

Re-awaking the mind

with the Arts 4 Dementia Charity

In 2011 Veronica Franklin Gould founded in London the charity Arts 4 Dementia. Arts 4 Dementia works with arts organisations to deliver re-energising, challenging workshops for people with early-stage dementia and carers, and provides early-stage dementia awareness training for arts workshop leaders. Arts 4 Dementia focuses on what people can achieve, often very much more than they imagine. The website signposts nationwide events for people living with dementia in the community.

In the summer of 2009 a young Russian cellist, finishing his MA at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, came to perform a Bach suite for Veronica Franklin Gould's mother, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease several years ago. He played exquisite music into her eyes, stopping for an engaging chat. For that hour, her eyes lit up and her joy in music, youth and education seemed to revive. Two years later „that brilliant moments" Veronica Franklin Gould had experienced with her mother, should give birth to „Arts 4 Dementia“.

Although her mother later forgot the visit, Veronica, a biographer, curator, who set up the Watts Gallery's funding and educational base for development, began to research the arts movement for dementia, soon discovering that arts are offered to positive effect in care settings, but rarely in the community; and that artistic stimulation helps to maximize cognitive function and should enable people to live better and longer at home.

This is one aim of the National Dementia Strategy of the UK.



In 2011 Arts 4 Dementia was founded. The inaugural Best Practice Conference in November 2011 at the Royal Albert Hall, funded by an Awards for All Big Lottery grant, was attended by a lot of leaders in arts and health.

Arts 4 Dementia 2012 London Programme

While co-ordinating activities nationwide and raising awareness of the benefits of artistic stimulation through the new website, Arts 4 Dementia ran a pilot programme of wide-ranging arts activities for people in the early stages of dementia at arts venues around London in 2012, covering art, comedy, dance, drama, music, photography, poetry and communication, announced on the Mayor's Culture Diary. The Culture Diary is a free worldwide calendar of UK culture including private, media, industry and public events all uploaded by over 4.000 UK organisations covering each art form. It allows members to connect with other arts organisations and develop partnerships to support major campaigns and international exchanges.



The London 2012 programme was awarded The Inspire Mark by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) which was presented by Lord Coe.

First educational partnerships

Live Music Now, who perform for dementia to high standards in care settings, agreed to give workshops to music students at Kingston University to perform weekly to a person with dementia and family carer at home, recommended and matched for musical taste by Age Concern Kingston.

The Wallace Collection agreed to give weekly tours to people in the early stages of dementia and their carers, and are now repeating Arts 4 Dementia at the Wallace Collection and using the procedure for training.

The third pilot, poetry at Putney Library opened up avenues of communication for participants – 'I feel innovated' 'I was walking on air to feel I was not alone in coping with a person who is changing'.

Fotos: Dementia Awareness Week London 2016
Anna Alcock, Inky Cuttlefish Studios

„THE ART WORKSHOPS ARE A SHARED JOYFUL EXPERIENCE FOR PARTICIPANTS AND CARERS. THE EMPHASIS IS VERY DIFFERENT TO OTHER PROJECTS; WE SET THE BAR HIGH AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO GO OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE. THEY ARE OFTEN ASTONISHED WHAT THEY CAN ACHIEVE AND WHATEVER THEY DO ACHIEVE IS JUST GREAT. WE ALSO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO PRACTICE THEIR ART DURING THE WEEK.“

NIGEL FRANKLIN

Training & -Advice for Arts Facilitators

The Arts 4 Dementia Early-Stage Dementia Awareness Training for Arts Facilitators, developed with Dementia Pathfinders, gives arts facilitators greater understanding, increased skills and confidence in communicating and working creatively with people experiencing the early stages of dementia and their carers. Arts organisers, facilitators, project managers, workshop leaders, front of house teams and volunteer postgraduate arts students are welcome to attend.

The Arts 4 Dementia Reawakening the Mind programme has established a workshop model for arts venues to re-energise and inspire people in the early stages of dementia and their carers. The developers are happy to advise arts organisations, artists, dancers, animateurs, musicians, photographers and combined arts facilitators wishing to set up – ideally weekly – workshop and training programmes.

Arts 4 Dementia has trained over 300 (327) arts facilitators to date and people come from all around the UK.

2015 the Arts 4 Dementia team received the Highly Commended Project Award in the Adult Learners' Week Awards 2015 at the London Canal Museum.

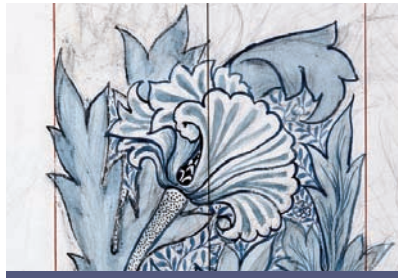
A Colorful Diversity of Events

Arts and Crafts

Arts and Crafts has been designed for people with dementia and carers to enjoy creative tasks. This includes woodwork, planting, painting and general crafts making. E.g.: At the Craft Cafe Govan there are

free drop-in arts and craft classes for people aged 60 from the local area - every Wednesday.

Printmaking Workshops at William Morris Gallery



An eight week programme of printmaking workshops at the beautiful William Morris Gallery started in September 2016 to energise and inspire people with early stage dementia and their companions, friends or family. Artist Anna Alcock from Inky Cuttlefish Studios leads participants on a creative journey through the collections and explore different printmaking techniques. All artworks seen here have been created during the Dementia Awareness Week 2016 with Anna Alcock. Dementia Awareness Week was funded by Laider Bequest and London Borough of Waltham Forest, Arts 4 Dementia is funding the workshops at the William Morris Gallery.

Arts 4 Dementia Workshop at bbodance

bbodance are pleased to have teamed up with Arts 4 Dementia to facilitate a series of four free and inspirational movement and Ballet workshops in September and October 2016 with experienced facilitator Danielle Teale. The workshop is ideal for people living with early stage dementia and their loved ones.

Previous participants describe their experience:

“It makes such a difference, as if I don't have dementia”, “It energises me, I have complete confidence when I come here”

Participants are invited to join the studios to experience what dance can do for them.

Arts 4 Dementia Music Workshop at St Mary The Boltons



Ten participants living with dementia together with their families or carers joined invigorating music sessions once a week between April and June 2016 led by clarinetist Jessie and pianist Charis from the outstanding Jacquin Trio. Workshops ranged from teaching participants how to conduct and then demonstrating this by leading the rest of the class as a choir to bringing in items from home and using reminiscence to inspire the creation of music. A highlight was having a jazz pianist in the group who, despite early stage dementia, played beautifully and passionately each week from his extensive repertoire. Other participants were completely transported by the music – smiling, laughing and singing along, often dancing spontaneously, truly relaxed and engaged with the art, lifted from the fog of dementia.

Participants really valued the opportunity not only to learn new skills such as improvisation, singing in harmony and a different

dance style each week, even playing virtual instruments on an iPad, but also to socialise in an accepting, stimulating environment.

Research detailed in Arts 4 Dementia's landmark 2012 publication *Reawakening the Mind*, showed that an important aspect of these workshops and a way of keeping the brain stimulated, is to continue the artistic stimulation between sessions. Conductors and organizers were delighted that participants reported: "I put the music on and dance at home!", "At home I now sing about the place."

The final session ended with participants performing a song they had written over the past few weeks that had been inspired by Edward Hopper's famous painting 'Nighthawks'. The creative spirit of the group was evident and the song had a beautiful quality to it ([www.Arts 4 Dementia.org.uk/a4d-music-workshop-at-st-mary-the-boltons](http://www.Arts4Dementia.org.uk/a4d-music-workshop-at-st-mary-the-boltons))

Forget Me Not – Bush Theatre Community Project



The Bush Theatre is inviting members of the local community aged over 60 or under 11 to join in for a fun day of creative activities inspired by the upcoming show, *Forget Me Not*. Participants will be collaborating with people of different ages to discover how the different generations experience day to day life in the local community and what they can learn from each other, through games, discussions and creative exercises. The day ends with a celebratory tea party at 3pm to share what they have discovered with friends and family.

Older participants will be offered a free lunch on the day and a free ticket to the production *Forget Me Not*, running at the Bush Theatre 8 December - 16 January.

Film, Photography and storytelling: Enabling people with dementia to tell us their stories

Photographic events, courses, and other photographic projects for people with memory

loss, their families and carers enables them to tell their stories.

People with dementia have many stories still to tell and the use of film or photography is one way they can be supported to tell us about their experiences now and from the past. The photography and storytelling not only enables the students with dementia to be creative, but also supports them to have a voice to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences. The students show pride in the photographs they have taken, they want to tell the story behind the picture and it prompts memories of stories which may not otherwise have been shared. While the students are supported in both the taking of the pictures and in the telling the stories about the pictures, it is a very positive experience for everyone involved in the project.

South Asian Dance with Akademi

A series of eight free and inspirational workshops in South Asian Dance with experienced facilitators from Akademi. These sessions are suitable for people living with early stage dementia and their loved ones and are a great opportunity to learn a new skill or revisit an old one.

What participants say:

"It makes such a difference, as if I don't have dementia", "It energises me, I have complete confidence when I come here".

Opera aboard the Angel Community Canal Boat



Opera workshops for people with early-stage dementia and their carers are offered aboard the Angel Canal Boat. These Thursday morning sessions run by mezzo-soprano Conacher. The idea is to not only enjoy singing aboard, but to enjoy singing at home in between sessions as stimulating relief from the stresses of dementia. The experience of listening to Vivien singing *Carmen*, focussing the mind on the beautiful sounds as the boat glides through the canal tunnel is sensational.

The third workshop is running as part of Dementia Awareness Week.

Arts 4 Dementia with the English Chamber Orchestra at London College of Music



Seven weekly orchestral workshops for musicians with early-stage dementia and their musical companions. These Wednesday morning sessions have been led by Jeremy Isaac and members of the English Chamber Orchestra in 2015, with students of London College of Music. There has been a final performance in March 2015.

The benefits of the arts

The benefits of the arts is two-fold: it can have a direct and positive impact on the health and well-being of people living with dementia, and it can also improve the culture and the environment in which they live. National and international research has shown that participation in even short, creative interventions:

increases

- the ability to recall life events
- physical movement
- face-name recognition
- verbal and non-verbal communication
- quality of life and social interaction
- collaboration and alertness
- participation in spontaneous activity and routine

and decreases

- fear
- anxiety
- agitation
- confusion
- physical agitation
- disruptive behaviour

Evaluation of Arts 4 Dementia's London Arts Challenge

In 2012 the project has been evaluated. 93 participants of the Arts 4 Dementia work-

shops took part in this evaluation. 41 were unique individuals. 13 attended more than one art form. Aged between 66 and 91, their average age was 77. The results of the evaluation are published in the report 'Reawakening the Mind'.

Arts help maximise cognitive function and enhances the quality of life

'It's exhilarating, the opportunity to do all this again. I thought it was lost.' Re-energising artistic activity has now been demonstrated to override the stressful symptoms and to transform the lives of people in the early stages of dementia and their families. Arts 4 Dementia's evaluation Reawakening the Mind establishes that participating in challenging activities at inspirational arts venues, can help maximise cognitive function, restore personal esteem, shared interests and the ability to enjoy life in the community.

Participants strongly agreed that the course had enhanced their quality of life. They valued the inspirational venue and creative challenge, as well as the collaborative social opportunity. All were able to access creative responses. To both, participants with dementia and carer, the workshops were the highlight of their week.

- 99% of participants with dementia felt more fulfilled through their creative achievement
- 99% planned to develop their art, as this enriched their lives
- 97% recognised that creative activity overrides memory worries
- 89% claimed to feel more confident
- 84% recognised that they had learned new skills
- 75% felt more energetic and keener to socialise

Carers enjoyed the creative, cultural and social opportunities – some discovering a new cultural world – and all were happier at their companions' restored energy, interest and relief of stress.

Carers noted that after each workshop, 94% of participants with dementia stayed energised, unstressed, happy and alert overnight, 80% for three days, 60% for a week. Whereas visual arts generated participants with dementia's personal sense of achievement, with music and dance, they remained energised longer. Only 7% - whose partners were not in the early stages – noticed no change, indicating that this dynamic approach is well balanced for the early stages.

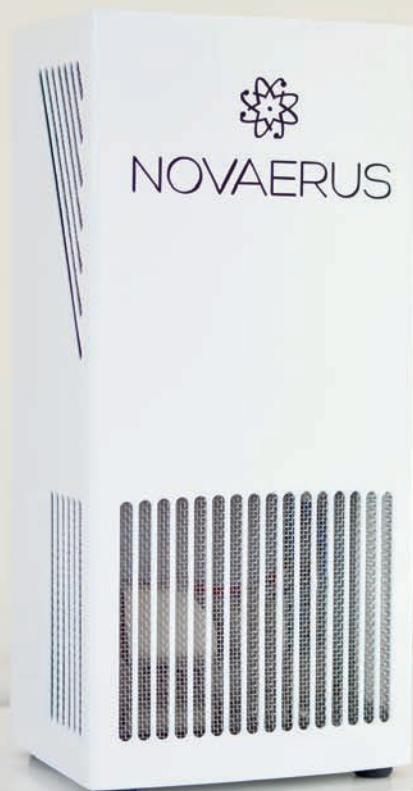
Arts 4 Dementia has also introduced an early-stage focus to Dementia Pathfinders-training to clarify for workshop leaders and volunteers the existing abilities, challenges and communication needs of participants with dementia. Those who had experience of more advanced dementia – through family or working in care settings – learned to think afresh about the person rather than the disease: and how people with milder memory loss are anxious to preserve their life in society and their ability to interact, revive and develop creative skills.

Gabriele Tupy

More informations:
www.arts4dementia.org.uk



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