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Ageing Britain



Finding love in later life

Have you started dating in your 60s, 70s or 80s? Share your experiences in the comments section below

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guardian.co.uk, Wednesday 10 June 2009 12.44 BST

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Two's company ... the baby boomers are looking for love. Photograph: Sparrow Photography/Getty Images

Reaching 60 certainly doesn't mean we lose the twinkle in our eye. The media often presents a glamorous image of [dating](#), full of whirlwind romances for twentysomethings or enviable hormone-crazed flings by the likes Carrie Bradshaw or a Desperate Housewife. As a sixty-something singleton, it's easy to feel daunted by the dating scene.

Well, you'll be relieved to know that the older generation is becoming a major part of it. Increasing divorce rates and the disparity in life expectancy for men and women have led to huge numbers of people facing retirement alone. According to [eharmony.co.uk](#), 30% of men over 65 and a whopping 60% of women don't live as part of a couple.

The [internet dating industry](#) is cottoning on to that fact. [Match.com](#) claims the baby boomer generation is its fastest-growing market.

Many niche websites have popped up, specifically targeting an older demographic. [The Senior Dating Agency](#) and [Senior Dating Group](#) are both free to join and are targeted at over-50s. [Singlesover60.co.uk](#) and [Online Senior Dates](#) focus on a slightly higher age bracket, with the majority of its members over 60. If you're stumped on how to write a profile, browse others to gain a feel for how much you need to divulge.

If you're still not convinced about releasing your details into the cyber abyss, then there's [Dateline Platinum](#) - the equivalent of old-fashioned dating agencies. It offers a personalised introductory service and vets all its members in person.

Traditional courting, without the aid of a keyboard, isn't dead either. A 35-year-old female friend recently complained her 65-year-old mother goes on more dates than she does - and none of them were organised through cyberspace.

The film industry has also seen an opportunity with the rise of the dating baby boomer. [Last Chance Harvey](#) hit cinema screens this month, prompting comment about the unusual choice of 40-plus characters in a love story.

Remember [James and Peggy Mason](#)? They are proof you certainly don't have to be

young to get married. They became Britain's oldest newlyweds in 2007 after their eyes met across a crowded day centre in Devon.

Don't panic, though; we're not suggesting a date should lead to selling your home and rewriting your will. Casual companionship is perfectly acceptable. Pauline Stone (64), from Arundel in West Sussex, lost her husband from a heart attack four years ago.

"Being suddenly single made me feel young again. It wasn't my choice to be on my own, of course, but when you're thrown into it you either sit and vegetate or you get out. I joined a singles' club for my area and have met lots of people.

"I'm not looking for someone to move in with, just someone to share a bit of fun and go to dinner. I miss having a person to make plans and go on holiday with."

Most later-life single status is down to separation or bereavement, and the sentiments surrounding each are very different. The former brings a greater fear of rejection, and the latter can carry a huge sense of guilt. A small percentage of people have never settled down, and others may have an ailing spouse and be seeking a platonic friendship.

Whatever the reason, there's a huge network of single sixty-, seventy- and eightysomethings who have not lost their lust for life or their desire to be loved. If you've found romance after 60, are still looking, or want to share your concerns about returning to dating, post your comments below.

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