, North Kensington.

The job consists of supporting Angela Sharkey (Head of Learning and Community Development) with the courses that Open Age provides. This includes recruiting members to join the courses and liaising with tutors, as well as keeping up with the registers of 40+ courses and inputting that information on the database of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, as they provide the funding for the courses.

Sara also helps out at the centres when needed, such as covering lunch breaks, staff holidays or staff sickness. She is

at New Horizons on Monday and Tuesday and at the Second Half Centre for the rest of the week.



Sara Ferreira

As reported in the last newsletter, Sara was holding the fort alone in Chelsea after the Senior Centre Co-ordinator Paul McGowan left. Now the two jobs

have been combined into a single role—see Fiolla story, page 11.

Says Sara: “I definitely still interact with members now. Having worked at New Horizons as a Co-ordinator means that I know most of the regulars there, and now I am also meeting the regulars at the Second Half Centre.”

Sara’s background is theatre. She has a drama degree and has worked as duty manager, front-of-house manager, usher and head usher at multiple theatres, including the London Coliseum and Soho Theatre.

She adds: “The unsociable hours were becoming a bit too much after four years, and I was looking for a job where I can help make a difference to someone’s life. That is how I came across Open Age via a friend that worked there—and the rest is history!”

Green travel

Trying to book a holiday abroad in these pandemic times is difficult and sometimes impossible. There are problems—are you fit and healthy enough, is it safe, is it expensive, is the destination on a Red or Amber list?

Maybe it’s time to ‘Think U.K!’ and go for a ‘Green Holiday’ spent in ‘...this precious jewel, set in a silver sea’? Bonus: a ‘flight-free’ journey will cut an amazing amount of carbon emission from our environment!

Having been fortunate enough to have lived in many parts of the world, I remain nevertheless, a devotee of the British ‘seaside holiday’—or maybe you would prefer a country break, or time spent in some of our magnificent

hill country or fell terrain.

Consider such very green activities as sailing, walking or cycling—not only as more ‘doing your bit’, but, for the sheer euphoric joy of it!

My editor tells me of an exciting new and even greener holiday idea invented during the lockdown—virtual travel! You don’t actually leave home—you link up online with a website called HEYGO and choose your destination around the world while hardly moving a muscle. And you can do it in any kind of weather!

It’s all done from your computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone. All you have to do is join the website:

www.heygo.com

and joining and travelling is completely FREE. Each tour has a guide who knows a vast amount about the subject.

Not quite the real thing, but a great substitute and lots of fun. Try it.

Margaret Porta





Tribute—Michael Turney

My husband, Michael Turney, died suddenly, aged 75, in April 2021 of a pulmonary embolism. After retirement from his career as a designer, Mike enjoyed many different Open Age activities including French, dance, gym, art, cookery and drama.

In the words of a friend, age was no obstacle and he was always looking for the next challenge. This included Open Age's collaboration with the Coronet Theatre (community company) in *The Outsider* and with the National Theatre's Public Acts project (a cameo role as 'Grandpa Orlando' in *As You Like It*).

Open Age also introduced Mike to the Donmar Local Company and we are honoured that their streamed lockdown production of *Assembly* <bit.ly/3v5rqbY> is dedicated to his memory: You might catch him as the 'Polar Bear Expert'(!) and 'the Stars'. He was always up for some dancing too, as in this #Silver Showbiz video on YouTube <bit.ly/3DtwzNU>

As an ambitious writer, he had completed his first novel with the encouragement of his friends in the North Kensington Library Writers' group.

Mike was passionate about the sea and small boats and loved sailing along the south coast. A true gentleman, Mike was kind, cheerful, outgoing and friendly, a devoted father and grandfather.

We are happy to have raised over £1,500 for Open Age in his memory via www.justgiving.com/fundraising/michaelturney

Thank you, so much, to all the members who contributed and who gave me their support and condolences.

Vicky Sanders

Lena, the IT expert

Smart phones, computers, laptops and tablets... no, not the stuff rattling around in that little brown bottle! I'm talking about... IT!

Yes, all those 'things' that I should 'know about' (but don't) and apparently, everyone else on the planet does... So, the ON button? Don't even think about e-mailing!

This is where Lena comes in! Lena Dekair was born in Khartoum and is one of five siblings. Soon she was whizzed off to school in Abu Dhabi where her father was working as an electrical engineer. Then back to 'sunny Sudan' and to graduate at Khartoum University.

By 1997 Lena is in London and studying at London South Bank University, and in the year 2000 has earned a master's degree in IT.

Soon Lena is 'snapped up' working as a community volunteer and by this time, of course, has not the least hesitation in choosing teaching as her career. It will be IT of course (no surprises there!)

By now Lena is 'set to go' and lands a job teaching IT with Westminster Adult Community Service, but when the hours are cut in 2006 she looks for another job and discovers Open Age.

Here she teaches basic computer skills, smartphone use, confident use of email, and Microsoft Office. The classes are held most weekdays at Second Half Centre, but on Wednesdays Lena teaches IT skills (technical support) at New Horizons.

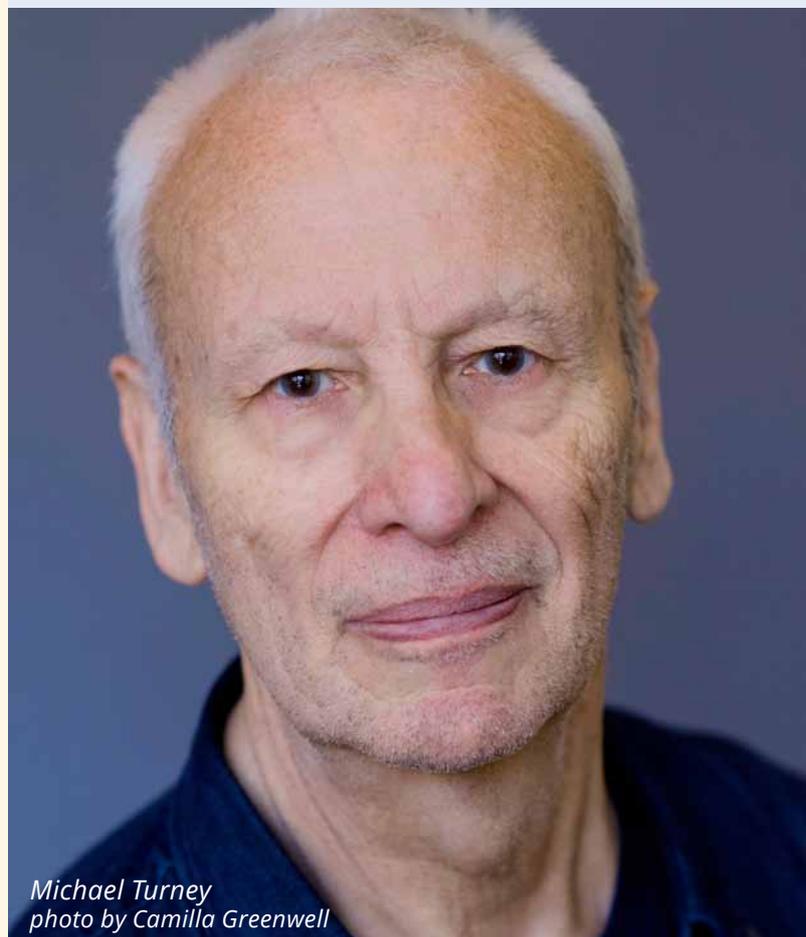
Recently she has worked additionally on Link Up outreach on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to encourage more people to engage with Open Age activities.

Are you keeping up with all this? I personally find Lena's energy and achievements exhausting even to think about!

"I have taught in lots of different centres and met all sorts of people. The beauty of it is, every day is different—the job is so interesting and challenging," she says.

Oh, by the way, Lena has brought up four children of her own. Wow! What a mummy!

Margaret Porta



*Michael Turney
photo by Camilla Greenwell*

Harassment: a personal view

Yonita Fairfax looks back



Please note this article contains sensitive issues

Every time you open a newspaper, there seems to be at least one story about sexual harassment. Since the Harvey Weinstein revelations in October 2017, more and more women have come forward to report harassment, abuse and in some cases rape—often dating back many years.

On the internet, the #MeToo movement gave women confidence to come forward—a good use of the internet. The court case involving Ghislaine Maxwell again made the issue front page news.

There have been numerous cases where the internet has led many, particularly the vulnerable, to fall victim to cybertroubling through social media. In the worst cases, this can lead to harassment or even suicide.

In terms of what happened to Sarah Everard, who was killed by a policeman after he handcuffed her, it seems as if abuse is often by a person in authority. This brought back some unhappy memories for me.

I was once made to stand naked in front of a doctor in the centre of a room and turn round very slowly so he could see if my shoulders were the same height.

Naturally I did not go back. My friend Roz told me that she had had the same experience. At that time, I would not have known who to complain to.

My experience with another doctor was so awful, I still cannot talk about it. I have two friends

who feel they lost their divorces because they did not 'co-operate' with their lawyers.

After I left school, I studied law for five years, but with nice old lawyers, accepting the occasional drink with the partners—hence, out in the world, unthinking, I accepted a lift home in a taxi with my new boss. I cringed and repulsed his advances. The next day I was fired.

The artist Modigliani is now being seen as the Weinstein of his day. An exhibition at Tate Modern brushed over his abusive side. Many of his models were his lovers.

The poet and critic André Salmon witnessed Modigliani mistreating his lover, Jeanne Hébuterne, tugging her hair, and sending her crashing against railings. It was even worse for another girlfriend—he threw her through a window. Another he scarred for life by slashing her face with broken glass.

All this happened long before the internet came along. YouTube could insist that the tech giants regulate the nightmare videos that are played automatically to vulnerable children.

Yonita says, "Even such unpleasant events in life should not stop one from going forward with courage and determination, and hopefully avoiding falling into the same traps as one gets older. Fighting back did not exist then, but hopefully it's easier now."

Welcome to Fiolla!

When Open Age centres partially reopened in June 2021, members found a new face at New Horizons reception—Fiolla Korenica.

Fiolla was appointed the new senior co-ordinator at the centre in June, combining the jobs of senior co-ordinator and centre co-ordinator—previously occupied by Paul McGowan, who now works for the charity Mental Health Foundation, and Sara Ferreira, who has transferred to ACL (see page 8).



Fiolla Korenica

Born in London of Kosovan parents, Fiolla is the eldest of four sisters and has led a busy life in her 26 years.

After studying history and politics at the University of Essex in Colchester, with a smattering of French, she worked for the NHS as a medical clerk, spent four years with a women's charity, and then became manager of the Census Office of National Statistics in Colindale.

She has also travelled widely on

holiday—visiting a friend in Japan, attending another friend's wedding in the Himalayan region of India, and even snorkelling in The Maldives.

The women's charity was an award-winning NGO empowering women mainly from an ethnic minority or disadvantaged background and working to prevent extremism and hate crime. Because many were over the age of 50, it gave her an insight into socialising with older people and developing empathy.

"My work for the charity was similar to this—welcoming people into the centre, helping to set up classes," says Fiolla. "But between June and September, only the Second Half Centre and New Horizons were open for selected groups, so it was nice to take it slowly and get to know people gradually.

"The members were mainly those who had not been engaged in online classes. They were so happy to come back, and found it a lifeline. Since September when the centres opened fully, the job has been a lot busier, but it has been great getting to know the members better."

Fiolla helps set up the Book Club, Quiz Group, Spanish and French classes and various physical activities. There is a limit on numbers for health reasons.

Her interests are reading the classics and British politics, so she hopes to visit the In The News (current affairs) class very soon. And if anybody speaks Albanian, she is happy to chat with near fluency. Kosovan is ethnically the same language, but just a different dialect.



A cure for ageing?

Galápagos tortoises can live for 200 years and more. How do you fancy doing the same? And not in a care home, or with dementia, but fit and healthy?

At the end of 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, biologist Andrew Steele posed the question: How would you like to live for ever? Or to start with, 100-150 years?

"Why not?" he says. "Ultimately, I don't say this because I want to have a load of 150-year-olds looking like 20-year-olds, I want it because those 150-year-olds won't have cancer, they won't have heart disease, they won't be struggling with arthritis. They'll still be playing with their grandkids, their great-grandkids even. It's about the health and lifestyle benefits."

If you fancy learning more about how to activate your inner Methuselah, it's all in Andrew's book. Or read the article in *The Economist*, February 2021, online.

Ageless: The New Science of Getting Older Without Getting Old by Andrew Steele is published by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Restless?

Young elderly or young-at-heart? You may be interested in a lifestyle website for the over-50s called **Rest Less**. The site was set up to help people find jobs, but now covers social activities and meet-ups when lockdowns allow, plus health, learning, finance, dating, volunteering.

Website: restless.co.uk

Other websites for older people include SilverSurfers, Over50s.com, Older is Wiser, NeverMindtheBuspass and Gransnet.

New designer for the newsletter

When our layout artist Christabel retired from the job of designing the Open Age Members' Newsletter during the COVID lockdown, we had to find a graphic designer from our own Open Age members, and retired teacher Jennifer Iles seemed to fit the bill completely.

A member of Westminster Open Age since 2014, she has extensive experience as a graphic designer including the design and typesetting of newsletters as well as many other types of printed materials. She specialises in typography, image processing, image editing, proofreading, working with PDF documents and web content.

Among her many activities with Open Age, she has attended

classes in digital photography and Tai Chi, watched movies at the New Avenues centre, and taken part in the Walks Programme. Before the pandemic, Jennifer regularly participated in the Open Age Trips Programme including visits and guided tours to museums, gardens, stately homes and religious buildings. She says she very much hopes that the Trips Programme will be restarted again soon.

Holder of two degrees and a teaching qualification, Jennifer has been a freelance designer since 1986, a role she combined with her full-time job as a lecturer at the University of Westminster Business School from 1981 to 2006 where she specialised in

business information systems and corporate identity.

Jennifer says: "Having enjoyed and benefitted from so many varied Open Age activities over the years, I am now delighted to be working with Kay in the production of the newsletter."



Jennifer Iles

Sparkling support

It is said that some 800,000 people in the UK have dementia, and researchers say the number will rise to one million by the end of 2021.

Various pursuits are believed to slow the rate of cognitive decline and boost psychological well-being—the right diet, exercise, especially dancing, and crosswords and puzzles.

But of major importance is reminiscence—shared memories

of events that shook the world, wartime impressions, schooldays, fashion and pop music.

A newspaper published in Totnes, Devon, aims to stimulate those memories, serious or humorous. *The Daily Sparkle* was the country's first 'reminiscence publication' when it started in 2009 and is now distributed daily to nursing homes, day centres and memory cafés, with an estimated readership of more than 100,000.

The four-page daily in large print is emailed to subscribers, who can print out the number of copies required for their group. You can also subscribe individually for a fee.

For more details, go to the website:

www.dailysparkle.co.uk/

You can phone them on 0800 228 9698, or send an email to:

info@dailysparkle.co.uk

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Open Age connects older people for a fun, active and fulfilled life.

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