
Editorial

Another New Year . . . another new volume - our sixteenth. . . new beginnings . . . new hopes. So how do we come to be doing an issue on Ageing? If we treat journals' ages as those of dogs and cats and multiply by five, then Self and Society is 80 . . . and that feels aged enough.

And reminds me of a favourite dog - a large white poodle called Minou who had a happy active life but at 15 was blind and deaf and began to lose her instructions. In London she was never allowed to go out unaccompanied. But now she began to trot off alone for her daily walk on Primrose Hill. She found the way there, and back, crossing two busy roads using only her still functioning sense of smell. And we couldn't get through to her to explain . . . she couldn't see us; she couldn't hear us. And though she still had complete control of her bowels, she had forgotten the rules.

So that first painful experience of euthanasia reminded me that ageing isn't only about illness and physical incapacity; it also has to do with fading control mechanisms.

But though we are animals too, we have an even more powerful instinct than smell - self awareness. We are not only conscious: we are conscious of being so. And we can be aware of what is changing as we grow older, both the bad things and the good things. And we can adapt to the changes and grow with them and by our thoughts and actions we have the possibility of affecting those changes to our own advantage.

As for this issue, apart from the people who wrote it three people have been responsible. Mark Matthews got it together and liaised with the writers: he has now gone into what he calls a Black Hole of depression. He is in his sixth decade. Vivian Milroy has overseen the mechanics of getting it all together and through the printers; he's now laid low under a heavy cold. He's in his eighth decade. Ninette Baben, who has very nobly and efficiently done most of the typing and word processing for the past eight years, has now had to take early retirement. She is in her ninth decade. Our combined age is more than two centuries which ought to be enough for an issue on Ageing!

A very Happy New Year to you and all our readers

Mark Matthews

Ninette Baben

Vivian Milroy
