

Third London Older People's Assembly

The organisation of this year's very successful and well-attended Assembly allowed the maximum opportunity for all participants to make their personal contributions and engage in discussion. The theme of empowering older people, and our ability to help make London a better place, was the basis of all the Assembly workshops. The volume, variety and quality of members' contributions were of a very high order.



The keynote speaker was Rodney Bickerstaffe, making his last public address before stepping down as the President of the National Pensioners' Convention. He spoke of the continuing campaign to establish a decent state pension for all, and answered a variety of members' questions with his customary wit and good humour.

Ken Livingstone welcomed participants to City Hall for the third time for their annual Assembly. He spoke about his Strategy for Older People in London, at present in preparation, which he hoped with the active help and involvement of older Londoners would have a major influence on the attitudes and policies of borough councils, government and voluntary agencies.

He particularly stressed the contribution older people make to London and highlighted numerous key issues such as poverty, employment, access to transport, policing and security.

After lunch the Assembly divided up into four workshops, each with a panel of older volunteers and those who work closely with them. The workshop themes were, "Active Ageing", "Income, Poverty and Employment", "Promoting Independence and Well-being" and "Empowerment and Security".

Graeme Matthews, LOPSG Secretary



CAPITAL AGE FESTIVAL 2005

Because You're Only Old Once

EVERYONE WELCOME

Admission Free
Wheelchair Accessible

Sunday 21 August 2005
2 pm - 6 pm

Bernie Spain Gardens, Upper Ground,
Next to Oxo Tower Wharf, South Bank,
London SE1

Located on the riverside walk between the
National Theatre and Tate Modern

Full information 020 7401 2255
www.coinstreetfestival.org
www.lopsg.org.uk

Secretary's Notes

In early May our Chair, **Les Evans**, was admitted to hospital for a hip replacement. We are delighted to report that he is making an excellent recovery and will be back with us very soon.

We are very sorry to lose **Charlotte Smith**, one of the two Project Officers at the **London Older People's Resource Facility**, who gave up her post early in June to develop a career in counselling. All of us who worked with Charlotte in any way came to regard her as a friend as well as a colleague. She did a wonderful job in establishing the Facility and supporting LOPSG, and will be much missed.

Until more permanent staffing arrangements are in place, Anna Roberts, our remaining Project Officer, will be at the Facility each week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, except when at meetings in City Hall. Please telephone on 020 7369 2690 if you wish to arrange to visit.

At our Special Participants' Meeting on 18 July, Natalie Cook, Senior Policy Officer in the Mayor's Office gave a presentation on the proposed **Mayor's Strategy for Older People in London** and the arrangements for consultation on the draft . Following questions on Natalie's very helpful contribution, members discussed how their groups may best participate in the consultation.

The draft document is expected to be launched in October, and there will be a three-month consultation period. All LOPSG members will receive copies of the draft, and will be invited to submit their comments.

LOPSG's AGM will be held on Tuesday 23 August at City Hall.

This meeting will be followed by the AGM of Capital Age Festival (2002) Ltd.

Graeme Matthews, LOPSG Secretary

Shu Pao Lim A Profile

LOPSG member Shu Pao Lim came to London in 1959. At the age of 50, after bringing up her four sons, she went to Oxford to study Social Administration. After two years as a Social Worker in Enfield she was employed by Camden Council as a Specialist Chinese Community Worker with the Chinese in Camden. She had become the first Chinese Community Worker in the UK.



Shu Pao was a founder of the Camden Chinese Community Centre in 1983.

Starting as an Advice Centre, they now have nine projects including a Home Help service, a Luncheon Club, and a number of study classes and exercise groups. They also run a trilingual nursery and a Healthy Living Centre.

With the help of Camden Council, Shu Pao set up her first Group House. They were able to provide a home for two elderly Chinese, a middle aged woman who is a Vietnamese refugee, a couple with a newborn baby, a woman with two small children, and a bilingual nurse who helped the residents with their language issues.

Shu Pao went on to set up The Great Wall Society in Islington, which is the only Chinese Sheltered Housing project in the whole of London, providing a home for eight elderly people. Many Chinese older people prefer to live in Sheltered Housing with non-Chinese people. Among those who come to The Great Wall Society are people over 80 and 90 years old, and homeless.

Shu Pao explains that many older Chinese are frail, need extra care, and may not be literate in their own language. Sometimes their relatives do not wish to care for them.

This is why she has been working so hard for the past five years to set up another care home for frail elderly Chinese.

Our Newcastle Connection



© Hayley Madden
Elsie Richardson BSc (Hons), MA

I first met Elsie Richardson at a meeting of Help the Aged regional representatives in London, at which she gave an impressive presentation on the work of the Newcastle Elders Forum.

Her group were establishing a similar relationship with Newcastle City Council to ours with the GLA, so we had a useful time comparing notes. On my reporting back to the LOPSG Committee it was agreed that Elsie should be invited to come and speak to members and we were very pleased that she agreed to be the guest speaker at our Participants' Meeting in February.

Elsie gave us a fascinating talk about her work with the Newcastle Elders and her joyful experiences as a full time university student in her mid-seventies. Elsie's warmth, liveliness and interest in us all was infectious and was

apparent from the number of members who came forward to talk to her after her address. We were delighted that Elsie was also able to come to our Assembly in March and we hope to see her at the Capital Age Festival in August.

Graeme Matthews,
LOPSG Secretary

Cultural Seminar

The Cultural Seminar, held in June, organised jointly by LOPSG Festival Group, the GLA and the Arts Council London was an exceptional event, bringing together LOPSG members, older actors, professional arts groups, Local Authority Arts Officers, partners and friends.

We were privileged to have Michele Hanson, Guardian Columnist, as our guest speaker. Michele castigated the typical entertainment provided for the elderly. "It is all too often assumed that old people will gratefully accept any old tat that you plonk in front of them. Although one's body may not function as well as it used to, the brain does just as well. It is high time that anyone providing arts opportunities began to appreciate that and adjust the provision or attitude accordingly."

The main purpose of the Seminar was to launch Capital Age Festival 2005,

and to introduce the key findings of the Arts Council's scoping exercise, Arts with Older People. This was an opportunity to demonstrate together for the first time the work of prominent arts groups, specialising in working with people of different ages and abilities, and from diverse communities across London.

Elder actors included those working with Entelechy and the London Bubble Company, Studio 3 Arts and Spare Tyre. A rousing finale by Connaught Opera brought the live entertainment to a close. The audience participated in the acting and led the vigorous discussion. The programme began and ended with film extracts from Attic Theatre Company's "It's the Ritz" and "Whispers of Time" by the Chinese National Healthy Living Centre. For both actors and audience this was an exhilarating and joyful experience.

This was the stuff to change stereotypical attitudes, even our own. We left the Seminar reflecting on the many possibilities for local involvement and the need to encourage challenging cross-community work.

Joan Matthews, Festival Co-ordinator

The full text of Michele Hanson's speech can be found at
www.lopsg.org.uk

www.lopsg.org.uk

The website of the
**London Older People's
Strategies Group**

Our new website offers a one-stop resource for information on what LOPSG is, the work we are doing, future events, and links to member organisations' websites. You can download LOPSG documents, and back issues of *Strategy*.

The site is growing all the time. Why not log on today!

Recent Donations

We thank the following organisations which have responded generously to our request for funds

CWU London SW Thames Branch
UNISON Camden Branch
UNISON Greater London Region
Islington Pensioners' Forum

Open House Day 2005

This year's free Open House London event will take place on the weekend 17 & 18 September. Five hundred buildings from the ancient to the contemporary, normally closed to the public, will be open to visitors.

This event has become very popular, with an estimated 360,000 people taking part last year. A free booklet containing details of this year's event will be available from local libraries during August. This is a really fascinating opportunity to see what lies behind the closed doors of some of London's most famous landmarks as well as the more obscure but no less interesting ones.

www.londonopenhouse.org

How to join, or find out more about LOPSG

As the principal forum for older Londoners' consultation with the Mayor, we are always looking to extend our membership, and particularly to encourage the involvement of representatives across the wide spectrum of London's communities and ethnic groups.

Membership is free, and is open to individuals, and representatives of London organisations. All members receive notice of LOPSG meetings, the quarterly newsletter *Strategy*, and documentation relating to Mayoral policy.

If you would like to join, or find out more about LOPSG, please contact Graeme Matthews (Secretary) 01895 631905 or Anna Roberts (Project Officer, London Older People's Resource Facility) 020 7369 2690 or anna.roberts@london.gov.uk, or visit our website at www.lopsg.org.uk

Diary Dates

Sunday 21 August
Capital Age Festival
2.00 to 6.00
Information on front page

Tuesday 23 August
LOPSG AGM
1.30 (Refreshments from 1.00 - 1.30)
Rooms 4 & 5, City Hall

This meeting will be followed by the AGM of Capital Age Festival (2002) Ltd.

Tuesday 27 September
Participants' Meeting
1.00 for 1.30
Rooms 4 & 5, City Hall

Monday 28 November
Participants' Meeting
1.00 for 1.30
Rooms 4 & 5, City Hall

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