



The Association for
Education & Ageing

<http://www.associationforeducationandageing.org/about-us.html>

AEA DIGEST

Issue no 39
Spring 2013



Finding the Sports News online – still from Val Bissland's film *Moose in the Hoose* (see page 15)

IN YOUR SPRING DIGEST:

Page 2	Notes from the Chair – Jonathan Hughes
Page 3	Meet our new treasurer Diane Sawyer
Page 4	Older Men - Men in Sheds and Older Men as Active Learners
Page 7	Update on the Memory Project
Page 8	The U3A Story and anniversary lecture
Page 9	The Pre-retirement Scoping Project and working past retirement
Page 11	Spring Online 2013
Page 12	AEA guide to Social Networking
Page 13	MOOC – another way of learning
Page 14	International Journal of Education and Ageing – future plans
Arts and Culture Section	
Page 15	Two older learning projects in Scotland, filmed by Val Bissland
Page 17	Old Geezer Radio – a new voice for older people
Page 18	Silver Stand Up Comedy of the Year Competition
Page 19	Mirror, Mirror – a conference on ageing in the context of fashion
Page 20	Rootstein Hopkins Drawing Exhibition at Morley College
Page 21	Theatre and film reviews plus AEA Contacts

FROM THE CHAIR.....

Jonathan Hughes

As chair, I'm becoming increasingly aware and impressed by the wide range of activities that other AEA members are engaged with. I'm also impressed by the energy with which people pursue their commitment to learning in later life. This activity includes representing AEA on the National Older Learners Group as well a European-funded memory project. AEA has also been involved in submitting a Grundtvig bid lead by Polish partners and focused on education, creativity and physical activity for well-being in later life. Fingers crossed!

Before I outline what I have been up to, I'd like to welcome Diane Sawyer as our new treasurer, having been co-opted onto the Executive Committee in January. Diane lives in Ipswich and (ideally for an AEA treasurer) combines a background in business with an interest in education. Read more about Diane on page 3. I would also like to say how much we appreciate the sterling work and professional approach Ron Speight has brought to the role. Ron will be presenting the end of year accounts before finally handing over to Diane.

We now have a subgroup (comprising Alex Withnall, Sasha Anderson and me) which is engaged in planning the AEA Conference and AGM to be held on 5th September 2013 at the University of East Anglia (Norwich). The theme of the conference will be Informal learning and well-being. Dr Marvin Formosa will give the key note address and Professor Judith Phillips (Swansea University) will give the annual Frank Glendenning Memorial Lecture that is always part of this event.

We are still firming up on details of costs for the day. Once we have these we'll publicise the event and put out a call for presentations and an invitation to participate.

Our Annual Conference last year was the result of a partnership with the Beth Johnson Foundation which was celebrating its 40th birthday. This year the conference will be in partnership with the Educational Centres Association, which is based in Norwich. ECA will also be holding their AGM at this event. AEA is very much looking forward to cementing its good relations with ECA, as both organisations have similar philosophies about the role of learning throughout life.

The Executive committee meeting in January also agreed to set up 4 working groups to look at what AEA needs to do in order to recruit and retain members. The 4 MORE (Making the Offer Real) groups will look at Membership and Journal Costs, the Digest, Website and Online Membership, International and Regional Conferences and what might be offered to students as members. These groups aim to report to the next executive committee in May so if you would like to be involved please get in touch with me. This involvement is likely to be based on email discussion but may include a phone or Skype conference.

Trying to improve the 'offer' AEA makes to its membership stems from a realisation that we need, as an organisation to grow, if we are to represent the needs of older learners to

practitioners, researchers and to policy makers.

Recently I have been emailing people and organisations, whose membership has lapsed. This has resulted in being able to welcome people back into the AEA fold. But it also resulted in an email conversation with one former member, who has decided not to re-join because it was felt that AEA was too 'elitist'. I think this is something that we need to take seriously, especially as I think one of the joys of AEA is the way that it brings together older learners, practitioners and researchers. I realise that this was just one person's view but I do hope that the deliberations of the MORE groups help ensure that everyone in the constituencies AEA seeks to address feels included.

In the week before writing this UK government minister David Willetts received a deal of publicity that learners over 60 should return to university. I read the correspondence (in The Guardian newspaper) with interest and felt that, as AEA Chair, I should comment. I've not heard back from the newspaper so thought I would reproduce my letter (actually an email) here:

David Willett's announcement (People over 60 should go back to higher education 20th February) is welcome if only because it has highlighted the continuing importance of learning across the life course. The Association for Education and Ageing exists to promote the interests of older learners, which are too often dismissed by policy makers. Two themes need to be recognised within this debate. First, that formal education, of which university education is part, is only a tiny fraction of the learning which all human beings engage

in, irrespective of their age. Second, that with the inevitable rise of the effective retirement age, older learners' needs for learning in the workplace will increase. Both informal learning and workplace learning in later life need greater recognition and support. In addition, more older people need to be encouraged to see being a learner as part of their identity, whether they are in paid work, voluntary work or neither.

Earlier in these notes, I comment on the way in which AEA brings academics, practitioners and older learners together. I have recently joined an Open University course production team and will be working on a block that focuses on different aspects of ageing. In addition in early March I become eligible for a bus pass. So I now feel that I can claim that I combine being an academic with being an 'older learner'.

jonathan.hughes@open.ac.uk



Incoming Treasurer Diane Sawyer, pictured on the Brooklyn Bridge, New York

As promised above, our new treasurer introduces herself.

Hello, I am Diane Sawyer, your newly appointed treasurer. My roots are in Dudley, West Midlands, but I have lived

in Suffolk for 32 years. I have worked in all areas of education from nursery to university. Since 1996 I have had a portfolio of work: a local FE college, the Open University, a local training organisation and an educational charity - the Workers' Educational Association. My subject area has been varied too. It includes: Business Studies, Gender Studies, Bookkeeping and Accounts, Literacy, Numeracy and provision for adult returnees.

I have provided financial services for the self employed for a number of years. I

complete self assessment forms for HMRC, advice on operating a small business and am an Authorised Agent for HMRC. At present I have 30 clients.

My husband and I are enthusiasts of preserved transport and visit various museum open days and rallies all over the country. I am also a Quaker (Religious Society of Friends).

I look forward to working with you all and meeting you.

DATE FOR YOU DIARY

This year's Conference and AGM will be held on 5th September 2013 at the University of East Anglia and will be in partnership with the Educational Centres Association, Norwich. The theme of the conference will be Informal learning and well-being. Dr Marvin Formosa will give the key note address and Professor Judith Phillips (Swansea University) will give the annual Frank Glendenning Memorial Lecture. Further details and call for papers will follow in due course and will be posted on our website

<http://www.associationforeducationandageing.org/aea-events.html>

In January we received a request from Merton U3A for assistance into research they were doing as to why there was such an imbalance in their membership of women over men. This resulted in a lively response from members as to the possible reasons from this, which is a situation by no means unique to Merton. I then saw an appeal from the WRVS calling for more male volunteers to help tackle the loneliness experienced by many older men. AEA member Alex Withnall reported some time ago on "Men in Sheds" - a project she'd come across in Australia, which was tackling that very situation. The idea is now taking off here in the UK. "Parky" is a

*blogger for Old Geezer radio (see page 17 for more on that). He wrote this piece for us on the history and benefits of the **Men in Sheds** community project.*

The shed is traditionally a male domain. It is a place to escape, to relax, to unwind and to break away from the rigours of the day-to-day norms and the pressures of daily life. Sheds can be small and basic or grander and more complex; each is different and each reflects the personality of its owner. My shed is a place to tinker, to listen to the radio, to fix & mend; my shed is also the first place my fellow shed owning neighbours look to find me.

The community shed approach came from Australia, where increasing demand on space by residential housing led to a decline in personal sheds. From this need the community shed was born. From small beginnings some 900 community sheds have grown across the country. This has since spread internationally, with community sheds in the UK, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia; Men in Sheds is one of those programmes.



Photo courtesy of Age UK

Men in Sheds is a community project, initially sponsored in this country by Age UK, with the aim of enhancing the lives of men through group interaction in a familiar setting. Sheds promote social interaction and reduce depression related illness in elderly men.* National Lottery funding now supports some sheds and others have started independently.

Regardless of the funding mechanism, the primary purpose of the community shed is to be an enabler for enhanced health benefits through encouraging interaction between members and giving a sense of purpose. Age UK (or another sponsor) provides the shed, tools & equipment, and a paid co-coordinator for support. However sheds are individual and run by their members for day-to-day activities.** This offers a common focus with an individual approach to membership. Shed activities include woodworking, inter-generational skills sharing and socialising. Sheds now report having IT suites along with the

woodworking tools, which range from hand tools to wood turning lathes. All these of course alongside facilities to make the tea.

Shed members come from all areas of society. An interview carried out by Old Geezer Radio*** at Ellesmere Port Shed, Ellesmere Port, UK, noted members who hailed from careers as diverse as Mayor to labourer. Shed members are predominantly male and over 55. However this is not exclusive. Membership conditions vary from shed to shed, with some sheds welcoming all ages and genders and some restricting membership to males above the age of retirement.

The one thing that came through loud and clear from the Old Geezer Radio interview was the sense of pleasure that everyone at the shed gets from being a member and that to a man they all wished they'd found the shed earlier in life.

* Misan G & Sergeant S, *Men's sheds – a strategy to improve men's health*, 10th National Rural Health Conference, May 2009

**<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources-home/services-and-practice/health-and-wellbeing/men-in-sheds/>

*** www.oldgeezerradio.co.uk

Listen to the broadcast here. And read more about Old Geezer Radio on page 17.

*The situation of older men is also a hot topic in European education circles. In the summer of 2012, partners from four European countries - Slovenia, Malta, Estonia and Portugal - started the Grundtvig Learning Partnership entitled **Older Men as Active Learners (OMAL)**.*



Roundtable discussion with Prof. Peter Mayo during the first partner meeting in Malta

Partners in this project are university members, active also in different community organisations in their countries. These kinds of projects are a framework for co-operation activities in the field of adult learning in the European Lifelong Learning programme. Sabina Jelenc Krašovec of the Faculty of Arts, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Ljubljana writes here about the purpose of OMAL.

The main goal of the OMAL project is to research learning of older adults in community, precisely older men, aged 60 and over, who are often experiencing deprivation and social exclusion in their living environment. The decision about the project topic is based on the fact, that in most countries, the share of older adults (60+) who participate in formal and informal learning is rather limited. Those who find themselves in the education process usually have a higher level of education, a relatively good income and are often included also in the other spheres of social, cultural and political life. Other groups of older people, especially low educated and socially deprived (amongst them many older men), are very often more vulnerable and marginalized and also

socially excluded, passive and lonely. In Australia and in some European countries the research show that older men sometimes need and want different offers for active social inclusion in community. Men prefer to be active in non-educational community organizations, clubs, NGO and other settings (sporting, hunting or fishing clubs, voluntary fire brigades, etc.). Most of these community organizations are not delivering organized educational programmes but through informal learning and by providing spaces where men can gather and learn in a more loose forms, they can have a powerful effect on the well-being of older men. The forms and development of older adults' community learning and education are well documented in the European context but we have less evidence about what is going on regarding gender differences and older people.

This project focuses upon organizations and programmes at the community level (in partnership countries) which are offering social and educational activities for older men. What kind of activities men are involved in and how men in different communities experience their social and learning activities in community organizations. We are using ethnographic research to collect data about different non-profit organizations offering social and learning, while later on we will deepen insight on informal learning of older men with semi-structured interviews in selected community organizations.

In OMAL Partnership we are organising working meetings, based on experiential learning in local community organizations in Malta, Estonia, Portugal and Slovenia, with emphasis on research

into the specific regional and cultural context of older men's learning. By drawing on the ideas, knowledge and experiences of all partners we hope this transnational project will give some more insight into the topic, open new questions for further research and strengthen professional and social networks for the partner institutions and also for local communities.

The OMAL project will end in 2014.



“Now where did I....?” (Photo Credit BananaStock/Getty Images)

*As reported in the Summer 2012 Digest, AEA is a partner in an EU Grundtvig Learning Partnership, which has the title **Memory in Later Life** – Learning, Supporting, Developing. **Keith Percy** gives an update on progress so far.*

The partnership is funded by the EU between August 2012 and July 2014 and apart from the UK brings together partners from Germany, Greece,

Hungary, Italy and Poland (the latter, an organisation in Krakow concerned with the “fullness” of later life, is the lead partner). As a Learning Partnership the project is funded on the basis of “mobilities”- the number of older learners and their tutors visiting other partners to progress a programme of work.

The project work is structured around two/three month programmes of “local activities” followed simultaneously in each country and then reported via the internet and at the next international meeting of the Partnership. The AEA “local activities” are being carried out by a group of around 15 enthusiastic older learners from the North West meeting in Lancaster, with one or two additional corresponding members from elsewhere. At the end of February 2013, the Partnership's second international meeting took place in Frankfurt. Two members of the Lancaster group travelled to Frankfurt to give a presentation to nearly 50 older learners, tutors and project co-coordinators from the six countries. The presentation covered the most recent phase of Lancaster activity on what and where is memory; everyday devices used by members of the group to assist their memories and older peoples' memory as represented in literature, art, film, proverbs, humour and advertising.

After Frankfurt, through further local activities, the Partnership is now turning to evaluate formal mnemonic devices and their relevance to learning in later life and to particular subject areas. Later in the project, reminiscence and autobiographical procedures, and the attitude and lifestyles of older people will be examined in relation to memory

and learning in later life. The twin outcomes of this two year programme should be lasting benefit for each individual participant and a resource book on memory in later life which will be disseminated internationally.

The final (June 2014) international meeting of the programme, hosted by AEA and concerned with evaluation and the final report, will be held in the UK, probably in Lancaster. AEA is planning to associate a national day conference on Memory in Later Life with the meeting.



Fatima Whitbread and her mother Maggie

Last summer U3A members, who completed a series of marathon walks to celebrate the London Olympics, were greeted on the Olympic site just before the start of the games by Fatima Whitbread, world champion javelin thrower in 1987, and her adoptive mother Maggie Whitbread, who is chairman of the U3A in Thurrock, Essex.

*U3A is now well established on the UK older learning scene. The organisation has in fact just celebrated its 30th birthday. U3A National Chairman **Barbara Lewis** looks at what it has achieved in its lifetime.*

‘Self-help, self-funded’ is not the description you’d expect of a major education provider. But it’s the essence of U3A (the University of the Third Age). It helps to explain why 880 U3As are thriving around the country, offering shared learning and stimulation to 300,000 people no longer in full-time work. The University of the Third Age has helped thousands of retired people to discover that learning can be fun. Its membership has grown in every one of those thirty years, until it now boasts 295,813.

Among those, of course, are people who are already educated to a high level – some have degrees, even doctorates. But U3A members also include many people who gave up learning as early in life as possible, feeling that dull facts were being crammed into them to enable them to pass exams and get jobs. They return to learning in their third age, when they no longer work full time or have responsibility for dependent children – and they find they love it. They love it because there are no exams, no set curriculum, no qualifications, and no one is looking to equip themselves for employment. U3A members learn the things they want to learn, just for the pleasure of learning them.

The U3A idea was brought to Britain by founder member emeritus Professor Brian Groombridge, who sought it out on a British Council trip to France. He then handed it over to three people: Cambridge University academic Peter Laslett; social entrepreneur Michael Young, whose many initiatives include the Consumers Association and the Open University; and Eric Midwinter, director of the Centre for Policy on Ageing. They called a conference in

Cambridge to discuss how the idea, already established in France, might work here, and Eric Midwinter was interviewed on the radio programme *You and Yours*. That short interview was the first chance anyone outside a small circle of educationalists had to hear about the U3A and it brought an avalanche of 400 letters. It was suddenly obvious that the U3A was an idea whose time had come.

Fifteen local U3As turned up to the first national U3A conference, at Keele University – there are now 870 local U3As. Roy Shaw, director general of the Arts Council (and former head of Keele’s extramural department) delivered the first third age lecture. Michael Young and Eric Midwinter were confirmed as chairman and general secretary.



Christchurch U3A writers group.

The idea was to enable groups of people to get together to learn what interested them. They would have, not a teacher, but a group leader or convenor, who could co-ordinate and help guide their efforts. The U3A should not be dependent on public funds. Local U3As were to be self-governing, and open to all Third Agers; their purpose must be educational in its widest sense, which meant that “educational” embraced leisure pursuits and social purposes; and they must be democratically run. The national office and national executive

provide services and advice for them, as well as a resource centre of non-book material from which they can borrow. But the national office does not tell U3As what to do.

If you like the sound of what U3A does, look at the website at www.u3a.org.uk or give us a call on 020 8466 6139 to be sent our material, and be put in touch with their nearest U3A. There’s probably one near you – but if there isn’t, we’ll be glad to help you start one.



**Barbara Lewis, National Chairman,
University of the Third Age**

*As part of the 30th anniversary celebrations, the **Founders’ Lecture**, given by **Dr Eric Midwinter**, will be on **9th April at 2 pm, at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ** (opposite Euston Station.) Tickets cost £5 from the U3A national office, 020 8466 6139 or national.office@u3a.org.uk*

In her piece above Barbara Lewis used the phrase “no longer in full-time work”. Because many third agers now are continuing to work either from economic necessity or because they enjoy it. The National Institute of Adult

Continuing Education (NIACE) is currently undertaking a scoping activity of pre-retirement training provision. Charlotte Robey explains the purpose of the Pre-retirement Scoping Project.

Our aim is to map the current availability and cost of this type of learning and, with expert input, make recommendations for effective options to address any gaps.

Retirement is becoming increasingly flexible and varied. Many older workers are no longer facing the ‘cliff edge’ of retirement, but can instead opt for a more flexible and phased retirement process, either by reducing their working hours, becoming self-employed or moving into a different type of work altogether. Extending working life is also a major Government policy objective due to our ageing society. Retirement preparation has therefore never been more needed, yet very little of it seems to be available. According to Life Academy less than 20% of the workforce has access to any pre-retirement learning or advice.

Our pre-retirement scoping project aims to demonstrate the availability of this type of training. It has been split into two stages. The first stage consisted of desk research (internet searching and telephone interviews) to scope the available provision. As expected, this process found relatively little in the way of pre-retirement learning. The majority of courses are expensive, require travel to a particular location and are aimed at employees in the public sector or from large employers. The age range of target learner groups is also very narrow, with the majority of courses requiring delegates to be over the age of 50 or

approaching retirement. There are very few providers which target mid-career employees and even fewer who offer provision to those early in their working life.

The content of pre-retirement learning varies between providers. A wide range of topics can be covered but the most common relate to financial matters or health and wellbeing. Very few providers include opportunities for lifelong learning in their pre-retirement courses.

Following the desk research, an interim report was presented to an expert group. We had some lively discussions about the findings and drew up a number of potential recommendations for Government. These will be developed further and presented in our final report which will be disseminated in April. For further information about the project, please contact Charlotte Robey (charlotte.robey@niace.org.uk).



If you enjoy your job and want to carry on working, that can now be an option – something which wasn't so thirty of more years ago. Evelyn from London, now aged 96, writes about the time she told a white lie about her age so she could continue working until she was 80.

“I was working as a secretary at the time and just as I was approaching my 60th birthday, my colleague came up to me and said, ‘I’m afraid you’ve reached that dangerous age’, and I replied ‘what age is that?’. She said ‘60’. I couldn’t believe it when she said I had to go.

“I wasn’t sure what to do with myself. I didn’t fancy doing housework each day, so I decided to apply to become a London guide. But they responded by turning my request down, saying that it was too strenuous for someone my age. I thought them a silly lot and in the end I re-applied and lied about my age saying I was 50.”

Evelyn, never looked back and after two years of training and exams, she began giving tours across London and further afield, including Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick Castle, Canterbury and Stonehenge. For 20 years Evelyn spent many happy days guiding tourists around.

“It makes me laugh, as 60 is no age. You’re still young at 60 and you’ve got another 30 years ahead of you. The experience of older people is invaluable but it’s just being wasted.”

*Whether you’re still working, spending your third age years in learning or just enjoying the activities you never had time for before, it has become increasingly important for older people to keep up with the digital age. **Spring Online 2013: April 22-26** is nearly here. **Julia Shipston** of Digital Unite draws our attention to what’s happening this year.*

Spring Online is Digital Unite’s award-winning campaign and one of the biggest digital inclusion drives in the UK. The aim of the week is to help people take their first steps with computers and the internet, and introduce them to new technologies.

Seven million people have never used the internet, 6.5 million of them aged over 55. Digital skills could help them access services, find new interests, reduce loneliness and save money.

This year’s campaign will be delivered in association with Carphone Warehouse and aims to help thousands more people get online.



Digital Unite introduces a new learner to new technology during last year’s campaign.

Our award-winning Spring Online campaign takes place from 22-26th April 2013 – find out how you can help older people get the most out of technology. You can register to hold an event and get free resources, including guides to running tasters and marketing materials, at <http://digitalunite.com/spring-online>

AEA and social networking - UPDATE



The Association for Education & Ageing

In addition to our Facebook page, AEA now has a Twitter account. If you're an experienced twitterer, you'll know what to do. If you're not, it's dead easy to open an account. Just go to www.twitter.com, click on Sign Up and follow the instructions. You first have to choose a few accounts to "follow" – try BBC and Age UK – they have loads. You then search for **@AssocEduAgeing** and click Follow. If you're not a twitterer and don't want to be, you can still take advantage of this new venture by e-mailing me on carolofdawes@btinternet.com about anything you want to disseminate. Tweets are though limited to 140 characters, so either keep it short or refer to me to a website you want to publicise and I'll sort it out.

There's also our Facebook page, hosted by Alex Withnall, <https://www.facebook.com/EducationandAgeing?ref=ts&fref=ts> Feel free to post your comments, perhaps start a

debate on a topic to do with education and ageing and indeed to "Like" us.

Alex also hosts our LinkedIn page – another potential forum for discussion. [http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Association-Education-Ageing-](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Association-Education-Ageing-4695574?goback=.anp_4695574_1363647668317_1)

[4695574?goback=.anp_4695574_1363647668317_1](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Association-Education-Ageing-4695574?goback=.anp_4695574_1363647668317_1) Alex aims to use this to create a global network for exchange of knowledge and ideas. A number of AEA members are already on this social network and it's easy to post your comments. To join just put LinkedIn into the Google search engine, sign up and then put Association for Education and Ageing into the search box. We currently have discussions going on *University at 60+* and *The Ageing Population: a problem or something to celebrate?* Feel free to start a new one.

You may also find of interest my new Cat's Whiskers Films Facebook page. Photos of our films and news of our plans

<https://www.facebook.com/CatsWhiskersFilms> A "like" would be appreciated!

*Continuing the digital theme, learning online is something that is on the increase. AEA member **Howard Freeman** took an online course in statistics via a **MOOC**, which sounds like it could be some strange, prehistoric beastie. But no, it's something completely different. Howard examines the pros and cons of "MOOCing".*

According to an article on Educause (<http://www.educause.edu/library/massive-open-online-course-mooc#tabs>), a MOOC is "a massive open online course for delivering learning content online to any person who wants to take a course, with no limit on attendance." One of the largest providers of online content is Udacity (www.udacity.com), which claims to have delivered the largest online class ever - 160,000 graduate students (<http://sloanconsortium.org/conference/2013/et4online/creating-your-own-mooc-udacity>). Their website provides a brief introduction to MOOCs (<http://sloanconsortium.org/conference/2013/et4online/creating-your-own-mooc-udacity>) The process is straightforward: you sign up, select a course and watch a series of short videos with some simple self-test questions.

This was my experience after taking the 'Introduction to Statistics' course. There's a final exam which consists of video questions and which is answered either by filling in checkboxes or selecting radio buttons. There is feedback, though it's not personalised. If you have a problem you can turn to the forum, the space for current users to post comments and questions and hope for some discourse. This is the typical approach to many online content courses, although

videos are often replaced by text and images and even a forum may be missing. They are seen by many in educational management as a means of increasing education provision at lower cost per learner.

So, what's new? Well, in some respects, not a lot: Massachusetts Institute of Technology OpenCourseWare has been around since 2008/9 and other large American universities such as Stanford and Harvard got on the bandwagon soon after. What's new-ish is the size of the offering and a significant change of approach: in 2012 MIT launched MITx which "will enhance the educational experience of its on-campus students... MIT also expects that MITx will eventually host a virtual community of millions of learners around the world." and (most significantly I think), "feature interactivity, online laboratories and student-to-student communication (... and) allow for the individual assessment of any student's work". MIT OpenCourseWare includes nearly 2100 MIT courses.

And what's not new? Many of these courses remain equivalent to reading a book, except that you need more technology than a pair of glasses and a chair. What's missing is the difference that a stimulating teacher can make in face-to-face teaching, where motivation, direction, relevant challenges and personalised perspective are available. The online forum, touted as peer-to-peer support, is often a place for commenting on spelling mistakes, as I found in my statistics course.

How useful can they be? There is evidence the MOOCs do not teach

(<http://www.computinged.wordpress.com/2013/01/04/moocs-are-a-fundamental-misperception-of-how-learning-works/>). So how can they be of use to us - post work but keen for stimulation and learning? Is there a situation where the resource of MOOCs can be allied to the advantages of face-to-face teaching within a social environment? Apparently so: perhaps this is an area where U3A, an organisation of 300,000 members in 880 locations, could try something new? Perhaps the structured nature of a MOOC course allied to the social environment of a U3A group might be a new approach to an already successful model?



My version of a Mooc. Sorry Howard, I'm being frivolous!

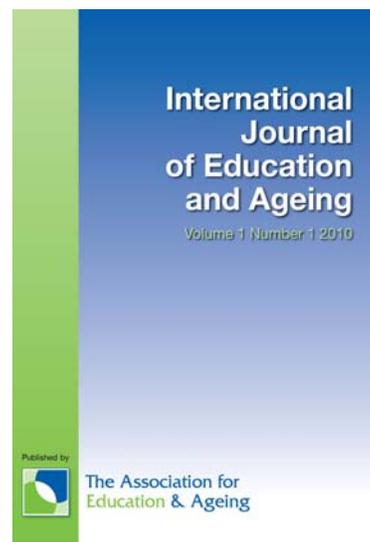
The latest issue of the **International Journal of Education and Ageing** (Volume 2 Number 3 2012) is now available. Subscribe here: <http://www.associationforeducationandageing.org/international-journal-of-education-and-ageing.html> Preferential rates for AEA Members

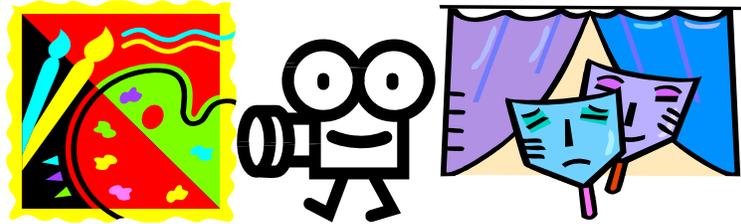
*News from Editor in Chief **Keith Percy** on upcoming content of **IJEA***

The three issues of Volume 3 of the International Journal of Education and Ageing will be published in April, July and September 2013. Articles on older adults' preferred learning and communication styles; transformative learning in later life and aesthetic experience; evidence on well-being and learning in later life; learning and autonomy in very old age; and financial literacy and activity among older people will be among those published. Authors to be published in Volume 3 come from Scotland, Greece, Portugal, New Zealand, Russia, Australia, England and elsewhere.

During the last six months the editors have been consulting with others and,

with the agreement of the Executive Committee of the AEA, expect to make the International Journal available for sale on-line as well as in hard copy





AEA DIGEST CULTURE SECTION

Val Bissland, who is Learning in Later Life Tutor at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow is a seasoned film maker and has seized on the opportunities offered by digital film making technology to make two videos which are both cultural and educational. As promised in the last digest, Val shares her experience with us.



Val Bissland

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so what is a movie worth! The Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA) film project had its beginning through a chance encounter one evening in Edinburgh in February 2012. I was attending an event on the changing perceptions of retirement, organised by the think-tank on longevity and

demographic change - *The International Longevity Centre-UK*. Arriving early I introduced myself to another 'early bird' - Glenda Watt, the Strategy Manager for Health and Social Care, City of Edinburgh Council. I was to learn that Glenda had been charged with supporting the SOPA Steering Group to organise an Assembly of 200 older people representing organisations across Scotland in Edinburgh's Conference Centre in November. This is an annual event funded by the Scottish Government, where older adults can raise issues directly with policymakers and social care managers. Also, there are opportunities to publicise examples of successful initiatives improving quality of later life.

This was where I entered the arena, as Glenda was exploring ways to present projects visually, rather than just inviting people to talk about them. I have been shooting home movies almost from the days when Kodak first introduced Super 8mm film and cameras, bringing movie-making to the masses. Of course, now people can film action with their phones and upload to YouTube in minutes. But putting together a film that tells a story still requires skill. I had just treated myself to a new high definition camcorder and editing software. Also I had completed making a film involving Learning in Later Life students from Strathclyde University and a music-

making community project. I was ready for something new and Glenda saw the potential for a productive partnership. We set about planning not one but two projects to showcase at the Assembly. I was co-opted on to the SOPA steering group and so began a remarkable creative period of film-making in Edinburgh and Inverness over the summer.

The short films speak for themselves and can be viewed on YouTube.

Moose in the Hoose

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Y3LBw2p1IQ> shows ACE IT volunteers (Age Concern Edinburgh Information Technology) in action in three care homes. It demonstrates what can be achieved through the medium of computers in a warm, friendly environment. You also hear residents and volunteers talk about the benefits to themselves personally of social contact, and the difference it has made to their perception or experience of care home life. The solo piano music by Trevor Morrison at the start and finish is of a wistful tune from St Kilda taught to him by a St Kilda émigré. Trevor passed away recently, so we are very lucky to have this record of his poignant piano playing.

Raising the Rhythms

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERKso0zDLE> is set in Woodlands Day Centre, Inverness, which is run by Alzheimer Scotland. They are using a computer programme called Hyperscore to enable people with no musical background to compose simple melodies. This is an uplifting and exciting experience for everyone involved. In the film you see people settling in for the day, and then Rena sitting down at a laptop with manager

Carolanne. You can witness the process of how Rena turns patterns or colours into melodies, harmonies and rhythms.



Carolanne with Rena using Hyperscore

Carolanne later talks about how music in various forms can transform the experience of care for people with dementia, contributing greatly to quality of life. The achievements at Woodlands are altering perceptions of the range of activities that are possible in day care. Actual filming was the easy bit. The secret was not to rush things, let people know what you are about and get used to you. Editing and fitting music and words together took many, many hours at my laptop, working in partnership with Glenda. However, I had signed up for support at my local Apple centre in Glasgow, so help was on hand for all matters technical. Film editing might seem daunting, but in common with all computer activities, it involves taking a step at a time and believing you'll get there in the end!

The proceedings of the Scottish Older People's Assembly are available in a series of nine videos, along with a final report, which can be accessed on the SOPA website. http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/2019/4/scottish_older_peoples_assembly/1480/scottish_older_peoples_assembly

*Turning or rather returning to another aspect of media – radio. On page 4 we heard from Parky of Old Geezer Radio about a piece they had done on the Men in Sheds project. But what is **Old Geezer Radio** all about? Who better to explain than one of the actual “Old Geezers”, **Neil Kinsey Fagan**.*



The senior residents of the UK have a voice – in fact a whole range of voices.... because a group of them have banded together to form their own radio station. And because it is available on the Internet, anyone, anywhere can tune in and join in – in fact it already has a big US following.

‘Old Geezer Radio’ is operated by a team of six people ranging from the eldest at 75 to the youngest at 48. Neil Kinsey Fagan designed the concept for the show after observing how the media is obsessed with youth. “Look, for example, at the recent treatment of female news readers,” he says, “who – once over 45 – tend to be removed from TV broadcasting. Also I had a chance encounter with a young man of 50 who

believed that after losing his job he was finished due to his age!”

“I started to discuss this age phenomenon with Terry – my father and an ex policeman age 75 – Barry a colleague of 65 and my long suffering wife Louise, 48 (not an Old Geezer, but possibly an ‘Old Gazette’). Being involved in radio and film production I decide to map out how we could give older people in the UK a voice, I floated the idea with the team and Old Geezer Radio was born.”

Old Geezer Radio contributors range in age from 45 – 85. Each has a wealth of experience and some have started new careers, such as the inspirational Angela Waller, who became an author at 77.

“Terry and I run the weekly round up show,” says Neil. “He has strong opinions about local politics and overseas politics and this has gained us an audience in the USA of over 150,000 listeners (we syndicate the programme through a US radio host). The subject matter we discuss every week is suggested by our listeners and covers subjects such as the NHS, fuel costs, mental health and politics.”

Neil himself is 55, and with his “fellow youngsters aged 75, 65, 50 and 48” there is a fair spread of ages and backgrounds at the station. “We broadcast on issues that directly affect us, and pass on our knowledge and experience to a younger audience. We welcome all contributors of any age and you don’t have to be a Geezer to get involved. We will go into our twilight years with dignity, humour and – occasionally – rage!”

And we’ll leave the last word to Terry: “Having had a triple bypass operation, I realise that life is about living.”

Old Geezer Radio broadcasts live four days a week, but you can catch up with previous broadcasts at any time by clicking onto the programmes listed on the website www.oldgeezerradio.co.uk or via Twitter @oldgeezerradio. The station is also on iTunes, and you can subscribe to the podcasts from the website, which are then delivered to you by email.

*AEA member **George Baddeley** has written in previous digests about the work of Silver Comedy. Earlier this year saw the finals of the **Silver Stand Up Comedy of the Year 2013 Competition**, held at Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival. The winner was Marc Lucero.*

Marc was a very worthy winner. His humour is sharp, very funny and highly irreverent - although definitely not irrelevant. Marc has certainly had to work hard to build up his new career, as he only started doing stand-up in his forties - after previously working on lots building sites.

Our annual competition - which was featured on BBC Woman's Hour and BBC Breakfast - is open to any comedian, established or up and coming over the age of 55. This year's entrants from all over the country had previously participated in afternoon heats in London on 27th January and the top 10 performers were selected to take part in the finals in Leicester on 14th February.

Marc, 59, comes from Kensal Rise, London and he's appeared in more than 75 West End venues over the course of his very condensed career. On winning the award and the £500 prize he said: "I want to change the perceptions people have of the elderly and by winning this



Marc Lucero, clutching his trophy

award I have proved that humour transcends age. Now we need to convince audiences that silver comedy is just as edgy and exciting as seeing the young bucks. Winning the Silver Stand-up of the Year Award also proves it is never too late to start a new career."

The Best Newcomer Award went to Sarah Maloney, aged 69, from Cambridgeshire. Her impressive performance was particularly surprising as she only started doing stand up in late 2012. Sarah was delighted: "Winning the Silver Stand-up of The Year Competition's Best Newcomer is completely surprising and wonderful. Being at the apprenticeship stage in my seventieth year feels pretty darn good, and I intend to work hard and make the most of it. I learn a frightening amount every time I do my five-minute set."

Silver Comedy is Britain's first specialist comedy training company seeking to enrich the lives of older

people through actively engaging them in comedy workshops and performances. Our competition will hopefully inspire other older newcomers to give it a go, whatever their age. So if you - or any other people you know - are over 55 years old, interested in learning about silver stand-up training and would like to give it a try or would just like to have more information about future competitions, please contact

george@silvercomedy.co.uk

Further information can be found on this website: : www.silvercomedy.co.uk

You can also find more information and watch a video of Silver Comedy in action at

<http://ageinginnovators.org/2013/02/26/silver-comedy/>



Photo by Ari Seth Cohen for advancedstyle.blogspot.com

The art of fashion is perhaps for many of us, with the exception of icons like Dame

*Vivienne Westwood, something we tend to largely associate with younger people. So it was an intriguing piece of news to hear that the London College of Fashion is mounting a conference in the autumn under the title **Mirror, Mirror: Reflections on age and ageing**. Getting it all together is **Dr. Hannah Zeilig** who is Senior Research Fellow at LCF in fashion and age and who has been working in the field of ageing for over twenty years. So why is London College of Fashion mounting such an event, which seems on first thought outside the college's usual remit?*

Issues connected with age and ageing are important to us all. Fashion impacts and is impacted on by societal trends and the most important of these currently is ageing. The unprecedented historical event of ageing populations affects the whole of society. As part of its Better Lives agenda, in 2011 London College of Fashion hosted a panel discussion to explore the beauty of age and *Mirror Mirror* forms part of this continued interest in the ways in which fashion and the arts can investigate age.

The conference will bring together makers and creators of all kinds (fine artists, theatre directors, film producers, members of the fashion industry, students from across University of Arts London) with a diverse group of academics (including scientists and scholars from the humanities) and of course older people. The conference is designed to appeal to everyone with an interest in age and ageing and the arts.

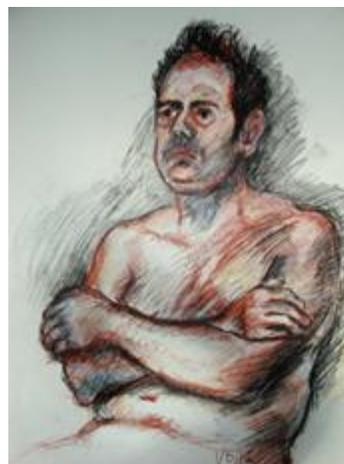
The programme for the conference has been drafted, international speakers have been invited and art work has been commissioned. An interactive performance has also been created, the

event has been publicised via various academic websites and the events team at LCF are also disseminating it amongst their contacts. We are now looking for active participants who can come and share their views and opinions in the Q & A sessions, though we are not looking for any more papers or artwork at this stage. But there will be more opportunities in the future, as this is expected to be the first in a series of innovative and provocative events at LCF to investigate age and later life and ageing.

The conference is being held on:
29 October 2013 18:00 for 18.30
30 October 2013 09:00 for 09:30
 at London College of Fashion, 20 John Prince's Street, London W1G 0BJ
 Tickets are £100 with an £80 early bird discount for tickets purchased before 31st May 2013
 £40 for students and over 65s

*This year's Adult Learners week is now fast approaching – 18th – 24th May. The Morley Gallery at Morley College near Waterloo will be celebrating the week with the second **Rootstein Hopkins Drawing Exhibition**, showcasing the artistic talents of adult learners from across London. A total of £2000 will be awarded to prizewinning entries.*

The juried exhibition, which will be open to the public from 8th May – 8th June 2013, is the second in a series of five drawing exhibitions funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation with the aim of encouraging more adults to explore their creativity through drawing and adult learning.



Toward the end of youth
 By Vojsava Fakhro

Following on from the success of the first exhibition in 2011, this year's showcase promises to be even bigger and better, attracting a total of 463 entries, of which 70 exceptional works have been chosen for display.

A distinguished panel of judges including Professor Stephen Farthing, Rootstein Hopkins Research Chair of Drawing at the University of the Arts; Bada Song, artist and second prize winner for the Jerwood Drawing Prize 2012, and Simon Beer, Programme Manager for NIACE, had the difficult task of selecting the pieces for the exhibition.

Bada Song said: "As an artist, it was a great pleasure to look through the drawings that were submitted to competition. Of my own practices, drawing is the most fundamental, relaxed and free form. The Rootstein Hopkins Drawing Exhibition is a fantastic celebration of the outcome of the education of drawing in art and I am honoured to play a part in it."

The judges will also be awarding a number of prizes to individual works,

including a first prize of £1000, which will be presented to the winners on the opening night by well-known artist and Morley Gallery patron Maggi Hambling. An additional People's Prize will also be running throughout the duration of the exhibition, with a £250 prize for the work which receives the most visitor votes.

When it opens, the exhibition will bring together an extraordinary breadth of work by people from many walks of life – from practising artists and working professionals to stay-at-home parents and the retired – who draw for a multitude of reasons. Over 17 London colleges will be represented in the show, including City Lit, Mary Ward Centre, Princes Drawing School and Putney School of Art, demonstrating the important role adult education plays in helping individuals to discover and nurture their creativity.

Professor Stephen Farthing says of the importance of drawing: “If we are literate, drawing becomes a part of our literacy; if we are not, it is the only method we have available to us of representing our world in two dimensions.”

The Rootstein Hopkins Foundation Drawing Exhibition will be on display at Morley Gallery from 8th May – 8th June 2013. Admission is free. For further information, including opening times, visit www.morleycollege.ac.uk/gallery or call 020 7450 1826.

For further details on the work of the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation in supporting art and artists visit www.rhfoundation.org.uk



James McAvoy and Claire Foy

Carlie Newman kicks off her Theatre News column with a review of the show that is the hot ticket in London at the moment.

It is good to see a young couple as the leads in *Macbeth* (Trafalgar Studios, London, until 27 April) and James McAvoy's natural Scottish accent is to be welcomed. His Macbeth is full of energy: he bounds around the stage, shimmies down a ladder, jumps on and off a table and is generally seen as athletic. He is pushed into considering murdering the King by his wife (Claire Foy) but once he accepts her desire to have Macbeth made King in accordance with the witches' prophecy, he embraces the idea so full heartedly that he becomes over-enthusiastic in his killing. When he returns from the war and places his hand on his wife's belly, one can sense in her piteous expression the loss of their child and there is a hint that their subsequent acts are the result of their loss and wish to achieve power instead.

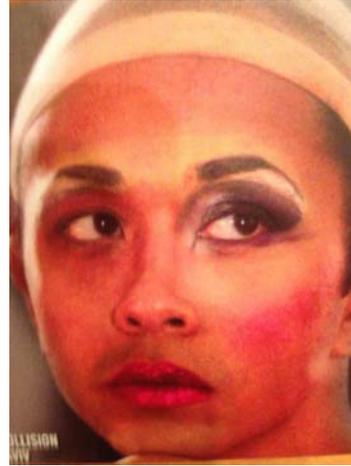
Director Jamie Lloyd has mounted a particularly bloody production. Macbeth and his lady are covered in blood and the killing of Lady Macduff and her young son is most harrowing. It is not just the leads who excel here. There are moving performances from Macduff (Jamie

Ballard) and a particularly strong Banquo (Forbes Masson). A simple stage nevertheless has appropriate props – perhaps too real when we see Macbeth vomiting into an on-stage toilet! The play is set in a dystopian future (we see the witches’ wearing gas masks and sounding as though they are underwater) and the adaptation of the stage – it is now raised and extends over the first four rows so that the audience is much closer to the action - helps to create a sense of immediacy. In addition there are some 70 seats actually at the back of the stage so they are right on top of the mud and gore.

McAvoy shows here that he is not just a film star but has some real acting skills which are on display here in a vivid and passionate performance. Apart from the fact that what is one of Shakespeare’s shortest plays runs here for almost three hours, the production is highly recommended.

Religious Jewish men are not allowed to be touched by women so when elderly Orthodox men in Tel Aviv fall ill a group of Filipino males come to Israel to look after them. On their day off five of them perform in a musical drag show which gives us the title of the play, *The Paper Dolls* at the Tricycle Theatre, London (until 28th April). Written by Philip Himberg, the play is adapted from the 2006 documentary film by Tomer Heymann. Director, Indhu Rubasingham presents it in a concrete multi-purpose set with various levels and playing areas – Ben Gurion airport, Israel with Hebrew newspaper headlines projected onto the walls, the inside and outside of

the elderly men’s houses and the clubs where the Paper Dolls perform. Unusually for a drag show all the songs are actually sung live, adequately rather than expertly, by the performers as opposed to being mimed. The start of the play sees the performers wearing costumes made out of paper.



Paper Dolls

The men have come from the Philippines to make a living; they send money home to buy health care and education for relatives. The play sensitively explores the themes of isolation and loneliness (through both the elderly men and their carers), homesickness, the different cultures and religions and, of course, sexuality, as the Filipinos look after their frail elderly charges with great care, often becoming good friends. The characters have verisimilitude and the acting, particularly of the five paper dolls is charming. Make the journey to Kilburn as soon as you can to see this most unusual show.

News and reviews from Carol Allen of what is around On Screen.

My celebration in the last digest of the plethora of films about older people may have been just a teensy weensy bit over optimistic, in that most of them seem for the moment to have disappeared from sight. The delightful *Quartet* however, which features four veteran actors led by Maggie Smith in a retirement home for opera singers, has been a bit of a hit and is still around even in the West End, despite the fact that it opened back in January.



Vanessa Redgrave and Terence Stamp

But *Song for Marion*, which has strong performances from Vanessa Redgrave in the title role of a woman who loves life and singing in her local community choir even though she is dying of cancer and Terence Stamp as her grumpy husband, who is saved from depression by that same choir, is in only a handful of cinemas despite opening much more recently. And another film, *Robot and Frank*, a really engaging comedy starring Frank Langella as a retired jewel thief and Peter Saarsgaard, voicing the role of his bossy robot butler cum carer,

seems to have disappeared right off the radar. Not even a DVD in sight yet – the other two will be out on DVD this summer. And they're all well worth your attention.

Mind you, these days most films don't usually stay in the cinema very long. Ken Loach's documentary *The Spirit of '45* was always planned to go swiftly to DVD after opening – it's available this month. Even if you're not old enough to remember the post World War 2 euphoria of nationalization and the creation of the welfare state (now being systematically dismantled), you cannot help but be cheered by the spirit of optimism for a brave new world that is there in the interviews with the now elderly people who were part of that social revolution. And I love the fact that it's advertised on Amazon as "starring Tony Benn"!

Another film you might well enjoy is *Papadopoulos and Sons*, a feel-good comedy about a Greek Cypriot born tycoon (Stephen Dillane), who loses all his money in the City meltdown and is reduced to starting again with his children and his estranged brother in the fish and chip shop where they first started out. There's a good story behind the film too, in that its writer/director couldn't find a distributor, so he courageously decided to do the job himself. He's been getting good reviews and good audiences, particularly from the Greek community, but distribution is an expensive enterprise, so it will only be around for a very short time. The DVD however will be available in August.

I hope the same short lived fate doesn't befall *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

from Indian director Mira Nair. It's a beautifully written and potentially controversial film about a young Pakistani man (Riz Ahmed), educated at Harvard, who becomes a Wall Street "Master of the Universe", until the events of 9/11 change America's attitude to him and his attitude to American values. It's a strong and engrossing story in its own right with good performances, which include Kiefer Sutherland as Ahmed's financial mentor and Liev Schreiber as the CIA planted journalist listening to his story. But even more importantly it provides a rare cinematic opportunity to look at the world from the point of view of an intelligently written

and well realised Muslim character and gain a bit of insight into the flip side of the West's fear of terrorism and the so-called "war on terror". The film opens in May.



Riz Ahmed as The Reluctant Fundamentalist

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