

The Baring Foundation

CELEBRATING AGE

A celebration of the *Celebrating Age* funding programme for creative ageing, 2017–2022

By David Cutler



CELEBRATING AGE: A CELEBRATION OF THE 'CELEBRATING AGE' FUNDING PROGRAMME FOR CREATIVE AGEING, 2017–2022

About the Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation is an independent foundation which protects and advances human rights and promotes inclusion. We believe in the role of a strong, independent civil society nationally and internationally. We use our resources to enable civil society to work with people facing discrimination and disadvantage and to act strategically to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality. More can be found in *A History of the Baring Foundation in 50 Grants*. From 2010-2019 the Foundation's Arts programme supported arts for older people. Our new focus since 2020 has been creative opportunities for people with mental health problems.

Acknowledgements

The Baring Foundation would like to thank all the organisations who contributed case studies to this report. We would also particularly like to acknowledge the role of Phil Cave who came up with the idea of the *Celebrating Age* programme when he was a Director at the Arts Council England, as well as working hard to steer it through decision making there.

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

About the author

David Cutler is the Director of the Baring Foundation and leads its Arts programme. He has written a number of reports about creative ageing including *Ageing Artfully* (2009), *Around the World in 80 Creative Ageing Projects* (2019), *Key Workers: creative ageing in lockdown and after* (2020) and *Every Care Home a Creative Home* (2022).

This report was designed by Alex Valy and edited by Harriet Lowe, Communications and Research Manager at the Baring Foundation.

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Summary

CELEBRATING AGE WAS PROBABLY THE LARGEST DEDICATED FUND ANYWHERE FOR CREATIVE AGEING SO FAR

It was launched in 2017 by Arts Council England (ACE) and the Baring Foundation with a value of £3 million which was increased by further grants from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for work to tackle loneliness in the pandemic. Thirty-two grants were given over three to four years and half of them have contributed case studies to this report. The fund focused on older people less likely to be taking part in creative and cultural activities.

There are many reasons for funders to support creative ageing, including as a cultural right, to widen access and inclusivity, as a means to connect communities and generations, and to improve health and wellbeing. Its importance will grow as the population ages.

A number of themes emerge both from the independent evaluation and the case studies in this report. These include:

- older people are not homogenous;
- older people's leadership was recognised though more needs to be done;
- any art organisation can undertake this work and all should;
- any art form can be deployed and all should;
- a lot of work took place in rural areas and also in care homes;
- these grants paved the way for further work often through funding from elsewhere and often led to organisational change; and
- all this doesn't need to be earnest – participants had a lot of fun!

Celebrating Age was a success. It now needs to lead on to creative ageing being embraced by the arts and cultural sector as a whole as a permanent and growing feature of arts provision.

Foreword

**BY SIR NICHOLAS SEROTA,
CHAIR, ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

In its 10-year strategy *Let's Create*, Arts Council England sets out an ambition that everyone should be able to develop and express their creativity throughout their lives. This, of course, includes older people, whose contribution should be as valued and celebrated as every other age group.

The increasing numbers of older people represents a significant demographic change in our society and we can see how arts and cultural organisations are responding to this change through the work celebrated in this report. Sometimes they are addressing very particular needs, sometimes supporting older people as artists in their own right, but always seeking to empower older people.

Here at Arts Council England, we have been delighted to work in partnership with the Baring Foundation for many years. We are proud to have invested over £3 million into programmes of work for older people – all of it in collaboration with our partners at Baring.

Both this report and the programme evaluation delivered by Imogen Blood Associates, which you can find on our website, demonstrate the transformational impact arts and culture can have on the lives of older people and those who support them. Both the report and the evaluation recognise the contribution that arts and culture can make to our wellbeing, our sense of self and the communities in which we live, regardless of setting, age, or background.

More than five hundred partners have been involved in the Celebrating Age programme, including the creation of exciting new partnerships with health and social care providers, and over 31,000 people have taken part across the 32 programmes.

There is always more we can do, and we hope that the case studies shared in this publication will inspire more of our partners across both the cultural and health and social care sectors to engage and empower more older people in shaping their own cultural experiences – throughout their lives.

Willow weaving in Cullompton,
Devon, with MAKE Southwest.
Photo © Jessica Pearson/Shimnix Films.



Introduction

WHY WE WROTE THIS REPORT

This report by the Baring Foundation seeks to complement an evaluation of the *Celebrating Age* programme by the Imogen Blood Associates evaluation team. It seeks to give extra colour and texture to their evaluation, chiefly through a series of self-reported case studies from half of the lead organisations funded through the programme. It is not constrained by the more formal methodology of an evaluation and in an unabashed way celebrates what we believe to have been a highly successful and ground-breaking funding programme. This report also explores a number of themes which we detect in these case studies, many of which were also identified by the evaluators.

THE BARING FOUNDATION AND CREATIVE AGEING

Since its creation in 1969, the Baring Foundation has funded the arts and from the late 1990s has concentrated on funding 'participatory arts', which can be defined as where trained artists in any art form share their creative skills with people without that training. This approach is sometimes also called community arts and is highly related to democratising the arts. More can be read about the history of participatory arts in a recent book by François Matarasso,¹ who also served as Chair of the Baring Foundation Arts Committee (as well as being a member of the Council of Arts Council England). The Foundation funds all art forms and across the UK.

In 2003, the Foundation chose for the first time to focus on a theme and funded work with refugees and asylum seekers up until 2009. After a period of consultation and research, it was then decided to change this focus to

Celebrating Age in a nutshell

Celebrating Age was a joint funding programme launched in 2017 by Arts Council England (ACE) and the Baring Foundation with a pot of £3 million. Arts and cultural organisations were given a one-off grant of up to £100,000 over three to four years to partner with older people's organisations to provide participatory creative opportunities to older people across all art forms throughout England. Thirty-two grants were made in two waves.

Some older people are highly involved in the arts already. This is true for instance of audience members between 55 and 65 to 70 years of age. The *Celebrating Age* programme in common with, say, ACE's Creative People and Places programme focussed on people less likely to be taking part in creative or cultural activities.

In 2020, in response to the pandemic, further grants of up to £30,000 were then made from an additional fund provided by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to combat loneliness, extending the programme to 2022.

Over 31,000 older people participated in more than 2,500 activities.

The programme has been independently evaluated for the two funders by Lorna Easterbrook, Imogen Blood and Mark Robinson. Their report is available on our website,² as well as in the short summary appended to this report (page 68).

In addition, the Family Arts Campaign was contracted to be a Learning Partner to the fund, building on their work on Age Friendly Standards.³

¹ *A restless art*, François Matarasso, 2019. Available at: arestlessart.com/writing/a-restless-art.

² See: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/celebrating-age-programme-evaluation.

³ www.familyarts.co.uk/age-friendly-standards

one of creativity and older people on the basis that this was a relatively neglected field where a modest sum of money might have a strategic impact.

This theme continued for ten years. It developed organically as we learnt more about the field and was underpinned by deliberately broad objectives to increase the quality and quantity of creative ageing across the UK. Grants were accompanied by a publications programme and a number of usually national events, as well as international cultural exchanges in partnership with the British Council and The Churchill Fellowship. In total 168 grants were given by the Foundation worth over £6 million. (In fact, this funding roughly leveraged as much money again from other funders.) You can read more about the programme in our 2017 publication *Towards the End*⁴. In 2019, the Foundation also commissioned Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt of King's College London to take a broader look at the state of creative ageing in the UK at the end of the decade.⁵

HOW OUR COLLABORATION CAME ABOUT

The Baring Foundation frequently seeks to collaborate with other funders, especially the four national Arts Councils. We value their expertise and appreciate their significance in shaping the cultural life of each nation. They are independent and pursue unique national strategies. We had already begun funding partnerships with Creative Scotland (2011) and the Arts Council Northern Ireland (2013), the latter being the first Arts Council to have a dedicated creative ageing fund. Arts Council England's (ACE) strategy at the time of 'great art for all' certainly resonated with a wish to ensure that all older people had access to culture and to creativity, including if they had additional challenges or had not been involved in the arts when they were younger.

We first collaborated with ACE to create a joint fund of £1 million in 2013. ACE contributed £750,000 and the Foundation the balance. The purpose of the fund was to create nationally significant models of work led by arts organisations in care homes. Forty-four applications were received and grants of £250,000 were given to Arts and Health in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, City Arts (Nottingham), the Courtyard Theatre Hereford and We Do. This generated 2,267 hours of creative activity and involved 321 care staff with 8,868 care home resident attendances. The results of this first funding programme were evaluated by 509 Arts.⁶

Reflecting on this initial fund, we jointly concluded that there was great merit in funding more work but wanted to somewhat change the remit to give a greater number of smaller grants and not to only allow work in care homes but to encourage partnerships with any organisation serving older people at the local level. ACE did much of the heavy lifting in designing this second initiative, ably led by the then Director of Engagement, Phil Cave. The great majority of the funding was provided by ACE and the Baring Foundation took part in the selection of grantees.

THE CASE FOR CREATIVE AGEING

It is very unlikely that you will be reading this report if you don't believe in the importance of creative ageing. But it is probably worth spelling out that there are many reasons for funding this work.

Creativity as a right

This is the most important reason for the Baring Foundation. We understand that there are other reasons, but even if that wasn't the case, we would want to assert the fundamental right to be creative and to take part in culture simply as an essential aspect of being human. Indeed, this is recognised in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁴ *Towards the end*, Baring Foundation, 2017. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/towards-the-end.

⁵ *Older and wiser: creative ageing in the UK 2010-2019*, Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt/King's College London, 2019. baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/older-and-wiser-creative-ageing-in-the-uk-2010-19.

⁶ *Each breath is valuable*, 509 Arts, 2018. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/each-breath-is-valuable-an-evaluation-of-an-arts-in-care-homes-programme.

Ageing and arts in England

Responsibility for services relating to ageing such as health and social care, pensions, housing, continuing education, culture, and really pretty much anything, are devolved to the four home nations. Some statistics are only collected across the UK and this is made clear when it is the case.

- There is no cross-Government strategy for ageing in England.
- The 2022 report by the Centre for Ageing Better on *The State of Ageing in England*⁷ described it as 'getting worse'. At least two million pensioners live in poverty.
- In 2022 there were 11 million people over 65 in England, 19% of the population. This will rise in ten years' time to 13 million and to 22%.⁸
- It is estimated that there are 944,000 people in the UK living with dementia. Most people in care homes will be living with dementia.⁹ There are roughly 419,000 people living in care homes and around 15,000 care and nursing homes in England.¹⁰
- The significance of health inequalities has long been recognised and the connection with poverty. The average life expectancy

is ten years longer in the wealthiest parts of England than the poorest and the difference in *healthy* life expectancy is 18-20 years.¹¹

- The shape of households continues to change, with an astounding 67% increase since 2000 in the number of men over 65 living alone. Over one million older people can spend a month without speaking to a family member, friend or neighbour.
- Research by Age UK in 2017 indicated that the top factor for older people for a good quality of life was creative and cultural participation.¹² But participation tends to fall after the age of 65.¹³
- In 2021, research by the Audience Agency for the Creative Ageing Development Agency (CADA) indicated that older audiences were slower to return to cultural activities than younger ones after the Covid-19 lockdowns.¹⁴
- The same geographical areas have the shortest lives, lowest incomes and least access to creativity and culture. Equally, given the positive effects of creativity on health they are the same areas which will benefit most from more cultural activity.

Inclusivity and access

By the same token, any funder wishing to show that they are working for the entire community needs to show that their programmes are available across the life course and take account of barriers that can arise from physical frailty or cognitive impairment.

The impact of creativity on physical and mental health of older people

The strongest research evidence for the positive effects of active participation in the arts probably reside in studies on music and dementia. A meta-review in 2019 for the World Health Organization into the effects of arts on health cites many studies regarding

⁷ See: ageing-better.org.uk/state-of-ageing.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See: dementiastatistics.org/statistics/numbers-of-people-in-the-uk-2.

¹⁰ See: www.carehome.co.uk/advice/care-home-stats-number-of-settings-population-workforce.

¹¹ 'Growing gap in healthy life expectancy between poorest and richest in England', *The Guardian*, 25 April 2022. Available at: www.theguardian.com/society/2022/apr/25/growing-gap-in-healthy-life-expectancy-between-poorest-and-richest-in-england.

¹² See: www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/policy-research/wellbeing-research.

¹³ *Creative Ageing Development Agency: Research exploring older populations in England and older people's engagement with culture*, Audience Agency, 2021. Available at: cada657445711.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/cada-research-report-exploring-older-people-in-the-population-and-engagement-with-culture-8.11.21.pdf.

¹⁴ Ibid.

older people¹⁵ and a more recent review by the Centre for Cultural Value looks at the impact on physical health for older people.¹⁶

The impact of the arts on social connectedness

It is a mistake to think that older people are the only people to feel lonely or disconnected, or even the most likely to feel that way, but it is an extremely significant problem and one of course very related to health. A research digest has been published on this topic by the Centre for Cultural Value, mainly relying on qualitative studies.¹⁷

The power of the arts to connect generations

The vast majority of creative ageing activity when it involves professional artists is in fact intergenerational. But this phrase is often used more narrowly to mean connecting early years or school-aged children with older people, especially in care homes.

Increasing significance

Like most nations, the UK is ageing; that is, the proportion of older people is increasing. This is, in itself, a major achievement and should be celebrated, but also planned for, including in the arts and those services that the arts can help, like social care and health delivery.

15 *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review.* Daisy Fancourt and Saoirse Finn. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe, 2019. Available at: apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/329834.

16 *Research Digest: Older People's Physical Health*, Centre for Cultural Value, 2022. Available at: www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Research-digest-older-people-PH.pdf.

17 *Research digest: Older people – culture, community and connection*, Centre for Cultural Value, 2022. www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Research-digest-older-people-v1.pdf.

Case studies



Members of Duckie's Posh Club
Photo © Peter Robertshaw.

Artcore

PROJECT: CREATIVE LIVING



Artcore's Creative Living project. Photo © by Ray Gumbly.

ABOUT US

Artcore is a contemporary art space that celebrates the richness and diversity of cultural life in Derby, the East Midlands and beyond. The venue presents an ever-changing programme of art exhibitions, creative activities for adults and young people, film screenings, artist residencies, talks and festivals. Our key objective is to use art as a tool to strengthen community cohesion and engage with a wide range of audiences, educate, raise awareness and provide a space to build self-confidence and mutual trust and respect. We engage with society's most disadvantaged and vulnerable people by offering inspiring and motivational

programmes in areas where there is a lack of provision and engagement with the arts is minimal.

ABOUT CREATIVE LIVING

Artcore's Creative Living project supported older people in Derby to live rich and fulfilling lives within their communities through creative engagement, enabling them to take part in creative activities, enjoy improved health and wellbeing and quality of life, and reduce isolation. Creative Living aimed to enhance the talent, experience and enthusiasm of over-55s in the creative arts by delivering visual arts and dance workshops by Artcore

A participant's story

“My wife died last year and my son was so worried I'd fall in to depression that he signed me up to everything going! I'm so busy my head is spinning. I often dash to Artcore from my library volunteering.

I was apprehensive when I first came but the office ladies have talked me in to getting involved with everything. I'm even doing a choreographed dance with Danni from Déda using scarves! Imagine me dancing with a scarf! Ha ha! Well, I give it a go!

I was an engineer by trade but I've been retired for so many years. It's nice to come back to doing drawing again in the art club. Also, the social aspect is good. I am always bumping into someone I know. Generally, a lady! ☺☺

An Indian man in his 80s makes new friends and uncovers hidden talents.



Artcore's Creative Living project. Photo © by Ray Gumbly.

and Déda Derby Dance in various community venues in Derby. The project delivery started in October 2017 and ran until March 2020. Each workshop worked with the imagination, creativity and memory of the participants and involved creative conversations and simple art making methods.

The project addressed Derby's priority of supporting older people to live enriching lives and involved engaging the talent, experience and enthusiasm of older people in the creative arts. The four main strands to the project were participation, production, celebration and progression.

We delivered in nine locations in Derby including the Old People's Club, Housing Association sites, Derby County Community Trust (DCCT), Derby Homes and Artcore sites.

Over the three years, we completed 75 creative movement and 116 art sessions. Venues were supported to run self-led sessions. The project reached approximately 300 people who were at risk of social isolation. The artists were selected for their ability to communicate, as well their strength of delivery in their art form. We knew this was a key element, as they would be working with a wide selection of older people with varying health needs and personalities in community settings.

An Ambassadors' Group was formed to support programme design and delivery and ensure older people's voices were represented. As active people within their communities, the ambassadors were supported to become a group of advocates and champions for culture in Derby. We supported seven Ambassadors and 18 volunteers to:

- support creative visual art and/or dance with older people in various community settings in Derby;
- provide advice and feedback to the Steering Group on project delivery and participant engagement;
- welcome and support participants to access and engage with the project;
- advocate for and champion the project in the media and encourage recruitment;
- assist with capturing evaluation; and
- engage with groups to help them become sustainable beyond the life of the project.

We had various celebration events, trips and exhibitions over the three years, including performances and exhibited work at Artcore; an Older People's Day Celebration with art workshops, stalls, a video launch and food; a Déda Dance show; a trip to see a

performance of 'A New Beginning' by over-70s dance group, the Three Score Dance Company; and a trip to Derby Theatre to see *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.

“BAHHHH HUMBUG!

I love this show. Always have! I did think that I was coming to a musical but it was a play. Staff at Parkland told me wrong. Don't think they know the difference! I did sing a song at one point and shout 'he's behind you' and got shushed by the ushers which was a bit of a lark. But coming out for an ice-cream and a show is definitely my kind of trip out. I LOVE it!! ☺☺

Audience member, A Christmas Carol

One of the Artcore artists gave out sketchbooks to accompany the participants on their creative journeys. The artist explained how to look at the world creatively, to pick up things as you go and add thoughts and ideas. This was a very successful creative tool that was used in between sessions for participants to keep inspired and engaged. For those with memory difficulties, it also provided a useful prompt for engaging with the following sessions.

Overall, we worked with ten delivery partners. As well as Déda Dance Derby, we collaborated with: Derby City Council, University of Derby, Metropolitan Housing Association, Derby QUAD, Derby Theatre, Derby 50+ Forum and Derby Homes. Each partner brought a wealth of knowledge, understanding and support to the project in different areas from match funding, venues and planning through to delivery and evaluation.

OUR IMPACT

Participation in the program was a positive experience for participants. It improved most aspects of mental wellbeing and helped people to feel more connected to other people. We also produced an online resource after the project which was also designed to help participants during the Covid-19 pandemic¹⁸.

“ We had a laugh as we got caught out in the break. Being older means you have to run to the loo more! During the interval we were late back in but it was a little dance studio so we couldn't walk up the tiered seating as it was pitch black and had to sit on the first row. Fantastic view of the dancers until they stripped down to their undies as one of the routines! I didn't know where to look, jiggly bits everywhere! But it made me laugh and good on them I think. I wish I had the body confidence to do that! ☺☺

Audience member

Arts Alive and Media Active

PROJECT: CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS



Photo courtesy of Arts Alive.

ABOUT US

Arts Alive is a rural touring scheme that takes professional theatre events to community venues across Shropshire and Herefordshire. Also, based in Shropshire, MediaActive works with local people, organisations and creative practitioners to co-design and produce an innovative programme of special projects, commissions, events and exhibitions.

ABOUT CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Creative Conversations, a rural collaboration led by Arts Alive and MediaActive, was a three-and-a-half year partnership that linked experienced agencies to help establish a new exciting Shropshire-wide programme, which later extended to Herefordshire.



Photo courtesy of Arts Alive.

Together we aimed to generate new local opportunities for people aged 55 and over, including those at risk of loneliness, to get creative, to take part, to enjoy the arts, and to raise their voices and celebrate their creativity and life experiences.

As well as a shared ambition to increase access and provision for older people, we also wanted to build capacity at a local level. We did this in partnership with the community, health and social care providers, the council, and by investing in our community of artists, through bespoke training, professional development and commission opportunities.

Community partners included: Age UK Choirs in Shropshire and Telford; Age UK Diamond Drop Ins; U3A; Shropshire Wildlife Trust; Montgomery House Care Home; Millington Hospital Almshouses; Greenacres Sheltered Housing; SAND (Safer Ageing No Discrimination); Time Together; Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery; Shropshire Libraries; Cliffdale Care Home; Stone House Care Home, Whitefriars; and the Grange Sheltered Housing, to name but a few.

From the outset in April 2018, the project sought to offer a breadth of art forms and cultural experiences in a variety of contexts and locations, reflecting the collaboration between the two lead organisations, whilst also responding to the interests of our many rural and community-based partners. As such, the menu of opportunities has included storytelling, music making, singing, poetry, visual arts, movement and dance, touring theatre, filmmaking, animation, digital arts, Live Cinema, exhibitions, and the creative use of technology, and sometimes a combination of them all! Activity took place in day centres, care homes, community and cultural spaces, and online, giving older people, who ranged in age from 55 to 100+, a chance to take part in an array of arts activities and events.

Although the project was interrupted by the pandemic, delivery continued by pivoting workshops and events to online sessions, with some outdoor activity.

From the outset we intended to recruit artists who had specialist knowledge relevant to the project, art form and inclusive practice. If they didn't have significant experience of working with older people, we looked for personal

experience of ageing or of supporting older friends or family. This proved crucial, ensuring insight but avoiding stereotyped assumptions. Artists included: Adrian Plant (Musicologist & Curator); Jill Impey (Visual & Digital Artist); Sally Tonge (Storyteller & Musician); Jean Atkin (Poet and Writer); Rachel Liggitt (Dance Artist); Samantha Moore (Animator); Dea Paradisos (Visual Artist); Hannah Prior (Theatre Maker); Sian Allen and Cerin Mills (Creative Producers /Arts Alive), and Sue Gainsborough (Creative Producer/MediaActive). Importantly, 75% of the lead creative team were older people.

We wanted to be ambitious and explore more than what might be considered the typical care home activity offer. We involved older people across a wide age range, building in a breadth of creative opportunities, participants and settings, which in turn afforded a breadth of creative outcomes and learning – shared between all parties.

OUR IMPACT

The long-term impact of the project is the learning and inspiration that has been gained: by the lead organisations, our community, cultural and care partners and the creative practitioners and individual older participants. Through the project, existing partnerships have enhanced their working relationships and new partnerships have evolved with social housing providers, older people and diversity focussed community initiatives, health and social care providers, and between artists.... and with participants.

A participant's story

Getting involved... has added another hugely important and enjoyable dimension to D's social (and creative) life. D describes his involvement in both these activities as having become a 'life-line' for him. The major good and most significant changes that I've noticed in the group is a slow, but huge, increase in their confidence (and belief) that – even at this stage of life they can still sing and rediscover playing musical instruments – and be creative! Typical of the majority of my older singers, D had lapsed into a self-perception that '*... oh I maybe had a half-decent voice when I was younger - but of course that's all now gone with age*'.

Although the pandemic interrupted some aspects of the new partnership developments, as we learn to live with Covid-19 there is commitment from all parties to revisit how we can continue to work together to improve cultural and creative opportunities for older people.

Celebrating Age Wiltshire partnership

PROJECT: CELEBRATING AGE WILTSHIRE



A Noticing Nature session in a care home in Trowbridge. Photo courtesy of Celebrating Age Wiltshire.

ABOUT US

Celebrating Age Wiltshire (CAW) is a partnership of cultural, heritage and community organisations comprising Wiltshire Music Centre (WMC), Wiltshire Creative, Pound Arts, Age UK Wiltshire, Wiltshire Libraries, Community First, and the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre. The project uses high-quality creative arts, heritage and cultural activity as a vehicle to improve or maintain the health and wellbeing of older people, including those who are most socially isolated or vulnerable due to dementia, reduced mobility, ill health, or caring responsibilities.

CAW is currently working in 11 community areas across the county. Based on each area's needs, CAW works with arts and community organisations to deliver accessible, high-quality arts and heritage activity under the following four core strands of activity:

1. Monthly events:

Indoor and outdoor events and activities, encouraging people to reconnect with their communities.

2: Creative Conversations:

One-to-one, face-to-face conversations for housebound and isolated older people, also delivered in small groups.

3. Noticing Nature:

Individuals at home or group visual art workshops responding to local nature.

4. Online concerts:

Free access to Wiltshire Music Centre's livestream concerts to care settings throughout the county, including care homes, independent living spaces and hospitals.

“As always thanks to CAW for supporting us – you help enrich our days.”

Participant, Alzheimer's Support Group

CAW reaches older people in various settings: e.g. community groups, coffee mornings, luncheon groups, care homes and sheltered housing schemes, libraries, support groups and individuals in their own homes.

The activity involves singers, musicians, storytellers, actors, poets, visual artists and creative project work: for example, in 2022 CAW and Age UK Wiltshire worked in partnership to deliver *The Jubilee Chronicles* project to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Five local artists facilitated reminiscence workshops with older residents focusing on the Jubilee years of 1952/3, 1977 and 2012 and sharing what was happening in their lives during these landmark years. From these discussions and stories, the artists wrote songs, poems and created artwork with their groups to produce 10 Jubilee Chronicles which were presented in a professionally recorded film at WMC.

OUR IMPACT

The impact can be seen and felt at every CAW event. People say how the creative activity lifts their spirits, brings back memories and helps them to forget about their troubles. For many older people who live alone, our work gives them an incentive to leave the house and connect with people in their local community. Many lost confidence during the pandemic but by coming to the CAW events their confidence has improved and they are socialising again.

Participants' stories

In January 2022, a group of local older people were referred by Community Connectors to attend a three-week set of 'Noticing Nature' art workshops in Melksham. The attendees soon found a common love of art and bonded as a group. They continue to meet weekly, one year later.

In December 2022 older people in Downton Memorial Hall were treated to an afternoon of creativity, making paper decorations, listening to live music and sharing their winter stories. This resulted in one attendee decorating his house with his paper chains and snow pompoms. He hadn't put any decorations up for about fifteen years since his wife died. A friend commented, "it was lovely to see some joy in his front room".

“I have taken photos of them all singing along, even my oldest member, 96, it was lovely to see.”

“I dropped off a lady at her home who recently had lost her husband, her son and had a stroke all in the space of two months. She said 'After this afternoon my mind feels so much clearer, and my heart feels light'.”

“We love the response we get from the older people attending our events, it makes it all worthwhile. We hear so many heartfelt stories of how the CAW activities really make a difference to people's lives. One woman shared that she suffered from absolutely debilitating depression and had hardly been out since lockdown.”

Creative Producers

The folk band Ribble in concert at Royal Wootton Bassett Memorial Hall. Photo courtesy of Celebrating Age Wiltshire.



Creative Health CIC

PROJECT: STILL LIVELY



A Still Lively exhibition. Photo © Ming de Nasty.

ABOUT US

Creative Health CIC is an independent community interest company designing and delivering high quality arts and health projects in the West Midlands. We believe that participating in the arts can help foster healthy, happy and vibrant communities.

ABOUT STILL LIVELY

We worked with Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Choices Housing Association and Staffordshire Libraries and Arts Services to develop and deliver Still Lively. Working across Wolverhampton and Staffordshire, Still Lively

offered opportunities for older people to form meaningful connections to cultural spaces, art and people.

Still Lively aimed to value and celebrate the artwork, skills, expertise, and opinions of older people through participation and profile-raising activities, making them and their work visible and accessible to a wide audience. The intention was to support older people in connecting to the cultural life of the places where they live, provide opportunities for social interaction and friendship, facilitate individual creative development and wellbeing, and to create long-lasting relationships with gallery spaces.



The Still Lively art group. Photo © Ming de Nasty.

During the two-year programme, our Consortium inspired older people to participate in the arts and supported the creation of artwork that they are proud of. The workshop-based programme was developed with and for older people and was led by an inspiring team of older artists who invited individual creative responses to the rich source of inspiration provided by exhibitions and collections. It included:

Still Lively Wednesdays at Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Weekly sessions took place in education rooms and exhibition spaces, “using drawing as a social vehicle”. The sessions were aimed at people aged 55+, for pre-existing visitors and those for whom it was a new experience. Many participants hadn’t drawn for a long time and were often outside their comfort zone as they explored ways of making meaningful marks. The gallery became a place to celebrate, create and share their artwork, stories, and ideas, inspiring those taking part as well as other visitors.

“It’s been so easy, I feel so relaxed. It’s been great being part of Still Lively out in the Gallery drawing.”

Participant

Group members worked in concertina sketchbooks which clearly showed their creative journey, with many of them spending time away from the sessions drawing at home.

“What surprised me was how I’d developed, I went away from the Gallery feeling inspired. I’ve been quite ill during radiotherapy and coming to Still Lively has really benefited me mentally to be positive.”

K, Participant

K used her sketchbook as a way of responding to her illness and treatment – always finding a creative link to a work in the collections.

Still Living at Shire Living Homes in partnership with Choices Housing Association

Work included creative activity with tenants from four Shire Living Homes in Staffordshire. The project exhibited works from the museum collection, testing out ways of doing so in non-arts venues.

“I didn’t expect to be inspired like this so late in life. Today, for instance, we’ve talked about creative writing, and I’m feeling moved to have a go. I used to enjoy jotting things down but as the years rolled by, I lost the motivation. Now suddenly, today, I’m inspired by what we’re discussing, and the drawing technique I’ve learned has got my brain ticking over and given me an idea for writing.”

Participant

A Still Lively Exhibition, 'Journeys – Making Marks with Meaning', was held at Wolverhampton Art Gallery and toured to Shire Living Homes. Work created by older artists living in Shire Living homes complemented the work created by artists from the Wednesday art groups. The exhibition was inspiring, thought provoking and well received by visitors.

We successfully used film to document participants' experiences of the programme and created two powerful short films¹⁹.

The success of the project led to the Still Lively sessions continuing as part of Wolverhampton Art Gallery's core offer.

During the pandemic the Still Lively WhatsApp group and Zoom sessions provided a lifeline, preserved social contact, and provided a platform for sharing responses to weekly tasks. The online offer has opened the possibility of engaging with those who are no longer able to attend in person. Resulting work was included in the exhibition 'Our Creative Lockdown', co-curated with Still Lively members at Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 2021.

STILL LIVELY IN 2023

Still Lively remains very popular, continuing to attract new members alongside those who have attended from the outset. Currently our oldest artist attending weekly (even in snow) is 88.

The Drawing of the Month is chosen by lot from those submitted by group members and exhibited in the Gallery. Still Lively members have worked together to develop and manage their own website to showcase the group's work and promote the offer²⁰.

The strong partnerships between Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Creative Health CIC and Staffordshire Libraries have continued through the Arts Council England funded projects CreateSpace and CreateMoreSpace and our current project A Sense of Place.

creativehealthcic.co.uk/still-lively

www.wolverhamptonart.org.uk/whats-on/still-lively-11-2023-03-08

¹⁹ You can see Still Lively's short films at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysi43bNHv3s and www.youtube.com/watch?v=e81kuOh1fHY.

²⁰ still-lively.weebly.com

Duckie

PROJECT: POSH CLUBS & THE POSH BUS



A cuppa at Duckie's Posh Club. Photo © Peter Robertshaw.

ABOUT US

Duckie has been running an LGBTQ nightclub in Vauxhall for the past 28 years, with the occasional globe-trotting avant-garde show

(the Olivier Award-winning 'C'est Duckie!'), as well as numerous community projects around the country.

ABOUT THE POSH CLUB

One of Duckie's main projects is The Posh Club, an afternoon cabaret club for pensioners. Simon, a producer at Duckie, created this for his mum ten years ago when she moved to a quieter town, so that she and her friends could enjoy a glitzy social club with live entertainment and afternoon tea. Originating in Crawley, The Posh Club then also took up weekly residence in Hackney, Elephant and Castle, Brighton and Hastings with great flair. Swanky senior citizens, elegant elders and glamorous golden girls grace the club with their presence, served by vibrant volunteers from all walks of life. It is an anti-loneliness project and a glamorous day out rolled into one roly-poly, and a fabulous jammy-sweet time is had by all.

Celebrating Age funding supported Duckie to deliver 20 The Posh Club events in Brighton and Hastings on the south-east coast and to commission Florence Peake and Karen de Silva to create a new performance celebrating the lives and loves of older people that toured The Posh Clubs.

AND THE POSH BUS

During the Covid-19 pandemic, The Posh Clubs became The Posh Bus... The Posh Bus was in all senses a touring vehicle for The Posh Club, taking the form of a vintage 1960s open-top Route Master bus, which ran thirty local pleasure tours of the aforementioned towns. The idea was conceived during the pandemic and materialised in May 2021 as the lockdown was being eased. Vaccines had been introduced by this point, but meeting indoors was still against the rules (so The Posh Club was still in hibernation), whereas socially distanced outdoor activities were encouraged, and so The Posh Bus was born.

Duckie ran two-hour tours on The Posh Bus and entertained Posh passengers with signature live musical performances and cream teas, but also local history commentaries over the microphone and an outdoor disco. They were hosted by volunteers enrolled as bus conductors, a la Blakey and Reg Varney from *On the Buses* - "I'll 'ave you, Butler!".

Each bus fitted about 30 passengers and in total Duckie hosted 750 participants across The Posh Bus tours. The Posh passengers were



A trip on Duckie's Posh Bus. Photo © Peter Robertshaw.

characteristically glamorous albeit wrapping up warm. The cool spring air dampened neither their enthusiasm nor their voices; everyone cheered the acts and sang and danced along to the music. Each bus had a different musical and performative theme; the Hackney bus had a Reggae flavour, while the Hastings one featured a Dolly Parton impersonator. As with live theatre, each experience was unique. Passers-by got a glimpse of the fun, waving at the raucous singalong bus.

On a few occasions, the tour coincided with a brewing storm and Duckie handed out pac-a-macs in readiness. The pelting rain became a great spontaneous touch, releasing not only humour and hilarity all round but also the yearning to celebrate being outdoors and having fun at long last. There was a convivial joy in everyone being together, the instant nourishment of a cream tea and a chinwag, a trepidatious excitement about being exposed to the elements, safe in the knowledge that every need is nonetheless looked after, the hysterical resemblance the pac-a-macs bore to bin bags, a sense that light is appearing at the end of the lockdown tunnel, and an overriding jubilation of being at once free and connected. Everyone had a splendid time! It was important to Duckie to keep The Posh Club running in whatever guise permissible under restrictions, and The Posh Bus with the joyous rides it provided was the most successful one; you might say it was just the ticket. Duckie created a fairground, and the energy was magical.²¹

www.duckie.co.uk / www.theposhclub.co.uk

21 With thanks to Meredith Wai Wong who interviewed Simon Casson for this case study.

FACT Liverpool

PROJECT: YOUNG AT ART & 'WHY CAN'T WE DO THIS IN IRL?'

ABOUT US

FACT Liverpool is an art gallery that works with artists interested in the impact technologies have in our life and how we understand the world around us.

ABOUT YOUNG AT ART

Young at Art was a Liverpool City Region-wide programme, funded through *Celebrating Age*. The grant gave FACT Liverpool, Open Eye Gallery (OEG) and National Museums Liverpool (NML) the opportunity to partner and produce a programme that encouraged the over-60s population to become involved in the city's art ecosystem.

Young at Art has linked participants with key cultural institutions in the city, extending access to audiences who may otherwise be culturally or physically excluded. FACT and OEG presented all the projects in their galleries, adding a validation of the participants' artwork.

Three programmes engaged older people in creative arts-based activities. Activities varied from traditional art forms to virtual reality video-making. OEG's focus was Social Engaged Photography, and Happy Older People is NML's long-term strand which supports independent programming across the city. FACT centred its work on intergenerational learning.

ABOUT 'WHY CAN'T WE DO THIS IRL?'

*Why can't we do this IRL? (WCWIRL)*²² was an intergenerational project delivered by FACT as part of *Celebrating Age*. It is a 360-virtual reality film exploring whether actions in the

virtual world have consequences in the real world. The artwork was created by artist Megan Broadmeadow with an intergenerational group of participants which included FACT's Digital Ambassadors over-60s group, and young people from Liverpool youth projects: Tiber Youth, Team Oasis, and Toxteth Fire Fit Hub. The work was presented by FACT's Curator in Residence 2019, Helen Starr, as part of *you feel me_*, a group exhibition critiquing dominant systems of control.

Broadmeadow worked with the participants from September to December 2019. The work was exhibited from mid-December 2019 to February 2020. Over 6,000 people interacted with the work.

The work responds to a widely shared in-game video of a violent attack on a non-playable character in *Red Dead Redemption 2*, and the outrage this provoked. The film presents a virtual trial that attempts to answer a YouTube comment: "Why can't we do this in real life?". It questions the responsibility of mass media towards social justice.

We brought two age groups together: those aged 11-17 and those aged 60 and over. Younger people get told what to do but are rarely asked what they would do if they had power. This is often the same for the over-60s, even though they have a lot of knowledge.

“I was... never really was concerned about it until Helen Starr...came into sessions, she talked to us about it.”

Participant

²² See: www.fact.co.uk/artwork/why-cant-we-do-this-irl-2019.



A still from the film *Why can't we do this in real life?* Photo courtesy of FACT Liverpool.

Aside from its intergenerational nature, the two main challenges the project faced were how to give the participants a real art production experience and how to create artwork that inspired ways to think about technology in our society.

We presented the artwork to our most important space, the FACT gallery. We worked closely with the curator to present this idea to the over-60s, who were less familiar with video games. They enjoyed the discussions, the intergenerational element and seeing how the young people interpreted concepts such as feminism and how it shaped the work.

The project involved filming at three different locations, most notably at the old law courts in St George's Hall.

“ Going to St. Georges Court was my favourite part, getting an opportunity to see the inside. Using it as a ‘film set’, you could sit in the judge’s seat and go into his private chambers. ”

Participant

“ I learned how much effort it takes to put together a film, helping the viewer think about different perspectives. I would never have thought a single video could make people so enraged It was brilliant getting to look at the different arguments on whether they were guilty or not guilty of committing a crime. It does make you think. ”

Younger participant

The group of over-60s performed as game characters in a fantasy ‘courtroom of the internet’, dancing to the choreography devised by the young people. The shoot became an archetypical production moment that we now refer back to when trying to understand our practice. It felt very different to conventional engagement activities: everyone had a job to do, and roles to perform to create the best artwork.



Exhibit at the *you feel me*_ installation at FACT Liverpool. Photo © Rob Battersby.

It was an opportunity to test how this type of project can produce artworks that engage all kinds of audiences in a story, moving beyond the participatory aspect.

“...It got us working with artists and professionals in computer graphics, music performers, film makers, script writers ... For the young people of Dingle to be a part of this project... is a massive achievement, and to see the final piece being shown in such a grand exhibition just makes for a wonderful round-off of the project.”

Community leader

OUR IMPACT

A lot of our current methodologies are based on the learning from this project: from how we bring participatory projects to the exhibitions programme, to how we design multi-layered and intergenerational models of engagement in production and learning resources. But, *Young at Art* was also an opportunity for peer learning. *You're on mute* – a programme of sessions and resources designed and aimed at creators that produce art projects using digital and online technology²³ – presents our final learnings.

Gateshead Libraries, Arts & Heritage Service

PROJECT: ART DIAMONDS



Windows project with artist Sara Qaed. Photo © Mark Savage.

ABOUT US

The Arts Development Team is based within Gateshead Council's Libraries, Arts & Heritage Service. Our creative programme consists of around 50 projects each year, devised to develop and support community engagement in arts and cultural activities across the borough. Projects are designed to increase wellbeing through creativity for all ages with a mix of targeted and public activities. The programme has a focus on participation across all art forms, with activities including community outreach, arts in education, exhibitions, workshops and projects on specific themes or with targeted communities. The team also advocate, engage and support artists, strengthening the cultural sector in Gateshead.

ABOUT ART DIAMONDS

The Art Diamonds programme was designed to support retired people to improve their health and wellbeing through creative arts activities. Activities included: workshops in all creative mediums, (face-to-face, on Zoom and Art at home packs), intergenerational film, talks, visits, theatre experiences, Make and Share sessions, Pen Pal projects, indoor gardens, creative challenges, Art Gem films (artist-made films with creative ideas), seasonal events and collaborations with the *MakerPlace* at Gateshead Central Library. We secured additional resource for Art Diamonds during the lockdown in 2021 through the Loneliness Engagement Fund. This provided a further programme to help reduce isolation, with a focus on activities that weren't online to

reach those of our participants (called the 'Art Diamonds'), who were unable to engage with screen-based workshops because of limited access or lack of confidence in IT skills. We developed partnerships, working with organisations in Gateshead to expand our current reach, develop new audiences and raise awareness of the core Art Diamond programme.

Led by the Gateshead Arts Team, Libraries, Arts and Heritage, partners included Gateshead Older People's Assembly, 64 Million Artists, National Trust at Gibside, Equal Arts, Northern Print, Gateshead International Festival of Theatre, Big Local Gateshead, Path Head Water Mill, sheltered housing, care settings and NHS Social Prescribing.

We celebrated the impact and showcased the talent of the Art Diamonds with a successful exhibition from January to March 2022 in The Gallery, Gateshead Central Library, alongside a programme of legacy projects.

“ Art Diamonds is the best thing to happen to my mental health. ”

Participant

More than 300 Art Diamonds have subscribed to the programme ranging in age from 55 to 99. Although each Art Diamond came with a very different background story, with different life experiences to draw from and share, everyone gained something from their involvement in the project, grew in confidence and improved their wellbeing. We connected and communicated with everyone: a newsletter via email to many, post to those without email or who preferred a letter, regularly chatted on the phone and of course met face-to-face at workshops and events. Each year we gave Art Diamond Awards to members whose engagement or growth in self-esteem had been particularly noticeable, and many became Ambassadors for the project, raising awareness and promoting the programme.

**Painting workshop with artist Kath Roger at Gateshead Older People's Assembly.
Photo courtesy of Gateshead Libraries.**



OUR IMPACT

We have had so many moving, powerful comments and feedback from our Art Diamonds about the positive benefits of the programme over the last four years. Increased confidence, feeling connected, improved mental health and wellbeing, being part of a community, pride in their creativity, being inspired and discovering new skills have all been mentioned, as well as making friends. This project has made a difference to people's lives and we're confident that it will continue as a core part of our Libraries and Arts programme.

“ There was a warm, pleasant atmosphere as I arrived for the workshop which immediately made me feel more relaxed. I was privileged to be asked to sit at a table with my name on it. Afterwards I thought, it could be in lights! Always grumbling! Thank you! It was a nice feeling knowing so many people. ”

Participant

Our Libraries, Arts & Heritage Service is part of Public Health, so our strategic focus is on the wellbeing of Gateshead residents. Our Arts programme has always had wellbeing outcomes and now includes Art Diamonds as a core part of our annual activity. We will continue to develop our long-term aspirations to prioritise arts for retired residents and use creativity to improve wellbeing.

Two participants' stories

“ I joined Art Diamonds in August 2021. My Mam died in April 2021 and Art Diamonds has been a life saver for me. It has helped fill a void in my life and I have been lucky enough to try several new things as well as meet new people in a safe, comfortable environment. Everyone, without exception, has been very welcoming. I have always been interested in crafts especially sewing based crafts but in the last few months I have stepped out of my usual comfort zone and have been pleasantly surprised by what I have achieved and experienced. I look forward to continuing to grow with Art Diamonds. ”

“ I had to retire early from a career I loved due to severe arthritis. Taking part in Art Diamonds activities has allowed me to step outside my normal life and to participate in fun interesting art projects with others. Art Diamonds has done so much for my mental and physical wellbeing. I cannot thank you all enough. ”

Helix Arts

PROJECT: FINDING YOUR FEET



Finding Your Feet workshop. Photo courtesy of Helix Arts.

ABOUT US

Helix Arts has connected people for almost 40 years, using the arts to create change and advocating for the wellbeing of the most excluded and vulnerable communities. We work with communities across the North East of England, with a base in North Tyneside.

We are the only Arts Council funded NPO in the borough. We focus on arts and health, social inclusion and criminal justice, working with participants of all ages and abilities and across all art forms to co-create socially engaged projects.

We work by forming deep and trusted partnerships across the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors in a range of settings from care homes to hospitals and schools to youth groups or prisons to libraries. We support people to overcome obstacles, encouraging and empowering them by providing a wide range of co-produced participatory arts.

“As a recently retired man, Falling on Your Feet has introduced me to fresh ideas and a new group of friends. It has taught me that I can salsa, cha-cha-cha, and I can make up my own steps and dance to my own rhythm. It has given me new skills, new ways of thinking, and confidence at a time when my working life was falling away.”

Participant

ABOUT FINDING YOUR FEET

Finding Your Feet was all about encouraging and enabling older people to keep moving through dance, encouraging physical and mental wellbeing through social connection and falls prevention workshops with choreographers. It sought to help people create their own ‘companies of older dancers’, with cohorts across the region by forming collaborations between artists, arts organisations and community partners (such as the NHS, Age UK, The Cultural Spring and Teesside University). It was built on the success of our Falling on Your Feet dance programme, with this new iteration designed to support older dancers through action learning. After the workshops, members, staff and artists began learning how to self-manage neighbourhood dance ensembles with the aim of engaging and inspiring local audiences across the region.

The original plan was for the programme to last three years (2018-2021) comprising seven dance projects. However, the Covid-19 pandemic led to a change of approach, with digital skills bursaries offered to artists and community members to explore new sound and film technologies. Cohorts met weekly online, adapting to successive lockdowns.

The resilience of the workforce, volunteers and residents in our communities was astounding. They continued to create dance work, develop strength and flexibility, and make new friends. This meant we were able to meet our original aims, with successful community leadership and ownership driven by our artists and producers who often went far beyond what anyone ever imagined.

The programme was delivered in North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Newton Aycliffe, East Durham, Middlesbrough and Northumberland with the support of four community volunteers and choreography and facilitation by 15 artists. 197 participants were reached from Amble in the North to Bishop Auckland and Darlington in the South across 136 sessions, amounting to 1,287 attendances.

OUR IMPACT

Regularly taking part in the dance sessions enabled participants to build confidence in their bodies. Some reduced their use of and reliance on physical mobility aids; others reported various improvements to their physical abilities, such as improving their posture, balance and gait. Some improved their confidence in conjunction with increased motivation, encouraging them to seek other opportunities and activities in their communities, largely as a consequence of worrying less about falling. (This was particularly important for non-shielding groups able to go outdoors during the pandemic.) Fundamentally, participants described the sessions as fun, enabling them to develop their creative skills in a safe and informal environment.

“I can’t express how much I enjoyed the sessions both for exercise and just as importantly from the mental health aspect. I also loved the music and movement. I’d had a hip replacement that went wrong last year so my confidence had been knocked but the sessions really helped me literally get back on my feet.”

Participant



Finding Your Feet workshop. Photo by Cheryl Gavin, Helix Arts.

Participants commonly valued the human interaction and socialising the sessions enabled, demonstrating how the programme reduced social isolation and enabled participants to make new friends.

Since the project ended, Helix Arts has absorbed much of the organisational learning from the project, applying it to its quality framework and informing future work, including by creating 'Dial it Up', a dedicated older people's strand of work beginning April 2023.

Many artists continued this work, including dancer Debbie Warbin who successfully established a legacy dance group within Darlington's 'Monday Movers' who continue to create beautiful art, develop balance and coordination, and make new friends.

“ Finding Your Feet has been central to our organisation in various forms for the last eight years. It continually ensures we really understand older people's needs, often in times of change leading to organisation development, to be relevant. It informed our Thriving Communities National Academy for Social Prescribing project, 'Better Connect', and ensured quality co-production continued. ”

Cheryl, Helix Arts, Director

Ideas Test

PROJECT: SEA FOLK SING



Singing at the station. Photo © Hope Fitzgerald.

ABOUT US

Founded in 2013, Ideas Test is an arts organisation that is part of Arts Council England's Creative People and Places programme (CPP). We work together with communities in Medway and Swale, Kent, to help them live more creative lives.

ABOUT SEA FOLK SING

Sea Folk Sing was a two-year Ideas Test project co-produced with Sparked Echo, a Medway based music and digital company. The project involved people aged 55+ with little or no cultural engagement in a project exploring North Kent's maritime and folklore history through singing. As well as *Celebrating Age*

funding, the project also received additional funding from Kent County Council and Optivo Housing with in-kind support from specialist researcher in singing and wellbeing, Trish Vella-Burrows.

Through workshops and practice, a choir was formed, who performed works written by themselves and the musicians they worked with. They performed in a variety of public spaces and venues, including working men's clubs and on trains and station platforms and on the streets.

Year One was based on the theme of peace and reconciliation, as November 2018 marked 100 years since the end of the First World

War. Thirty people took part in workshops combining local heritage, personal stories, music, sound art and storytelling. These were then incorporated in a new choral piece, *Never Again*, by composer Emily Peasgood and lyricist Kate Lynn-Devere.

Out of the workshops, 24 people created a community choir whose legacy continues to this day.

“So good to be part of the choir.
It has been like joining a family.
Lovely experience.”

Participant

A total of 613 people saw live performances of *Never Again*. The performance of *Never Again* on the train between Sittingbourne to Sheerness and on Queenborough Station footbridge was awarded a prize in the Rail Community Awards in the Best Community Engagement Project. The Remembrance Sunday performance at Queenborough Station was particularly popular with curious

passers-by and train passengers. Performances also took place at Strood Railway Station and The Historic Dockyard, Chatham. Composer Emily Peasgood was nominated for a 2019 Ivor Novello Composers Award for Community Music.

We learnt various lessons from the first year of Sea Folk Sing. While having a high-profile project such as this was an amazing experience for all involved, we heard that participants wanted even more creative input in the second year, including hands-on experience in creating the music. So rather than work with a single composer, we worked with a larger, more diverse group of songwriters, composers and musicians to reflect not only music genres but life experiences, especially under-represented voices in our community.

We ran 18 workshops in new locations in Gillingham and Sheppey with choral director Debbie Sowter, music leader Bob Carling and Kent-based musicians including Anil Sebastian, Lucy Moyo, Naomi Bedford and Paul Simmonds. Participants explored their local history and folklore, drawing on stories related to the North Kent coast to create music. These workshops culminated in the co-creation

Singing on the train. Photo © Hope Fitzgerald.



of eight new folk songs including the singalong *Dockyard Rush* about the workers of Chatham Dockyard and *Island Home* about the natural beauty of Isle of Sheppey.

Performances took place at Gillingham FC's Priestfield Stadium, Sheppey Library, and Sheerness East Working Men's Club as well as more traditional venues. There were street performances in Gillingham, Gravesend and Sheerness and two sessions at the Oasis Dementia Café on Sheppey, which brought together children and older people to explore some of the songs.

OUR IMPACT

Our evaluation of the project, which used the Canterbury Wellbeing Scale, showed that those who took part improved their confidence and wellbeing by creating and performing songs to the public. Sea Folk Sing was shortlisted for a Heart for the Arts Awards in 2021.

“For me, variety and newness helped my wellbeing. Because I feel as though I'm expanding my comfort zone ... my confidence at the end of it was higher.”

Participant

There were some challenges. The choir found many of the physical and technical aspects of singing *Never Again* a challenge. The unexpected emotional impact of the music on some audience members also impacted some members of the choir. Another was access. Large print and alternative formats, limited public transport, walking/parking distances and accessible venues are things we always have to consider generally but more so for this group of people.

As an organisation, Ideas Test worked with several new partners for this project, including Age UK and Kent Community Rail Partnership. We also strengthened our existing relationships with local partners, artists and organisations such as SparkedEcho.

It was always our wish to carry on the legacy of Sea Folk Sing. We planned to hold in-person workshops in hyperlocal venues. However, 2020 had other ideas... As the first Covid-19 lockdown was announced, we were keen to keep our Sea Folk Sea community together in a safe and creative way and ease the isolation that the lockdown had brought via online workshops. At a time where online connectivity seemed more important than ever, we realised that many of our older community members were being left behind. To help, we supported those who wanted to come to our workshops but were not 'tech-savvy' with simple instructions and support on how to set up Zoom.

“This year's Virtual Workshops are the perfect way to take time for yourself, see the positives in life and just smile. Each week I just lose myself in a safe, creative atmosphere under the guidance of truly inspirational artists from very different backgrounds.”

Participant

Since then, many of the participants have continued to sing and meet, notably as members of the Oast House Choir, led by Bob Carling. We have regularly invited them to perform songs from their repertoire as part of festivals, celebrations and other public events across Swale and Medway. The voices and the songs live on.

“Sea Folk Sing was a beautiful project and its real success has been in bringing people together to celebrate North Kent's maritime and folklore history through music. The quality of the work and its gentle and professional delivery have made it a hugely valuable experience for combating loneliness and social isolation in those who need it most.”

**Tony Witton, Arts & Culture Service Manager,
Kent County Council**

Independent Arts

PROJECT: TIME & TIDE



Time & Tided photographer Bill at work. Photo courtesy of Independent Arts.

ABOUT US

Independent Arts is a charity based on the Isle of Wight. We use creativity as a tool to reduce social isolation and improve health and wellbeing.

ABOUT TIME & TIDE

Independent Arts' Time & Tide project took place in collaboration with Southern Housing Group, Isle of Wight Council Museums and Heritage Service, Isle of Wight Library Service, Dimbola, Dinosaur Isle, Newport Roman Villa and Isle of Wight College. Independent Arts delivered local heritage talks to groups in care homes, libraries and supported accommodation schemes across

the Island. Topics included 'In the Footsteps of Giants' (Dinosaurs), 'Prehistoric Islanders', 'Ave Imperator' (Romans), 'Poverty, Pomp and Prosperity' (Victorian Newport) and the 'Bawdy Georgians'. Groups then worked alongside a local artist to produce a creative response to this work. Each topic used a different medium, including clay, textiles, water colour and photography.

Participants were predominately from Southern Housing schemes across the Island but also members of the public and care home residents. Participants were over the age of 50 and many over 70. Many of the participants were not able to access traditional cultural venues due to transport, cost or health limitations, so we brought the culture to them.

OUR IMPACT

Time & Tide gave older Isle of Wight residents the opportunity to connect with their local heritage, work with local artists and connect with each other. Many residents of the supported accommodation schemes didn't know each other despite living closely together. It built confidence in them to try new things, visit new places and see their work displayed in exhibitions in local galleries and exhibitions spaces. In care homes, it gave residents the chance to reminisce about their past and share collective stories prompted by images and items from handling collections. It allowed all participants to work with and learn from local artists (many of whom were over 50) to create pieces of work using materials they had never had the opportunity to use before.

“Dad loved getting out with his camera, it encouraged him to go out more often and kept him active. Finding a new hobby so late in life was really unexpected, I'm so grateful he was given this opportunity to try something new. Some of the photos he took were amazing and they are something we will treasure now he has gone.”

Participant's son (see story in box)

In terms of Independent Arts, it allowed us to build long-term collaborative partnerships which sustain to this day. We have collaborated on a number of projects with the Isle of Wight Council Heritage service and the local library service. We worked with the team at Dimbola on a project last summer. Residents of Southern Housing Group schemes have benefitted from projects we have run since Time & Tide. In wider terms, the experience of running Time & Tide has allowed Independent Arts to seek funding to expand elements of Time & Tide to help embed creativity into everyday life in care homes. We were able to use the learning from Time & Tide when delivering our lockdown project 'Digging Deep' to allow the widest access to activities and materials using things that had been successful previously. The project has also allowed us to work with new older artists and expand our wider work to include their skillsets.



Portrait by Bill. Photo courtesy of Independent Arts.

One of the sustaining legacies of Time & Tide is the Porter Court photography club. During project delivery the group from Porter Court (a Southern Housing Group supported accommodation scheme) took part in three arts modules, two of which were based around photography. This first module led by artist Mark Lloyd involved learning how to use simple 'point and shoot' cameras to take images of the historic county town of Newport. The second module supported by artist Julian Winslow gave the group the opportunity to learn about portrait photography using studio equipment.

When the project had finished, the group wanted to continue their photography and Southern Housing Group found funding for some additional workshops to help the group build further confidence and skills. The work created is now hanging on the walls of communal areas at Porter Court. The group continued to meet regularly and one former resident who had moved out of the scheme returned weekly to attend the group meetings. When one of the group members died during the pandemic, the image he had taken was used on the order of service for his funeral.

Leeds Playhouse

PROJECT: EVERY THIRD MINUTE



Susan Cookson, Manish Ghandi, Balvinder Sopal and Jem Dobbs in *Three*, a play created for the Every Third Minute festival. Photo © David Lindsay.

ABOUT US

Leeds Playhouse is a major producing theatre, an artistic beacon for the North, rooted in our communities and creating exceptional art. Our mission is to create world class, relevant and compelling theatre and to transform people's lives by the power and vitality of our work. We aim to have a company, an artistic programme and an audience that reflect the diversity of the society in which we live.

ABOUT EVERY THIRD MINUTE

Every Third Minute was a major festival of theatre, dementia and hope curated by people living with dementia. It was created through a co-production initiative lasting 18 months, amplifying the voices of people with dementia, and highlighting their potential as artistic decision-makers. Its intention was to challenge perceptions and to rebalance the narrative of dementia, moving away from despair to allow room for hope.

“ I have now told many people – friends and work colleagues – about my dad’s condition – something I’d found difficult to bring up in conversation before. His involvement was a good platform to open up conversation about dementia. ”

Family Support

The title of the festival reflects the statistic that someone in the UK develops dementia every three minutes. To explore experiences of dementia in the most balanced way, people living with dementia and their supporters were recruited to form a Curators’ group in May 2017. These nine Curators took responsibility for steering the artistic content and processes of the festival, in a collaborative process led by practitioner and researcher, Nicky Taylor. The Curators selected and programmed theatre productions and co-created music and poetry performances. Additionally, 15 people with dementia co-created three new plays in collaboration with professional writers, which were performed by a professional cast. This included one play focused on experiences of South Asian people affected by dementia, highlighting specific challenges and stigma faced by members of this community. All artistic collaborations were supported by the expertise of the professional teams at Leeds Playhouse.

Every Third Minute ran from 9 February to 31 March 2018. The seven-week Festival, attended by over 7,500 people, comprised 12 productions (in-house and visiting artists/theatre companies), four training programmes, 16 workshops and a tour of performances in care homes.

“ We had a voice. ”

Participant curator

Support from local, national and international partner organisations contributed to the success of the festival’s development and delivery, including: Leeds City Council’s Peer

Over two hundred young people aged 5-18 in the Playhouse’s Youth Theatre created new work in response to dementia, focusing on this theme for a whole term. The young people and their leaders all took part in Dementia Friends sessions to increase their awareness. Their thoughtful and respectful performances were showcased in an evening event attended by the Festival Curators. One of the Curators – Bob – opened the event with a poem about his life. The auditorium was completely silent as he spoke his words and a deep sense of intergenerational care and understanding was evident as the young people, their parents and carers listened intently. The Curators felt this event offered hope for the future and were extremely moved by the young people’s interest in their lives. At the end of the performance a woman approached me to tell me that three generations of her family had been involved in Every Third Minute – she had watched several Festival productions at the theatre, her daughter had performed in the Youth Theatre showcase, and her mother, who lives with dementia, had enjoyed the three short plays performed in the care home in which she now lives. I felt proud that we were making a difference for that family, and for many others.

Nicky Taylor, producer, Every Third Minute

Support Service for people with dementia, Touchstone, Hamari Yaadain Memory Café, Leeds Beckett University, Northern Film School, TimeSlips and Created Out of Mind. We welcomed numerous visiting artists and companies; a full list of collaborators can be found in our evaluation report (Taylor and Hughes, 2019).²⁴

OUR IMPACT

The impact of the Festival has been personally significant for the Curators, who developed new skills, social connections, confidence and personal growth through their involvement. Co-production work with the Curators continues beyond the festival, taking their ideas into care homes and campaigning through advocacy groups.

²⁴ See: baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ETM_SinglePages_Webversion_Linked.pdf.



The Every Third Minute curators performing at the Still Alice press night. Photo © Anthony Robling.

“It’s like building up muscles, using our skills, getting braver.”

“I realised I still have skills to offer, that I haven’t used since I was working.”

Participant curators

Positive feedback from audiences, artists and participants (with and without dementia) indicated that the festival started conversations, and changed perceptions about dementia, towards more informed and hopeful outlooks.

“It made me feel hopeful for people living with dementia, their life isn’t over, it is just different.”

Audience member

“I understood the subject intellectually before, but now I understand it emotionally better.”

Audience member

The festival’s approach continues to impact the day-to-day activity of Leeds Playhouse, demonstrating a notable ripple effect. Since the festival people with dementia have co-created another major theatre production with a focus on adapting to life with dementia – *Maggie May* (2020/2022) – which had its first reading at Every Third Minute. The Playhouse continues to promote an ethos of involvement and collaboration in dementia-related theatre projects, cementing its dementia friendly approach, which values lived experience and results in greater inclusivity for everyone.

Academic research into the impact of Every Third Minute’s processes has also led to new understandings of the potential of creative co-production with people living with dementia.

MAKE Southwest

PROJECT: A GOOD AGE

ABOUT US

MAKE Southwest was founded as Devon Guild of Craftsmen in 1955 by a small group of makers who were enthusiastic about the idea of promoting the best in regional craftwork. From 1956, and for the next 30 years, annual exhibitions were held at various venues throughout Devon.

In 1986, with David Leach as a driving force, the organisation took the step of purchasing Riverside Mill, a large stone building adjacent to the River Bovey. The building now houses a large workshop/event space, retail gallery and two exhibition galleries which together stage up to 20 exhibitions throughout the year.

In November 2021 the organisation changed its name to MAKE Southwest to represent its offering more accurately. MAKE Southwest is a registered educational charity, which uses profits from its trading ventures, to subsidise our exhibition programme, hands-on projects in schools and with community groups, in-house workshops, teaching and maker support and development.

Apart from a handful of items, the MAKE Southwest retail gallery sells only the work of its Members, while the exhibitions programme aims to show a broad range of the best craft from around the country.

Prior to *Celebrating Age*, we delivered several community projects, in partnership with other organisations, and facilitated outreach workshops for all age groups. Our areas of interest are promoting an appreciation of craft, making skills and materials knowledge, along with the recognised mental health and wellbeing benefits of creative activity.

ABOUT A GOOD AGE

For our *Celebrating Age* project, we partnered with Devon Libraries who provided venues in five Devon towns with reasonable public transport links. Make Southwest recruited the tutors, makers already known to us as good, empathetic, workshop leaders, who devised the workshops collaboratively with the participants. The project had two strands: a community strand and a programme for professional artists.

The overall aim of the community strand of the project was to support older people at risk of loneliness and isolation and the theme of all five of the workshop programmes was 'Change in my Time'. Each tutor worked, with their participants, in one of the following disciplines: photography, ceramics, paper, willow weaving and mixed media. The participants were mainly women (with the youngest in their sixties and the oldest in their eighties).

“ I am a child of the Second World War generation and have received memories and associated artefacts from both World Wars. What do I do with these inherited memories, especially in light of current conflicts? There is always a danger of complacency. Because I was not damaged doesn't mean I was untouched. ”

Participant

MAKE Southwest's
Creditor group.
Photo © Jessica Pearson/
Shimnix Films.



Alongside the community workshops, we commissioned five professional artists, all born before 1948, to make new work also responding to the theme of change within their lifetime. The artists were paid a fixed commission, something which they all commented on as being a very rare thing for their age group. The commissions represented a significant investment in their careers, providing funding as well as a new audience. For each of them, the theme prompted reflection.

The final part of the project included a showcase exhibition in each of the five libraries where the workshops took place, and then we held a nine-week exhibition, showing the work of the community participants, alongside the commissioned artists work, in our main exhibition gallery.

For the tutors, a notable difference between this project and other community projects they had facilitated, was the timescale.

This was a vital aim of the project; to allow the participants time to shape the activities available, to discuss the theme and time to develop their ideas and material skills.

“Having 18 weeks is a luxury; it meant we could go on a bit of a journey and at the same time have conversations about the theme and what it meant.”

Tutor, Crediton group

OUR IMPACT

As the community workshop activity progressed, it became apparent that friendships were developing between the participants. The Photography group (in Crediton) have continued to meet up weekly, using a room in a local pub, and are very supportive of each other's work as well as assisting those in the group who have mobility and/or other issues. We know that the other groups also enabled some ongoing friendships and encouraged a much more positive outlook for some of the participants. The theme of the workshops, *Change in my Time*, was the starting point for many conversations. These encompassed issues such as the austerity of the post-war years versus what was seen as the over-consumption of the present day. Conversely, some of the participants were delighted to be introduced to aspects of the Digital Age such as YouTube and Photoshop and the entire Exeter group spent several of their sessions in the Exeter Library Fab Lab making a collective piece of work with the laser cutter.

The impact of the final exhibition on the workshop participants was significant. They were delighted to see their work shown alongside that of the 'professionals'. (We hired a bus so they all made it to the opening party.)

“At the Private View, the daughter of one of the participants told us that the project had been a lifeline for her mother. It coincided with the serious illness, and then death, of her husband who she cared for at home. Her only outing each week was to attend the workshops where she was able to engage completely with the project, talk to the other participants, and return home feeling energised and capable again.”

MIMA

PROJECT: CELEBRATING AGE PROGRAMME



Creating a mosaic in a toilet! Photo courtesy of mima.

ABOUT US

MIMA, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, has a civic agenda to put art into action. We connect art, people and ideas. We work with communities to address current issues within politics, economics and culture. Our programmes encompass urgent themes such as climate change, migration, inequality, ageing and wellbeing.

We offer changing exhibitions, collection displays, learning activities, projects and community-focused initiatives that involve many artists and publics. These programmes promote creativity for everyone in ordinary life, through education, debate and making.

As part of Teesside University, and home to its School of Arts and Creative Industries, we play a key role in the cultural life of the Tees Valley and wider North East. Our ambition is that a range of constituents shape who we are: a public site, open and accessible, diverse and inclusive, and used by all.

“ We feel like after all this time we belong in MIMA and MIMA belongs to us. ”

Participant

A participant's story

“I started coming to the group because my counsellor told me that it would do me good to join a group, to get to know people and talk to people, to get me out the house. I came to the group and I really enjoyed it.

Joining the group has made such a difference in my life. I am a nervous person and I spent all my time on my own or caring for my mam. I do not find it easy in groups but I'm made to feel so welcome; I bring my mam along who is 96,

everyone is so kind to her and we love trying new things and just having a natter. I have never been any good at art but that doesn't matter. It feels like a family, it's loud and busy and everyone makes sure that you have a cup of tea.

Sometimes we don't really do anything except drink tea and chat, then other times we can't stop crafting. I have missed the bus a fair few times. Coming to the group takes my mind off the worries I have in my head, I feel safe and have made some wonderful friends.”

We are a world-leading gallery and artistic research centre. MIMA is an accredited museum and active within national and international subject specialist professional networks. MIMA continues to build its role as a cultural leader regionally, nationally and internationally.

“It's great that we are able to explore and walk around the galleries, nobody bats an eyelid if we have a “senior moment” or get mixed up, and even if we shouted it wouldn't be a problem. It feels like there is an understanding, the gallery is a space to feel safe in. That's pretty unusual in a gallery, to feel like you have a voice, and you are seen.”

Participant

ABOUT OUR CELEBRATING AGE PROGRAMME

As part of planning a dementia-friendly creative programme, MIMA visited other settings, working with colleagues from other venues and chatting with artists to find out how we might offer a series of weekly workshops for those living with dementia, as well as for their families and caregivers.

Dementia-friendly provision has traditionally centred on reminiscence and memory-based activities, while MIMA's approach for the *Celebrating Age* project sought to engage with people's imagination in a fun and relaxed environment.

Our programme served people living with dementia, their families and caregivers, but it also welcomed elders who felt lonely or isolated. The programme a range of art forms, including visual arts, writing and zine publishing, a mosaic (in a toilet!), storytelling, music and conversations.

It evolved organically from its inception, taking its dementia friendly programme beyond the walls of MIMA and into community settings. By using existing community spaces around the town, we sought to ensure that people took part in activities in places that they were familiar and comfortable with. The aim was to activate these community spaces, and the resources around them, so that social and creative practices become a sustainable part of people's everyday lives.

The programme worked in partnership with Thirteen, and North Star Housing Group alongside artists, volunteers, friends, colleagues and family.

“Thirteen has a long-standing history of collaborating with MIMA to encourage older people to engage in creative activities as a tool to help happy ageing. We are developing a full programme of work around how we support our customers to live well, and this project is a fantastic way of contributing to that.”

Angela Corner, Head of Community Resilience, Thirteen

“It’s an exciting time to be working in partnership with MIMA on a series of ‘Doorstep Portraits’ that capture and document life and the experiences of residents and families living in North Star accommodation.”

**Coral Smith, Community Connector,
North Star Housing Group**

mima.art

An artist’s story

Jamie is a long-standing volunteer with MIMA and *Celebrating Age*. Since he has started working with the group he has joined an art collective called Art Lab Teesside, an artist-run social enterprise, and has worked on a showcase for autistic artists. Taking part in the *Celebrating Age* project enabled Jamie to gain valuable experience and skills, which have given him the confidence and self-belief to make a life-changing decision to apply for university.

“The sessions have been really important because I have been able to work with so many people on projects, working with many different artists. It’s been great for my profile as an artist and helped with my university application. The award for Volunteer of the Year has been great in helping me stand out. Being part of *Celebrating Age* has made me feel I have a value to many in the community.”
Jamie, volunteer and artist



Illustration of mima participants by Katie Chappell.

Moving Memory Dance Theatre

PROJECT: LOVE GROWS



Moving Memory's core dance company performing for Love Grows. Photo © Matt Wilson.

ABOUT US

Moving Memory Dance Theatre is an innovative, collaborative and inclusive physical performance company which has been performing in town centres, public spaces, festivals and theatres for over 12 years. Led and delivered by older women, our key objective is to improve quality of life and equality for older people and other marginalised communities. Based in East Kent, we produce performances, workshops and training, offer guidance to others and contribute to research so that people across the country perceive

ageing differently. We are recognised nationally as an organisation working to address the pernicious and ingrained ageism in individuals and across society which the UN's Global Report on Ageism, March 2021, says 'leads to poorer health, social isolation, earlier deaths and cost(s) economies billions'²⁵.

ABOUT LOVE GROWS

Love Grows²⁶ was the result of a six-month project led by the company and Intergen31 in partnership with Gulbenkian Theatre

²⁵ *Global report on ageism*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. Available at: www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2021/03/global-report-on-ageism.

²⁶ Watch a short video of Love Grows: vimeo.com/356251765.

Canterbury and part of our *Celebrating Age* programme. As part of our commitment to sharing the benefits of dance, movement, telling stories and performing, we brought together young pupils from four Kent primary schools with older people in four care settings to share stories of love and friendship across the generations, animating these stories through movement, music and spoken word and creating a promenade performance, premiered by a company of 27 dancers (professional and non-professional) at bOing! International Family Festival at the Gulbenkian Theatre Canterbury, in August 2019.

This project brought together a diverse group of participants, old and young, with a rich mix of backgrounds life experiences and stories including from Age UK Medway (COGS group) – a group of people with early-stage dementias; Age UK Thanet – a mixed group of regular day centre clients; Red House Nursing Home Canterbury, frailer older people in a residential home; and a specially created group of quite active older people living independently in Littlebourne. Our schools were the Academy of Gillingham, Cliftonville Primary School, Margate, Canterbury Academy Primary and Littlebourne Primary School, Canterbury. Workshops were led by an intergenerational Moving Memory team of Love Grows ‘Gardeners’ aged between 14-88.

“This was an important opportunity for the different generations to connect. Everyone involved has benefitted from this unique experience.”

**Caroline Spackman, Assistant Head Teacher,
Cliftonville Primary School**

OUR IMPACT

The immediate impact of the project was far reaching, crystallising the value of the company practice which emphasises creativity and co-creation, placing participant voices and bodies centre stage. The project established new connections and relationships between individuals and organisations which have continued beyond the project, building strong community ties. In Littlebourne, members

of the independent group of older people expressed their wish to carry on visiting the school to set up a gardening club. In Gillingham, the school and Age UK – who are in neighbouring buildings but had not made contact before Love Grows – planned to develop the relationship.

“... the intergeneration dance theatre project was a successful intervention to counter negative age stereotypes and negative self-stereotypes which may serve protective functions in terms of health and health behaviours.”

Report by Ian Farr, University of Kent, 2019

Long term, the project helped define Moving Memory’s practice and purpose, especially the priority of reaching the wider community, not just older people, but other marginalised groups, exploring public spaces such as shopping centres, libraries, high streets, shifting the shape of public spaces toward creative engagement, and building vibrant healthy communities. In working together with others and acquiring new skills, participants not only become more active and socially connected, they also felt a stronger sense of identity and purpose in society, reducing internalised ageism and marginalisation, with dividends for individuals as well as the wider community.

“I am more confident and self assured of my status in society now. That is a big statement which is entirely true and due to the people I worked with and to the wider MM Company...”

“I would say it was quite tiring physically and mentally. I think it pushes you and you do more than you think you can do. It stops you getting to that mindset of I’m getting older now and I am going to ache and not walk far. It does energise you.”

Participants

Participants' story

The connections between young and old were captured beautifully at Cliftonville primary school when Josh (6 years old) and Margaret Simons sat down to have a chat with film-maker, Bob Karper. Josh eyes lit up with curiosity as Margaret described how she rescued her dog, Simon Simons, from a torrential downpour – he stayed with her from then on. The warmth between the two grew as they went on to chat about Josh's hamster 'Snowy Fire'. They left happily together, as if old mates, off to do a biscuit portrait of each other and to rehearse the dance they'd been creating as part of a team. The 'Generation Gap' was gone.

Moving Memory's work sits within a movement which proposes that older people should be co-producers in developing strategies and services which address the wide-ranging issues around our ageing population. Within that sector, we are committed to the use of developing personal creativity and artistic production as the tools to bring about positive change in communities and wider society. Currently, there is an enormous gap between the need for ways of engaging with and empowering older people and provision of opportunities. Moving Memory is committed to playing a leading part in bridging that gap.

Our new, three-year strategic plan articulates our desire to significantly increase and extend our services and respond to demand from participants and local organisations across Kent and Medway. Pilot work including performances and participatory activity by our core performance ensemble has taken place in four localities: Dover, Medway, Tunbridge Wells and Whitstable. We are now working with local partners to develop ongoing hubs of activity so that we can offer multiple access points and progression routes for a wide range of older people, especially those from areas of significant deprivation.

Rural Arts

PROJECT: ART ON YOUR DOORSTEP



Art On Your Doorstep printmaking workshop. Photo courtesy of Rural Arts.

ABOUT US

Rural Arts is a charity that delivers inspiring and inclusive creative opportunities that enrich lives and connect communities. Working across 3,500 square miles of England's largest county, our vision is creativity at the heart of every community in North Yorkshire. We provide over 400 events and activities each year at The Courthouse in Thirsk, which is also home to a café, artisan shop and rooms to hire. We lead a range of outreach programmes to support vulnerable people across North Yorkshire, with a specialism in supporting older people. We programme 70 professional performances per year into rural venues across North Yorkshire and the Tees Valley. Rural Arts was founded in 1993 and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

ABOUT ART ON YOUR DOORSTEP

'Art On Your Doorstep' was a two-year action research project exploring innovative ways to increase the participation rates of people aged over 75. We worked from the grassroots up, testing and delivering a range of creative interventions both at The Courthouse and within a ten-mile radius. Making connections with partners who work in the community was crucial. Alongside Thirsk Community Care, a charity that provided support to older people in our locality, other partners included three GP practices, NHS Health Visitors, the Living Well team and Social Workers at North Yorkshire County Council, and Broadacres, a not-for-profit housing association.

A participant's story

G joined the project at 84 years old. He was living alone following the death of his spouse, and found it difficult to develop new contacts and interests. He fell in love with our project, describing it as “very friendly and stimulating”. The project gave him “greater confidence to explore and pursue new experiences”, leading him to say, “the future is still exciting!”. Five years later, G is still attending Heart and Craft, alongside other Rural Arts’ sessions almost every week. G is the perfect example of how our *Celebrating Age*-funded project reached isolated older people, and how its impact continues to this day – and will continue for years to come.

“The future is still exciting.”

G, participant (see box)

Across the project, Rural Arts provided 168 activities to more than 1,250 people over the age of 75. We offered a monthly programme of two-hour group sessions of creative activities and relaxed performances, working with professional artists and performers, in village halls around the area.

The Art Café was hosted once a month at The Courthouse, where participants could enjoy an hour of creativity and a cup of tea in the relaxed, social atmosphere. The group began with six regular attendees and grew to 25 by the end of the funded period. The one-to-one sessions brought photographers, poets and visual artists into the homes of housebound older people in order to increase the accessibility of our programme and improve the wellbeing of people often overlooked and most isolated. We also worked with local musicians, placing them on a Thirsk Community Care minibus to perform live singalongs to those using the service to get them to their shopping. We also ran one-off events, including a tea dance, a peer-led musical sharing and an open day event which worked with local partners to provide a day of creative activity.

OUR IMPACT

‘Art on Your Doorstep’ has had a significant impact on participants, partners and our organisation. Following the success of the Art Café and one-to-one visits models, we have developed, and secured funding for, two long-term projects: Heart and Craft and ArtBeat.

Heart and Craft launched in 2019, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, and provided free monthly creative activities in eight village venues. These venues had been identified through Art on Your Doorstep, so we were delighted to be able to continue our partnership with them. Heart and Craft has run continuously since, including via digital and postal workshops and an online exhibition during the pandemic. From 2019 to present, Heart and Craft has delivered 281 sessions to 3,100 participants, all thanks to original investment from the *Celebrating Age* fund.

In 2023, thanks to funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and the Henry Smith Charity, Heart and Craft will provide fortnightly rather than monthly activities, doubling our impact. In 2024, the project will expand to eight more communities – doubling our impact yet again.

In early 2020, we secured support from our *Celebrating Age* partner, North Yorkshire County Council, and the Peter Sowerby Foundation to launch ArtBeat, a programme of workshops in care homes and one-to-one sessions in housebound people’s homes. Due to the pandemic, ArtBeat was only able to launch in mid-2022, but has already reached 415 people via over 100 sessions. The impact of the project is palpable.

“It was the first time in months I’ve enjoyed myself. The session completely bought me out of my shell.”

Participant

Suffolk Artlink

PROJECT: MAKE, DO & FRIENDS

ABOUT US

Suffolk Artlink is a participatory arts charity that brings creativity into the heart of communities. We develop and deliver inclusive arts programmes that support people's health and wellbeing by bringing skills, support networks, confidence and joy to people in the East. Our collaborative practice with partners, artists and communities supports the delivery of our initiatives to increase participation, enable people to realise their creative potential and support wider social impacts.

ABOUT MAKE, DO & FRIENDS

In 2018, Suffolk Artlink secured *Celebrating Age* funding for 'Make, Do & Friends' (MD&F), a project developed to bring high-quality participatory arts outreach to rurally isolated older people in Suffolk. The project was developed to enhance rural Suffolk's limited creative offerings for this demographic, and worked in partnership with the Rural Coffee Caravan (a charity that helps rurally isolated people in Suffolk to access services and information) and DanceEast (a national dance organisation based in Suffolk).

Our partners provided diverse knowledge of both rural Suffolk and older adults which supported MD&F's journey. Together we developed a consortium to test new ways of both reaching people and working with communities to develop new creative programmes. DanceEast brought participatory dance performances to village halls – allowing moments of celebration; the Rural Coffee Caravan hosted creative artists as part of their village visits, offering people different reasons to come along and new ways to connect.

Make, Do & Friends worked in some of the most isolated, rural locations across Suffolk. The project primarily reached adults over the age of 55, engaging with nearly 700 individuals between 2018 and 2021.

Our team of artists devised creative activities to promote and celebrate connections within a community – even when it wasn't possible to physically meet due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During this period our artists found different creative ways to support people to stay connected and introduce the basics of certain digital technologies from downloading and using editing apps, to jazzing up photos, to how to get the most out of Zoom. Remote sessions offered safety for many.

“ Although Zoom doesn't give you that (real) human interaction, there are many other benefits... Like doing it in the comfort of your own home... not having to worry what time you've got to set off, will there be parking? Will there be traffic? Will I be late? Do I have money for parking? Do I have enough fuel to get there, etc? And for people with anxiety, doing it online takes a lot of that out of the equation... ”

Participant

We ran poetry workshops, radio drama listening sessions, used Padlet to map some of our favourite trees and learnt how to add text to images to create multi-layered pictures. Our artists collaborated with village residents to create artworks, including art trails of photographs and plaques created by residents.

A Make, Do & Friends digital photography session. Photo courtesy of Suffolk Artlink.





Dance theatre company Casson & Friends at Wingfield Barns. Photo courtesy of Suffolk Artlink.

They wrote poems in response to conversations over the phone and collaborated over email with residents to create an illustrated map of local sites.

We also created a bank of online and printable activity guides – often using the local environment as a starting point. Regular slots by our artists on BBC Radio Suffolk brought a different way of reaching people, offering creative ideas to do at home during the pandemic and signposting people to our blogsite. Postcards distributed by Rural Coffee Caravan and local contacts invited people to share their ideas of what their village is made of.

Inspired by postcards sent in from three villages, the wonderful artwork created during sessions and conversations with participants, Casson & Friends dance theatre company created a unique dance to celebrate all that people love about living in rural Suffolk. Feeding ducks in Risby, growing pumpkins in Laxfield, walking sheep paths and fending off thunder flies in Combs all feature in the film, along with countless other personal

experiences. The dancers spent two days in rehearsals at DanceEast before travelling to each village to perform the dance in situ²⁷.

OUR IMPACT

The three main areas that Make, Do & Friends worked to make a difference were: improving a sense of wellbeing, reducing feelings of loneliness; and developing new skills.

The project enhanced a sense of community and boosted participants' wellbeing.

“It’s been so lovely to have a laugh with everyone this morning and to come together... when you live by yourself it can get quite lonely and this is just a lovely place to come. I’ve had 90 minutes of laughing with other people.”

Participant

²⁷ www.makedoandfriends.co.uk/2021/01/13/tinydance-suffolk

“ I loved everything about it.
It was good to learn a new skill...
which I have bored my family
endlessly with! ”

Participant

Face-to-face sessions offered real-time connection that created positive change. Technology enabled a connective lifeline during the pandemic and uncovered new ways to improve accessibility in our work. We embraced a blended model of delivery in Make, Do & Friends which created a legacy used in other Artlink projects today.



**A Make, Do & Friends digital photography session.
Photo courtesy of Suffolk Artlink.**



Out and about with Duckie's Posh Bus.
Photo © Peter Robertshaw.

Reflections

Looking across the case studies as well as the published evaluation, many themes can be detected, some of which are common across participatory arts but can be especially true in creative ageing. Here, for starters, is a 'baker's dozen'...

DIVERSITY

The fundamental principle of creative ageing should be to not treat older people as a homogenous group. This was explored in multiple ways by the grants made in this programme.

In some respects, older people become more diverse as an age group through the increased chances of physical or cognitive health problems. This is well understood in the increased possibility of living with dementia and this was sensitively and empoweringly recognised in the Every Third Minute festival run by Leeds Playhouse (see page 40). New Writing South concentrated on the older LGBT+ community in its Hear Us Out verbatim theatre pieces.²⁸

The older population is rather less ethnically diverse than the population as a whole and fewer people from ethnic minorities are living in care homes than would be proportionate. A number of *Celebrating Age* grants sought to focus on ethnically diverse communities. Pavilion in Leeds commissioned a visual artist to co-produce new work with older people from ethnic minorities with shared histories in the local textile industry. This led to this telling story by one participant: *"In a silhouette workshop run by Pavilion, one Sikh man was keen to have his silhouette done: he had tried*

to do this in Scarborough during the 1970s and had been turned away on the grounds that 'we don't do turbans.'"

The project worker explained: *"No one could have predicted that that story would come up, but it meant he was able to talk about it, probably for the first time, in a safe and supportive group where people empathised and then actually get his silhouette done, which then felt quite symbolic."*

In other respects, like the arts in general, these projects mainly struggled to engage men on a proportional basis. Only 26% of participants identified as men and 69% as women across the programme as a whole. In seeking to address this significant systemic issue, in 2016 the Foundation published *A Handbook for the Cultural Engagement of Older Men* by Ed Watts at the Whitworth Gallery.²⁹

Beyond these examples, there is much work to do in this area, and this is a priority for the recently established Creative Ageing Development Agency (CADA). Diversity has also been explored further in another publication by the Baring Foundation called *On Creative Ageing and Diversity*.³⁰

AGEISM AND VISIBILITY

There are many forms of prejudice, and it could be argued that ageism is challenged the least³¹. A sign of this is the degree to which it can be internalised by some older people. In this context part of the answer to ageism is showing older people as creative and capable. This includes being visible in cultural spaces, like the Still Lively Wednesday group at Wolverhampton Gallery and its resulting exhibitions (see page 21) or the Arts Diamonds

²⁸ hearusout.live/events

²⁹ *A handbook for cultural engagement with older men*, Ed Watts/Whitworth Gallery, 2015. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/a-handbook-for-cultural-engagement-with-older-men.

³⁰ *On diversity and creative ageing*, Baring Foundation, 2020. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/on-diversity-and-creative-ageing.

³¹ 'Ageism is one of the last socially acceptable prejudices', Kirsten Weir, *American Psychological Association*: vol 54: 2, 2023. Available at: www.apa.org/monitor/2023/03/cover-new-concept-of-aging.



Pottery in Honiton Library with MAKE Southwest. Photo © Jessica Pearson/Shinnix Films.

exhibition in the main Gateshead library (see page 29). Ideas Test staged many public concerts for their newly created sea shanties (see page 35).

OLDER PEOPLE'S LEADERSHIP AND VOICE

Celebrating Age was a participatory arts and culture programme. The concept of participation is open to many interpretations. It is helpful to apply 'the ladder' of participation that was developed by the American sociologist Sherry Arnstein to talk about citizen's empowerment to arts participation too.³² This has three progressive rungs for genuine power – partnership, delegated power and citizen's power. There are many examples in the programme of artists sharing power (as well as skills) with older people and allowing them to take the driving seat. Moving Memory Dance Company is unusual in being an arts organisation led by two older women (see page 49). Why doesn't this happen more, as is the case with other aspects of identity? An interesting example was the mac in Birmingham giving roles to older people

as curators (something done increasingly by the museum and gallery sector with different groups in society). Older people living with dementia created scripts with coaches as part of the Leeds Playhouse Every Third Minute festival as well as forming a group called 'the curators' (see page 40). It is interesting that different descriptions were used for roles – 'ambassadors' came up for several projects (such as the New Vic and FACT Liverpool) which has a nice ring, but it isn't always clear what decision-making power this entails.

“Moving Memory is unusual in being an arts organisation led by two older women. Why doesn't this happen more?”

However, it feels as if there is still quite a long way to go in putting older people's leadership and voice at the heart of creative ageing. Perhaps there should be a presumption of older people's leadership, which should only

³² Sherry R. Arnstein, 'A Ladder Of Citizen Participation', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35:4, 216-224, 1969. www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01944366908977225?instN=&needAccess=true&journalCode=rjpa19.

be constrained when there are good reasons for doing so, for example if the older people concerned didn't actually want that role.

PARTNERSHIPS

To receive a *Celebrating Age* grant, arts and culture organisations were required to work with an older person's organisation, so of course partnerships are here in abundance. Indeed, it is hard to think of any arts organisations working on creative ageing in the wider field which do not rely on such partnerships. So, the question here is whether these were extended and improved through this programme. 548 organisations were identified as partners in the programme. Given the focus of the programme, it is unsurprising that care homes and local Age UK branches were the most frequent new partners.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION

The Baring Foundation has long seen creative ageing as a glue for a society that is fractured in many ways. Our 2013 grants programme specifically funded arts organisations to provide a bridge between care homes and the local community. Covid-19 lockdowns increased isolation for everyone but especially older people, and the additional grants made by DCMS focussed on reducing this. Magic Me has long been a leader in intergenerational arts in London and now beyond. Another example among many is Intergenerational Music Making in Surrey. It feels as if intergenerational work



ArtBeat one-to-one visit felting session. ArtBeat is a successor to Rural Arts' Art on your Doorstep programme.

happens more often in performance pieces: 200+ young people from the Youth Theatre at Leeds Playhouse engaged with the Playhouse's dementia programme (see page 40); FACT Liverpool's project brought Liverpool youth arts organisations into their work (see page 26); and the 'Love Grows' project by Moving Memory Dance involved pupils from four primary schools (see page 49).

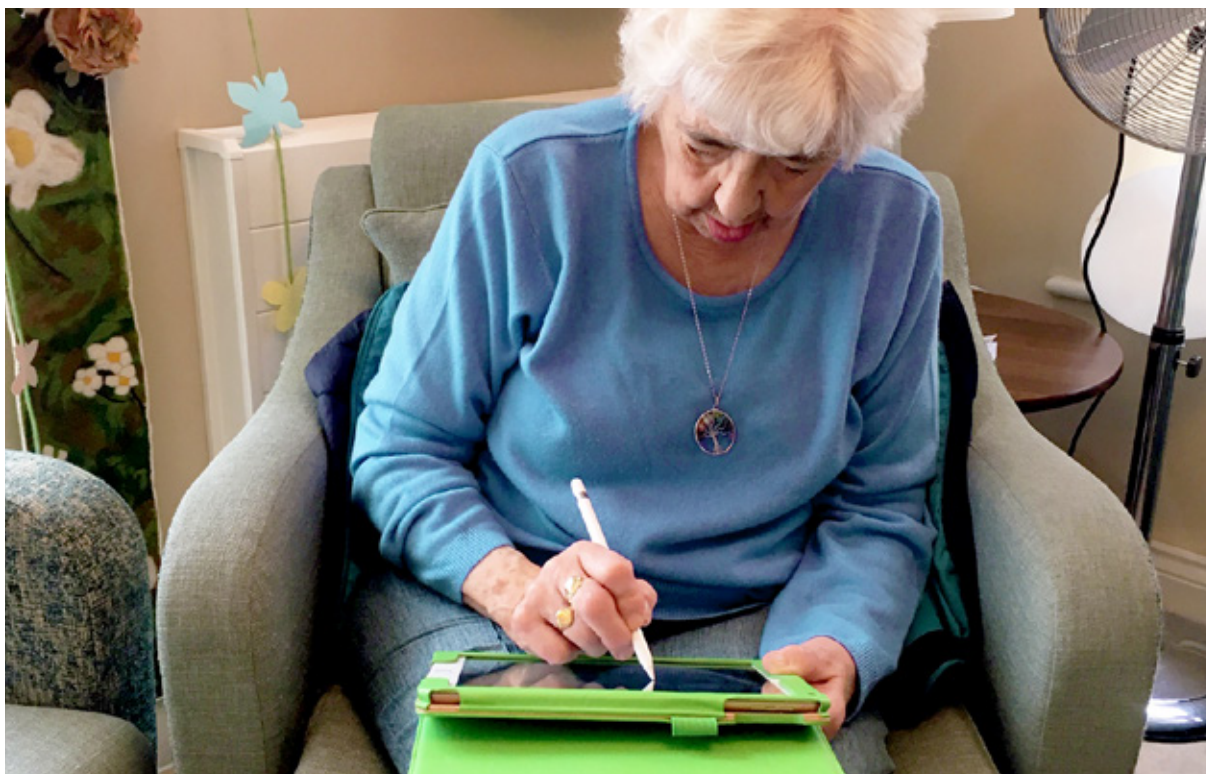
RURALITY

Grants were made through an open process and awarded on merit. A high proportion of the 32 grants awarded worked in rural parts of England, especially: Independent Arts on the Isle of Wight (see page 38); Live Theatre in Hampshire, Rural Arts in Thirsk, North Yorkshire (see page 52); Arts Alive in Shropshire (see page 15); Cinderford Artspace in the Forest of Dean, the Wiltshire Music Centre (see page 18); Suffolk Artlink (see page 54) and the Devon Guild of Craftsmen (renamed as MAKE Southwest) (see page 43). These organisations are highly experienced at working in a rural context and its specific challenges, most especially around transport. This often meant going to multiple small local venues (56 venues in the case of Celebrating Age Wiltshire alone). MAKE Southwest used libraries throughout Devon because of their relatively good transport links. Suffolk Artlink partnered with the Rural Coffee Caravan, a charity that helps isolated people access services.

The challenges of rural locations led to lots of invention, such as delivering arts along with eggs door to door and delivering projects in people's homes (Rural Arts, page 53), and using the advantages of being in the countryside to combine art and nature (both Cinderford Arts and Celebrating Age Wiltshire, see page 18). It is interesting that many projects also explored living in a rural area as part of participants' identity.

ARTS IN CARE HOMES

Unlike the earlier joint art fund between the Arts Council England and the Baring Foundation, *Celebrating Age* was not exclusively focussed on working in care homes. Even so, many grantees worked in care homes or sheltered housing including: Arts Alive (see page 15), Entelechy Arts/The Albany, Cinderford Artspace, Leeds



Digital art-making. Photo courtesy of Arts Alive/Media Active.

Playhouse (see page 40), the New Vic, Moving Memory Dance (see page 49) and Writing East Midlands. The Bluecoat worked exclusively in a retirement village run by the Belong group. The effect of this last grant can be seen in this quotation from an Activity Coordinator:

“The artists have contributed to opening up the minds of our team, their understanding of what art is – it’s opened their minds to ‘it’s not just painting a picture’. You’re expressing yourself as a person, no-one’s telling you what to do – that’s freedom. Being expressive of oneself, being able to say ‘this interests me’, I’ve done that, that’s wellbeing isn’t it? I’m sure you’ll have heard change stories about individual people – customers and family members – whereas you need to get the staff. It’s like a pyramid, with staff at the top – they need to learn and it trickles down. And for the sustainability, after you’ve gone.”

This work became much more difficult during the pandemic and organisations needed to turn to working either digitally and/or through

working online. This is explored more in a report in 2019 by the Baring Foundation: *Key Workers – creative ageing in lockdown and after*.³³

The Foundation has also explored the need for work in care homes to take place in a more joined up way and with greater support from the care regulator in a report called *Every care home a creative home*.³⁴ This report argues that a systemic approach is needed to make creative ageing in care homes a right for all residents rather than available only to the more fortunate, an approach that is much more evident in Finland than the UK, for example.³⁵

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

The vast majority of creative ageing activity in the *Celebrating Age* programme up to 2020 was delivered in person. However, digital approaches to creative ageing activity in general, and indeed in the wider participatory arts sector, were then in their infancy compared

³³ *Key workers: creative ageing in lockdown and after*, David Cutler, 2020. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/key-workers-creative-ageing-in-lockdown-and-after.

³⁴ *Every care home a creative home*, David Cutler, 2022. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/every-care-home-a-creative-home.

³⁵ *Love in a cold climate: creative ageing in Finland*, David Cutler, Raisa Karttunen and Jenni Räsänen, 2021. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/love-in-a-cold-climate-creative-ageing-in-finland.

to in-person work. The Baring Foundation had published several reports exploring practice in this area as well as creating a joint fund with what was then the Nominet Trust³⁶. As we all know, the Covid-19 lockdowns turbo-charged a major change in the use of digital engagement and we explored this in our report *Key workers; creative ageing in lockdown and after*.³⁷ Helix Arts was typical in moving from entirely in person dance to fully remote working in a matter of weeks (see page 32).

ARTISTS

Celebrating Age funding both provided artists already skilled in this area with fulfilling work, as well as introducing new artists to the field through training and employment. Creative ageing in the UK is partly based on a strong tradition of participatory arts work. This tradition is essential to the growth that will be needed in the sector as the population continues to age.

More thought may need to be given to the support needs of participatory artists in general (as is happening with the Quality Framework for arts and health work which is under development by the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance³⁸). However, here we are concerned with participatory artists working with older people. The Baring Foundation commissioned a scoping review of training provision in 2018.³⁹ Training and advice is needed for understanding how to work in care homes and how to work with frail older people, including when they live with dementia. Affective or counselling support for artists including for when participants become very ill or die is also needed.

To what extent should older artists be preferred when undertaking this work? MAKE Southwest (see page 43) commissioned five artists born before 1948 to make work as part of the project. 75% of the artists employed by Arts Alive were themselves older (see page 15).

They said:

“From the outset we intended to recruit artists who had specialist knowledge relevant to the project, art form and inclusive practice. If they didn’t have significant experience of working with older people, we looked for personal experience of ageing or of supporting older friends or family. This proved crucial, ensuring insight but avoiding stereotyped assumptions.”

Finally, this programme shows that creative ageing shouldn’t be seen as ‘worthy’, and perhaps a little second rate, as an area for artists to work in. It can be ambitious, challenging and artistically exciting.

“‘Creative ageing’ can be ambitious, challenging and artistically exciting.”

UNIVERSALITY

These grants show that creative ageing is relevant to any arts or culture organisation, any art form and any community. Indeed, the conclusions and recommendations proposed by the independent evaluation by Imogen Blood Associates for the programme are largely the underlying principles for good participatory arts practice whatever the audience.

LEGACY

Although this has not been tested systematically, it would appear that all grantees have continued with creative ageing activities. (Admittedly most of them were already fairly active in this area.) Some organisations have indicated that they have substantially increased their creative ageing programme after winning additional funding. One example is Rural Arts which has secured grants for two extra creative ageing programmes as well as being employed by the County Council to run consultations with older people using creative techniques (see page 52). Celebrating Age Wiltshire has

³⁶ *‘Quite an adventure’: some lessons from digital arts projects with older people*, Imogen Blood, Lorna Easterbrook & Mark Robinson, 2019. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/quite-an-adventure-some-lessons-from-digital-arts-projects-with-older-people.

³⁷ *Key workers: creative ageing in lockdown and after*, David Cutler, 2020. Available at: baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/key-workers-creative-ageing-in-lockdown-and-after.

³⁸ See: www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/resources/creative-health-quality-framework.

³⁹ *Arts in care homes: a rapid mapping of training provision*, Penny Allen, 2018. baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/arts-in-care-homes-a-rapid-mapping-of-training-provision.



Chine Colle workshop for the Art Diamonds with artist Marcia Ley. Photo courtesy of Gateshead Libraries.

expanded to working out of eleven venues using a major grant from the National Lottery Community Fund (see page 18), and projects like a photography club in Crediton live on (see page 43). Helix Arts has added a dedicated strand of work with older people to its repertoire called Dial It Up (see page 32).

A number of projects also said that it has changed the culture of their organisations and their practice in working with older people or their relationships with older people's organisations. Arts Alive simply described this as learning and inspiration.

FUN

Finally, although creative ageing is important for so many things including those grown-up sounding words like purpose and meaning, we all deserve some fun too. And it feels like *Celebrating Age* delivered in that respect too.

"There was a convivial joy in everyone being together, the instant nourishment of a cream tea and a chinwag, a trepidatious excitement about being exposed to the elements, safe in

the knowledge that every need is nonetheless looked after, the hysterical resemblance the pac-a-macs bore to bin bags, a sense that light is appearing at the end of the lockdown tunnel, and an overriding jubilation of being at once free and connected."

Posh Club – Duckie.

"We had a laugh as we got caught out in the break. Being older means you have to run to the loo more! During the interval we were late back in but it was a little dance studio so we couldn't walk up the tiered seating as it was pitch black and had to sit on the first row. Fantastic view of the dancers until they stripped down to their undies as one of the routines! I didn't know where to look, jiggy bits everywhere! But it made me laugh and good on them I think."

Artcore participant.

"BAHHHH HUMBUG! I love this show. I did sing a song at one point and shout 'he's behind you' and got shushed by the ushers which was a bit of a lark."

Artcore participant on going to 'A Christmas Carol' performance.

Conclusion

CELEBRATING LATER LIFE AND THE ROAD AHEAD

We wanted to write this report to share the treasures that were created through what we see as having been a very successful arts programme. *Celebrating Age* is the largest dedicated creative arts programme that we are aware of and it deserves to be recorded. It is a major part of a larger journey to embed and develop creative ageing as a permanent and important part of this nation's cultural life in the same way as arts for children and young people.

These projects also show that there is always more work to be done. In particular, they are taking place while systems that they rely on such as the wider arts sector, local authorities,

the NHS and social care are all under unprecedented pressure. Like other prejudices, there is a continuous need to challenge ageism in the arts world, as everywhere else. And there is clearly much further to go in terms of artists giving over power to older people themselves.

“It is in everyone's interest that creative ageing goes from strength to strength.”



The Still Lively art group. Photo © Ming de Nasty.

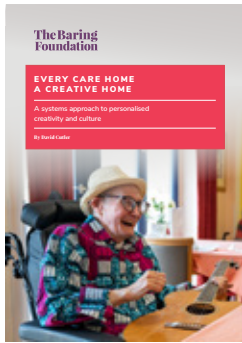
Moving Memory Dance issues this call to action:

“Moving Memory’s work sits within a movement which proposes that older people should be co-producers in developing strategies and services which address the wide-ranging issues around our ageing population. Within that sector, we are committed to the use of developing personal creativity and artistic production as the tools to bring about positive change in communities and wider society. Currently, there is an enormous gap between the need for ways of engaging with and empowering older people and provision of opportunities. Moving Memory is committed to playing a leading part in bridging that gap.”

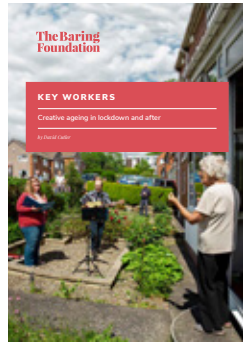
Everyone who is reading this report is ageing. Creative ageing is either already relevant for you or your loved ones or it will become so. It is in everyone’s interest that creative ageing goes from strength to strength.

Selected Baring Foundation publications

All resources can be found on our website www.baringfoundation.org.uk



Every care home a creative home
David Cutler



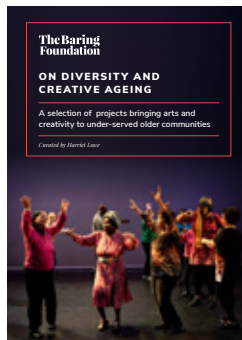
Key workers: creative ageing in lockdown and beyond
David Cutler



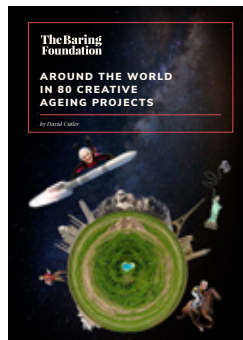
Treasury of arts activities for older people, Volume 1
Liz Postlethwaite



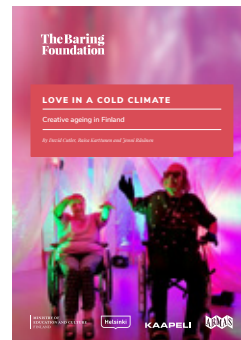
Treasury of arts activities for older people, Volume 2
Liz Postlethwaite



On diversity and creative ageing
Harriet Lowe



Around the world in 80 creative ageing projects
David Cutler



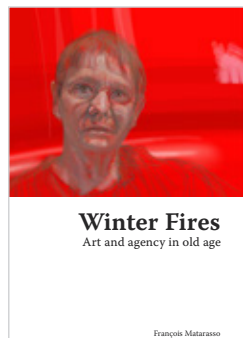
Love in a cold climate: Creative ageing in Finland
David Cutler, Raisa Karttunen and Jenni Räsänen



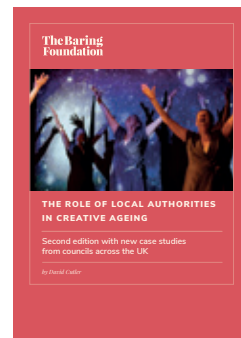
Older and wiser: creative ageing in the UK 2010-19
Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, King's College London



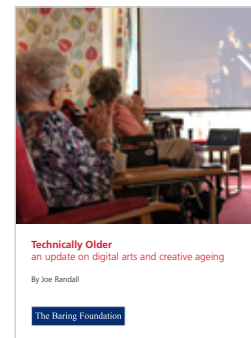
The Artist in Time
Chris Fite-Wassilak and Ollie Harrop



Winter Fires: art and agency in old age
François Matarasso



The role of local authorities in creative ageing
David Cutler



Technically older: an update on digital arts and creative ageing
Joe Randall

APPENDIX 1

Celebrating Age: Programme evaluation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation was conducted by Imogen Blood, Lorna Easterbrook and Mark Robinson. The full evaluation can be found on our website.⁴⁰

PROGRAMME

- Thirty-two projects received a total of £3 million funding for up to three years (or, where extended due to the pandemic, up to four years), with varying start and end dates.
- Projects worked across a wide range of art forms, and delivered workshops, programmes, events, festivals, exhibitions and performances in arts and cultural venues, housing and care settings, and a range of public spaces. Some commissioned new works of art from older artists, and/or exploring ageing or oral histories.
- The pandemic brought challenges and opportunities, with a noticeable increase in both the range of activities and the media through which they were delivered.

PARTICIPANTS

- 31,000 people participated in over 2,500 activities (with an average of four engagements each).
- Nearly three-quarters of participants were aged 65 and over, with 65-69 being the largest participating age group.

- In total, half of participants said that their day-to-day activities are limited because of a long-term health condition or disability (a quarter said they were limited 'a lot').
- Diversity in relation to ethnicity and gender identity varied considerably between projects. Overall and across both rounds of the projects:
 - 26% of participants identified as men and 69% as women
 - 85% were of white British origin with a total of 15% coming from minority ethnic backgrounds (though ethnicity data was missing in many cases).

PARTNERSHIPS

- Funded projects were required to work in partnership, and succeeded in working with a total of 548 partners – an average of 17 partners per project, showing the range of stakeholder interest in this activity.
- Half of projects partnered with their local Age UK, over three-quarters partnered with another arts, cultural or heritage organisation.
- New partnerships resulting from the *Celebrating Age* programme were most frequently with care organisations and with older people's groups.
- Some projects worked in partnership with care homes and their providers, developing activities which introduced artists or arts activity into those settings.

- These partnerships required adaption to the day-to-day routines of care homes, creating new ways of working, but also challenges. This was especially so during Covid, given the lack of access to homes.
- Partnerships benefitted from the six months of planning at the start of the project, and from review and refresh – many projects were impacted by organisational change and turnover within partner organisations.

THEMES/IMPACT

- The programme has highlighted the **huge diversity and individuality** of ‘older people’, and how the arts can enable people to build and restore their sense of identity in later life.
- A common theme in older people’s stories was how projects had **helped redress past exclusion from the arts**, due to direct discrimination, to messages that they were not ‘good enough’, or a perception that they would not be welcome.
- Many projects challenged **ageist assumptions**, however, consistently recognising older people as experts in their own lives is an ongoing journey, as is recognising one’s own role as an older (50+) artist or staff member.
- Many projects worked **intergenerationally**, recognising that this can make a key contribution to tackling ageism, although projects tended to bring young people and older people together, with less involvement for age groups of working age.
- The **creation of communities** was a recurring theme in projects – sometimes this was around an aspect of diversity and/or an art form; however, the particular importance of **connection to place** for many in later life was also clear.
- There was evidence that participation in *Celebrating Age* projects had resulted in positive impacts on **physical and mental wellbeing**, and on **relationships and social isolation**.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS AND FUNDERS

- The programme has demonstrated the value of **longer-term funding**. With a six-month planning period at the outset and up to four years’ funding, projects have been able to develop potentially sustainable partnerships, support individuals on longer journeys of self-development, and there is evidence in some of a whole-organisation approach to mainstreaming the inclusion of older people, e.g. within programming.
- The **peer learning and dissemination to the wider sector** through regular *Celebrating Age* events (run by Family Arts Campaign) and a national evaluation which used participatory methods helped to create profile and community for the developing creative ageing sector. These were welcomed by most projects; however, it is important to **set explicit expectations of projects regarding participation** in peer learning and evaluation activities at the application stage to ensure budget for and commitment to these.
- There has, however, been limited success to date in involving older people in this national movement. There is more work to be done **to develop older people’s voice and leadership in the sector**, and we hope that the Creative Ageing Development Agency will be able to continue working to advocate and build capacity for this to happen.
- The importance of **supporting project staff, and freelance practitioners** emerged as a theme: their skills, relationships and resilience are key to sustainable delivery.
- Having a **range of ‘entry points’ to arts and culture** for people with different life and health circumstances should be considered when designing projects and programmes, including digital, face-to-face, and hybrid approaches.
- The **needs of emerging older professional artists** should be given greater emphasis in policy and development.

- There is clearly potential for further exploration of how intergenerational approaches can be applied in **place-based working**, but without losing some specific focus on older people.
- The importance of working with older people should be **made explicit within Arts Council England's *Let's Create* strategy** and its implementation.

CONCLUSIONS AND LEARNING FOR ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH OLDER PEOPLE

Programme design

- Supporting long-term vision and partnerships through funding which allows for this kind of longevity can lead to stronger legacy, in terms of delivery, design and partnership. It has encouraged many to be more strategic about their approach to partners and commissioning.
- Consider the complex realities of older people's lives in designing programmes – bearing in mind health, previous experiences of the arts, skills, isolation, social dynamics in communal settings, and other factors: it is important to take into account an older person's *whole life* (both now and in the past). This is arguably even more important in working with older people than it is doing participatory arts with other groups.
- Being explicit about the desired 'mainstreaming' of work for older people that might result from individual projects – bringing 'older people' from the education department to main programming or exhibition room as it were – could be valuable, echoing the Investment Principles within *Let's Create*.
- In future, programmes such as *Celebrating Age* are, we suggest, more likely to support hybrid programmes of in person and digital/online activity, or to be specific about desired methods, and will need to reflect this in guidance.
- Building in evaluation and peer learning costs to the expected budgets/grants would encourage wider take-up of the learning opportunities.

Project design

- Consider, from the outset, what all partners might like to see by the end of the project: better/more relationships? Continued activities? Trained and committed volunteers? Active older artists? New opportunities?
- Think early on about how you might sustain this work or create sustainable legacy activity after the project funding ends.
- Trial activity and don't be afraid to change tack if responses are not as expected or something does not work.

Building relationships

- Share your values about successful ageing.
- Allow enough time to get to know each other's organisations, and each other, to build good relationships: it's not just about outputs and outcomes.
- Individuals' enthusiasm plays a big part in successful partnering: strategic or Board-level partners need to be as motivated as operational staff.
- Find ways to make involvement fun.
- Find out your partners' long-term goals – identify how working with you on this project can help them move towards those goals.
- Meet regularly and with a focus, to foster good relationships and trust.
- Become a catalyst: be the organisation that acts as a bridge between different partners.
- Be clear and explicit about your assumptions – about older people, about the purpose of the project, the nature of art, the goals, the roles, sessions. Check for unconscious bias about older people and challenge stereotyped age assumptions.
- The importance of supporting project staff, and freelance practitioners in particular.

Older people as partners and co-creators

- Involve older people and include their voices in project design and development – either directly or through representative groups such as local forums.
- Make sure people are able to engage – provide enough time (including time to take action between meetings, and report

back), recap on previous meetings, provide independent or 'neutral' spaces where everyone feels comfortable.

- Find out and listen to the aims, hopes, and wishes of later life participants; be prepared to be surprised; ask all the partners, including the older people, how can we all run with these?
- Support older people to be challenged in return: taking everyone out of their comfort zones can support the project's development into new areas.
- Work to build confidence as well as creative skills so older people can shape activity and co-create the creative experience or output.
- Support the practicalities of engagement: travel, welcome, breaks, accessibility, communication needs.

Sharing knowledge

- Provide arts-related experiences for non-arts partners.
- Explore age-friendly training for artists.
- Pool your knowledge about venues/physical spaces/participants/audiences – value each other's expertise.
- Be open to being challenged on your project's art form by the non-arts specialists.

Communication

- Find simplicity and a common language across partners, including academic partners – communicate straightforwardly about the project, so it's easy for everyone to pass this information on.
- Step back every now and then to assess your assumptions and understanding about roles and goals.

Data collection

- The collection of data adds real value to a project by providing details of engagement, impact and quality. Organisations working with older people should get to know the 'why' and 'how to' of data collection to better understand its purpose.
- Data collection techniques and tools may need to be adapted to the variety of projects, activities and events on offer.
- Collecting and discussing 'stories of change' from participants, artists, project managers and partner agencies can generate rich data and insights for change management.

APPENDIX 2

Map of grants

The number in red refers to the location of the counties on the map (right).

GREATER LONDON**01 London**

Cubitt Artists
The Albany
Stratford Circus
Studio 3 Arts
Voluntary Arts Network
(and UK-wide)

EAST MIDLANDS**02 Derbyshire**

Derbyshire
Artcore

03 Nottinghamshire

City Arts
Writing East Midlands

WEST MIDLANDS**04 Birmingham**

The mac, Birmingham
Creative Health CIC &
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

05 Staffordshire

New Vic Theatre

06 Shropshire

Arts Alive

NORTH WEST**07 Merseyside**

FACT Liverpool
The Bluecoat

NORTH EAST**08 Tyne & Wear**

Helix Arts
Gateshead Libraries

YORKSHIRE & HUMBER**09 North Yorkshire**

MIMA
Rural Arts

10 West Yorkshire

Leeds Playhouse
Hoot Creative Arts
Pavilion

EAST OF ENGLAND**11 Suffolk**

Suffolk Artlink

SOUTH EAST**12 East Sussex**

New Writing South

13 West Sussex

Duckie's Posh Club

14 Kent

Ideas Test
Moving Memory Dance Theatre

15 Surrey

Farnham Maltings

16 Isle of Wight

Independent Arts

SOUTH WEST**17 Gloucestershire**

Cinderford Artspace

18 Hampshire

Live Theatre Winchester Trust

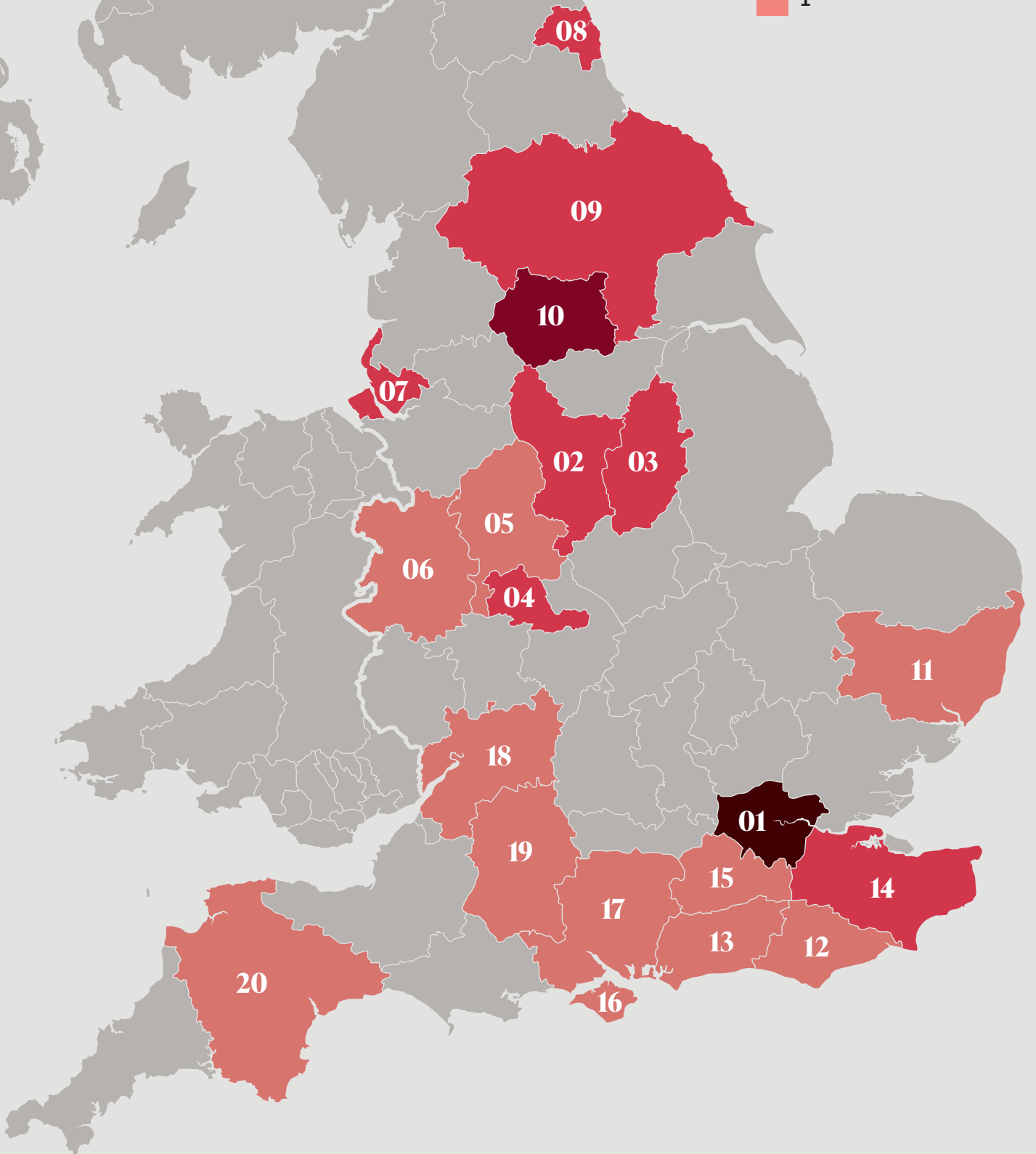
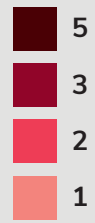
19 Wiltshire

Celebrating Age Wiltshire

20 Devon

MAKE Southwest

Number of grants,
per county area



APPENDIX 3

List of grants awarded

LEAD ORGANISATION	GRANT	SUMMARY DESCRIPTION	KEY PARTNERS	AREA & SETTINGS
Artcore Project: Creative Living	£100,000 <i>Round 1</i>	Creative Living created opportunities to perform, learn digital and visual arts, and included an intergenerational dance project. During Covid, activity shifted online.	Déda dance agency, Derby City Council, Metropolitan Housing Association.	Derby At community venues and online.
City Arts (Nottingham) Project: Imagine Celebrates	£97,200 <i>Round 1</i>	Words of Wisdom: writing and virtual tours of writers' homes and Classical Fusion: dance, songs and sound walks with older people.	Nottingham City Council, Writing East Midlands, Nottingham City of Literature, Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall Nottingham.	Nottingham At City Arts (Nottingham).
Cubitt Artists Project: Going Places	£91,000 <i>Round 1</i>	Visual arts and public events – participatory sessions, public arts commissions, summer balls and picnics as part of Going Places month-long festival of events and workshops. Also included a publication.	Partners included All Change, Sadler's Wells, Candoco Dance, Notting Hill Housing, Alsen Day Centre and Islington's Home Library Service.	London At Cubitt gallery, sheltered housing settings, care settings.
Duckie Project: The Posh Club	£99,173 <i>Round 1</i>	Cabaret and performance art – a series of 20 social club events including dance and performance, including commissioned work.	Posh Club Network, Alzheimer's Society, St Joseph's Hospice, Opening Doors, Hackney and City Mind, Swallows Lunch Club, and the Arts and Production Network.	Crawley In social clubs and community venues.

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Farnham Maltings Association Project: My Shout	£62,388 <i>Round 1</i>	Four separate projects, co-created and presented by people aged 55+: a devising dance group; theatre workshops; a film of 'older Farnham voices'; and a sculptural bench.	Waverley Borough Council, New Adventures, Age UK Surrey.	Surrey At Farnham Maltings; outdoor venues; outdoor festivals.
Hoot Creative Arts	£99,971 <i>Round 1</i>	Wide range of art forms (music, creative writing, visual, drama, dance), including inter-generational sessions and mentoring of partner agency staff to continue delivery.	Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees; Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (sheltered housing provider); Sharing Memories – local arts & reminiscence group.	Kirklees In 14 different settings including: sheltered housing schemes, Age UK day centres, and community venues.
Independent Arts Project: Time & Tide	£85,659 <i>Round 1</i>	Wide range of mostly visual art forms, with projects inspired by local heritage sites and historical artefacts.	Age-Friendly Island.	Isle of Wight In sheltered housing schemes, care homes and public libraries. Organised trips to heritage sites and cultural venues.
Leeds Theatre Trust (Leeds Playhouse) Project: Festival of Theatre & Dementia (Every Third Minute)	£99,950 <i>Round 1</i>	Theatre festival exploring (and co-produced by people living with) dementia in Feb/March 2018: 12 productions, 4 training programmes, 15 workshops.	University of Bradford; care homes/sheltered housing providers; Innovations in Dementia; Hamari Haddain memory café.	West Yorkshire Festival held at Leeds Playhouse, with three plays written by people living with dementia then taken on a two-week tour of care homes in Leeds.
Live Theatre Winchester Trust Project: Hat Fair	£75,560 <i>Round 1</i>	Three performance-based projects: touring Four Score Years and Ten (an existing verbatim show); walk-through installation of 16 audio recorded Living Portraits of older residents; Recycled Silent Movie – a film mixing current older Corby and Winchester residents with archive film of both towns.	The Core at Corby Cube, (Northants), Winchester City Council.	Winchester Community/small arts venues; The Core at Corby Cube; HatFair outdoor arts festival (Winchester).

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mima Project: Celebrating Age	£90,000 <i>Round 1</i>	Project included visual arts, writing and zine publishing, a mosaic (in a toilet!) storytelling, music and conversations.	Thirteen, a major local care and social housing provider, Teesside University, James Cook University Hospital, Ageing Better Middlesbrough, Dementia Friendly Middlesbrough and Riverside Housing.	Middlesbrough Six Thirteen-supported living schemes across Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley, mima gallery.
New Vic Theatre Project: Meet me at Live Age	£99,975 <i>Round 1</i>	Mixed art forms; annual festival and wider community arts programme (10 artists, 10 art forms) and leadership programme to extend festival reach.	Age UK North Staffs and community groups in its network; Keele University.	Staffordshire Festival held at the New Vic; arts programme held in wide range of venues – from care homes to Men's Sheds, older LGBT group, etc.
Pavilion Project: Interwoven Histories	£62,249 <i>Round 1</i>	Commissioned visual artists to co-produce new work with older minority ethnic people with shared histories in local textile industry – also oral history/ music/ poetry recording and performances.	Touchstone's – local charity working with minority ethnic communities; Leeds Irish Health & Homes.	Leeds Exhibition at Leeds Industrial Museum; wider public events across the city; and links with the Leeds Playhouse <i>Every Third Minute</i> festival.
Rural Arts North Yorkshire Project: Art on your doorstep	£89,635 <i>Round 1</i>	Music, visual arts, performing arts. Using a referral system, isolated individuals could work with artists, to complement events in community venues and extra care facilities.	Thirsk Community Care, three local GP practices, North Yorkshire County Council Living Well Team, Broadacres Housing and NHS Health Visitors.	Yorkshire Old Courthouse Thirsk, doorsteps and homes, rural touring.
The Albany	£98,665 <i>Round 1</i>	Wide variety of 12 artist-led projects (plus drop-ins) with tenants in communal areas of 14 Lewisham Homes independent living schemes: crafts, music, film, animation, movement, writing, gardening.	Entelechy Arts, Lewisham Homes.	London Exhibitions and performances at The Albany; Royal Festival Hall; Lewisham Town Hall; Lewisham Homes independent living schemes; Deptford Lounge.

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<p>The Wiltshire Music Centre Trust</p> <p>Project: Celebrating Age Wiltshire</p>	<p>£99,931</p> <p><i>Round 1</i></p>	<p>Wide variety of art forms: 140 cultural and creative events held across six district council areas, for people aged 75+: music performances; theatre, dance, art, and craft workshops; heritage and reminiscence events; storytelling; reading groups.</p>	<p>Wiltshire Creative, Pound Arts, Age UK, Wiltshire, County Council Library and Community Engagement Services, Community First, Wiltshire and Salisbury Museums.</p>	<p>Wiltshire</p> <p>56 community and arts venues; final music and spoken word performances shared online (YouTube).</p>
<p>Wolverhampton Art Gallery</p> <p>Project: Still Lively</p>	<p>£90,800</p> <p><i>Round 1</i></p>	<p>Visual arts and collections. Art groups and special events at Wolverhampton Art Gallery and in residential settings using museum collections.</p>	<p>Shire Living Homes, Staffordshire Libraries and Arts Service, Limewood Dementia Care Home.</p>	<p>Wolverhampton</p> <p>Art Gallery, Shire Living Homes, care homes.</p>
<p>Gulbenkian Theatre</p> <p>Project: Still Stomping by Moving Memory</p>	<p>£99,000</p> <p><i>Round 2</i></p>	<p>Four devised dance projects:</p> <p>Start Stomping (devised by older women's core company, and younger Intergen31 members); develop and train older volunteers to deliver Moving Well workshops.</p>	<p>Kent County Council, Gulbenkian University Kent.</p>	<p>Canterbury</p> <p>Gulbenkian's bOing! Festival; outside Turner Contemporary (part of Margate Festival); care homes; primary schools; Ageless festival (Leeds).</p> <p>Films (on Vimeo)</p>
<p>Arts Alive</p> <p>Project: Creative Conversations</p>	<p>£100,000</p> <p><i>Round 2</i></p>	<p>Range of art forms (including film, storytelling, music, digital art) – workshops (taster sessions, residencies, training), performances and exhibitions.</p>	<p>Age UK, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, wide range of rural partners – venues, community groups.</p>	<p>Shropshire/ Welsh borders</p> <p>Care homes, sheltered housing, specialist dementia ward, community venues, Age UK day centres, outdoor touring, video and online exhibitions during pandemic.</p>
<p>Cinderford Artspace</p> <p>Project: MindSCAPE</p>	<p>£90,000</p> <p><i>Round 2</i></p>	<p>Combining art and nature to inspire creativity, range of art forms. Roadshows, taster sessions, organisational training/ resource development.</p>	<p>Forestry Commission, Forest of Dean District Council, community groups and venues, 2Gether Trust Dementia Education Team.</p>	<p>Forest of Dean, Glos</p> <p>Events outreaching across a wide range of rural venues.</p>

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FACT Project: Young at Art	£100,000 <i>Round 2</i>	Older 'Digital Ambassadors' - creative workshops; co-producing/commissioning (often inter-generationally) new artworks – range of art forms (digital, music, poetry, photography).	Open Eye Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, Happy Older People (HOP) partnership (cultural, health and social care, housing, and education sectors).	Liverpool Exhibitions in FACT gallery mainspace, pop-up performances in public spaces in the city, online.
Gateshead Council (Library Service) Project: Art Diamonds	£90,000 <i>Round 2</i>	Cross art form: workshops and events with artists, short courses, creative challenges and cultural visits.	64Million Artists and Gateshead Older People's Assembly.	Gateshead Libraries, galleries, online.
Helix Arts Project: Finding Your Feet	£99,425 <i>Round 2</i>	Dance: range of projects including ensembles of older people, action learning sessions, online/follow at home tutorials.	Public Health, Durham County Council.	North Shields Arts and community venues, online.
Ideas Test Project: Young at HeArt Music Project	£88,555 <i>Round 2</i>	Music & song composition for people 55+ working with professional musicians and composers, exploring North Kent's maritime and folklore history & life experiences.	SparkedEcho, Kent County Council, Medway Council, Swale Borough Council, Involving Medway, and Optivo.	Sittingbourne Historic Dockyard Chatham; a moving train and a railway station; Gillingham FC's stadium; a Working Men's Club; Dementia Café; town centres; arts centres; and online (via Zoom).
Midland Arts Centre (mac)	£98,000 <i>Round 2</i>	Culture Club – monthly arts club (variety of art forms); Tea with a Twist – tea party with live entertainment; Curators' Club; engaging older people in mainstream programme.	Contact the Elderly, Sampad, Little Earthquake Theatre, Wolverhampton Art Gallery.	Birmingham mac arts centre, engaging with older people living in community and in care homes (via Contact the Elderly).
New Writing South Project: Celebrating Our Stories	£100,000 <i>Round 2</i>	Training older LGBTQ+ people across coastal West and East Sussex to collect, share and listen to life stories; with professional playwright, workshops to develop, write and perform verbatim-based theatre about older LGBTQ+ people's life experiences.		Brighton Original plans for performances in a new verbatim LGBTQ+ theatre festival (Hear Us Out) replaced, because of Covid, by live online and recorded shows, podcasts and workshops.

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Stratford Circus Project: Stratford Arts Club	£100,000 Round 2	Music, dance, performance: older adults in Newham participate and curate monthly multi-art form activities with specialist artists.	London Borough of Newham's Adult Social Care Service, Age UK East London, Minhaj-ul-Quran Educational Centre, Ekta Project, Any Old Irons.	London Stratford Circus venue, care settings, community spaces.
Studio 3 Arts Project: Scaling Up	£100,000 Round 2	Events across a range of art forms, shaped by a participant-led committee, leading to a borough-wide festival.	Creative Barking and Dagenham, Care City, Barking and Dagenham CVS, Volunteer Bureau Get Together, Eastside Community Heritage.	Barking and Dagenham Community and arts venues.
Suffolk Artlink Project: Make, Do and Friends	£100,000 Round 2	Dance, music, writing delivered through a high-quality outreach programme led by artists and co-produced with older people.	DanceEast and Rural Coffee Caravan.	Suffolk Community venues in rural areas.
The Bluecoat Project: Where Art Belongs	£98,000 Round 2	Range of art forms delivered by core group of mid-late stage career artists & student artist placements.	Belong Care Villages, The Atkinson.	North West England Series of residencies/workshops/exhibitions in both care village and community-based settings, using The Atkinson's space & collections.
The Devon Guild of Craftsmen Project: A Good Age	£67,219 Round 2	Five artist-led projects in five libraries: age, wellbeing and life changes explored through paper, ceramics, photography, willow, mixed media, with people aged 65+; exhibition. Commissions made to five UK-based professional artists (all born before 1947) - new pieces in response to age & change in each artist's lifetime; exhibition. A film made of projects and commissions.	Libraries Unlimited.	Newton Abbot Five public libraries (Crediton, Tiverton, Cullompton, Exeter, Honiton). Devon Guild of Craftsmen exhibition Film on YouTube

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Voluntary Arts Network Project: The Age of Creativity	£100,000 Round 2	The 3rd annual England-wide Age of Creativity festival (May 2019), featuring workshops, performances, and other creative and cultural events, run by individual artists and organisations, for older people.	Age UK Oxfordshire.	London/UK England-wide month-long festival of arts practitioners' and arts/older people organisations' classes, workshops, talks, visits, and performances, to encourage more older people to take part. Events could be found through online searches, or via regionally organised printed materials.
Writing East Midlands Project: The Elder Tree Project	£99,531 Round 2	Writing and heritage: 12 residencies working with older people to create new work stimulated by museums, archives, heritage spaces and writers. Activity included storytelling, reminiscence writing, poetry, group reading, trips, and role-play.	First Art, Transported, Tonic Health.	Nottingham Care homes, hospitals community venues, adult mental health unit, online during pandemic.

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