

Games, exercises and  
discussion starters to spark  
new ways of thinking and  
talking about ageing

# Unclaimed Conversations

# What do you think, feel and know about ageing?

Incredibly, one in three people in the UK today will reach their 100th birthday. As a nation we have never lived so long, but as a society we're in denial: we're fixated on youth while trying to put off or disguise the signs of growing old. As a result, we tend to ignore an important question about ageing: what will it be like for me?

To help us navigate the experience of ageing both individually and as a society, we need to have more open and honest conversations about what growing old means. How can we create towns and cities that work for people of all ages? How do we re-shape the way we work to benefit everybody? Who will care for us as we grow older? And how can we foster more discussion and debate across generations?

These cards offer people of any age a way to get the conversation started...

## How to Use

These cards are designed to help spark new ideas about ageing. They contain exercises, conversation starters and questions, which can be used with a friend or family member, or in groups.

Each card covers a different theme for you to reflect on and talk about. Conversations evolve in different ways, so there's no set order to how you should use this pack.

You don't need any special materials, but for some exercises paper and pens are required.

# Who made these cards?

Unclaimed Conversations has been created by The Liminal Space with support from the Barbican, Wellcome Trust and the Centre for Ageing Better.

These cards draw inspiration from Unclaimed, an interactive installation first shown at the Barbican Centre in 2019. Unclaimed is a surreal lost property office that invites audiences to uncover stories about ageing today, and ask questions about our shared futures. The exercises and conversation starters in this set are based on creative workshops and discussions that The Liminal Space led with more than 150 people from many backgrounds to understand their experiences of ageing.

The Liminal Space uses art and design to create groundbreaking experiences that transform what people think, feel and do.

With thanks to our project partners at the Barbican and Dr. Daniel Davis and the LINKAGE-Camden Study, University College London; and to our project advisors the Centre for Ageing Better and Professor Molly Andrews, The Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London.

**barbican**

The Liminal Space

**A** CENTRE FOR  
AGEING  
BETTER





Take a  
virtual walk  
with me...

**"We are in great need of people being able to stand in somebody else's shoes and see the world through their eyes." BARACK OBAMA**

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Our lives are made up of experiences, some profound, some mundane. They all contribute to make us who we are.

- What has been the most important journey of your life? This could be as monumental as migration or your journey to parenthood, or something as simple as a daily walk with your dog...
- What journey of self-discovery would you like to go on next?
- Complete the sentence and share with each other: *'If you stepped into my shoes at the moment you'd be feeling/thinking...'*

What do you want  
to celebrate?



"A party without cake is just a meeting."

JULIA CHILD

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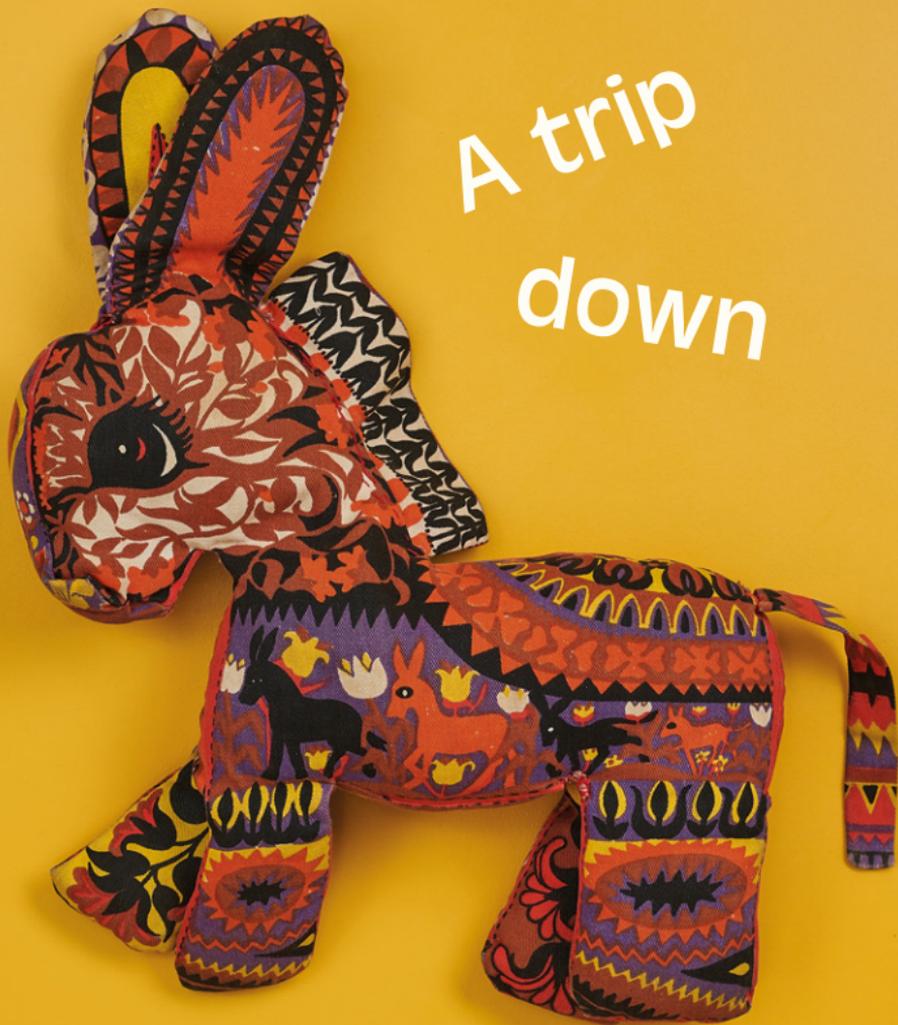
Imagine you have been given an empty space in which to hold a celebration of your choice.

It could be to mark an important life event or something that went uncelebrated at the time that you would like to recognise now. It could even be a celebration for something you would like to do or create in the future.

- What do you want to celebrate?
- Who would you invite?
- How would you celebrate and where?

Grab some paper and pens and get creative producing an invitation to your party.





A trip  
down

memory lane

**“Our childhood experiences lay the foundations for our whole life course and therefore have a huge impact on our ageing experiences.” DR. DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH**

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Often, the things that inspired us as children remain special to us even in adulthood. Returning to that phase of curiosity, wonder and exploration in later life can be fulfilling and even thrilling.

- What sport, hobby, game or activity did you love doing as a child?
- What was it about the activity that you enjoyed so much and is there anything that makes you feel like that now?
- How could you reintroduce it into your life now and who would you like to invite to join you?

# Write a postcard



# to the future

We're all just memories of our future selves.

REGGIE WATTS

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It's the year 2025, what would you like to write to society in the future about this moment?

What small three things can you do today to make your future self smile?

Invite friends and loved ones to write to their future selves too.





Dream journeys

**“Travel makes one modest. You see what a tiny place you occupy in the world.”**

**GUSTAV FLAUBERT**

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Travel can enlighten, enrich and elevate; it can broaden the mind and widen horizons. Create your own magical desert island filled with places you have been and still long to visit.

- On a large piece of paper, draw the outline of your imaginary island. Plot five places that have meant something to you over your life so far. They could be the beach you loved as a child or a grandparent's house full of memories; a famous city or landmark, or a little known spot that is special to you.
- Now add the places you still want to visit and share your adventures with others.



Time for tea

**“Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.” MARGARET WHEATLEY**

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Think back to a moment in your life when a conversation changed everything. Who was it with – a teacher, friend, colleague, lover or even a stranger?

- Write down a conversation that changed your life. Why was it so important?
- If you're feeling brave, also share the conversation you're yet to have that might change something.



Opening doors

**“Architecture is the very mirror of life. You only have to cast your eyes on buildings to feel the presence of the past, the spirit of a place; they are the reflection of society.” IM PEI, ARCHITECT**

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On a blank piece of paper – the larger the better – design a town for people of all ages to spend time together. Remember to include places for:

**Housing**

**Transport**

**Shopping**

**Meeting**

**Recreation**

**Work**

Does your town look like somewhere you would want to live? How different is it to where you live now?



Stay curious

Happiness is closely related to the performance of a wide range of activities. This confirms the view that wellbeing in later life significantly depends on the types of daily activity undertaken by older adults.

CENTRE FOR AGEING BETTER

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Children in the UK take up a new hobby or activity every 6 months, while for the over-50s, the average is just once every 9 years (Nielsen, 2016). Yet there are health benefits in doing new things.

- If you could learn or try one new thing, what would it be and why?

What's inside the box?



"The home should be the treasure chest of living." LE CORBUSIER

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Call a friend and take it in turns to secretly think of an object that reminds you of the other person, or a memory that you both share. The object could be precious or mundane, but don't tell each other what it is! Start by describing its:

Size & Weight

Colour

Texture

Then describe three thoughts it conjures:

When you first got it

Why it's meaningful

Where it lives

Now, take turns to guess each other's objects. Why do we feel attached to certain things throughout our lives and what do these symbolise for us? Were there any similarities or differences between the objects?