POSITIVE AGEING STORIES AND IMAGES
CONTENTS

3  Mary
5  Angus
6  John J
7  Krishna
9  Alcira
10  David
11  Graham
13  Barbara
14  John S
15  Kevin
16  Jack
Mary

It is not a physical thing. It is all about feeling that you belong…

Mary is 86 and lives in Carlton in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. She grew up in rural New South Wales where her parents had a sheep station. “We had a free, open and very busy childhood,” she remembers. “I was the youngest of five and we had a sort of wholesome life. It was quite a shock when I moved out.”

After studying in a boarding school in Canberra, Mary remembers the turmoil of her first visit to Sydney. She was then of working age and the war had begun. The country, and her life, underwent a dramatic change. “I didn’t know about many things in the world and about people’s perceptions of life. For example, people who quarrelled - I never had any of that in my childhood. We never quarrelled”.

After boarding school, Mary attended a finishing school in a beautiful old home and focussed on becoming ready for the workforce. The students were allowed to go out with boys during the year of study and, after graduating, began to look for work and a husband in equal measure. Mary found both. “We were frantic to get married because the war was on. I got married when I was 20. We all did. I mean, we had to grab someone before they all went to the war and got killed. We were very frightened of the shortage of men.”

Mary had three children and notes that this was her greatest pleasure- one of the best things in her life. She recalls the hardships post war with shortages and how it was to raise a young family in these conditions. Marriages were strained, and some broke under the hardship. Many of the men had to work by day and then focus on training by night in order to progress their careers. Mary’s husband worked at the bank during the day, and then went to university at night. Mary’s neighbours, the women around her, were the anchor that kept her going through these times. The friendships last to this day. The women of her community supported each other and helped to raise the children together. “We all got the kids going to bed together - 10 o’clock feed over … nappies on the line…and then we all had a cup of tea together. I lived there until I left my husband. All of the marriages broke-up, but the friendships stayed. We remain close friends.”

When she was 40, Mary met Charlie, and moved away from her hometown of Sydney to Melbourne to be with him. Her projected idea of a new adventure in Melbourne fell short of the reality when her homesickness was overwhelming. It was not until Mary got a job at the Brotherhood that she felt settled in Melbourne. The job proved rewarding. After the Henderson poverty inquiry, the Brotherhood family centre worked with 60 families with low incomes and provided access to jobs, secure living and building communities.

“Regarding approaching ageing positively, I actually don’t think a lot about age. It’s about the person. I suppose you age all the time: you are a child… then you are a teenager… then a young woman… then (to your horror) you find people refer to you as middle aged. I remember my friend saying that she was horrified when someone said: ‘let’s get the middle aged people sitting there’- middle aged! Of course she was in her 40s but she never saw herself as middle aged. She saw herself as a young married person.”
Mary found that the biggest change for her as she got older was when she left work. She hadn’t anticipated or prepared for the impact that would have and she found it difficult. Mary stresses that to prepare you need to develop outside interests—things that you enjoy doing. Her late husband, Charlie, had a similar experience and the retirement that he thought was going to be wonderful ended up being isolating— he felt he was no longer needed. To counter this, he started researching things he wanted to write about and got a desk at the Ethnic Affairs Commission and went there every day as if it were a job. He found a purpose. Mary took inspiration from that, and also found meaningful things to spend her time on. She volunteered with Anglicare, running a market stall, and she drove people to hospital with a volunteer organisation.

She also spent time working on home library services, selecting books for those that were housebound. At least, that was what the project intended for her to do. “I felt that was stupid - why should I choose for them? They should be helped to come to the library. I did all sorts of forbidden things – I picked them up and drove them to the library where they could choose their own books and have a cup of coffee, go shopping and get out of the house.”

There were two other major changes that Mary had to come to terms with as she got older. The first was losing her siblings— her greatest loss. The second was giving up her driver’s licence. Despite assurances from her optometrist that she was within the legal visual limits to drive, Mary no longer felt comfortable behind the wheel and decided not to drive. “I suppose that it is an important part of ageing- making your own decisions and not having other people making decisions for you. You feel that you are still in control. I made the decision that driving was finished. It has been horrible not being able to get in the car and drive because you lose a lot of independence and independence is very important.”

Mary has had primarily negative experiences with the health care system. She explains, “It was never because the people were not nice to me - they were great. What I didn’t like was when we were put together with people the same age - like a retirement village. When I was in hospital in a normal ward with people of all ages it was fine. I had a young girl next to me and could chat with her. Then they shifted me to rehabilitation before I went home and I was placed in the geriatric ward. The attitude of the staff was completely different. In the general ward, we were all treated as people. In the geriatric ward, nobody talked to you. That’s why I hope I never have to be in one of those places again. I go and see my sister-in-law in a nursing home and look around and sometimes that same feeling is there.”

The importance of community and family has been a common thread throughout Mary’s life and remains the centre of her wellbeing now. Mary has found ways to stay connected with her daughters and granddaughter, even when she can no longer easily leave the house. She has regular phone contact with one of her daughters (who lived in Papua New Guinea). Another daughter visits and cleans Mary’s house, as she doesn’t like sitting still to talk. After she leaves, “I can’t find anything!” jokes Mary.

Mary has also embraced technology to stay connected with her family. Her newly-wed granddaughter is living in London and Mary uses her mobile phone to text her. “Last night I sent her a message saying: ‘I am thinking of my favourite married people’. The message connected me to her. It is not a physical thing. It is all about feeling that you belong to the outside world and that you are not alone even if you don’t leave the house.”

“I meet with my other daughter to go to the market. I don’t leave the car. I only sit there and watch people going up and down. Even if I am not physically walking up and down the market lanes, I can see people and I feel alive and part of life.”
Angus lives in the small country town of Woodend, Victoria. He seems to know everyone in town. He stops to talk to all of his neighbours, listening to their stories, asking about their families, and wondering if there is anything he can do to help. He has had his fair share of health problems and operations, but he brushes those aside, “I’m here to look after everyone else!”

Angus has lived alone in his big house for the past three years. His wife Shirley had to go to a local nursing home at that time, when she started showing signs of dementia. Shirley no longer has any mobility or speech, but Angus still sees signs of recognition.

Angus is supported by family, neighbours and friends. His next door neighbour Charlie drives him to the nursing home every morning before lunch, and he spends the next six hours with Shirley. He sings her songs, talks about the memories of their life together, and shows her photos of their children and grandchildren.

Angus believes that music is food for the soul- it keeps both of them smiling, and helps to celebrate the special bond between the couple. Their favourite song is “Annie’s Song” as Annie is Shirley’s middle name. When they first met, over fifty years ago, the two of them would dance their nights away to the classic. Angus likes to spread his love of music throughout the nursing home. He spends time with every resident and often organises musicians to come in and play their favourite pieces. He has a calming pace, he is genuinely inquisitive and it is a joy to be in his presence. His deep care for everyone in his community keeps him healthy, positive and active.
John J

Don’t think too much about the past - enjoy today. We have more yesterdays than tomorrows now

John is in his early 70s and lives with his partner in Leopold, Geelong. John is the picture of health. “I attribute my good health on a number of things,” he explains. “One has to have a certain amount of luck to begin with, but if you have a healthy diet, good relationships and a good balance of both physical activity and emotional supports, it leads to good health. I also know that a glass of red wine is absolutely very important!”

John is semi-retired as, after retiring from a big corporation, he joined the not for profit sector working for an international development organisation that focuses on the environmental field. He is a qualified accountant and company secretary and holds a degree in finance. “I really enjoy my work - if I was not enjoying what I do I wouldn’t be doing it, I’d find something else. In fact, I think this is the most enjoyable job I have done in my life!” he muses.

John puts this job satisfaction down to the fact that he feels that he is contributing to better the lives of many people. He also enjoys the people he works with. “This is a quite different experience coming from the corporate world.”

John also prioritises spending time with family and sometimes friends. He has three children and six grandchildren and has good relationships with them all. In his spare time, he enjoys gardening and dining out has become one of his favourite things to do.

He remembers, “I used to enjoy playing golf until my daughter decided she needed a horse and this took most of my spare time.”

According to John, many older people become too dependent on other people. “I don’t want to live a life like that. I used to work for an organisation that operated nursing homes and hostels. I have mixed feelings about that experience. Most of it was positive. The downside was the realisation that I do not want to live in such an environment. I enjoyed the people living there; I enjoyed working there and enjoyed those who did such hard work. I just think that a lot of people who live in these facilities are in reality existing, not living. “

After working in that field, John has a strong respect for aged care work and workers. “Work in the aged care field requires a lot of commitment and dedication I think. I must admit, I have the most admiration for the hands-on workers.”

When asked if he would have any advice for those who are 65 plus, he pauses then offers: “don’t think too much about the past - enjoy today. We have more yesterdays than tomorrows now. Try and keep good health. And, if you are lucky enough to be in a relationship, make the most of it.”
Born and raised in Bangalore, India, Krishna attended a British school and grew up with a strong British influence. “My views are very free compared to other Indians” she explains. She feels that the British influence has helped with her relationships with the younger generation and allows her to speak freely where others who live in India are more orthodox and honour strong family traditions.

Krishna has a son and a daughter. Her son still lives in India, working in the shipping industry and has visited seven times. Her daughter moved here and, when Krishna retired, invited her mother to join her in Melbourne, prompting Krishna’s move across the globe.

In her working life in India, Krishna trained chefs at The Indian Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology. The institute was opened as a response to the Indian government’s desire to increase tourism. It was decided that to attract more tourists, they had to invest in more attractive food and hospitality options. The institute teaches chefs how to prepare dishes that are appealing to tourists using modern equipment and techniques. Krishna was trained by a French chef when she was only 17 and has had a lifelong journey creating great food. She was a natural choice for the job at the institute.

The institute has thrived to this day, and has invited Krishna, as one of the founding teachers, back to visit and see the legacy she’s created.

In Australia, Krishna’s students were like a ready-made community. Many of them were in Australia. Some had restaurants and they all extended a greeting to Krishna and asked her what she needed. They looked out for her.

Krishna began to explore her new Australian home and the differences between the cultures. “One day an older person came to my door” Krishna recalls “and said ‘I am your neighbour- how about a cup of coffee?’ Through my neighbours, I started to learn about seniors in Australia that day. This neighbour taught me what Australians like doing. That’s how I learned how to drink coffee. Before I knew it, we were a large group meeting for coffee.”

Krishna began to notice the differences. In Australia, families lived apart, in India families live together. “It is very lonely here. I used to help taking my grandchildren to the school every day, but this did not fill my whole day. Then I thought: ‘what am I going to do with my day?’ I could not cook because by children would not let me cook - they cooked.”

She recalls the moment she realised how lonely Australian life could be - her neighbour’s husband died and the neighbour knocked on her door to ask her what to do- she was alone and didn’t have family around her to be able to help at a time like that.

In addition to not having the family under one roof, Krishna noticed that the Indian population were also used to having servants- someone to talk to- as well as someone to do the basic household things and many of the people that moved here didn’t have those skills.

When a friend of Krishna’s suggested she should try some community work, Krishna began to understand how Australian communities are built. She volunteered for her local op shop for 6 years, washing and ironing the clothes. She then decided...
to meet the need she could see so plainly— to help the Australian Indian community here with basic skills and to help counter the loneliness. The idea started small—she met 5 seniors and they formed an association. The association now has 400 members. Krishna worked for 10 years as president of the association before handing the reigns over to a new person but she still offers her support and advice.

When Krishna’s husband had a stroke, he went into a nursing home to get the care he needed. She lived near the home and would go and assist him. “I used to get there early. I felt that people there did not feed them well. They all sat and hardly moved. The staff would say: ‘so John you are not hungry today’ - and not even wait - and then take the dish away. He liked curd yoghurt. I asked if they could add some boiled potatoes in it but nothing happened. I wrote to the government saying that there must be something done. People get admitted to nursing homes and then they only come to get the dead bodies. Something needs to be done. I did not achieve anything. We need very good and sincere workers.”

There was an Indian lady at the nursing home that wasn’t eating much so Krishna decided to help by offering to cook Indian food for her at the nursing home. She ended up feeding 22 people that meal and, even though there wasn’t much conversation, she was certain that these people had enjoyed their meal.

Krishna continues to challenge herself daily. “I have been the Principal of two different schools but I cannot do the same now,” she explains, “but I can do other things and accept these changes. I’m not young but I put lipstick on and try and look young in the same way. I do not want to feel inferior. I want to look as I always did. It gives you a lot of strength. We all wanted to be accepted as we were accepted before.”

Krishna recently finished a community development course with support and encouragement from the course project manager despite starting to encounter problems with her memory. Her goal was to start a community kitchen for ladies looking after children so they could cook together. Unfortunately, at this stage she hasn’t been able to secure a kitchen space. She also struggled to pay for the travel to and from her course. On top of her study, she also does Bollywood dancing for fun or spends time with friends, showing and sharing saris.

Krishna concludes, “For those who are ageing, do not expect life to be the same ever – accept the changes gracefully. Find ways to deal with the problems. And for those working in aged care - please observe older people. At the beginning of their lives they are in command and in control. Suddenly the power shifts and they lose that control. Think of the good things they have done. Then you will help these people who are growing older. Give them the value they deserve.”
Alcira enjoys spending her time drawing and painting in her art studio. She is an animal lover, and her artistic subjects are mostly extinct or endangered Australian species. "We are losing so many animals, I need to capture them on paper". Alcira developed a love for painting koalas while living on the orchard and berry farm she once owned. "They were everywhere on the farm. A big fat one would meet me at the back door most mornings." She bred rare and exotic cats on the farm that generated a lot of interest, leading to visits from the television shows Burke’s Backyard and Totally Wild. Although she no longer breeds animals, she still has two beloved cats that like to share her bed.

Born in 1936, Alcira grew up in the UK and was once a professional ice skater for England. Even with a walking frame, she still moves gracefully around the room, showing me a recent drawing she has done of a brush tailed possum. Her family is now spread around the world - she has daughters in the UK and Dubai, and her father was Native American. Australia has been home for thirty-eight years but she enjoys travelling to visit family. Two years ago, Alcira suffered a stroke that has made her more dependent on visiting care. Workers from St Luke’s Mission visit three times a week to help with showering, cleaning and meals. She also spends Tuesdays at the local community health centre, where she enjoys the company of other older people at an arts and craft day program. "It keeps me out of trouble and gets me talking to people!"
David loves living on an airport flight path. He was in the air force for thirty years, and feels at home when he hears the rumble of airplane engines overhead. He lives in a bluestone family heritage home built in the 1850s on a large acreage named ‘Woodside’. “It is a special place,” David says, “It has a really nice feeling about it. I’d like to live there for the rest of my days.”

David and his wife Julie have some help on the property. One worker helps with the outside chores and another comes to do some cleaning and daytime meals. David and Julie don’t cook meals anymore and, because of this, enjoy eating at the local RSL most nights for dinner.

At 83, David relies heavily on his three children for moral support. He is still able to visit his family because he has been able to keep a reduced kilometre license, and appreciates the freedom that this brings.

Four years ago David came out of hospital after developing severe rheumatoid arthritis that left him unable to move. He credits his recovery to the exercise classes run by the local community health centre. Today he is able to walk around his farm with only the use of his cane.

Recently David had two strokes that have slowed him down again. However, he stays positive and assesses that he is still in “reasonable health”. He finds it harder to remember people now, but enjoys the fact that people know his name at the RSL and at the gym. David’s favourite times of the week are the two exercise classes he still likes to attend.
Graham, now retired, worked as an economist in Canberra in the Commonwealth Grants Commission. He has two children who, in turn, have had families of their own. In 2008, he and his first wife went their separate ways and eventually divorced. After the divorce, he renewed his active social life and was lucky enough to meet his current wife, Janet. “Now I am very happily married at the ripe old age of 71” he says proudly.

Graham works two days a week as a volunteer at Retina Australia, offering his skills in all financial matters. On the other days of the week, he stays busy with the usual domestic routines of shopping at the Victoria markets, cooking, cleaning, gardening and whatever else needs doing.

“I also spend a lot of my time seeking information”, he confides, “I am a lover of information. I like documentaries. I like to keep tabs on what’s happening in the far corners of the world, even though I cannot do anything about it.” Graham reads many books on history and geology as well as watching many documentaries. He is careful not to get so consumed by his quest for information that he forgets about wife Janet. “Sometimes there is a lovely documentary coming up so I stop and put some music on for Janet first!”

Graham and Janet lead active lives together. Janet is Chinese so Graham is teaching her English; Janet and Graham share a love of music and they watch a lot of musicals on DVD; They take regular walks along the beachfront in Frankston or in the local parks and they take ballroom dancing lessons. “I had never done ballroom dancing in my life. But four
years ago I thought I would have a go and I started to learn the steps. I find it very challenging. Because I have severe hearing loss, I have to learn to listen to the music, feel the beat and then coordinate my feet with the beat. And because I have restricted vision I have to be careful not to bang into other couples but this is all part of the fun! Of course, other people in the class know I can’t see well and they make way for us.”

Graham is proud of his extended family including his nieces and nephews and has a good relationship with them all. “I have a beautiful extended family and I keep in touch with them. I keep in touch with my two children. I think that too many families adopt a practice of not talking to each other, which is very bad for your well-being. Life is too short to be fighting.”

When Graham left work in 1996, he was given a generous financial package that allowed him to look forward to a secure future and a release from the pressures of work. At first, he travelled and visited galleries and museums, but he didn’t find it fulfilling. “I didn’t feel happy within myself because I wasn’t doing anything useful. I wasn’t contributing to the community. That’s when I decided to volunteer with Retina Australia.” Graham’s condition (retina dispigmentosa) combined with deafness was the initial impetus to give time to Retina Australia but the main motivation was to do something productive for the community and keep in touch with other people.

Graham’s activities—reading, ballroom dancing, walking—help him maintain good health. He also focuses on a healthy diet, helped by Janet’s Chinese cooking and love of vegetables. Where his diet used to consist of lamb and T-bone steaks along with a lot of desserts, cakes and puddings, he and Janet now eat fish, beans, vegetables, spices and herbs. They also avoid bad fats and sugar. “I really enjoy my diet,” he says, “I really think that it prolongs your life if you eat well.”

While Graham admits he has been lucky enough to not have much contact with the aged care field, he feels that the most important quality we should promote in aged care workers is being a good listener. “You are professionally trained and you have a lot of knowledge and skills but being a good listener will put you in a good position to use the skills you have to help aged people.”

And his advice for others? “Eat well, keep active. Don’t watch too much TV—get outside, fly a kite, go dancing and keep moving. If it helps you, join a local church, because they can provide emotional support. Enjoy your grandchildren, maybe listen to their reading or help them to learn how to read. You have a lot of knowledge that you acquire in your life. Try and share it with your grandchildren.”

“If you can do volunteer work, it will help you a lot. It doesn’t matter who it is for—whatever work you do will add to this country and your well-being.” These are the principles that Graham has upheld during his life, and he has reaped the reward of a happy life. As he tells us, “I am very lucky!”
Barbara likes to have a lot of projects on the go at all times. She embroiders, paints and writes. Writing is a particular passion, as she always wanted to be a journalist and has published short stories and articles. Her current writing project involves tracing the genealogy of her family back to the early 1700s. As she writes the history of her ancestors, she is encouraged by her two sons to write her own story as well and describe all the places she has lived. She fondly remembers the family ice-skating to school in Edinburgh, their years in coastal Cape Town, and their move to Australia in 1967. Barbara is emphatic about the importance of writing down family history, “Do it now, before your elders pass away. There is so much knowledge and so many memories that go with them...” Barbara knows that writing her family history will keep her busy for the next couple of years. “It’s only lots of nana naps that interfere with all I want to do!”

Four years ago Barbara’s husband passed away in her arms. She was heartbroken to lose the love of her life. The pair had been engaged at eighteen and cherished every day of their fifty-year marriage. After his death, Barbara decided she no longer wanted to live in the home they had shared for many years. She sold the house to move closer to one of her sons. She now lives alone in a small house with her loving cat that takes up a lot of the bed and wakes her up at exactly 6.11 every morning. She is quite certain that cats can tell the time!

Barbara was diagnosed with diabetes a number of years ago and needs to give herself insulin twice a day. She also manages cron’s disease and a thyroid disorder, which makes it hard to keep her weight down. This has affected Barbara’s mobility and she now often walks with the assistance of a walking frame. However, she does not let any of her illnesses stop her from being productive. She likes to keep busy by attending folk art and card making classes, visiting her son and meeting with friends, new and old.
John is the oldest of six children and is a qualified teacher. Early in his life, John joined a religious order and gave 19 years of service. His life at that time was very structured - time management was important. Nine years after leaving the order, John married and had a beautiful daughter. Over the years, John has had many roles in his community - he has been a teacher, clerk, volunteer, husband, father, coordinator of a Men’s Shed and an avid golf lover.

“Early to rise and early to bed is my motto,” says John and adds, “I am very active. In the mornings I spend either an hour at golf, walking the dog or riding my folding bicycle 2 kms to the bus stop (on workdays). I often take a few minutes to stretch or exercise each hour - especially if I’m doing computer work.”

At work, John enjoys people’s company and the sense of belonging that work can bring. “My motivation to continue working as well as engaging in volunteer work is age and experience. In fact, age and experience have prepared me to be an excellent support worker. Whether helping refugee children learn or volunteering at the aid agency I believe that others less fortunate are being given more opportunities through my work.”

When asked what he would say to aged care workers, he replies “My message to people who enjoy working in aged care is: motivate yourself to do more than the basics. Listen. Remember that you have two ears but only one mouth.”

For his peers, he offers this advice: “Accept - accept others; accept yourself.”
Meet Kevin. Kevin was born in Liverpool, Ireland and comes from a large family. He’s 78 and proudly states that he is going from strength to strength.

During his early career years, Kevin worked for the ministry of overseas development in several countries, including several Arab countries, teaching English for the British aerospace agency that used to supply aircrafts and ships. The training in the technology surrounding planes was all delivered in English and, in order to teach the technology, the agency first had to teach English to the Arab people.

As a result, the military hired teaching professionals to teach the local staff. When the local staff would say that they did not understand a certain concept, the teachers (including Kevin) would use the terms and concepts in the next English lesson. Their role was to bridge the gap. Kevin estimates that he worked for over ten years in Africa and also worked in Nepal as teacher. “In fact, most of my working life was overseas,” he notes.

Kevin enjoys spending time with family and friends, using computers, reading, and also has a keen interest in shooting. “Shooting is an activity that keeps me connected to young people and my peers,” he explains, “I used to go hunting in Africa - the real thing. Of course I was a lot younger and fitter so I could track animals. Now it is a bit difficult - I mostly do target practise rather than hunting. I like to see if I am still accurate.”

When asked about his views on aged care, he considers, “I think that workers who are working with older people have to remember that the page does not turn over immediately - as if you are young one day and you turn old the next day. It is not like that. It is a very gradual process. When you are older you are still pretty much the same person as when you were in your 20s. Everyone who works with older people needs to realise that these are people and not some separate organism. They are the same people they were the year before or even 10 years before. As far as I am concerned, I don’t even think about it. I just live my life as I used to before.”
If you were arranging a time to meet with Jack, you would be met with his diary packed full of appointments, jobs, meetings and afternoon tea dates. Jack is a hard man to pin down. At 92, he is even busier than he was the day he retired in 1999. Jack was a butcher on the main street of Kyneton for exactly fifty years. It was sad to close the doors to his thriving business, “I felt incredibly lucky to have a job that allowed me to deal with the public every day.” His stories from these days are colourful and full of life. He remembers town characters vividly—there was Mrs Tyrell who was his first ever customer back in 1949: she asked for just a quarter of a pound of beef and went away most pleased with Jack’s knife skills. There was the woman who would visit every morning just to hear the town gossip - it was Jack who had his finger on the pulse.

Jack brings the same colour and life to every story he tells about his current days. And he still knows everything that is happening in town. Despite two heart operations and a number of other illnesses, he is involved with every facet of the community. He sells raffle tickets for a different organisation every weekend, volunteers at the op shop, is President of the Cemetery Trust and the Lions Club, a member of arts committees, the patron of schools, and fits in a round or two of golf now and then. “I don’t know how I fit it all in!”

Jack acknowledges that he stays happy and positive largely because of his active social life. He tragically lost his son John 2 years ago. “That’s the only problem with living so long” Jack says solemnly, “your son isn’t supposed to go first.” His two daughters live in neighbouring towns and are regular visitors. “One of my daughters likes to bring me meals to stock my freezer...but I like eating out every night!” He is a regular at the town RSL and likes to eat at the local bakery; “they know my order there. I don’t need to take a number and line up.”

Jack is known all over town. He is valued and celebrated. When his wife passed away eight years ago, he was surrounded by love and support from his extensive community. And part of Jack’s community is right next door. Jack still visits his old shop every day. Twice a day to be precise. He lives in the same house he always has, and rents his old business out to his friend Mara who runs a café out of the old butchery. Mara is a good friend to Jack- she checks in with him all the time and runs him around town when he needs a lift. If you were to visit Mara’s café, you could enjoy a piece of “Jack’s fruit cake” which has been named after Jack, not because he makes it, but because he eats it every day. “You want to know the secret to long life dear? I’ve never tasted beer in my whole life. Tea and cake for me!...it’s probably got nothing to do with my long life, but it’s the truth!” Jack laughs, sips his tea and begins to eat his daily piece of cake.