

Jean's Story

Community Stories

Taking Steps to improve my Wellbeing



“Jean was really excited to use YouTube and see all her favourite Irish bands - an added bonus”

Hazel

Hazel (Age UK Cornwall, Community Wellbeing Coach) supports people across Cornwall to Age Well. Hazel has been supporting Jean to regain her independence and improve her wellbeing. Jean has shared her story below.

The Early Years

Jean was born in Southern Ireland, but sadly, Jean's parents passed away. Subsequently, a young baby Jean, was taken into care and fostered in England. After leaving care, Jean went into household service, working for a prominent Lord and Lady.

Jean was ambidextrous, which often meant that she found it very difficult to learn how to lay tables for the various parties hosted at the manor house. However, Jean fondly remembers the Master of the House, a lovely man who would come and correct any mistakes - telling Jean it was their 'little secret' and not to mention it to the Lady of the House.

Jean had a friend who lived in London and invited Jean to visit - whilst in London she was first introduced to Vince. Jean and Vince enjoyed many warm conversations during this first visit, and once Jean returned home, they wrote to each other regularly. Jean arranged to visit again, and Vince would be waiting for her at the train station.

Unfortunately, Jean had given Vince the wrong platform information, who quickly realised this mistake and rushed over to the right platform. Little did they know that this would be the start of a lovely romance and a long and happy marriage.

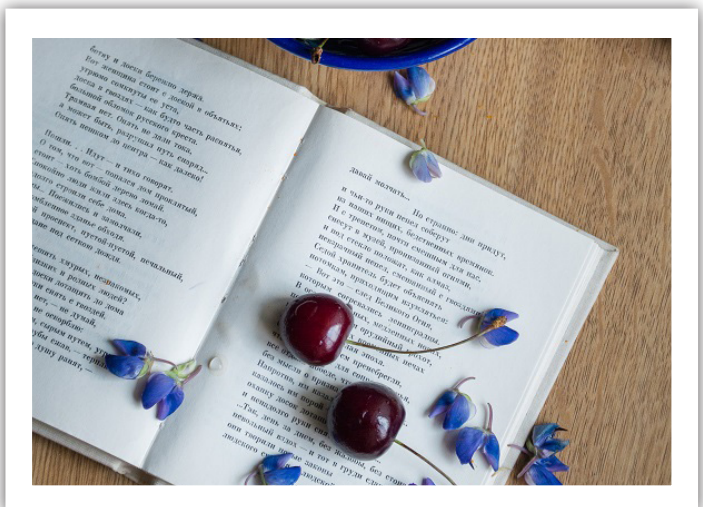
Their life began in Colchester, where Vince was stationed in the Scot Greys Regiment. Jean remembers fondly how Vince played in the forces band, and because of his musical talent, Vince registered with the Performing Arts Society. **The Society was based in Cornwall, so it was only sensible for Jean and Vince to relocate - making their home in Cornwall and starting chapter 2.**

Cornish Life

Jean and Vince loved Cornwall, Jean wrote poetry and Vince would bring her words to life with his music - recording several compositions.

Jean is rightly proud of her poetry. She was even invited to go to America to receive a certificate for her work - this was due to presented by the Man in Black, Johnny Cash. Unfortunately, the couple were unable to afford the travel costs to America - **however, Jean can still display the certificate.**

Jean is also an accomplished artist and published writer; some excerpts have even been quoted in a book by Terry Wogan.



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Offering a Helping Hand

Jean and Vince were happy together and supported each other through thick and thin. Sadly, Vince passed away in 2021, which has left a hole in Jean's life.

Vince's passing, compounded with the effects of COVID, has left Jean increasingly lonely. Jean has not been able to get out on her own and has lost her independence - becoming increasingly isolated.

At this point is where our Community Wellbeing Coaches stepped in. We spoke to Jean and suggested that she might benefit from our Step into Wellness program. Jean was interested in receiving support but could not get to the sessions and wasn't sure how she could attend.

There is an online version of the Step into Wellness program. Unfortunately, Jean was not connected to the internet and didn't have the appropriate digital equipment. Our team quickly jumped into action and assessed where we could purchase or arrange a loan of a laptop and equipment - we also sourced IT training so that Jean could gain confidence and feel comfortable when accessing one of our Digital Cafes.

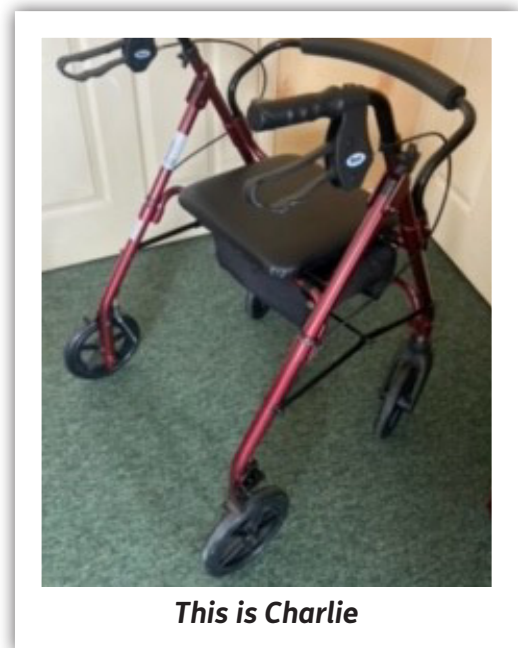
We worked with Cornwall Council, who supplied a loaned laptop, and together we are providing ongoing digital support. Jean has already learnt the basics and is on Zoom ready for the start of the program.

Jean also has mobility issues, so we are supporting Jean to get out again and regain her independence. Starting slowly, we have helped Jean get up the road to her GP appointments. As Jean builds up more confidence and strength, we will arrange future outings that work for her and meet her needs.

After a conversation with Jean, we contacted Occupation Therapy to see if they could help. Following an assessment, it was agreed Jean

would benefit from a rollator. Jean has already named her rollator "Charlie".

Jean and Charlie are now taking short walks out so that Jean can chat with neighbours and passers-by.



This is Charlie

The small practical steps have put a real spring in Jean's step. It is lovely to see a smile on her face and watch her confidence return.

Jean is very motivated to stay mobile and active, so the Age UK Cornwall Respiratory Care Co-ordinator, Jan, has provided exercises that improve her mobility and strength.

The future is a little brighter for Jean, and we are all proud to be part of it.

Contact us

If you, or someone you know needs a helping hand, please give us a call on:

01872 266383

or email@ageukcornwall.org.uk