

In with **THE NEW**

Sometimes change can come in the most unexpected of ways. Cherry Casey meets three people who picked up the pace, just when they were expecting to slow down

When Tricia Hamilton left her Hong Kong teaching post, she thought she'd retired from her job and her jet-setting ways. Soon after, she embarked on an entirely different type of journey.

My new career all began when my daughter needed a fascinator for a friend's wedding. We looked for one everywhere, but nothing was quite right. All of a sudden she said, "you can make one for me". It was quite a challenge – I needed to make it for the next day and I didn't have all my sewing bits with me. But I managed to create one that matched her outfit, and afterwards thought, "I loved that!"

'Five years on and I have my own business, triciadesigns.com, where

I sell my handmade hats, fascinators and even masks. I also sell my creations at local bridal studios and boutiques.

'I always knew I had an artistic side and enjoyed subjects like sewing at school. But this was 40 years ago, and following an artistic career path wasn't encouraged; there wasn't the opportunities there are now. So I went into teaching sciences instead.

'It was only after making the fascinator for my daughter that I decided to pursue this side more seriously, so I went on a course with a hat designer in London. I started to get quite a few requests, so, after my family helped me set up my website, I had my business!

'Since then, one thing has really led to another. A company got in touch with me about making Alice in

Wonderland-inspired masks for their Christmas party! Adding masks to my repertoire has been great for business as they are less seasonal than weddings. In 2014 I also got through to the finals of the Venus Awards [celebrating women in business]. I'm proud of that achievement and it's been great for raising my profile.

'Hat-making has certainly brought out a different side to me. I always considered myself someone that worked in a very structured way, but now it's different. Each hat I make is a sculpture, and I only ever let it go once I am 100% satisfied with it, however long it takes.

'I'd like to think that I didn't go out looking for this profession – it found me! It's not how I envisaged my retirement years, but I'm so pleased to be doing something that I really love.'



'Hat-making has brought out a different side to me'

TIME FOR CHANGE: LIFE



After retiring, Wyn Sheryn revisited his boyhood interest in woodwork. And even he was surprised by the outcome.

Woodwork is something I've had an interest in from a very early age. My dad had the archetypal "man's shed" and I would make things in there with him as a child.

The later part of my career was with the local government, but when cuts were made I opted for early retirement at 52. Shortly after I enrolled onto the "Making and restoring handmade furniture" course at Burnley College, and it was the best thing I ever did.

I took every single course and exam they offered, and loved it. In fact, it got to the point where they had to gently let me know that they'd run out of courses for me to do! I've made everything from music stands to a four-poster bed, and I'm in my workshop every single day, working on something. There's just something fantastic about working with wood – knowing that when I split a log, I'm the first person to see the patterns inside, which are spectacular.

The course has led to other surprises too. In 2011 my wife and I were invited to the City & Guilds Lion Awards ceremony where I was to receive a gold medal for my work making handmade furniture. When the presenter started talking about the "Lifetime Learner of the Year" – a man from Lancashire – I thought, "I wonder if I know him?". Turns out, it was me! That was a fantastic experience.'

AWARD WINNING
Wyn adding 'Lifetime Learner' to his accolades

When you hear the word 'retirement', perhaps you think of relaxation, holidays or gardening. For Pat Thompson, it meant ice skating.

As I was approaching retirement from my veterinary nurse's job, I knew I wanted to do something constructive with my time, but wasn't sure what. When I saw an ad for a beginner's ice-skating course in Coventry, I thought, "I'm doing that". I'd always been fascinated with ice skating as a child, but in those days it wasn't a viable hobby. But that advert reignited my old fascination, so at the age of 62 I had my first ever ice-skating lesson.

'Before the lesson I was absolutely petrified, and once on the rink I really was like Bambi on ice. But I was hooked. I'm a pretty ambitious person and just knew I wanted to get better at it.

'Five years on and I still absolutely love it. I'm part of the International School of Skating and have two professional coaches who tutor me in ice dance and figure skating five times a week. They've instilled a lot of confidence in me, which makes all the difference.

'The beauty of the sport is that you constantly need to develop, so there's always a new skill I'm aiming for. And because I have to stay really focused, it's a form of escapism too – no other thoughts can creep into my head while I'm on the rink.

'The new experiences that I've had are amazing. I'm part of the Coventry Figure Skating Club, and have entered three competitions with them. I'm always nervous beforehand, but once I skate onto the ice I feel that I can perform. I'm obviously doing something right because I've won first prize twice!

'I've also been involved in five ice-skating shows, which are so much fun. As well as bringing out the performer in me, ice skating has added a whole new social aspect to my life. Skating is an ageless sport, so people don't look at me and see a 67-year-old. I'm just another ice skater.

'Quite a few people have said, "wow, I'd love to do what you're doing!" and I always come back with the same reply, "well why don't you?". I really believe if you want something badly enough, you can do it.'

'Skating is an ageless sport, so people don't look at me and see a 67-year-old. I'm just another skater'



A BORN PERFORMER
Pat's figure-skating finesse has led to two gold medals