

# AGE EXCHANGE ANNUAL REPORT

**AGE EXCHANGE**  
aims to improve the  
quality of life  
of older people by  
emphasising the  
value of their  
reminiscences to  
old and young,  
through pioneering  
artistic, educational  
and welfare  
activities.



**BOOKS  
EDUCATION  
EXHIBITIONS  
JOURNAL  
MUSEUM  
NETWORKING  
RESOURCES  
THEATRE  
TRAINING  
WORKING WITH  
YOUNG & OLD  
THROUGH  
REMINISCENCE**

**1995/96**

# 1995-6 : A YEAR TO REMEMBER



*John Major chats to the cast of 'Cheers' at the Reminiscence Centre.*

**T**he period covered by this report has been the most active and ambitious of our fourteen year existence.

- We have opened the refurbished Old Bakehouse building as our new European Reminiscence Training and Development Centre, with excellent facilities for educational and arts events.
- We have hosted two major international events, the European Reminiscence Symposium and the European Festival of Reminiscence Theatre, attracting visitors from many countries in Europe and beyond to Age Exchange.
- We have consolidated the European Reminiscence Network, developing partnerships, training packages and skills exchanges with groups in many different countries.
- We have secured National Lottery funding for major improvements to our facilities.
- The Prime Minister, John Major, has honoured Age Exchange by choosing to pay us a special visit to mark the first anniversary of the National Lottery.
- Our professional theatre company has travelled extensively across the UK and throughout Europe with specially devised new touring theatre shows.
- Our older people's theatre company, The Good Companions, have created two new shows which have played to appreciative audiences in the UK and in Germany.
- We have completed an international tour of "Routes", our show about Punjabi elders' memories.
- We have researched and published extensively to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.
- Our exhibition space at the Reminiscence Centre has had a major refurbishment.
- We have mounted three new exhibitions/environments on reminiscence themes in our Centre and sponsored a new touring photographic exhibition.
- Our work has been extensively featured on local and national TV and Radio.
- Our press profile has risen considerably.
- Numbers attending our training courses have increased and our book sales have remained steady.
- We have conducted the first major survey of reminiscence work in the UK with over 700 detailed replies to our questionnaire.
- We have created the first specialist library in reminiscence literature, including an archive of original interview material collected over the last fourteen years.

## **OPENING THE BAKEHOUSE BUILDING**



*Friends and helpers hard at work on the Bakehouse refurbishment*



*Delegates and speakers at the Reminiscence Symposium in May 1995*

The month of April was one of frenzied activity preparing for the opening of the Old Bakehouse building and the European Reminiscence Symposium. An army of friends and helpers was brought in to sand down brickwork, help weld the staircase, make new doors, as well as the professional builders doing the major works under the architect's direction. The paint was still drying on the morning when the delegates from all over Europe were to arrive.

The Bakehouse building was formally opened on May 5th 1995 by Richard Balfe, M.E.P., and Dr. Christopher Joyce from the Department of Health. In attendance were two of our patrons, Dr. Richard Stone and Sir Sigmund Sternberg as well as Management Committee members, local councillors, Bridget Prentice, M.P., and about 80 visitors including delegates from many European countries. We opened with a performance of 'Routes', our Punjabi show, which played to a capacity audience and gave us just the start we needed.

## **THE EUROPEAN REMINISCENCE SYMPOSIUM**

The Symposium was divided into two separate halves representing different fields of interest within reminiscence: Reminiscence in Dementia Care and Inter-generational Reminiscence. Bernie Arigho took responsibility for presenting the dementia care side and Pam Schweitzer for the inter-generational work. Bridget Knapper co-ordinated the event and everything went very smoothly. We had a very good take-up of places and each seminar was packed. We did not run parallel sessions as we had

at the 1993 Conference, but tried to keep everyone together so that the presentations added together to give a wide range of experience to all delegates. With manageable numbers (40-60) this worked very well and there were plenty of social events and performances to balance the concentrated input.

A set of Symposium Papers was available at the event, including contributions from all the presenters. Older people from Age Exchange were involved in workshops and performances (including

the absolutely final performance of 'Grandmother's Footsteps' with the Youth Theatre) as well as helping with the catering side. This was admirably managed by Maureen Knott who has been with us on a freelance basis since the 1993 Reminiscence Conference held at the Concert Halls.

The new building was greatly admired by the delegates and proved to be a very flexible space, though we did realise that improved sound insulation (undertaken subsequently) would make it possible to use more spaces simultaneously.

# AGE EXCHANGES : ACROSS THE GENERATIONS



*Penny Cheesman & Nathan Cooper*

## **A daughter-in-law writes**

**I**n January 1995, my mother-in-law, Penny Cheesman, started voluntary work at the Reminiscence centre in Blackheath Village and since then, she has been a changed woman!

Before Penny found the Centre, she seemed to have no purpose in life and was always fed up and depressed. She had lots of time on her hands and complained a lot of her different ailments. She would phone us up saying, 'I'm not well', and she was very 'weepy' and depressed. We worried about her a lot and constantly told her she should find something to do instead of just sitting in her flat day after day feeling down. As we both had demanding jobs, plus two young children, we only saw Penny at the weekends.

Nothing seemed to interest her until she 'found' the Reminiscence Centre through her friend, Joyce Milan. Things have changed dramatically since then. She's a changed woman! She loves her time spent at the Reminiscence Centre, especially the theatre group, The Good Companions. Now, when we phone her, she's full of life (that's when she's at home!) and has lots of things to talk about. She has always loved drama and travelling so the trips to perform abroad are very exciting for her.

We feel happier now that Penny has found an interest in life that she really enjoys. It has taken years off of her!

**Jean Cheesman**



*Natalie Brown (r.) with her grandmother, Barbara McKenzie & family members*

## **A grand-daughter writes**

**M**y first memories of Age Exchange are of joining the Youth Theatre ten years ago when I was fourteen. I remember two things; meeting a rather fierce lady and being told to lie on the floor and pretend to be a slug. It was called dramatic interpretation and despite the fact that we had all hoped for a more challenging role, we all rather reluctantly obliged and formed a wriggling mass of giggling molluscs.

And so began our rise to stardom. As you can imagine, when my grandmother mentioned joining Age Exchange, the thought of her wriggling horizontally in my footsteps rather appealed. I told her to "Go for it" and gingerly awaited her response.

A part of me knew that Age Exchange would provide her with something important, but I had no idea what an enormous part of her life it would become. It was the memory of a picture I had seen when I was about seven years old, that had come to mind. I remember seeing this dark-haired lady in a play and being horrified that not only had my Granny been in her twenties at some point, but that she had secretly led another life. A lady who I had unquestioningly assumed had lived in a shop of knickers all her life (at that time she ran a lingerie shop) was harbouring a secret passion for the stage. However, it was not to be, and Granny happily followed a somewhat rigid path of

seamless stockings for over twenty years, accompanied as always by her adoring husband.

In October 1994, however, it was all to change. I don't think any of us realised the devastating impact that the death of my grandfather would have on the family. Certainly no-one could conceive the loss for my grandmother. Their lives for 51 years had become so intrinsically woven in a world they know only as theirs, that to suddenly be left alone must be one of the most terrifying realisations. It takes a courage and inner strength I can only admire to pick up the pieces and to begin a new life. It was undoubtedly Age Exchange that provided the support and encouragement to begin that new path.

It has been nearly two years since Granny joined Age Exchange and I don't think anyone could have predicted the changes we have seen in her life. It stuck me most at the performance of "Work In Progress", when I suddenly saw that dark-haired lady again and realised it was my Granny.

My grandfather would have been so proud of her! It was as if the routine of her life had fallen away and had left a stronger, wiser woman, with an unfamiliar childlike curiosity to experience every facet of life to its fullest. And that's what strikes you most about the Good Companions; it's a youthful spirit of living which finds its joy in the ability to share with others, this incredible gift of restoring and nurturing memories.

It is said that it is only when faced with a death that we truly appreciate the beauty of living, and that's nowhere more evident than in some of the people I have met at

Age Exchange. The loss will always remain a painful one, but the memories are such a priceless gift. So many of us spend our lives afraid to jump on to a new unknown path or risk new experiences that can be found from a different direction, that we can often miss our most profound opportunity for growth. It's rather strange now to be reaching that cynical age of 24 and know that it will now always be Granny who tells me "Go for it!"

**Natalie Brown**

## *Growing Up with Age Exchange*

**I** have seen Age Exchange grow from a desktop to what it is today. I started as a member of the Youth Theatre when I was about eleven, and for a long time, that was the only real social life I had! I was very shy. It really helped me to come out of myself. I found I had a real interest in theatre and people. I really loved going.

Last year I returned to Age Exchange to help decorate the basement, and was asked if I would like to take part in the play 'Cheers'. This was a play much like the Youth Theatre plays, based on memories; only this time the older

people were actually acting in the play as well as six young people. I had not done any acting for over four years and had forgotten how much I loved it. My enthusiasm for theatre was re-awakened.

We took the play to Germany, which was brilliant. We had to try and overcome the language barrier. But watching the audience connect despite the fact that most of them couldn't speak English, was a truly wonderful experience, and made me realise how important this type of work is. It's the best kind of history lesson. You are put in touch with what people actually felt, which is a powerful way to bring history to life.

I realise how important it is to bring young and old together; in our society, the old are very isolated as we do not have many people living in extended family situations. As a result, a lot of wisdom is not passed down to younger members who have the most to learn. And, by spending time with younger people, older people can be reminded of being young themselves.

During the Reminiscence Festival, this was echoed a hundred times over, as people were able to share their experiences with each other using movement and facial expressions to overcome the language barrier. During this Festival I

also got to learn more about my video camera as I had the opportunity to help with the filming.

This year I was asked to help with the Memory Boxes exhibition. I had never done anything like this before, but I said yes anyway. I love to be creative. This was a great experience. I really started to understand how important memories are. Helping people to remember a lot of things that they have done in the past, recalling forgotten times - happy or sad - , seems to remind them of who they are, and give them a renewed sense of identity. People are so special and everyone deserves the time to be listened to and appreciated. I have not met a single boring person.

As a part of the exhibition, I learned to use the word-processor, which has revolutionised my attitude towards writing. As someone who normally finds writing most frustrating, I actually found it enjoyable. Once the exhibition had finished, I realised how much confidence it had given me. I am now going to college to study Stage Management and that is a direct result of working at Age Exchange. I think it is an inspiring place, an essential part of our society, and a major contributor towards bridging the gap between young and old.

**Joscelin Platt, Aged 22**



*Joscelin Platt (l.) with Eileen O'Sullivan, a volunteer, and Rado Klose, photographer at the 'Time To Remember' exhibition*

# THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

## NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS:

We had decided in 1994 that we would maximise the opportunities offered by the 50th anniversary of the end of hostilities in Europe and mark the 1995 occasion in style. Our volunteers were involved in many of the big VE Day events (Hyde Park, Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, etc.) promoting our books and encouraging people to visit the Centre. We undertook research and editing commissions from the London Boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham, resulting in two new books featuring memories and photos from borough residents. Rib Davis undertook the editing task with input from Pam Schweitzer.

## SPECIAL EXHIBITION:

A splendid 3-dimensional exhibition was created in the studio space by Lisa Wilson,

helped by her brother, Steve and by Dora Schweitzer. The exhibition was launched by Joan Regan, a world class star of the 50s who sang all the favourite songs of the period with our stalwart volunteers, all dressed in appropriate period outfits.

## A NEW PLAY FOR THE 50th ANNIVERSARY

Rib Davis and Pam Schweitzer wrote a new play 'When the Lights Go On Again' to present at the Greenwich Festival in June, using our own Bakehouse building as a public performing venue for the first time. Pam put together a book of reminiscences and photos from Reminiscence Centre members featuring many of the stories which were used to make the theatre script and this has sold well ever since. The show toured in London, across the UK and in a wide-ranging tour of Germany to very appreciative audiences.

## A NEW GOOD COMPANIONS SHOW

With a small grant from London Arts Board, the Good Companions and members of the Age Exchange Youth Theatre worked with Pam to create a new show entitled 'Cheers', based on the group's own wartime memories and set at a celebration party at the end of the war. We made the experiment of performing (to very small audiences) in the exhibition space with the end of the war exhibition as a background. This worked extremely well giving the performances a tremendous sense of authenticity and intimacy which was greatly admired and which made our work very accessible to audiences from abroad.



# THE EUROPEAN FESTIVAL OF REMINISCENCE THEATRE

## 'A TIME TO REMEMBER'

The European Reminiscence Theatre Festival commemorating the end of World War II took place in London between 18th and 24th October 1995. Participants were groups of older people aged 60 to 95 who had prepared theatre pieces from their own experiences in their different countries to bring to the festival and share with others. Delegates attended from many different projects across Europe to observe the work and to participate in workshops and discussions alongside the main participating groups.

Performances were offered by the following groups:

**Alt und Jung Theater  
Hildesheim, Germany**  
**DaneAge Reminiscence Theatre Group,  
Copenhagen, Denmark**  
**Age Exchange Good Companions,  
London, U.K.**  
**Les Femmes de la Residence Viricel,  
Lyon, France via La Flamboyance**  
**Hymittos Theatre Group,  
Athens, Greece**  
**Associazione Italiana Donne  
Anziane/Attive, Perugia, Italy**  
**Age Exchange Professional Theatre  
Company, London, U.K.**

**Theater der Erfahrungen,  
Berlin, Germany**  
**Players Centre, Taipei, Taiwan**  
**Footsteps of the Elders,  
Columbus, Ohio, USA**

## OTHER FESTIVAL DELEGATES AND PARTICIPANTS:

Delegates attended from Vienna, Brussels, Cologne, Oslo, Brest, Paris, Belfast, London, Magdeburg and Brasilia, many of them representing reminiscence projects and/or creative arts projects with older people. Well over 150 people attended the festival as delegates and participants, and large numbers of the general public attended performances in the Blackheath Concert Halls and the Albany Theatre in Deptford.

## THEATRE PERFORMANCES

The shows were conducted in the mother tongue of the performing groups, but summary translations had been prepared in all languages. The groups had been set the task of using theatre to overcome language barriers as far as possible by using movement, gesture, music and visual effects to transmit meaning. Some groups succeeded very well in this difficult task and managed to communicate very directly with audiences. Most groups felt that the need to communicate non-verbally had been a very stimulating challenge and it had enabled them to try new styles of work and enlarge their vocabulary of artistic expression.

Particularly gratifying was the absence of a competitive spirit which can be very corrosive where the main medium is artistic presentation.



*The Hildesheim Group in performance at the Festival*

It was very clear that the groups were at very different levels of theatrical expertise and sophistication, but those who were relatively new to the work were glad to pick up new ideas and approaches from others. There is every indication that a lot of learning took place and that groups will set the highest standards for themselves in future work as a result.

### A SHARED THEME AND A SHARING OF EXPERIENCE

Common themes emerged from the presentations and there was a great sense of mutual understanding between the older people of different groups, including those who had been on opposing sides during the war years. Experiences of fear, loss, shortages, courage, resistance, flight and above all relief at the end of hostilities were expressed in different ways by the performing groups, but the degree of sympathy and empathy were very high. The presence of visiting groups from Taiwan and America, who funded themselves to come to the festival and a remarkable speaker from Japan, gave a wider dimension to the work, reflecting the world-wide nature of the last war and again emphasising common experience in a spirit of reconciliation.

### CREATIVE WORKSHOPS FOR OLDER PEOPLE FROM MANY LANDS

The older people and delegates also had a chance to work together every day in a series of practical workshops. These workshops were extremely well attended and afforded much pleasure and stimulus to all participants. Mime, music, dance and dramatic improvisation offered alternative languages and enabled the participants to get to know each other in an unusual and particularly creative manner.



*The Greek Group in performance at the Festival*

### AGE EXCHANGE'S BIGGEST EVER ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGE

Social events such as a coach trip around London, a visit to Royal Greenwich, celebratory meals and a barn dance all offered groups the chance to relax together and to benefit from being abroad, in many cases for the first time. Age Exchange catered for up to 100 people a day, providing proper 'sit-down' meals on both floors of the Bakehouse as we did not want our older visitors to be standing too long. Maureen Knott organised a team of excellent helpers to co-ordinate all the catering and our own volunteers were extremely generous with their time, helping with serving, clearing and washing up. Many delegates commented on the high standard of catering and the exceptionally warm and friendly atmosphere created by our helpers.

For Age Exchange, as Network Co-ordinating body, this was our most ambitious event to

date. All the staff and volunteers felt very happy with the way it went and really felt that their hard work was appreciated. A thoroughly friendly informal atmosphere prevailed in which it was easy for delegates to make new friends. Many of these friendships are already flowering as groups make plans to continue their links and develop joint projects. Age Exchange has already received many requests for help and support in the development of these projects.

### THE 'TIME TO REMEMBER' FESTIVAL CONTINUED IN GERMANY

The Freies Werkstatt Theater invited Age Exchange to Cologne for the German end of the Festival of Reminiscence Theatre to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. A joint exhibition (FWT and Age Exchange) was prepared with memories, photographs and memorabilia supplied by older people from both groups and a special workshop by Age Exchange was attended by 50 practitioners from the Cologne region.

The Age Exchange professional theatre company gave several performances of the new show 'When The Lights Go On Again' (featuring Londoners' memories of the end of the war and the period which followed it) and then went on to play in Rotterdam, Gottingen, Kassel, Hildesheim and Hamburg. In each city, Pam Schweitzer conducted workshops in Reminiscence for enthusiastic groups of practitioners.

The Good Companions, Age Exchange's older people's company also went to Cologne to perform 'Cheers', a new inter-generational play with nine young people and ten older people about wartime experience in Cologne in November. The group were very warmly received at all



*An international audience at the festival prepare themselves by reading a summary of the show in their own languages.*

performances and they had the opportunity to see FWT's own older people's theatre presentation *'Lebensend und Sonnenschein'* which they greatly admired. There were workshops and exchanges with other German older people's theatre and writing groups and an excellent atmosphere of creativity and good will prevailed.

## THE HILDESHEIM MEETING OF THE REMINISCENCE NETWORK

In May 1996, the Network partners and thirty delegates from European projects met in Hildesheim to draw together their thoughts on the programme of events of the last two years and to plan for the future. We met over three days to reflect on the recent Reminiscence Theatre Festival and on what we had all learned from the related research project and to share ideas as to how the Network should now develop.

The Hildesheim event was the first major meeting to be held away from London and the first time a significant organisational responsibility had been shouldered by a Network partner working closely with Pam at Age Exchange as the Network Co-ordinator. Other Network partners at our planning meeting also agreed to take responsibility for future events to be held in Denmark, Brussels and Berlin.

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

*The impact on older people from different countries of recording their memories and creating*



*Volunteers helping with catering for 100 people a day at the International Festival, left to right : Gladys Richardson, Elsie House and Anne Finer*

## their own theatre pieces from experience.

All the group leaders participating in the festival *'A Time To Remember'* have conducted interviews along the same lines with their group members and have passed their interviews on to Age Exchange. The results of this research are very fascinating in that they demonstrate the enormous significance in the lives of the older people interviewed of their creative work around their experiences. Reminiscence Theatre emerges as a life-enhancing opportunity to take stock, to share and work through difficult experiences in a supportive environment, to make new relationships based on creative co-operative activity, to

gain new skills and new courage and to re-orientate after major setbacks such as bereavement or painful transitions from the world of work to retirement.

Pam has produced a summary of the findings, now published in *'A Time To Reflect'*, the Hildesheim Conference Papers, and further work will be done with this research material in the coming months. It is hoped to publish it together with Rado Klose's photographs from the Festival *'A Time To Remember'* and reflections from the group leaders on their methods of making theatre from memory, but we need to raise separate sponsorship for this publication.



*A Festival music workshop with Danish, Greek, German, American and British participants*

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS & NEW PROJECTS

### 'WORK IN PROGRESS' A WRITING AND THEATRE PROJECT

Older people have undertaken a multi-part project based around their memories of leaving school and starting work in the 1920s to 1940s. Twenty-five older people have recorded or written their memories of their first work experience, including information on their childhood ambitions, their family background, etc and these memories will shortly be made into a 'home-produced' publication.

Some of these memories formed the basis of a new Good Companions play called *'Work In Progress'* which has been performed in London and Hildesheim and will shortly be seen in Oslo, Copenhagen and Vienna. The older people involved have learned new acting skills and have participated in the making of a radio programme for the BBC which will be heard on Radio 4 in the autumn of 1996. They have also been filmed by BBC TV for the national programme 'Breakfast News Extra'.

This programme (watched by an estimated 8 million viewers per day), featured two five minute films (shown on consecutive days) about the work of this group in the UK and in Germany. This was invaluable publicity and we were all very pleased with the end result.

For the old people involved, this whole process of making a new play under the cameras and microphones was extremely stimulating, not to mention the adventure for some of travelling by air for the first time and seeing another country. The play is also a means of bringing these older people into contact with other similar groups in other EU countries when they visit Norway and Copenhagen in the autumn as part of festivals and conferences about older people and creative reminiscence work.

### COMPUTER COURSES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The computer training programme for older people is now well established at Age Exchange, with some of the early graduates of the programme about to progress to more advanced courses in page layout and newsletter production. The acquisition of a scanner means the older people can now acquire the skills to incorporate photographs and other images into their computerised reminiscences and move towards desktop publishing projects. We are advertising for new tutors to deal with the growing list of would-be older learners.



*Designer Madeline Herbert with visitor Catherine Marson at the opening of the 'Winter Warmers' exhibition*

### 'WINTER WARMERS'

This was the name of our winter exhibition designed by Madeline Herbert and based on interviews conducted by Rib Davis. It ran from December to April in the Centre and was a very popular exhibition attracting many visitors. A book of stories has been published by Age Exchange and a new play written by Rib Davis and Clare Summerskill based on the same interview material. This will tour in the autumn with our professional acting company, with financial support from Help The Aged, Department of Health and the London Boroughs Grants Scheme.

### PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS

The 'Time To Remember' Festival was photographed by Rado Klose and the finest 40 photographs have been mounted and framed as a touring photographic exhibition.

The theme of the exhibition is older people's creativity as manifest at the festival and again many EU colleagues in the Reminiscence Network hope to host this exhibition next year as part of their high profile programmes for and about older people. Rado Klose is also photographing reminiscence work with dementia sufferers for the new manual which Bernie Arigho is currently preparing.

In January we hosted another exhibition in the Bakehouse, 'Centenarians in Europe' by Carl Cordonnier and Eric Le Brun. These French photographers had visited each European country and photographed people aged 100+ in their home environments. Carl Cordonnier gave an excellent talk on his work to visitors and staff at the Centre. We were all delighted to see what an excellent space for photography exhibitions the Bakehouse provided.



*Launching the 'Winter Warmers' exhibition at the Reminiscence Centre in December 1995*

## THE REMINISCENCE CENTRE

**T**he Reminiscence Centre has seen even more changes this year! The Exhibition room is now looking splendid, fresh and elegant after the refurbishment which included the new roof and skylights. Yet, it still retains the atmosphere of the 1930's and 40's hall and is a perfect setting for our exhibitions.

The improvements have been a source of great joy - not only for friends, volunteers and staff of Age Exchange but also for our many visitors. Our regulars and new visitors are delighted when they hear that Age Exchange has been awarded lottery money. To be able to see the improvements the lottery money has made gives people an extra interest, pleasure and 'ownership' - *"It's good to know my money is going to a worthwhile cause"* - *"You deserve it"* - *"Small charities need the support"*. Visitors react with so much enthusiasm for our work at Age Exchange.

The Reminiscence Centre attracts a wide range of groups from local boroughs, Greater London, Britain and also from other countries, especially the European Union. Our pre-booking policy ensures that the Centre staff and volunteers are prepared for the visits and are able to welcome the groups in a relaxed and friendly manner and give assistance if needed.

Staff working with elderly people often see new aspects to their personalities as memories are triggered by handling the objects; smelling medicines, perfume, mothballs and carbolic soap; listening to the 78 r.p.m. gramophone records and

sometimes singing along to the music. The elderly people gain confidence and enjoyment in explaining and demonstrating how the objects in the Centre were used and often other visitors will interact with the group making it a very lively session indeed. Recently a group had to leave later than expected because one lady was being interviewed by a schoolgirl as part of her summer project.

We offer short training sessions to staff, volunteers, carers and students. These are designed to give people a greater awareness of the value of reminiscence in our lives and also give practical advice on how to get a group started and where to find materials. The Reminiscence Centre shop has a wide variety of books, cards, toys, posters etc., which are chosen for their reminiscence value, but also bought by visitors as gifts for family and friends, or even for themselves.

Age Exchange's own pensioner volunteers greatly enjoy working with groups of schoolchildren. This is now a very important part of children's education and the Schools' Curriculum project work can be linked to the life experiences of our volunteers. The *'Keeping Warm in Winter'* exhibition was used as an authentic background to stories and explanations of life before central heating, when bedrooms became so cold in winter that ice formed on the inside of the windows; when in some families children shared a bed and overcoats were used as extra blankets; and when families ate hearty stews and suet pudding and the kitchen, with its black lead range glowing with warmth, was the heart of the home.



*Young visitors from Germany and the UK enjoying the Memory Box exhibition*

In the Centre, visitors are always made welcome by our dedicated volunteers and we are fortunate in having many people - young and old - who are willing to give time and commitment to Age Exchange. Working as a volunteer provides an excellent opportunity to meet a wide range of people of many cultures and each with their unique life experience.

### MEMORY BOXES PROJECT

This project was undertaken following a similar project in Hildesheim. Older people were given redundant grenade boxes by the army in each country and artistic help was available to them to make the boxes into *'life portraits'* representing aspects of their lives which were particularly important to them.

Using photographs, computerised text, painting and collage, 20 of the older people have now produced 3-dimensional displays about their lives past and present. Some were displayed in Hildesheim at our Network Conference there alongside the German older people's boxes. Now both countries' boxes are on display in the newly refurbished exhibition space at the Reminiscence Centre in London until the end of September. We are hoping to be able to tour them to different European countries next year, adding boxes made by older people from different countries as the project continues.

There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the idea at the Network meeting in Germany and the project has caught the imagination of many reminiscence workers across the EU and beyond. We have recently received press-cuttings from Taiwan where our partner organisation has just had a major success with a memory boxes project inspired by Age Exchange.



*A group of visitors to the Reminiscence Centre with Chris Tapping, a Centre volunteer*

# REMINISCENCE TRAINING & SUPPORT SERVICES

The past year has been one of both consolidation and new growth for our training and support services. We aim to meet the various and changing needs of people engaged in reminiscence work, and to this end our services are constantly developing, as new evidence and feedback comes in from practitioners, researchers, managers of services and course participants. We are grateful for the financial help we have received for this side of our work from the Department of Health, the London Boroughs Grants Scheme, the Linbury Trust, the European Commission and the Metropolitan Hospitals Sunday Fund.

## REMINISCENCE DATABASE

A wide-ranging questionnaire was sent out to projects and individuals on the Reminiscence Database. Over 750 questionnaires have been returned already and many more recipients have responded in other ways to our survey, seeking training information or wishing to subscribe to the Reminiscence Magazine. The returned questionnaires make up a fascinating body of information confirming the extent to which reminiscence work has gained acceptance across Europe, and the UK in particular. We hope to set up a research project to analyse the questionnaire responses in the coming months and publish our findings.

## REMINISCENCE MAGAZINE

We have produced three new editions of Reminiscence Magazines in the period 1995/6, featuring Inter-generational projects, theatre work and work with older people with dementia. The forthcoming issue is concerned with evaluation of reminiscence work and an information round up. The subscription has increased to around 600, with many more readers as the magazine circulates at work places. There is plenty of copy coming in now which indicates that there is a lively and participating readership. Help The Aged will give us support with the Magazine for one more year.

## REMINISCENCE CENTRE SHORT COURSE PROGRAMME

Interest in courses run at the Reminiscence Centre has been maintained, as more people discover for the first time the relevance of reminiscence to their work, and come to hear about our training through our promotional activities.

It is particularly good to see so many people booking in for various specialist courses, having taken the introductory course. Feedback has been very good generally, but



many participants are asking for longer courses which could explore aspects of practice in greater depth. This we are now considering.

## NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

We are able to provide any of the Centre courses (as well as specially customised courses) on an in-house basis for organisations around the United Kingdom. Demand for this service has increased, and in order to help us meet further expected increases in demand we need to recruit new suitably qualified and experienced trainers from around the regions.

Our training programme is developing more of an international flavour, with growing numbers of people from other countries either attending our short course programme, or asking us to arrange special group-training with interpretation. The Centre has attracted groups of workers seeking reminiscence training from Finland, Sweden, Germany, Japan, Holland, Hungary and Belgium. Many European practitioners have attended Age Exchange's UK training days in specialist fields such as inter-generational work, new technologies, reminiscence theatre, inter-cultural reminiscence and reminiscence in dementia care.

Age Exchange training workshops in various aspects of Reminiscence have been given by Pam Schweitzer, Bernie Arigho and Lindsay Royan in Stockholm, Helsinki, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Kassel, Cologne, Berlin, Hildesheim, Vienna, Galway, Dublin, Aberdeen, Stirling, Athens and Brussels. Several more are in the planning stages to take place in Oslo, Copenhagen, Brussels, Ghent and Vienna.

The new training manual on 'Reminiscence in Dementia Care' which is being prepared for publication by Bernie Arigho with photographs by Rado Klose should be ready by early 1997 and we hope to publish it in French and German at the same time.

'Age Exchanges', the training manual on inter-generational reminiscence work by Pam



Schweitzer is being translated into French following the success of the German version and this will be published early in 1997. 'The Reminiscence Handbook', a popular training manual by Caroline Osborn for carers, has been translated into German and will be published in 1997. A Danish version of the handbook will be published by DaneAge in autumn 1996.

## THE REMINISCENCE PROJECT

We have been working in 23 different placements over the last year, many of them involving reminiscence workers who took part in the Fifty-Plus Reminiscence Project. We have a large team of Project Workers available in the London area, and our challenge is to continue to make the case for guided work practice in reminiscence activities to more service-purchasers.

## REFERENCE LIBRARY

In the near future we will be opening the Reminiscence Reference Library, situated in the Old Bakehouse, and containing over 800 articles and books on the subject. As a valuable addition to the library, we are cataloguing all the research interviews we have conducted on audiotape over the last 14 years at Age Exchange with older people (many of whom have now died but who have left invaluable information behind) and these too will be available to Reminiscence Library users. A large video library is also being catalogued and will be available to users for research purposes.



A visitor enjoying a memory

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Statement of Financial Activities shows net income for the year of £26,939 and total funds standing at £327,477.

Although a surplus in excess of £26,000 may seem a comfortable margin, it should be borne in mind that Age Exchange financed part of the Bakehouse conversion programme (£11,000) from its own reserves and we must continue to finance the £12,500 repayment each year, together with the interest thereon (£4,568 in 1995/6), until the year 2000, on the loan to purchase our premises.

The charity performed strongly both in terms of fund-raising and self-generated income. Income from grants exceeded the quarter million mark with the European Commission more than doubling its previous year funding to £106,146 and a first time grant of £16,246 was received from the Arts Council National Lottery Fund. However, before we get carried away with this significant achievement it must be stressed that only £50,000 of the total grants received during the year can be considered to be annual and renewable core funding or service level agreements so that we can carry out our valued work with a comfortable degree of financial stability.

Income from fees and book sales was up 19% on previous year to £132,064 with training fees performing particularly well (up 38%) and book sales maintaining its previous year level of £24,000.

Direct expenditure on the charity's activities increased by 43% to £345,210 largely due to the European Commission grant, which allowed the significant increase in spending in the area of publications, education and training.

The financial position as shown by the balance sheet reveals that whilst the charity is reasonably well endowed in fixed assets, its position with regard to working capital is quite weak. Total working capital (net current assets) of £40,269 again may seem a reasonable margin but this figure contains the four elements of stock, debtors, cash and creditors and the increasing challenge is to keep these elements circulating in order to maintain liquidity.

These summarised accounts are a summary of information extracted from the audited annual accounts, on which the auditors' opinion was unqualified. The full report and accounts were approved by the trustees on 31 July 1996 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information the full accounts, the auditors' report on those accounts and the trustees' Annual Report should be consulted.

Copies of these may be obtained from the Age Exchange office at 11 Blackheath Village, London SE3 9LA.

### Auditors' Statement

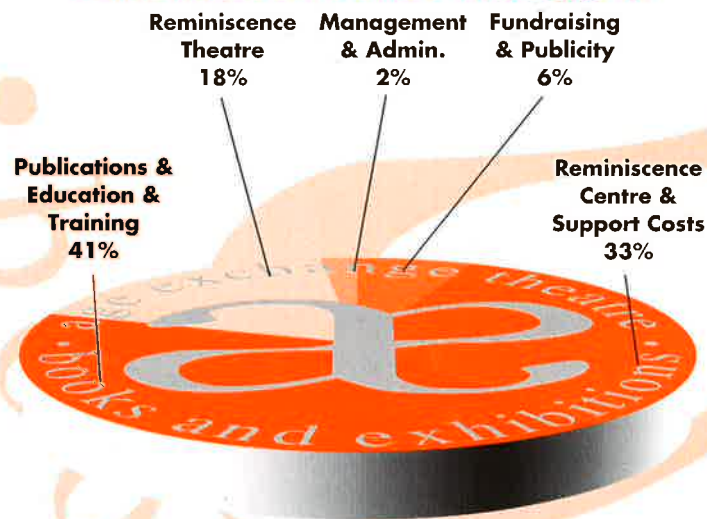
*As Auditors to the charity, we have reviewed the summarised accounts above and consider that they are consistent with the full accounts, on which we gave our opinion.*

*John Green & Co.*

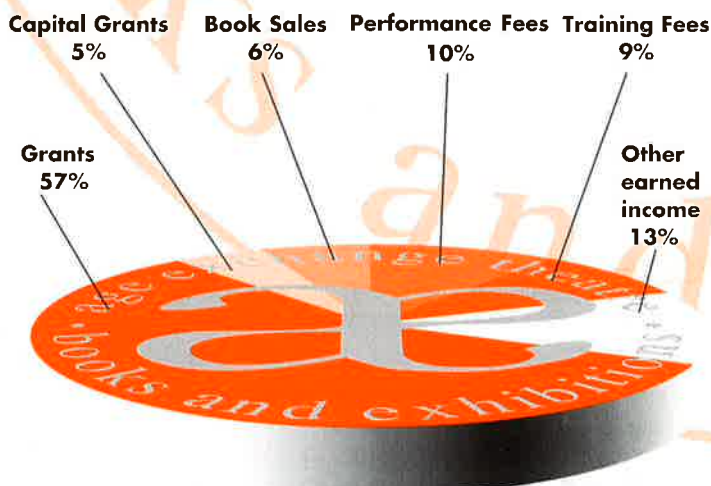
Age Exchange gratefully acknowledge support from the following funders during 1995/96.

Arts Council National Lottery Fund.  
Baring Foundation  
Department of Health  
East Sussex County Council  
European Commission  
Help the Aged  
Linbury Trust  
London Arts Board  
London Borough of Ealing  
London Borough of Greenwich  
London Borough of Lambeth  
London Borough of Lewisham  
London Boroughs Grants Unit  
Lord Ashdown Charitable Settlement  
Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation  
Readers Digest  
Sir Sigmund Sternberg  
The Tibble Trust  
West Sussex County Council

## EXPENDITURE 1995/96



## INCOME 1995/96



## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 1996

	1996		1995	
	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Tangible Assets		337208		298277
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Stock	43092		41726	
Debtors	22259		47259	
Cash at Bank and in Hand	10001		26158	
	75352		115143	
<b>CREDITORS:</b> Amount falling due within one year	(35083)		(50382)	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		40269		64761
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		377477		363038
<b>CREDITORS:</b> Amount falling after more than one year		(50000)		(62500)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		327477		300538
<b>FUNDS</b>				
Restricted Funds		73984		36320
Unrestricted Funds		253493		264218
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		£327477		£300538

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1996

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	1995
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
Fees and Book Sales	132064	-	132064	110726
Grants	70845	183160	254005	228399
Donations	5685	-	5685	3723
Interest Received	970	-	970	443
Other Income	1855	-	1855	14436
Gross Income from Trading	7450	-	7450	5313
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	218869	183160	402029	363040
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
<b>DIRECT CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE</b>				
Reminiscence Theatre	41091	28106	69197	45242
Publications Education and Training	26577	125328	151905	79260
Reminiscence Centre	20530	-	20530	23171
Support Costs	86216	17362	103578	93272
	174414	170796	345210	240945
<b>OTHER EXPENDITURE</b>				
Fund-raising and Publicity	11807	11620	23427	37476
Management and Administration	6453	-	6453	3963
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	192674	182416	375090	282384
<b>NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR BEFORE TRANSFER</b>	26195	744	26939	80656
Transfers	(36920)	36920	-	-
<b>NET INCOME AFTER TRANSFERS</b>	(10725)	37664	26939	80656
<b>FUNDS AT 1 APRIL 1995</b>	264218	36320	300538	219882
<b>FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 1996</b>	£253493	£73984	£327477	£300538

# WHO'S WHO AT AGE EXCHANGE?

## APRIL 1995-JULY 1996

### FULL-TIME STAFF

**Pam Schweitzer**  
Artistic Director  
**Frank Thackaberry**  
Administrator  
**Matthew Couper**  
Assistant Administrator  
**Bernie Arigho**  
Reminiscence Co-ordinator  
**Bridget Knapper**  
European Officer  
**Patricia Juarez**  
Marketing (from July 1995 to January 1996)

### PART-TIME STAFF

**Jyl Cowley, Jo Girdlestone,**  
**Eileen Taylor, Margaret Taylor,**  
**Kathy White**

### FREELANCE WORKERS

Maggie Jones - Press Officer  
Lisa Wilson - Designer  
Madeline Herbert - Designer  
Rib Davis - Writer  
Paula Gardiner - Musical Director  
Sophie Scarborough - Stage Manager  
Alex Schweitzer - Architect and Photographer  
Rado Klose - Photographer  
Joscelin Platt - Exhibitions Assistant

### REMINISCENCE TRAINERS

Lorna Barter	Noelle Blackman
Vanda Carter	Sarah Clevely
Shirley McCaw	Lindsay Royan
Jo Stanley	Peter Watson

### VISITING TRAINERS

John Adams	Joanna Bornat
Alfredo Cinnella	Jeffrey Garland
Faith Gibson	Mariae Mills

### REMINISCENCE PROJECT WORKERS

Bernie Arigho	Matthew Audley
Lorna Barter	Noelle Blackman
Vanda Carter	Fiona Clayton
Sarah Clevely	Tess Garrett
Pam Human	Liz Kent
Aileen La Tourette	Shirley McCaw
Pippa Sparkes	Jo Stanley
Eileen Taylor	Peter Watson



*Bernie Arigho enjoys the Festival*



*Robina Mir in 'Routes', May 1995*



*Clare Summerskill chats with a member of the audience after a performance of 'When The Lights Go Out'.*



*Philip Curtin, Clare Summerskill and Lyn Gardner in Germany*

### FIFTY-PLUS TRAINEES

Astra Blaug	Paula Chitty
Jyl Cowley	Valerie Dunn
Joy Hall	Jane Langley-Pratt
Susan Lazenbury	Tony Martin
Millie Sayer	Alex Schweitzer
Barbara Seiersen	Veronica Simmonds
Doreen Wilder	Kathleen Yeates

### PROFESSIONAL THEATRE PROJECTS

#### 'ROUTES'

Ajay Chhabra	Roseline Dhin
Seva Dhalival	Robina Mir
Sohail Dhin	Ashiq Hussein

#### 'MANY HAPPY RETIREMENTS'

Godfrey Jackman	Helen Keene
Pam Lyne	John Lyne

#### 'WHEN THE LIGHTS GO ON AGAIN'

Philip Curtin	Jules Davison
Neil Gore	Lyn Gardner
Clare Summerskill	

### COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT

*The following have served during the period covered by this report. Staff at Age Exchange wish to thank them for their continuing support and advice.*

**Graham Dodd**, Solicitor (Chair)

**Joy Drewett-Browne**  
(Friends of Age Exchange)

**Les Eytel**  
(L.B. Lewisham Councillor)

**Jim Gillman**  
(L.B. Greenwich Councillor)

**Bridget Keegan**  
(Age Concern Greater London)

**Lilian Murrell**  
(Friends of Age Exchange)

**Philip Newton**  
(Independent Theatres Council)

**John O'Shea**  
(L.B. Lewisham Councillor)

**Del Pasterfield**  
(Welfare Department, Ford Motor Company)

**Lloyd Trott**  
(Royal Academy of Dramatic Art)

### AUDITOR

John Green, Certified Accountant

# USEFUL AGE EXCHANGE STATISTICS

## APRIL 1995-JULY 1996

### REMINISCENCE CENTRE VISITING GROUPS

673 pensioners attended the Centre  
(88 Group Visits)

761 school children and college students  
attended (41 Group Visits)

Total numbers on group visits: 1,434

### INDIVIDUAL VISITORS

25,856 visitors noted - a conservative estimate  
as numbers are often not logged when the  
Reminiscence Centre is very busy

### PROFESSIONAL THEATRE PERFORMANCES IN THE U.K.

'Routes': 48 performances playing to 2,736  
people throughout the United Kingdom.

'When The Lights Go On Again':

Spring Tour of 25 performances playing to  
1,440 people in London. Autumn Tour of 43  
performances playing to 2,477 people in  
London, Kent and the Midlands.

'Many Happy Retirements':

30 performances to pre-retirement groups  
across the UK

### PROFESSIONAL THEATRE PERFORMANCES IN EUROPE

'Routes'

7 performances in Germany and Holland to  
approx. 650 people

'When The Lights Go On Again'

8 performances to approx. 950 people

### 'THE GOOD COMPANIONS'

'Work In Progress'

10 performances : 8 in London,

2 in Hildesheim

### THE GOOD COMPANIONS AND YOUTH THEATRE

'Grandmother's Footsteps':

4 in London

'Cheers'

12 in London, 3 in Cologne

### EUROPEAN REMINISCENCE SYMPOSIUM, MAY 1995

93 delegates attending over 6 days of  
lectures, workshops and performances

175 people involved when volunteers,  
speakers and guests are included

### EUROPEAN REMINISCENCE THEATRE FESTIVAL IN OCTOBER 1995

150 participants (mostly older people) from  
20 cities across the world met and worked  
together over 6 days and shared theatre work  
created specially for the festival on the theme  
of World War II

### REMINISCENCE CENTRE EXHIBITIONS

'When The Lights Go On Again'

Memories of the end of World War II

'Winter Warmers'

Memories of Keeping Warm in Winter

'Our Memory Boxes'

A joint Hildesheim/London exhibition by  
German and English older people

### BAKEHOUSE EXHIBITIONS 'Meetings Between Generations'

A pan-European look at inter-generational  
work from Il Melo project in Gallarate, Italy,  
displayed in the Bakehouse

'Centenarians in Europe'

Photographic Exhibition by Carl Cordonnier  
displayed in the Bakehouse

'A Time To Remember'

Photographic Exhibition by Rado Klose of  
older people making theatre

### PUBLICATIONS

'When The Lights Go On Again'

Memories of the end of World War II

'How We Went To War'

Lewisham memories researched by Age  
Exchange for Lewisham Libraries

'Southwark At War'

for Southwark Libraries

'Winter Warmers':

Memories of keeping warm in winter

European Reminiscence Symposium  
Papers

'A Time To Reflect'

Papers for the May 1996 meeting of the  
European Reminiscence Network

### MAGAZINES

Reminiscence Magazine

3 issues produced on Inter-generational

Reminiscence Work, Reminiscence in

Dementia Care and Reminiscence Theatre by

Older People's Groups

### TRAINING

#### REMINISCENCE CENTRE

TRAINING Total number of day-places  
booked by trainees = 655

#### EXTERNAL TRAINING COURSES

Total = 33 days - including one in Eire and 3  
for a Japanese group

#### SHORT WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS

Total = 18 including Hungarian, Swedish,  
German, Finnish, Japanese and Dutch groups.  
Plus many talks and presentations to groups  
visiting the Centre and to special interest  
groups at national conferences of nurses and  
social workers

#### REMINISCENCE PROJECTS

23 placements in the UK, mainly in Greater  
London

#### THE FIFTY-PLUS REMINISCENCE PROJECT

14 people over the age of 50 have  
successfully completed the course.

16 Fifty-Plus Reminiscence Project Placements  
completed

Presentation day: August 17th 1995.

#### CAPITAL PROJECTS COMPLETED

Old Bakehouse adapted and refurbished  
by Age Exchange. Opened May 1995.

Refurbishment and new roofing for  
Exhibition space in Reminiscence Centre  
March - May 1996.

Purchase and set-up of new upgraded  
computer system for all workers January  
1996.



The cast of 'When the Lights Go On Again' play for a packed meeting of the  
Camden Labour Party at the invitation of Glenda Jackson, M.P., our patron.

Age Exchange Theatre Trust, The Reminiscence Centre,  
11 Blackheath Village, London SE3 9LA  
Tel. 0181 318 9105, Fax 0181 318 0060  
Registered Charity Number 326899  
Company Limited by Guarantee Number 1929724



## EUROPEAN REMINISCENCE NETWORK PARTNERS

### ■ AUSTRIA

Heinrich Hoffer,  
Altern & Kultur, Vienna

### ■ BELGIUM

Marie-Louise Carette,  
Entr'Agés, Brussels

### ■ DENMARK

Brita Lovedahl,  
DaneAge,  
Copenhagen

### ■ FRANCE

Romola Sabourin,  
Points Communs,  
Paris

Daniel Juif,  
ORPAB,  
Brest

### ■ FINLAND

Viveca Hagmark,  
Folkhalsan,  
Helsinki

Heli Virtanen,  
Age Care Services,  
Lohja

### ■ HOLLAND

Loise Meijer,  
Social Service Department,  
Province of South Holland

### ■ GERMANY

Ingrid Berzau & Dieter  
Scholz,  
Freies Werkstatt Theater,  
Köln

Angelika Trilling,  
Town Social  
Administration,  
Kassel

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Kassel University, Kassel

Maria Beimel,  
Inter-Generational Action  
Research Project,  
Ministry of Education,  
Hamburg

Franz Matzke,  
Hildesheim University

### ■ GREECE

Cleo Mavroudi,  
Family and Child Care  
Centre,  
Athens

### ■ NORWAY

Liv Hulteng,  
Nordic Conference on  
Reminiscence,  
Oslo

### ■ SWEDEN

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### ■ UNITED KINGDOM

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Coleraine,  
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Chase Farm Hospital,  
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