

The Journal of DementiaCare

For all who work with people with dementia

Vol 32 No 6 November/December 2024



Celebrating the arts in dementia care

**Also inside
this issue:**

- Creative Space: enabling empowerment and joy
- Models for using music in care homes
- Audio playgrounds



learning | sharing | inspiring

Our new name is Dementia Community

Dementia Community is a Charitable Community Benefit Society, a membership cooperative that provides learning and networking opportunities for the dementia care community. Community members own a £1 community share in **Dementia Community**.

Dementia Community is the organisation that provides:

The Journal of
DementiaCare

The UK
Dementia
Congress

The National
Dementia
Care Awards

You are warmly invited to join us!

Membership benefits include a discounted subscription price for the *Journal of Dementia Care* (published bi-monthly), reduced delegate fees for the UK Dementia Congress and other events that **Dementia Community** will host. Plus a members' newsletter, a discussion forum and many other opportunities for networking and involvement. **Dementia Community** has co-produced and adopted the following values:

- ▶ **Trust:** steadfastly believing that everyone has potential and a unique personhood to be honoured and upheld. Confident that collectively and individually we can improve the experience of dementia care.
- ▶ **Inclusive community:** embracing, supporting, valuing and sharing contributions from everyone committed to our common purpose.
- ▶ **Inspiration:** igniting creativity, energy and new possibilities.
- ▶ **Quality:** equipping the delivery of excellence in care and support for those affected by dementia.
- ▶ **Learning:** encouraging, equipping, sharing and celebrating personal growth so that people enjoy their full potential and all our dementia care communities flourish.

Our core purpose is to connect and empower the dementia care community and our vision is of a world where all people in the dementia care community feel connected, informed, empowered and purposeful, and are actively engaged in co-producing changes that improve everyone's experience of dementia, in care and in wider society.

By reading the *Journal of Dementia Care*, attending the UK Dementia Care Congress or The National Dementia Care Awards you will have already experienced our commitment to combining research with best practice, and valuing those who are passionate about improving the experience of dementia. Whether you are working alone, a care provider, a commissioner, a researcher, a person living with dementia or a family carer our invitation to join our Dementia Community is warmly extended to you.

Join our community and subscribe to the *Journal of Dementia Care* at

www.journalofdementiacare.co.uk



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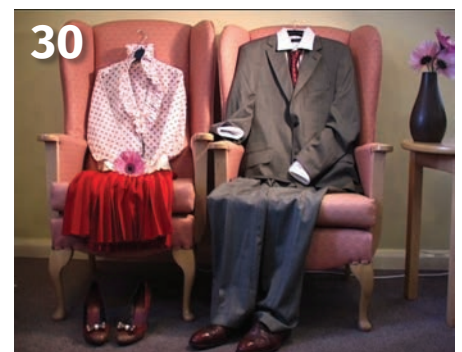
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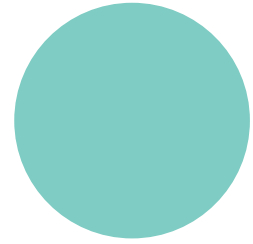


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Front cover: Sincere thanks to all involved in Resonate Arts' Creative Spaces (see p.34; photographer Richard Gray) and the House of Memories Yemeni Elders Heritage (see p.12; photographer Robin Clewley).


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A celebration of the arts

By **Maria Pasiecznik Parsons**,
Creative Dementia Arts Network



This journal has always championed the arts in dementia care. Creative activities and arts offer people living with dementia opportunities to experience pleasure, inspiration and stimulation, express their feelings, emotions and ideas, and to socialise and maintain social connections that enhance health and wellbeing and quality of life.

This issue highlights continuity and change in creative arts. Many of the articles Sue Benson and Sally Knocker recall (pp26-33) resonate fully with the state of the arts today. Pam Schweitzer's Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today, reminiscence arts programme (p37) is now 30 years old and continues to be run in Europe as well as the UK.

Today we are aware of more co-production in the arts, as described by Shelley Hastings of Resonate Arts (p34), and increasing development of culturally appropriate resources for overlooked and underserved communities, as described by Carl Case of Sheffield Memory Hub (p16) and Lizzie Ward of the House of Memories, National Museums Liverpool (p12).

Jon Pigrem (p10) introduces pioneering music technology while Isabelle Latham (p18) reports on two different approaches to musical engagement of care home residents by musicians and care staff. The National Activity Providers Association (NAPA) have always championed the arts and produced some excellent resources in recent years. Finally (p23) Dr Richard Coaten and I review the field and offer glimpses of a new Practice Handbook on creative arts and dementia we have co-edited and co-written with 25 co-authors including experts by experience, practitioners, managers and researchers. ■



Dementia Community is delighted to partner with *Daily Sparkle* to publish this special issue of the *Journal of Dementia Care* — packed full of articles that show how arts-inspired approaches improve experiences and outcomes for people living with dementia, family carers and all involved in their support and care.

Daily Sparkle's mission is to improve the lives of people with dementia and those that care for them through our wellbeing tools and resources. Over the last 15 years we have seen time and again how powerful the arts and related reminiscence can be, so are excited to partner with Dementia Community on this.

The Journal of Dementia Care is a multidisciplinary journal for all professional staff working with people with dementia, in hospitals, nursing and residential care homes, day units and the community. The journal is committed to improving the quality of care provided for people with dementia, by keeping readers abreast of news and views, research, developments, practice and training issues. *The Journal of Dementia Care* is grounded firmly in practice and provides a lively forum for ideas and opinions.

Writing for JDC:

Do you have a project or survey to report, or a change in practice organisation or structure which has worked well (or not), and would you like to share this experience with others? Do you have a strong opinion you would like to express? We welcome letters and contributions that promote discussion and debate about dementia care.

Contact the editor, Sue Benson: sue@dementiapublishing.community

News round-up

This is a brief round-up of the news and resources regularly posted and updated on our website.

New personal care resources for family carers

The Association for Dementia Studies (ADS), University of Worcester has launched a series of booklets for family carers supporting someone living with dementia with their personal care. The booklets come from the Crossing the Line research project funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The project aimed to gain an understanding of the experiences of family carers relating to their provision of personal care to people living with dementia and hear their often-hidden voice.

ADS says: “Family carers often face challenges adapting to the role that providing personal care brings, which can be worsened by a lack of knowledge and skills, information, guilt and embarrassment. The challenges around personal care are often a tipping point for the person living with dementia to move into a care home.

“The findings from this project enabled the development of accessible, co-produced educational resources for family carers, including a website, a series of 15 booklets covering a wide range of topics around personal care and dementia, and film clips sharing carer experiences. Health and social care professionals can also use the resources to provide advice, deepen understanding and initiate discussions about caring topics, and they may also be useful in support groups for family or unpaid carers, or to plan training and education sessions.”

Topics covered by the booklets include going to the toilet, washing, bathing, dressing, mouth-care, shaving, hair care and foot and nail care. The booklets are available here <https://caringhelp.on.worc.ac.uk/index.php/booklets/> and printed formats can be provided. More information and film clips at: <https://caringhelp.on.worc.ac.uk/>

Free counselling for unpaid carers

Dementia Carers Count (DCC) offers free counselling sessions to unpaid carers. DCC’s clinical psychologist, Dr Gemma Fitzgerald, specialises in supporting dementia carers, and the service offers carers up to six free remote counselling sessions. The sessions are intended to help unpaid carers feel listened to and support them to understand their emotions, as well as exploring new coping strategies. Sessions are organised around what works best for carers and follow up support is available if needed. Call the DCC Carer Support Line free on 0800 652 1102 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday to find out more.

Meet Liv: AI powered by the experiences of people with dementia

Innovations in Dementia has launched a film showing the work they’ve been doing with Lenovo to create an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool powered by the experiences of people living with dementia. Alzheimer’s Intelligence is a photorealistic 3D avatar named Liv, with custom AI. The avatar was created from a composite of images of 10 people living with dementia,



This striking painting is by George Rook. He and Frances Isaacs run an online art group that has inspired many of their fellow experts by experience to express their creativity (see p9).

and the large language model (LLM) dataset of the advice ‘Liv’ shares was created using data directly from the experiences of people living with dementia, including entries from Innovations in Dementia’s Dementia Diaries project and in-depth panel interviews. You can watch Innovations in Dementia’s ‘Meet Liv’ film here: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=JGSIHBB1QWk>

People with lived experience of dementia wanted to shape new DCAN strategy

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP), who host the Dementia Change Action Network (DCAN), are developing a new strategy for DCAN. It is intended the strategy will be shaped by insights on the current lived experience, aspirations and ideas of people living with dementia, their families and friends. Find out more from TLAP here: <https://thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/news/personalising-dementia-support-building-a-strategy-on-lived-experience/>

Find out how to get involved from DCAN here: <https://dcan.org.uk/projects/lived-experience-into-strategy/>

DSDC invite people with dementia and their care partners to join Lived Experience Panel

The Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC) are inviting people with dementia and their care partners to join their Dementia Lived Experience Panel. Being on the Panel involves taking part in research and providing feedback on products and services, as well as receiving updates and the option to attend social events such as DSDC’s blether sessions. Find out more and sign up here: <https://mailchi.mp/stir.ac.uk/dementia-lived-experience-panel>

2025 is NAPA’s Year of Musical Expression

The National Activity Providers Association (NAPA) has announced that 2025 will be its Year of Musical Expression. Every year NAPA has a focus for their activities, and the 2025 campaign is designed to inspire and empower activity and care teams across the country to celebrate and integrate music into their activity



See below for details of upcoming webinars.

Monday 2 December 2024

Validation: the gift of connection and communication

Presenter: Vicki De Klerk, Validation Master Teacher and Executive Director of the Validation Training Institute.

The programme is updated and webinars available to book on our website; previous webinars have been recorded and are available to watch here too.

Webinars for 2025 will include the following:
– see website for dates and booking:

What Dementia UK offers, plus: Ask an Admiral Nurse

Presenter: Vic Lyons, Admiral Nurse and Head of Digital Service Delivery and Dementia at Work, Dementia UK.

Dementia & Continence – The next phase of DemCon and how you can be involved

Presenter: Cathy Murphy (Professor of Continence, Bladder & Bowel Management Research Group and Dr Barbara Bradbury, Senior Research Fellow, both at the School of Health Sciences, University of Southampton.

Dementia, communication and swallowing

Presenter: Dr Lindsey Collins, Associate Professor, Lead Dementia Care Consultant and Trainer, RCSLT National Clinical Advisor (Dementia and Dysphagia), Centre for Applied Dementia Studies, Faculty of Health Studies, University of Bradford.

Travel and Tourism - ‘Holidaying with dementia’

Presenter: Carol Sargent, MindforYou

See: <https://journalofdementiacare.co.uk/events/webinars-2>

provision. Find out more and download the toolkit here: <https://napa-activities.co.uk/get-involved/the-napa-year-of-musical-expression>

New website for Dementia Carers Count

Dementia Carers Count (DCC) has revamped its website, with the aim of making it easier for carers to find the information they need. You can find the new-look site here: <https://dementiacarers.org.uk>

Magic Me’s Annual Report

Magic Me, an arts charity that brings generations together, has published its annual report 2023/24, entitled Creativity, Connection and Growth. Magic Me began in 1989 with a focus on intergenerational arts practices and arts initiatives for people living and working in care settings. In this latest report Magic Me discusses Spark (formerly Magic Moments) that offers creative, sensory activities which

The long goodbye

Members of the board of Dementia Community have met with the Alzheimer’s Society to discuss our reservations and our members’ responses to this advertising film, and to explore the future relationship between our organisations. A joint statement will be posted on our website soon.

improve the quality of life for older care home residents, and notes the ability of Spark to reach isolated residents, including those who are living with dementia. Magic Me also make reference to their presence at the 2023 UK Dementia Congress. Read their report here: <https://magicme.co.uk/magic-me-annual-report-2023-24-creativity-connection-and-growth/>

Young onset dementia resources launched

Care England has launched resources in partnership with Dementia Forward and Wellburn Care Homes to raise awareness and advocate for action to support individuals living with young onset dementia (YOD) across England. The resources are in response to the current care pathway often failing to meet the needs of younger people with dementia. Access the resources here: <https://www.careengland.org.uk/young-onset-dementia-yod/>

QCS share Culturally Appropriate Care Guide

In Black History Month (October 2024) Quality Compliance Systems (QCS) shared a free resource: ‘The Culturally Appropriate Care Guide’. The guide is aimed at care providers across England, Scotland, and Wales and supports the delivery of person-centred care that respects the cultural identities of people who draw on care and support services. Download the guide here: <https://www.qcs.co.uk/culturally-appropriate-care-guide/>

Dementia Diaries

This special issue of JDC gives us a great opportunity to showcase a positive vision of life with dementia – the blossoming of creativity, connection and growth that people with dementia have found through the arts. Many diarists and others have told us that at the point of diagnosis, they were basically advised to ‘get their affairs in order and get ready to die’. What these diaries show us is that life goes on with dementia. People do not need to stop learning, stop growing, and finding new ways of seeing and exploring the world around and within them.

During lockdown, diarist Frannie decided to set up an online watercolour course for others with dementia. These were hugely successful, and Frannie helped many people to discover the joy of painting. Here’s Stephen. “I love it, once you get concentrated on that everything else is just gone away”
<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/16421/stephens-been-learning-watercolour-painting-from-fellow-diarist-frances-hes-enjoying-it-immensely/?highlight=painting>



Frannie was also commissioned to work with people face to face in Wales and ran a series of very successful courses. She also delivered a one off workshop as part of the ENLIVEN project, which looked at the connection between nature and dementia. Here Frannie talks about that:
<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/22209/frannie-describes-the-wonderful-watercolours-session-she-ran-for-the-seaton-tramway/?highlight=watercolour>



For all the difficulties it brought to people’s lives, lockdown was also an engine of creativity for many. In this diary Gail describes how during lockdown, creativity in the form of crafting, poetry and photography brought solace, excitement and connection with others.



<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/18155/in-this-extended-diary-gail-reflects-on-living-with-dementia-in-a-year-of-lockdown-this-is-also-the-story-of-how-people-with-dementia-have-come-together-to-support-each-other-during-this-strange-time/?highlight=watercolour>

The Time and Place project involved fair few diarists who were supported to explore the use of poetry, and was hugely successful. You can read more about the project here: <https://www.dementiavoices.org.uk/time-and-place-poetry-project-2020/>

...and can get a copy of the resulting book here: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Collected-Poems-Time-Place/dp/1838127879>

...and here is diarist Keith with a few of his poems from the project (and again, a mention of his experiences in Frannie’s art classes):

<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/18989/the-poets-from-the-time-and-place-project-are-moving-on-to-explore-other-arts-forms-together-this-is-a-wonderful-testament-to-the-creativity-and-potential-of-people-with-dementia-working-together/?highlight=watercolour>



Ronald is very active now in dementia and the arts, and has done a huge amount to highlight the power of music for people with dementia. We first met him when he joined as a diarist and submitted this glorious poem, set to music.

<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/10124/the-mountains-i-still-climb/?highlight=mountains>



Let’s stay with music. One of the amazing things about the DEEP network is the number of groups which have been set up by people with dementia themselves to support others. Diarist Dory set up the Like Minded group in Mold, and in this diary she introduces Lyn. This is absolutely joyous – have a listen...

<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/20797/i-ask-for-a-happy-heart-sings-lyn-in-this-glorious-version-of-calon-lan-introduced-by-our-very-own-dory-fab/?highlight=art>

Paul and Tommy have frequently used music to, in the words of Lord Reith, “inform, educate and entertain” about dementia. Here they are in typically irreverent form.

<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/11528/tommy-and-paul-use-song-to-investigate-a-hole/?highlight=photo>

Peter Berry’s book *Slow Puncture* (written with Deb Bunt) is one of The Reading Agency’s choices for this year’s list: Reading Well for Dementia.

<https://readingagency.org.uk/books/22365563>



We mentioned “I’ve got you” in this column a few years ago – but it is worth revisiting, The music is inspired by a tune from Paul, played mostly by Chris, and contains poetry from Dory, George, and Wendy along with artwork from Frannie and beautiful banners created by DEEP groups. Not bad for a bunch of ‘dead’ people eh....
<https://dementiadiaries.org/entry/21841/lots-of-diarists-have-been-involved-in-making-this-love-letter-to-deep-and-to-the-friendship-between-people-with-dementia-its-called-ive-got-you-and-wed-love-you-to-watch-it/?highlight=I%26%23039%3Bve%20got%20you>

See p9 for Maxine Linnell’s poetry and art work from Keith Oliver and Frances (Frannie) Isaacs.

fish strawberry wasp

By Maxine Linnell

Up to her knickers in stream
she fished for tadpoles
through bent light
carried them home
by a string handle
to free in the garden pond.

Strawberries
she picked
hulled
sugared
boiled up
packed in
sealed with gingham covers
to spread
on scones.

Calling for help
that didn't come
her hand shaking
till the jar might crack
she trapped a wasp
against the kitchen window.
Could it sting
through glass?

This summer
jam jars
lie empty in the shed
cobwebbed
loaded with dust.
She is lost for words.
The simple ones –
fish
strawberry
wasp –
slip down

too deep for catching.

Scenes from Whitstable beach in watercolour

Keith Oliver

Beach walks and talks
with a student at
Whitstable near my home
are a highlight of my
week. Since being
inspired by Frances
Isaacs and George
Rook's online art group
I've loved dabbling in
watercolour painting.



Frances Isaacs:

I made this drawing when out with our little dog. We were on a pathway between two Welsh valleys in the Brecon Beacons. The dog jumped up on to some rocks to get the view below.

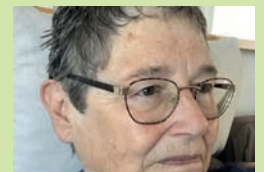
A few words about my writing:

I've written for most of my life. Nothing is different now, though the content of my work changes as I do. There have been novels, stories, articles and poems; the ones I come back to probably have some personal content.

This *Dust*, a collection of my poetry, was published in 2017. Writing is part of who I am, it's how I contact myself, how I speak to others. When I had my diagnosis, I started a series of pieces about dementia. Instead of preparing for a book, I thought a blog would catch the process as it unfolded, and it wouldn't matter when it needed to end.

The blog continues, at www.maxinelinnell.com

Maxine Linnell



Association for Dementia Studies

An active centre for research, education and consultancy in person-centred dementia care

New resources to support family carers providing personal care for people with dementia

dementia@worc.ac.uk
www.worcester.ac.uk/dementia



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Audio playgrounds: tools for listening or music creation

Jon Pigrem and Jennifer MacRitchie describe how the Music Dementia Technology team at the University of Sheffield has worked closely with community groups and care settings to develop an innovative device for music-based activities and therapies

Sustained engagement with music has been shown to aid vital aspects of life for those living with dementia, such as the sense of self (Baird & Thompson 2018), an awareness of the moment and memories of the past (Dowlen *et al* 2022, Elliot *et al* 2020). In the Music Dementia Technology team at the University of Sheffield we explore the potential for musical technology to support and develop these aspects (and more) through the careful implementation of technological solutions. We work with a range of stakeholders, ensuring we include the voices of those living with dementia, their families and their carers in our participatory activities.

Working closely with community groups and residential care settings in Sheffield and beyond enables us to explore the needs and wants of these groups, and the common issues encountered in the facilitation of music-based activities and therapies. To date we have conducted over 50 visits and worked with over 500 participants, providing a range of music-based activities using technology. We develop technological solutions to use in our research, and have the ability to test and improve them, and the theories which inform them, through real life experience and practical deployment.

What does music technology add?

There is lots of great work and research happening currently which explores the roles of music and arts-based activities for those living with dementia (MacRitchie *et al* 2023) - from dementia choirs and singing groups to songwriting groups and music workshops. Through our own work we have been fortunate enough to explore the potential for musical interventions, as well as experiencing first hand some of the limitations and bottlenecks in its facilitation. We work with care settings and music facilitators to find the right place where technology might best have added value.

Through our work we aim to:

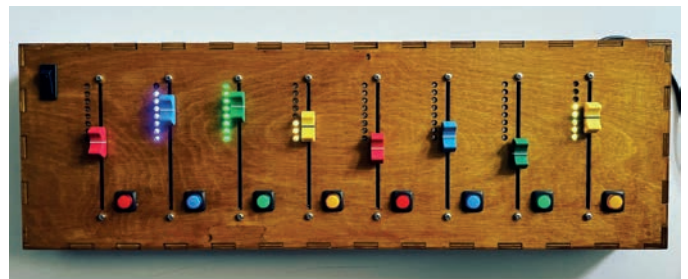
- make music technology more approachable
- provide consistent opportunities for music interaction around the clock
- increase the potential for agency for those living with dementia.

The Sliderbox

The Sliderbox is an accessible music device which facilitates a range of musical experiences for its users. Designed for use with and by those living with dementia the device removes the complexities often found with music

Key points

- The Sliderbox is an accessible device for music-based activities and therapies.
- Designed with those living with dementia and their care team. It currently runs in a jukebox mode (Listening Post) or a creative music-making mode (Audio Playground).
- Carefully designed technology makes interacting with music more accessible around the clock for both those living with dementia, and those who provide care.
- The Audio Playgrounds have the ability to provide agency though creativity and musical interaction.



The Sliderbox. An Accessible Musical Instrument.
Photo Credit: Jon Pigrem

technologies, providing mature and stimulating musical interactions and round the clock accessibility.

Physically the device invites interaction through the use of robust natural materials, polished surfaces, chunky physical controls, and clear visual feedback. We enable the use of tactile knowledge that often lasts well in dementia and borrow from lived choreographies (like turning a door handle or a key in a lock) which continue to inform expectations and interactions at all stages of life. This approach addresses many of the challenges posed by common technologies and enhances the potential for autonomy in use (Pigrem *et al* 2023).

Audio Playgrounds

The Audio Playgrounds are a ‘choose your own adventure’ in sound. Users create their own unique piece of music by exploring, selecting and combining carefully created musical material. Each Audio Playground explores a different mood and feel, from classical to soundscapes, with



'JoJanGles' Music Group (Darnall Well Being/ St Mary's Handsworth). Photo Credit: Kitty Turner

varying levels of complexity to suit users at all stages of their dementia. Research shows that creativity provides vital opportunities for agency, and through intentional creative actions users can become active agents in their own creative flourishing.

The Listening Post

In 'Listening Post' mode the Sliderbox works as a jukebox, capable of holding up to eight different musical playlists of the user's choice. The device provides potential for customised audio content such as soundscapes, unique stories, messages from loved ones, and home specific content.

The Sliderbox in use

We have been using the Sliderbox in our work for around two years and testing the Audio Playgrounds for just over a year. Over time this has developed and expanded into a suite of compositions, with varying levels of challenge for users. In a recent study (Pigrem *et al* 2024) we evidenced positive engagement levels with a mixed group of participants who joined us to explore the Audio Playgrounds. For most users, we were able to detect a pattern of interaction we believe demonstrates agency embedded in creative decision making.

In partnership with residential care settings, we are seeing positive outcomes from deployments of the Sliderbox in both its Listening Post and Audio Playground modes. Here is what our partners say:

My observations of residents using the Sliderbox [in audio playground mode] have highlighted changes in perception, processing and understanding and the level of autonomy and coping strategies. It has also encouraged space sharing and interaction stimulating interest, choice making and adaptive techniques that have visibly enhanced feelings of empowerment and has offered a unique and valuable insight into their lived experience.

Fiona Pritchard – Music and Arts Partner, Colten Care

The Listening post gave the residents the opportunity to be involved in development of a useable item that can be used at Sheffcare and in other settings. It gives the care home a tool that can be used for entertainment and engagement. It also gives residents a simple device that enables them to make choices and select difference tunes themselves.

Kathryn Rawling – Dementia and Wellbeing Manager, Sheffcare

Jon Pigrem is a research technician in the Music Dementia Technology team led by Jennifer MacRitchie at the University of Sheffield.



The Sliderbox deployed in 'Listening Post' mode in a Sheffcare dementia care home. Photo: Jon Pigrem

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the wider MDT team (Dr Justin Christensen, Prof. Renee Timmers, Prof Luc de Witte, Prof. Andrew MacPherson) and our partners in community and residential care for their contributions to this work and our wider research. Our research is funded by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship.

If you would like to know more about our work and research, feel free to get in touch via our website: <https://tinyurl.com/2kwr49d3>, or contact Jennifer MacRitchie (j.macritchie@sheffield.ac.uk) or Jon Pigrem (j.m.pigrem@sheffield.ac.uk).



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House of Memories: Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage

Lizzie Ward describes the development of a new resource that brought the Liverpool Yemeni community together, for elders and young people to share memories and pride in their heritage



House of Memories is an award-winning dementia awareness programme led by National Museums Liverpool that has been running for more than 10 years. It was designed to raise community awareness of dementia through the exploration of museum and community heritage resources. Using an approach that privileges the power of personal memories, stories and cultural heritage as a complimentary social resource to established clinical interventions and practice, the House of Memories programme was co-designed and co-produced with people living with dementia, care providers and family members.

A culture-led initiative, House of Memories reaches out to under-represented communities who experience health inequalities in order to build and enable trust, respect and connections and to ensure authentic cultural representation and engagement.

Inspiration for the Yemeni Elders Heritage app

Abdul Wase, a young person within Liverpool's Yemeni community, discovered the My House of Memories app, and wanted to create a digital memory resource for his own family members and his wider community.

He worked with the House of Memories team and local Yemeni elders to scope, design and deliver the Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage app. His idea was to share the rich heritage and elders' memories of the Yemen as a conversation link to foster understanding and signpost to dementia resources.

There's a lot of pride on Merseyside, especially within the Yemeni community. The elders and the young people were very proud of the heritage that we have here.

(Project delivery staff at House of Memories and member of community.)

Lizzie Ward is House of Memories Programme Manager at National Museum of Liverpool,

The app's development was supported by a group of Yemeni young people who were passionate about this project to share their cultural memories.
Photographer: Robin Clewley

Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage brought the Liverpool Yemeni community together, encouraging young people and elders to access and share their cultural memories, an intergenerational element of the app's development that was supported by a group of Yemeni young people who were passionate about the project.

One of the highlights of the collaboration between the museum and the young people is watching the young people within the community centres from the Yemeni heritage taking centre stage. It was also nice to see the gap being bridged between young people and the elderly community.

(Project delivery staff and member of community.)

Design and content

The app's design included community and museum objects and stories supported by a bi-lingual narrative. To aid the app's development, multiple opportunities were created to celebrate Yemeni culture within the community. This included traditional food, music and dance events, inviting local people to get involved and learn more the resource. The project became a catalyst for intergenerational engagement and a positive illustration of co-creation

enhancing the wellbeing, connection and social empowerment of community participants.

The whole concept and the idea of the app, I think, is great and is amazing. [In] the first workshop where we were looking through the app I even became emotional because of the memories it brought back.

(Community members.)

Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage is a powerful example of a museum reaching out to connect culturally diverse yet marginalised neighbourhoods. The programme champions community participation in the co-creation of cultural and heritage resources by the House of Memories team to help meet community health needs.

I think this project is very unique to me personally, to the Yemeni community in Liverpool as a whole, because it's the first project of its time in the UK... The whole project itself - I've loved it so much when I see the elderly going on the apps and just tapping different photos and seeing different memories.....The app I believe is a saviour for

many families and more about re-bonding, reconnecting with the elderly and the young people.

(Community Members)

The Yemeni app package is now available via the My House of Memories app package and is available in English language as well as Arabic.

Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage Webpage: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/connecting-yemeni-elders-heritage>

Toolkit: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/toolkit>

Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage Evaluation: <https://images.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/2023-02/HoM-Yemeni-Project-Evaluation.pdf>

Connecting with Yemeni Elders Heritage Video - <https://youtu.be/p0aSxE3fbSw>

Main House of Memories

website: www.houseofmemories.co.uk

My House of Memories app webpage: [https://](https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/my-house-of-memories-app)

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/house-of-memories/my-house-of-memories-app

Bewick Tales

Stories from the life and work of Thomas Bewick

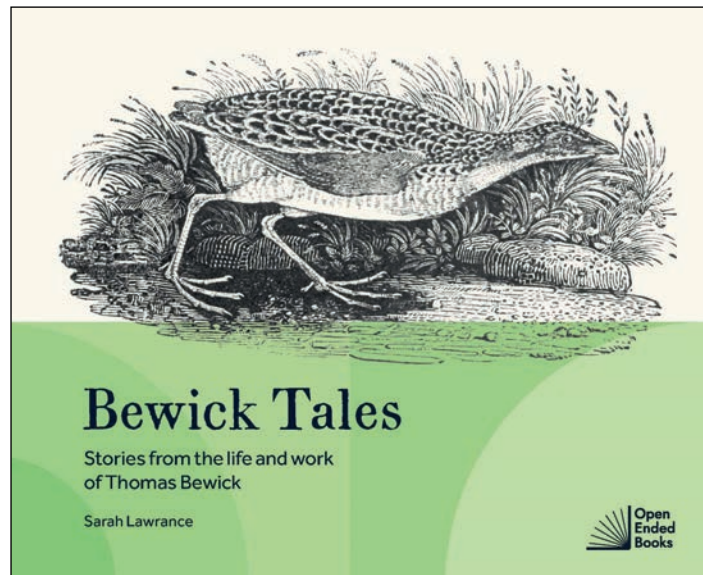
By Sarah Lawrence

Open Ended books is a new imprint of Equal Arts, a leading creative ageing charity supporting older people and those living with dementia in Gateshead, Newcastle and across the UK. The aim of this initiative is “to create beautiful and life affirming books that stimulate the imagination and help maintain positive relationships between people living with early to moderate dementia and their family and friends.”

This first publication, Bewick Tales, Stories from the life and work of Thomas Bewick, has been co-produced by Equal Arts, people living with dementia, Newcastle City Library, the Bewick Society, the National Trust, Sarah Lawrence, the author and Wendy Lewis, book designer. It is such an apt choice of subject as Bewick, a prolific artist, engraver and natural historian was born, lived, worked and died in Northumberland.

This beautifully illustrated book tells the story of how Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) became one of England's foremost engravers, beginning with his childhood in the countryside where he revelled in the natural world and started drawing what he saw around him. After training in Newcastle he engraved on a variety of materials and objects, produced commercial labels and signs but also published books about nature including his famous History of British Birds.

Most of the images and descriptions of his engravings



are reproduced in traditional black and white, but there is astute use of dark cyan (turquoise) and emerald green in the book both as background and text to add interest; pewter grey is used well to frame some illustrations and there are a few full colour images. The first paragraph on each page summarises the topic in Times Roman (24) font and more detail is added in Arial (14) with good sized spaces between the lines. This helps visual accessibility as a few pages are perhaps too

‘busy’ given the sheer detail of some of the engravings but overall the scale of the images help make them clearer.

Bewick Tales has a landscape format (200mm x 250mm) a manageable size, printed on high quality paper with a hard cover enabling it to be opened and laid flat across a table or knees. This makes it ideal for people living with early to moderate dementia and health and social care staff, family carers and friends to share especially since many images are accompanied by useful questions to prompt discussion. Equally however this book can be enjoyed by many different people who enjoy art, engraving and social history. Bewick Tales is an excellent resource for retirement communities, extra care, care homes and hospitals.

Maria Pasiecznik Parsons,

Creative Dementia Arts Network

Purchase online at:

<https://www.equalarts.org.uk/shop/bewick-tales-stories-from-the-life-and-work-of-thomas-bewick>

The In Cahoots Collective: towards inspirational practice

Richard Coaten, Maria Pasiecznik Parsons and Bridget Gill describe a dance and movement residency run by an international partnership in West Yorkshire

In 2023, two arts therapists from the Netherlands - Job Cornelissen (dance) & Jantje Van Der Wurff (music) - applied to and were awarded funding by the Dutch Cultural Participation Fund (DCPF) to work with UK based colleague Dr Richard Coaten (dance movement psychotherapist) on a week-long movement and dance-based residency involving those living with dementia and their carers in West Yorkshire since the county is seen by the DCPF as a beacon of innovative practices in Creative Health. They called themselves the In Cahoots Collective (ICC), having worked internationally together before. Bridget Gill, chief officer of Spectrum People, was to support this and kindly offered the charity as a facilitator to provide the necessary structure and administration. A Made in Wakefield Culture Grant bid was successful. This was ideal, since Spectrum People has strong links with a number of local organisations, people living with dementia, their carers, volunteers and others.



Renegotiating the shared spaces where we connect

This was followed by morning and afternoon sessions for the rest of the week in different locations throughout the district. Each session lasted around an hour and a half. There was an expectation that those attending the masterclass would also attend sessions during the rest of the week. This helped understanding of the work in practice and built confidence regarding the effective transfer of knowledge between training, theory and practice. On the Friday afternoon,

there was a moving celebration event of what had been achieved, with 90 plus attenders. Masterclass, sessions and celebration were filmed as a legacy of the week to be shared going forward.

Results

All attending the sessions had an experience very different from a more traditional approach to seated movement and music type work. It also involved song and reminiscence that became woven improvisationally into the emerging themes for each one, each session being unique. In one participant's words, "It reclaimed nice memories".

The masterclass laid the foundations for an improvisational approach with a focus on how live music and its strong dynamics, together with rhythmic movement and dance, combine to bring out the "creative" best, including the arts therapists delivering the practice to creative practitioners and other arts therapists from different disciplines:

I felt growth in us as participants in the masterclass, in the participants of the workshops, and it seemed even in the ways the therapists were engaging!

It was an incredible creative experience, run by talented and inspirational experts that will stay in my memory for a long time.

Of particular relevance: the week was a collaboration between highly experienced arts therapists and creative practitioners, facilitated by a local charity and promoting further engagement, dialogue and collaboration; a successful creative health initiative with people living with dementia and their carers.

Our key objectives:

- Revitalise use of **multi-disciplinary practices** in this work e.g. use of movement, dance, play and live music.
- Revitalise importance of intuitive and **improvisatory practices in dementia care** including **performance and performative aspects** in what In Cahoots Collective do.
- Renegotiate shared spaces where we connect and the sensorial channels we use, while maintaining relationship and **personhood**.
- Offer training and development opportunities to **VCSE** and other staff in community settings together with arts therapists, creative health practitioners across all art-forms, especially movement and dance.
- Explore further opportunities for international collaboration in creative health and well-being practices and particularly between Wakefield, West Yorkshire and the Netherlands.

What happened?

The week began with a masterclass from ICC on the Monday for fourteen creatives. Some were dancers, others art therapists, including one newly qualified dance movement psychotherapist, and activity co-ordinators.

In Cahoots Collective – moving towards inspirational practice in Creative Health' International Movement, Music & Dance Residency in partnership with Spectrum People, Wakefield, September 23rd to 27th 2024
<https://spectrumpeople.org.uk/>

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Virtual Reality and museum collections

a tool for creating culturally appropriate resources

Carl Case describes the development of a 3D Virtual Reality Museum Tour, based on an exhibition he co-created at Mansfield Museum — Windrush: It Runs Through Us. It is freely available online and has many benefits for people living with dementia, their carers and families, he explains.

Opportunities exist for many museum collections — whether these are defined as cultural or art institutions — to evolve into vital resources for dementia care, shifting from collection-centric spaces to virtually engaging environments that can enrich the quality of care for individuals living with dementia and their care partners.

Embracing this approach, I spearheaded the further development of an exhibition I had earlier co-curated at Mansfield Museum—Windrush: It Runs Through Us—into an interactive 3D Virtual Reality (VR) Museum Tour.

This VR Tour showcases a culturally responsive design, offering a 3D computer-simulated version of the Windrush exhibition. With this innovative experience, users can immerse themselves in the gallery among the artifacts in real-time, all from the comfort of their favourite chair at home or care setting. Immerse yourself here:

<https://my.scene3d.co.uk/tour/mansfield-museum-windrush-exhibition>

Overlooked and underserved communities

It is said that ‘dementia does not discriminate’ - however it does affect ethnic communities in different ways.

A UCL research team studied primary care and hospital health records in the UK from 1997 to 2018, incorporating data from 662,882 people aged over 65. In comparisons between ethnic groups, they found that after controlling for factors such as age, sex and socioeconomic status, Black people had a 22% higher incidence of dementia recorded than white people, while the recorded incidence in the South Asian population was 17% below the average.

The 2022 study confirmed findings from previous studies, indicating a younger average age at dementia diagnosis for South Asian and Black individuals compared to white individuals, with members from both groups also being found to die at younger ages than white individuals studied (Mukadam *et al* 2023).

Post-diagnosis, many individuals and care partners of people from African and Caribbean communities encounter substantial challenges and isolation, further exacerbated by

Carl Case is the Director of Operations of Cultural Appropriate Resources, promoting cultural inclusivity in health and dementia care and creating innovative enabling projects. Co-founder of the award-winning ‘Sheffield Memory Hub’, he is recognised for his work in delivering culturally competent dementia enablement, care and support within diverse communities.

Summary and key points

This article highlights how the Windrush 3D Virtual Museum Tour offers a unique opportunity for individuals living with dementia, their wider family members, and professional care partners.

It highlights its role as:

- A culturally appropriate dementia intervention, enriching the quality of care, fostering meaningful engagement and connection.
- An innovative non-pharmacological approach to initiating self-directed, passion-based virtual learning, enabling, educating and inspiring individuals.
- Aiding African & African Caribbean people affected by dementia to discover, re-discover and pursue their passions.
- A freely accessible online resource.
- A support for care partners in utilising reminiscence and narrative therapies, as well as experiential learning techniques.
- A means of enabling family and professional care partners to enhance the well-being of predominantly African and African Caribbean individuals with dementia.
- A support for care partners well-being and peace of mind.

cultural stigmas, a scarcity of culturally sensitive care, and a deficiency of tailored support services (Lasrado *et al* 2020).

Virtual Reality: Addressing the cultural void

The interactive Windrush 3D VR Tour can help, and it has advantages over the physical experience, as one is taken on an immersive journey into Caribbean heritage with short videos, cultural narratives, mini-documentaries, life-stories, and classic record albums, showcasing Caribbean popular music's growth and early development.

Several senses are stimulated: hearing, vision and, if the headset is used, touch and proprioception. These properties of VR make it an appealing tool in promoting well-being in people living with dementia by providing them with a sense of autonomy, stimulating reminiscence, and providing many an escape from constrained mobility and/or pain (Appel *et al* 2022).

This focus of mine is not new, as it is widely recognised that the benefits of ‘visiting museums’ for individuals with

dementia are substantial, enhancing cognitive performance, well-being, quality of life, self-esteem, and social support. My approach to dementia enablement echoes previous research findings, highlighting the positive impact of leisure activities on individuals with dementia (Camic *et al* 2017).

These non-pharmacological benefits are sadly bypassing too many Black Africans and African Caribbeans. Records show that 51.1% of white people aged 16 and over had physically visited a museum or gallery at least once in the past year compared with 33.5% of Black people and 43.7% of Asian (Gov.UK 2019).

Virtual reality is making strides in addressing healthcare gaps. VR environments offer a valuable tool for creating safe memory spaces for individuals living with dementia. In these environments, users interact with virtual objects using sensory devices that make them feel as though they are in the real world, experiencing a sense of immersion in the virtual world's scenario. Kim and Coyle (2019) have shown that VR therapies can positively affect a range of clinical outcomes amongst elders with cognitive disorders and that they can also slightly enhance cognitive functioning in those participants.

Reminiscence and creative story telling.

The 'Windrush 3D Virtual Tour' enables visitors to take a step back in time to the 1950/60s which for many can be a powerful and comforting experience. This process utilises reminiscence therapy, incorporating sensory multi-media cultural triggers such as photos, music, familiar objects, vintage fashion, and the traditional Caribbean 'front room' with period furniture and furnishing. These elements work together to evoke positive memories and emotions.

Such triggers for creative storytelling, help to restore elders to the pedestal of family 'storyteller', the central figure sharing information and knowledge with children, grandchildren, and care partners who are now once again active listeners. The elder is now back in control, no longer the one being talked to, decisions made on behalf of, a prisoner in their own home, restricted from walking



Solutions often involve simple tweaks rather than systematic changes. What is required is a combination of dementia intelligence, access to culturally appropriate resources, commitment, and the right support. It's not rocket science!
Carl Case (pictured, left)

through the front door whenever they wish.

At the beginning of the creative storytelling process, care partners and family members think about the differing ways they are instrumental in enhancing elders' experiences. Through the use of open-ended questions to gather and document life stories for memory books,

they can enhance communication, develop expression skills, and cultivate stronger relationships.

This approach leads to meaningful multi-generational engagements, ultimately improving the quality of life for both the elder and their care partner, with many elders experiencing heightened excitement and enrichment, promoting cognitive enhancement (Coyle *et al* 2015).

The Windrush 3D Virtual Museum Tour, can enable, educate and inspire, characterised by self-directed, passion-based virtual learning, helping people affected by dementia discover, re-discover, and pursue their passion. The resource is assisting care partners in utilising reminiscence, narrative therapies, and experiential learning techniques. This immersive virtual platform has been designed to enhance the well-being of predominantly African and African Caribbean individuals with dementia.

In a world with limited culturally appropriate dementia interventions, leveraging this asset is crucial for families and care establishments. Enhancing the quality of care through this resource empowers care partners to create impactful experiences for those they support. If museums and galleries aspire to enhance well-being, inclusivity, independent learning, audience engagement, and participation, prioritising VR programming for individuals living with dementia of all ethnicities and their care partners is essential.

We are all of us tasked with bridging the cultural gap in



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purposeful activity and culturally meaningful engagements:

*May we lock arms on this journey,
As healthcare providers, senior advocates, persons
suffering and their caregivers and loved ones.
May we unmask hope,
May we unmask joy,
May we discover new ways to connect with and honour
the persons living with dementia.
May we unmask the heart behind the disease and focus
on the beauty that lies within
May we together create a future of inclusion and
equality for all on this journey of life.*
Sira Botes (2024)

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Spoiled for choice?

Two different models for using music in a care home organisation

Isabelle Latham describes two different models of using music in Hallmark Care Homes, and the benefits and challenges of each. She urges better coordination between arts practitioners and services to improve outcomes for all

It is now widely accepted that music and music-based interventions are not only enjoyable for people living with dementia, but also impactful in a variety of ways (Abrah 2016; Livingstone *et al* 2014; Platel 2022). Many care homes therefore aim to integrate music into their everyday support for residents living with dementia, (Meadows & McLennan 2022) moving beyond only utilising music in large group activities or via external entertainers and performers towards more therapeutic applications, (Platel 2022; Playlist for Life 2024). As a result of this, there is now a proliferation of approaches to using music and organisations that provide guidance, training or expertise to care homes. This is undoubtedly a positive development, but it can mean challenging decision-making for care home providers when choosing the type of approach and means of implementation within individual care homes.

Over the last four years, Hallmark Care Homes has applied two different models of using music in their care homes, and recently had the opportunity to reflect on their various benefits and challenges. This article describes those two models, their contribution to the resident experience and the challenges of implementation. It also makes a case for more coordination in this area to enable care providers to access different models as required for individual residents.

A spectrum of opportunities

When considering the range of music available, Hallmark found it useful to think of opportunities as existing on a spectrum, from those that support care staff (usually via training) to integrate music into daily care, thus impacting multiple residents, to those that provide specialist music therapy to specific individuals with identified need. Figure 1 below illustrates this spectrum. ▷



Figure 1:
The spectrum
of music
opportunities

“Music on Prescription” Service

Partnered with Musica CIC to link experienced musicians (**not** music therapists) with residents who would benefit

Care home referred individual residents with interest/background in music who needed extra support to reduce distress and/or Isolation

Musicians work one-on-one with resident in the care home using bespoke musical activities.

Musica musician visited resident 1 hour per week across 12 weeks and fed back to the care team

Necessary equipment sourced by care home or musician

Online training available to all team members.

Creating Individual Playlists

Partnered with Playlist for Life . Regional team members certified to deliver “Playlist for Life” training

Playlists training delivered to key staff in the care home

Coaching support for staff provided weekly for 12 weeks by regional dementia team

Care homes provided with necessary equipment (dementia-friendly radios, headphones, MP3 players etc.)

Playlists initially developed and used for at least 6 residents per care home and expanded further if possible

Online training available to all team members

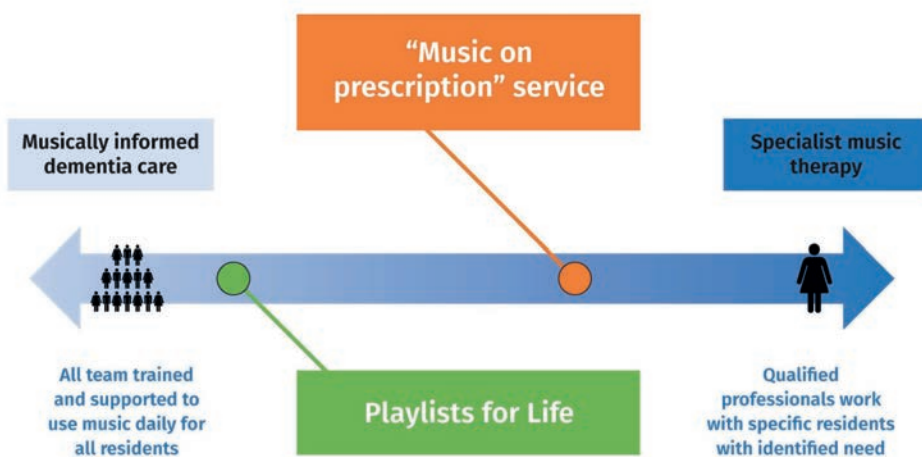
Care home worked toward Playlists for Life accreditation .

Impacts

Both models led to overwhelmingly positive impacts for those involved. Playlists enabled the development and use of playlists for 13 residents over three months, with resident-users experiencing benefits in terms of reduced distress, increased communication, improved emotional well-being and increased engagement. Staff members also benefitted, reporting improved ability to connect with residents, better awareness of resident ability and improved response to resident distress. Looking forward, Playlist for Life was confirmed to be useful for a significant proportion of residents in Hallmark care homes, but required additional support (one-to-one coaching and action planning) alongside training to navigate required technology and ensure effective, ongoing implementation. Without this support, implementation would probably have failed.

Musica on Prescription* successfully operated a referral system for four residents over three months, each of whom received bespoke, creative interventions with musicians including composing music, playing instruments and musical reminiscence. Individual residents built relationships with the musicians and experienced improved mood, reduced distress, increased communication and better engagement with the care home community overall. Staff reported a better understanding of residents and integrating musician-inspired approaches into daily care. Support was required to help the musician understand the care home and connect with staff, but once this occurred little external support was needed. In the future, Musica on Prescription would be a valuable resource to “socially prescribe” for specific residents in each of our care homes. ▷

Above: Figure 2—models of using music at Hallmark. Below: Figure 3—the two models contrasted by their position on the ‘spectrum’ of opportunities .



▷ **Utilising music at Hallmark**

As part of an evolving dementia strategy, different ways of integrating music across the organisation’s homes are considered as they are discovered. In recent years, two models have been experienced by a selection of our care homes. The models are described in Figure 2 and the two models contrasted in Figure 3 (both above).

Hallmark chose to explore both these models to consider the impacts and practical requirements of each. Playlist for Life is a well-recognised model and had the potential to benefit large numbers of residents in each care home over the long term. However, a more specialist approach using the skills of experienced musicians had the potential to benefit particular individuals to a greater degree. While music therapy with qualified therapists would be considered a gold standard individual intervention, it can be hard to source and employing therapists directly is not feasible for an organisation of Hallmark’s size and geographical reach. Therefore, partnering with Musica CIC* enabled exploration of a ‘middle ground’ between generalised playlist approaches and individualised music therapy.

*Musica Music and wellbeing CIC can be contacted via Linked-In: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/musica-music/>

Isabelle Latham is Researcher in Residence, Hallmark Care Homes

Playlists for Life - Staff reflections

The best time I used the playlist? I'm smiling about it now – I couldn't believe it! She was smiling, she knew the words. I didn't even think she could say more than a few words. It was amazing!

"(The resident) would usually say 'leave me alone'. 10 minutes before I was going to assist her, I put the (playlist) on. When I went back, she was actually sat on the edge of the bed. I have to help her sit up, but she had done it herself,"

"He wasn't in a very good mood... I put the playlist on and when I came back, his mood had improved. After his shower he was really grateful, he said that he really appreciated the time I had spent with him"

Musica on Prescription: A case example

A resident was referred to the service by the care home as she had a substantial background in music, playing in orchestras and being married to a music professional. She was also frequently showing distress and low mood, with staff unsure how to interact with her at times. The musician worked for 12 weeks engaging the resident in activities such as playing chords, doing voice warmups, listening to recordings of her husband's performances, and composing some music. The musician also sourced a violin for the resident.

Staff reported that over time, the impact of the sessions became clear as the resident's mood improved after sessions, and this was sustained for longer and longer periods of time. Staff had more opportunities to connect with her and were increasingly able to provide personal care for her without causing distress. This culminated in the resident approaching team herself asking for support with personal care, which had never happened before.

▷ What does the future hold?

Since early 2024, Hallmark Care Homes has focused resources on implementing Playlist for Life across all 22 care homes, with several already receiving accreditation. This is supported by an organisational implementation initiative – known as an "Outstanding Pathway" - which provides bespoke guidance and support for each care home to apply the learning into practice and effectively sustain the use of music and playlists in the home. This direction was taken to ensure the widest impact on residents and to increase the consistency and sustainability of our provision over the next few years.

The experience with Musica on Prescription has shown that the ability to "socially prescribe" for specific residents can be valuable and impactful, and the model used could be applied to other practitioners and qualified therapists (e.g. drama, dance, art). However, because of its specialist nature, this is challenging to implement more widely. Unless an organisation can logistically and financially justify the in-house employment of such practitioners, provision is limited by geographical availability and capacity of (usually small or single-person) providers of such services. This means longer term use of this type of resource by those in care homes (and thus the incentive for practitioners to develop and offer such services) will remain limited until larger scale solutions can be found.

A future in which the diverse, bespoke and geographically dispersed needs of residents for this type of resource could be easily connected to the diverse, bespoke and geographically dispersed providers of such services across the UK is something that would benefit a wide range of care providers and those skilled to deliver such services. Hallmark Care Homes will be exploring this further, so watch this space!

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Research and evaluation: a beginner's guide

Richard Coaten and Maria Pasiecznik Parsons throw light on the often intimidating topics of research and evaluation, explain the difference and give helpful advice to practitioners on evaluating their work

Research and evaluation are two words that can be very off-putting to creative health practitioners, especially those new to the subject who imagine it is full of jargon and complex ideas. If you are an activities co-ordinator or care home manager **please do read on** as what follows is designed to be useful, easy to read and digest and not a deep dive into the subject. It has some helpful ideas at the bottom so please do persevere!

Research and evaluation are distinct yet complementary methods of inquiry that have different purposes and methods. In this context they are used to better understand the complexities involved in creative health interventions with people living with dementia. In a nutshell, *research* aims to generate new knowledge and contribute to academic discourse and *prove* something while *evaluation* is more focused on assessing the effectiveness of an intervention or, more often, a specific programme, in other words to *improve* something. The results or outputs of both research and evaluation are about learning and used to help develop the evidence base for, in this instance, creative arts, leading to more effective interventions, programmes and services.

Research: complementary approaches

Quantitative and qualitative research approaches and methods are used in both research and evaluation, but increasingly mixed methods are favoured in “striking a balance between scientific rigour and the flexibility and creativity essential to arts” (Fancourt 2017 p.198) and (really) capturing their benefits. The growth of using creative arts as a medium for maintaining and improving the health and wellbeing of people living with dementia is due, in no small part, to the demand for evidence of its effectiveness (Schneider 2018, 2023).

Simply put, research involves deciding on a focus or problem, developing the research question(s) related to it, choosing a strategy or methodology that helps answer the question(s). A review of the literature is essential to be able to situate the work in a body of knowledge where shortcomings or a gap has been found. Following this, a specific approach to the conduct of the research and tools (methodology) is identified to answer the question(s)/measure change. It also involves arranging the practical elements, collecting the data, preparing and carrying out analysis, reporting what has been discovered (dissemination) and its relevance to the field (Robson 1993).

Crucially, and this cannot be overstated, people with lived experience of the condition and their carers should be fully involved in both processes. ‘Hearing’ the voices of people directly affected has become a core consideration in developing research, policy, and care practice both in the

United Kingdom (UK) and worldwide. For example, the Alzheimer’s Society Research Network includes lay members - people living with dementia and carers - who are involved in reviewing grant applications to the charity. Qualitative research methods such as action research, ethnographic and emancipatory methods are being widely used in “field research” with people living with dementia in neighbourhoods and care homes (Ludwin & Capstick 2017). Also, in generic studies where family carers and their relatives act as co-researchers (Birt *et al* 2023) they provide rich insights into how people living with the condition maintain their personhood in social settings.

Evaluation: assessing effectiveness

Evaluation on the other hand is a systematic process of assessing the effectiveness of an intervention, a project, programme, or policy involving the collection and analysis of information to determine whether or not intended aims and objectives were achieved. These can include participant outcomes such as Quality of Life and Wellbeing, Falls Reduction as well as broader aims such as determining the influence of staff culture on care practice. Beyond judging whether whatever was carried out achieved its aims and objectives, an evaluation seeks to discover the key factors that contributed to its achievement or that were implicated in its failure to achieve desired results. This is in order to inform decisions and/or make recommendations. Findings are typically reported to programme commissioners who are usually the funders and stakeholders and who request information of this type.

Learning and questioning

At the heart of both processes is learning, and at the heart of learning is a desire to question in order to better understand, to be able to reflect on our work whether as care co-ordinator, arts practitioner or creative arts therapist, in order to develop it. Here are some suggestions to help us learn in order that we don’t get stuck in a rut in what we do, finding ourselves doing the same old things in the same old way:

Keep a journal to help you plan, run, evaluate and reflect on your work. There are a number of resources that can help you develop evaluation skills to plan and carry out evaluation of your work - visit the resources below - start simply and build your confidence and resource bank.

Record what you do in a journal, for example write out a session plan (or plans if you are running a number of sessions) including aims and objectives and how you are going to evaluate what you do. Add a narrative of your experience, pen pictures of participants and their responses and reflect on your experience. Use the reflective cycle (of

which there are several – see below) to do this in a systematic way. If you are going to work with a group over time, involve participants in co-designing the session and gather feedback and biographical information that can help you tailor what you do to their interests and needs. Collect and record basic statistical information about participants' and their attendance. Journal contents may also be used to populate research and/or evaluation write ups. Remember that whatever you do in terms of research and evaluation is a contribution to your own learning and development, as it is to the field when you are able to get your work published!

Visit CHWA to access a range of useful resources including research and evaluation <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/resources/research-and-evaluation>.

How might you evaluate what you do? Try <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/i-want-evaluate-my-work>

Publication

Research is typically published as an article in an academic journal, often online where it might be available freely via Google Scholar or Pub Med, though some online academic journals have payment firewalls and only offer an abstract of the articles. Nevertheless, abstracts are usually short clear summaries of the article proper that include key recommendations or results from a research study and are a good start if engaging in research.

Student research produced in UK and global universities can be accessed via their research repositories <https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/opensoar/>. For example, Canterbury Christchurch University staff and students upload their research to <https://repository.canterbury.ac.uk/>

Resources

The Centre for Cultural Value has a comprehensive website that offers resources for research and evaluation in <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/research-and-evaluation-practice/> and a FREE online course <https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/evaluation-arts-culture-heritage-online-course/>

The Centre for Cultural Value evaluation course can also be accessed along with hundreds of free courses on many different aspects of research and evaluation at [Future Learn https://www.futurelearn.com/](https://www.futurelearn.com/)

Join your local university library as a public member.

Join Dementia Community and subscribe to the *Journal of Dementia Care*. The journal always includes research and evaluation articles, often about creative arts, and subscribers have access to the whole archive of issues back to 1993. Events are posted on the website including free webinars featuring researchers.

Research and evaluation is presented at conferences such as Dementia Community's UK Dementia Congress, the British Society of Gerontology, and Alzheimer Europe.

Check out Dementia and Imagination – A short guide for artists and other people who plan to deliver arts-based activities with people who are living with dementia, that provides a set of useful ideas and recommendations distilled from a robust research project setting out some foundations for developing visual arts projects with and for, people affected by dementia. <https://www.artsforhealth.org/resources/dementia-and-imagination.pdf>

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Learning Disability and Dementia Training

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On This Day



Jimi Hendrix

Jimi Hendrix was wild and brilliantly gifted. He changed the way people played the electric guitar. He was a 1960s superstar.

He was born in America on 27th November 1942. He had a spell in the US Army. But his real interest was music and the electric guitar. He came to Britain and formed a band called The Jimi Hendrix Experience. He used amplifiers at full blast, and it was electrifying.

His was a life lived in the fast lane. In just four short years, he became the greatest rock guitarist on Earth.

The Way We Were



Rudyard Kipling

We learnt quite a lot of poems by heart at school. We also had to write them out in our best handwriting. It's no wonder I can still remember a lot of them.

I loved A Smuggler's Song by Rudyard Kipling. It had a lovely rhythm to it. It also sent a delicious shiver of fear down my spine. Do you remember it?

The line 'Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by' conjured up the image of a child with their eyes screwed tightly shut, waiting for the smugglers to pass.



Over To You



Pablo Picasso painting

Dear Daily Sparkle,
Whenever anyone talks about modern art, it reminds me of a comment my little sister made. She must have been about seven years old. She came across a painting, probably by Picasso, and she asked Mum about it. “What is this picture of?” she asked. My mum said, “It’s a picture of a lady.” My sister replied, “So why does it look like a vacuum cleaner?”

I actually quite like Picasso’s pictures, but I could see what she meant. When she grew up, we sometimes went to art exhibitions together. I used to remind her of that comment, which made us both laugh.

Best wishes, from Margaret

That’s Entertainment



Jerry Lee Lewis

When I was a teenager, being a good dancer seemed like the most important thing in the world. My cousin Joan would come round to our house. We pushed back the kitchen table to make space. We used the kitchen because the lino was slippery. We turned on the radio and practised jiving.

I remember dancing to Great Balls of Fire by Jerry Lee Lewis. It was at the top of the pop charts. It was a fast and exciting song. Jerry Lee Lewis played the piano. He did slides up and down the keys.

We danced until we were right out of breath. We were determined to be best on the dance floor when we went out!

ABBA Quiz

Challenge level: ★☆☆



The Swedish pop group ABBA were a big hit in the 1970s and 80s. Can you complete the titles of their songs?

1. W _ _ _ _ loo (Winning song of Eurovision 1974, and the name of a famous battle)
2. M _ mm _ Mi _ (Now a hit musical film)
3. Dancing Q _ _ _ n
4. Take a Ch _ _ c _ On Me
5. Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!
A M _ _ After Mid _ _ _ _ t
6. The W _ _ _ _ r Takes It All
7. M _ n _ y, M _ n _ y, M _ n _ y
8. Knowing M _ , Knowing Y _ _
9. Thank You for the M _ _ _ c

Delilah

Tom Jones



I saw the light on the ni _ _ _
That I passed by her wind _ _ _
I saw the flickering shadows
Of love on her blind
She was my wom _ _ _
As she decei _ _ _ me
I watched
And went out of my mi _ _ _

My, my, my, Deli _ _ _
Why, why, wh _ , Delilah
I could see
That girl was no good for me
But I was lost like a sla _ _ _
That no man could free



Daily Sparkle produces wellbeing tools and resources to support dementia care. For more information or to take a free trial visit dailysparkle.co.uk/free-trial

**Joke Answer: "I love you with all my art!"****PAGE 1 ~ ON THIS DAY ~ 27 November 1942 – Jimi Hendrix, American rock musician, born**

Background: Jimi Hendrix was one of the greatest rock icons of the 1960s. His music and drug taking matched the mood of hippy rebellion of the late sixties. He became famous in 1966, having moved to London, where he formed The Jimi Hendrix Experience. He became a symbol of youthful rebellion and the flower-power generation. He died, probably of an overdose, in September 1970, aged just 27.

Questions: Do you remember the rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix? What do you know about him? Were your children, or nephews and nieces, into his style of music? Or did you like it? What are your memories of the 1960s? How old were you then? What were you doing? Where were you living? What was life like back then? Which decade of your life do you think was the best? Why do you think that?

Idea: Play some of Jimi Hendrix's well-known songs from the 1960s for all the residents who like a bit of rock 'n' roll!

PAGE 1 ~ THE WAY WE WERE ~ Learning poetry at school – A Smuggler's Song

Background: Generations of school children learnt this poem and recited it, so it may be familiar to many residents. Find the full text online. The rhythm of a poem is often one of the things that reinforces it in someone's memory. Kipling's style of poetry usually had a strong rhythm and memorable rhymes.

Questions: Did you learn Rudyard Kipling's A Smuggler's Song at school? What was it about? How did it make you feel? Which other poems did you learn off by heart at school? Can you remember any of them? What are your favourite poems? Would you rather read a book of poems or a novel? Why is that? Have you ever had a go at writing poems? Do you prefer poems that rhyme, or is rhythm more important?

Idea: Look up the poem A Smuggler's Song by Rudyard Kipling online, and read it together as a group. Discuss what the poem means and if anyone remembers it from their school days.

PAGE 2 ~ OVER TO YOU ~ Modern art and finding it difficult to interpret

Background: What is often described as 'modern art' is now over 100 years old. It was first created in the late 19th century, so not quite so modern now. When people talk about modern art, they often mean abstract images. These are sometimes harder to make sense of in comparison to traditional realistic or photographic images, where the subjects are immediately recognisable.

Questions: Do you like looking at paintings? Do you have a favourite picture or a favourite artist? What do you like about them? How would you describe the difference between modern art against traditional art or old masters? Do you have a favourite modern art painting or artist?

PAGE 2 ~ THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT ~ Dancing to Great Balls of Fire by Jerry Lee Lewis

Background: Great Balls of Fire was a hit for rock and roll pianist Jerry Lee Lewis in 1957. Dances were at the heart of a teenager's social life in the 1950s, and learning to dance was an important step, especially for the new and fashionable dances like the jive. Some teens would have had formal dance lessons, others would have learnt from siblings or friends. Many practised at home, especially on shiny kitchen floors.

Questions: Were you a fan of Jerry Lee Lewis? What were some of his other songs? [eg Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On, Breathless] Where did you learn to dance? Did you ever take dance lessons? Did you practise often? How good were you? Who did you practise with? How important was it to be able to dance well?

PAGE 3 ~ QUIZ ~ ABBA Quiz

Answers: 1. Waterloo 2. Mamma Mia 3. Queen 4. Chance 5. Man ... Midnight 6. Winner 7. Money ... Money ... Money 8. Me ... You 9. Music

PAGE 3 ~ SINGALONG ~ Delilah

Answers: 1. Night 2. Window 3. Woman 4. Deceived 5. Mind 6. Delilah 7. Why 8. Slave

Living well with dementia: the state of the arts

Maria Pasiecznik Parsons and Richard Coaten reflect on changes and challenges in creative arts and dementia that they set out in their forthcoming book

In September 2019, the Creative Dementia Arts Network (CDAN) partnered with the *Journal of Dementia Care* to run a conference at the Midlands Arts Centre in Birmingham. There we celebrated the value of creative arts for the health and well-being of people living with dementia, highlighting some of the key drivers for the rapid expansion of this field, and offering examples of good practice. Maria's article in *JDC* at the time (Parsons 2019) reviewed developments and looked forward with optimism. This was CDAN's tenth annual conference; little did we know that it would be our last for some time, as work and life then took a different turn.

What a difference five years makes

The pandemic impacted heavily on the lives of people living with dementia, on caregivers, on communities and wider society, and in its aftermath came the cost of living crisis and continuing pressures on the NHS and social care. Most services are struggling to respond to current demand resulting in many individuals living with unmet needs especially psychological and social needs. Increasing prevalence of dementia is also likely to drive up demand for services further.

Repeated lockdowns, social distancing, masking and disease control measures introduced to stop COVID-19 from spreading resulted in the widespread loss of work and income for creative arts practitioners, and closures of arts organisations and cultural venues. However, the pandemic also provided new opportunities for participation in creative arts (Bradbury *et al* 2021). Arts materials, colouring and activity booklets, letters, and postcards were sent to people living with dementia isolating in the community (Armstrong *et al* 2021), to patients in hospital <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/news/colouring-book-helps-older-patients-to-make-creative-connections/> while many creative arts practitioners connected with care home residents in care homes online (Tischler *et al* 2023) including the Dementia Craftists, artists living with dementia. There was an exponential increase in streamed performances of plays, shows and concerts, while museums and galleries sped up the digitalisation of their collections to make these more widely available. Creative arts practitioners amply demonstrated their resourcefulness and flexibility:

<https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/how-creativity-and-culture-are-supporting-shielding-and-vulnerable-people-home-during-covid-19>

Maria Parsons is Chief Executive, Creative Dementia Arts Network (CDAN) and Dr Richard Coaten is dance and movement psychotherapist, CDAN

Reflection

We spent some time reflecting on the lessons of the pandemic, while with characteristic resourcefulness and resilience creative arts practitioners slowly returned to engaging people living with dementia in arts, music, dance, poetry. Post-pandemic however, the dearth of training and professional development, self-care and support remained acute. Arts subjects in schools, colleges and universities continued to fall out of favour while the absence of a clear education and training pathway into participatory arts with people living with dementia was an additional obstacle for students, and early career practitioners, the much needed practitioners of tomorrow.

CDAN considered how best we could support creative arts practitioners now and in the future. Both Maria and Richard have been involved in working with people living with dementia for almost 30 years and have both developed and led training and professional development courses for arts practitioners. Maria developed and ran FLOURISH, a short course that equips arts practitioners to work with people living with dementia. This will soon be offered as blended learning. Richard continues to deliver dance and movement programmes in the UK and in Europe. Over the years we have both produced subject guides for course members, pulling together a plethora of useful resources and their location (increasingly online) with Maria producing a comprehensive collection of creative arts and dementia resources for FLOURISH. However when we searched for a practice handbook of creative arts and dementia we failed to find one. So we consulted many colleagues about the contents of a practice handbook and gathered feedback from arts practitioners during our online webinars.

Our goal became to produce a “state of the art” good practice learning resource that would serve to update experienced creative arts practitioners, inspire younger generations and inform arts, health and social care commissioners, managers, professionals and care staff about the value of creative arts for people living with dementia. We became co-editors and were fortunate that 25 insightful co-authors agreed to write chapters — including people living with dementia, carers, creative arts practitioners and therapists, managers of arts organisations



Celebrating the creative arts in 2019

and voluntary sector organisations, academics, researchers and health professionals.

The state of the art in creative arts and dementia

Here we highlight three areas of change and development that have influenced creative arts and dementia care since 2019:

Policy context

UK healthcare policies are continuing to reallocate more resources from acute medical care to primary and community care, to support the management of long-term chronic conditions (Parkin & Baker 2021). Prevention is a major goal particularly for addressing the social determinants of health via public health education, integration of health and social care, personalisation of care and social prescribing (SP) including SP of creative arts.

The role of arts in western societies has changed and evolved over decades (Belfiore & Bennett 2018) as have views about their value, function and impact. While arts have an intrinsic value, they have long been associated with healing and increasingly used instrumentally to achieve social and economic goals (Matarosso 1997).

Arts has become part of health interventions across multiple disciplines including medicine, nursing, psychology, and occupational therapy, while the social value of the arts for individual and community development, initially championed by the community arts movement, has become central to place-based health policies aimed at improving population health, reducing health inequalities, enhancing public education about chronic illness and addressing social isolation.

In both spheres, interest in creative arts for people living with dementia has focused on their capacity to address “behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia”, to reduce anxiety and agitation, lift mood and decrease behaviour that challenges staff (and research reveals this to be the case — e.g. Schneider 2018). This is especially the case in care homes, where training in person-centred care, social engagement and activities was found to improve quality of life, reduce agitation and use of anti-psychotics (Ballard *et al* 2028) while music therapy (Thompson *et al* 2023) and dance (Bungay *et al* 2022) were also reported to be effective for facilitating better health and wellbeing outcomes for hospital patients living with dementia.

In many ways these developments highlight progress in arts for health and wellbeing following the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts, Health and Wellbeing whose landmark report *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing* (APPG 2017) aimed to enable health and social care systems to integrate arts in their service provision, setting out the evidence gathered not only from research but also from individuals, groups and organisations about the benefits of arts for health and wellbeing across the life span for all ages and conditions including a key section devoted to arts and dementia. Some of the report’s key recommendations have been actioned, including two new bodies that have been set up to lead work at different levels on embedding creative arts within mainstream health policy and NHS services.

The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH) was



The power of dance therapy described in JDC by Jackie Kindell and Diane Amans (2003)

established to lead strategic development work on *Creative Health* a construct that refers to the use of creative activities to promote health and wellbeing and prevent illness. NCCH’s plans for how creative health can become an integral part of a 21st-century health and social care system were set out in the *Creative Review: How Policy can embrace Creative Health* (NCCH 2023). The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA) is a free-to-join membership organisation for creative health across England that provides support networks and resources for promoting health and wellbeing for all through creative and cultural practice.

The NCCH is working in collaboration with the CHWA, with national Arts Councils, the National Association for Social Prescribing (NASP) and the Baring Foundation and with professional bodies representing arts, music drama and dance and movement psychotherapists’ government departments, the NHS and social care bodies and systems including Integrated Care Boards. The Arts Council of Wales is a partner for the delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, while the Arts, Culture, Health and Wellbeing Scotland (CHWS) network leads arts, culture, health and wellbeing initiatives and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland works closely with Arts Care, Northern Ireland’s regional arts health and wellbeing organisation.

Creativity and dementia

We begin our forthcoming book by considering the art of communication, and stress the importance of hearing the voices of people living with dementia who speak and write about their lived experience. Keith Oliver, a poet, writer, artist and campaigner living with dementia, emphasises that it is availability and quality of social interaction and support that enable him to live with dementia and yet *to be himself*, to have agency, to be creative.

This view challenges the notion of the “gifted creative genius” who develops an original or novel product and makes a significant contribution to public life in the sciences, industry and art. We can also reframe creativity with a big ‘C’ by understanding and focusing on creativity as a process rather than a product (Killick & Craig 2012) and co-creativity as a key aspect of good practice in working with people living with dementia. A study by

Zeilig *et al* (2018) identified several important aspects of working co-creatively, including: levelling power relationships i.e. working non-hierarchically with a focus on the process, sharing the creative task and thus erasing distinctions between the producer (artist) and the participant, noting that improvisation was a key practice skill required for working as co-creators.

Camic *et al* (2018) noted the heterogeneity of dementia and the differing ways in which individuals shape and mediate the condition, observing that “...even as artistic expression may change over the course of the dementias...and as cognitive abilities decline, there remain possibilities for artistic creativity to develop.”

Furthermore Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) offer a more inclusive lens for viewing creativity in dementia as a creative spark (or mini ‘c’) a concept that refers to novel but personally creative processes, experiences and activities related to learning. Frames of Mind digital artists for example supported care home residents living with moderate cognitive impairment to create digital portraits using a Pro-Create App on their iPads and stop-go animation to tell stories about personally meaningful material objects (Flynn & Chapman 2011) and to sit and pull a cord to activate a camera and take a photograph of another resident.

Everyday creativity (little ‘c’) has become increasingly linked to dementia as it a type of creativity that involves small, everyday actions, ideas, and solutions that are useful and enrich our lives (Bellas *et al* 2019) many of which occur in various ways during participation in leisure which “enables people living with dementia to sustain their place in the world” (Gray, Russell & Twigg 2023 p.3).

Transient “in the moment” creative experiences are nevertheless authentic experiences that researchers practitioners and relatives have noted (MacPherson *et al* 2009). In our handbook John, who is living with mixed dementia and is an established painter, reflects on his creativity, suggesting that it aids temporality: “Abstract painting is very much to do with the present. It doesn’t need the memory of trees or people. It is a contemporary act, maybe that’s why it’s become the dominant mode for me, because it’s concerned with the present. Colours don’t have a past. Colours have no memory or history.” (One of John’s paintings is illustrated above.)

Ronald, living with a stroke related dementia declares: “The biggest thing that keeps me going is creative expression through art. Art makes me breathe.”

Creative arts and the workforce

We define creative arts practice as follows:

The purposeful application of person-centred values to creative arts practice which engages with, and relates to, people living with dementia in ways that facilitate meaningful, imaginative and emotional experience and



Artist: John Daniel. Photograph by Jerry Moran, Oxford

promote health and wellbeing. Creative arts include both direct participation and/or non-direct appreciative involvement in arts, cultural and heritage activities and experiences.

The inclusion of creative and cultural activities reflects the importance of acknowledging that many creative arts provide a medium for participating in an activity that gives access to a culture that may not be familiar, such as museum object handling sessions, or reinforces cultural identity — e.g. the Calypso music of Trinidad, Ska music with roots in Jamaica, or Scottish country dancing. Culture is a major focus of strategies produced by national Arts Councils of England, Wales and Scotland whilst Northern Ireland plans focus on developing a thriving arts sector.

Creative arts include: painting, drawing and crafting, digital arts; music including singing, playing and listening; dance and movement; creative writing, especially poetry; storytelling and reminiscence using prompts such as music, objects, and sensory stimuli. Indirect (appreciative) participation takes place in arts and cultural venues where museum collections, exhibitions, plays, and heritage arts are made more accessible by curating the experience for participants with different needs, abilities and strengths. Many arts venues have become dementia friendly (Allen *et al* 2015).

Our definition emphasises the values underpinning creative arts and the way they are planned and facilitated by a members of diverse workforce. These include professionally registered creative arts therapists (CATs) including arts therapists, music therapists, drama therapists and dance and movement psychotherapists, and non-therapists who are creative arts practitioners (CPs) activity coordinators, and community artists. There are also staff in arts, health and social care whose job titles may not refer to direct practice but who nevertheless work with people living with dementia using participatory arts. The strategic direction and goals of Creative Health broadly align with creative arts for dementia care. There is merit in being part of an overarching entity and for CATs and CPs to be viewed as part of a larger group of creative health practitioners (CHPs).

A short tour of the Practice Handbook

The handbook has three sections:

Introductory chapters that conceptualise and contextualise creativity arts and dementia and reflect on good practice informed by person centredness, personhood and the Creative Health Quality Framework (CHQF) (CHWA) a set of principles that underpin good practice and enable creativity to flourish.

Creative Practice: the breadth and diversity of the field presented in eleven chapters from many different perspectives. The section ends with a chapter written by the manager and senior staff of large arts organisations

who reflect on their experience of the local social prescribing of the arts, and lessons learned.

Informing, Developing and Supporting: in this section the focus is on training and developing the creative health workforce, including self-care and support and guidance for practitioners, an examination of research and evaluation and its importance for practice, then a dive into the working lives of three independent creative practitioners that offers their insights and practical advice.

In many ways the *future* of creative arts and dementia is *here now* in the form of increasing prevalence of dementia

in the UK and globally. There is increasing need for support particularly psychological and social support, not only for individuals, but crucially, also for family carers. The arts offer many benefits for health and wellbeing, especially hope and a reason to be. That is the message of the book's final chapter.

Sign up to the JKP mailing list to receive mailings on the publication of the Practice Handbook (as well as other JKP books of interest in the subject areas you select). <https://pages.hachette.co.uk/jessica-kingsley-publishers-uk-newsletter-sign-up/>

References for this article can be found on the pdf version of this issue and on our website www.journalofdementiacare.co.uk

Folding back the years

1. Music, dance and movement

Sue Benson looks back over 31 years of *JDC* articles, focusing here on music, dance and movement in dementia care. Sally Knocker continues the theme on page 29

The arts in dementia care have always been a strong theme in *JDC*. Right from the start we have featured, promoted and aimed to explain in practical detail how arts-based approaches can help us connect with people living with dementia. From our very first issue, 31 years ago now, our authors have tried to help everyone involved to 'Discover the person, not the disease', in the words of the late Tom Kitwood. Tom's article in the very first issue of *JDC* (Kitwood 1993) pointed the way forward to the positive approach we have always championed, with articles that not only inspire but help in a practical way to truly see and respond to the person within.

The arts have played a large part in this, and the best work has always led to a deeper connection and communication. John Killick has been a key figure. In an early edition of *JDC* (Benson 1994) we described his early work as a poet in residence in care homes; this led John not only to more wonderful projects and published poetry, but also deeper projects on communication, especially with those in later stages of dementia, in collaboration with Kate Allan, Claire Craig and others.

Sally Knocker and I have taken a dive into the *JDC* archive from 1993 to 2024. Our review of *JDC* articles on the arts will be broad and, inevitably, selective – focusing on those articles we have personally found most memorable over the years. **We would love you to tell us about articles you remember and those that influenced you most – please do get in touch and we'll follow this up in forthcoming issues of *JDC*.** My focus here is on music, dance and movement, and Sally's is on poetry, drama, photography and filmmaking, and the visual arts.

The arts and activities

Activity coordinators/lifestyle leads have always played a vital role in encouraging the arts. Their contribution to quality of life for people with dementia in care homes and elsewhere is enormous and vital. Recently NAPA shone a spotlight on some brilliant work in their year of the arts (Teader 2023). Music, dance and movement have always played an important part in group activities, and several articles from *JDC*'s early years include accounts of how they enabled "lightbulb" moments of communication, where skilled practitioners and care staff recognise and build on these.

Music in a group situation

Early issues of *JDC* described successful activities such as tea dances (Howarth & Ketteringham 1995) and singing sessions. Olive Walker, a retired violinist, described how sensitive playing of songs on simple instruments brought a variety of positive responses from individuals and groups of people living with dementia in a care home (Walker 1996).

Reminiscence played a part as many songs prompted memories and pleasurable chat in the group.

There is also recognition that music is not always positive. In 1997 music therapist Jeanette Morrison wrote of the disabling effects of background music in lounges, over which residents often had no choice, and sometimes it seemed to be there for the staff's benefit: "Often there is music playing on cassette player, radio or television... loudly and continuously over a long period of time, sometimes in addition to other sounds, such as the vacuum cleaner, shouting...". This lack of control over their environment, as well as "acoustic garbage" must have had hugely disabling and disturbing effects - well



In this *JDC* article Helen Nairn (2011) described the benefits of music therapy in MHA care homes

recognised over the years since.

In the same issue Vernon Pickles (1997) urges staff and carers to use music in a person-centred way, with personal preference, but he acknowledges how difficult this is in a group situation, even when a small group can be formed. The technology for providing personal music via headphones did exist then, but was not widespread. Personalising music choices has become much easier with today's technology, as other articles in this issue show.



Verbal dialogue may not be possible. Moving talk is... The Jabadao approach

atmosphere and ambience, the agility and flexibility of response" (Perrin 1998). This quality of attention is the key, but it can be very difficult for family or care staff to achieve. Arts practitioners have the privilege of being able to come and go from an emotionally demanding situation, and they probably couldn't give this exquisite attention if that were not the

case. Arts approaches can teach us much, but we need to understand the difference and the pressures, and not be too critical of ourselves as carers, paid or unpaid.

"It's a pity *not* to sing"

This wonderful comment came not from *JDC* but from a resident in a care home after I'd led a singing session in the lounge. The benefits of simply singing together are widely known and some excellent initiatives have grown in recent years – notably Singing for the Brain, dementia choirs in the community and in care homes too.

Describing the wide benefits of a care home choir in bringing together residents, staff and families, music therapist Stuart Wood (2007) explained how the act of singing affects us all: "When music catches someone and draws them into singing it changes them. During the time they are singing, they are more highly organised, their emotions flow and they become more connected to those around them..." Singing has special value for people with dementia, who "can find that their abilities return when they sing...and people who become isolated by the effects of dementia can be drawn back into meaningful community through singing together" (Wood 2007).

Music-therapeutic caregiving – where caregivers sing to a person during care – is an interesting practice that deserves exploration. In a 2001 article, Brown, Gotell & Ekman described a positive evaluation of this: "Singing to a person is a highly emotive activity, one that conveys a great sense of personal involvement, caring and gentleness... Individualised singing can be enormously soothing and can create a great feeling of security and bonding," the authors say.

Movement and communication

In 1997 dance therapist Sarah Crichton of Jabadao described their work with people with dementia, where the spotlight is on *movement conversation*: "When I go into institutional settings, I see people eager for contact... Fred cannot speak but is actively seeking contact. Verbal dialogue may not be possible. Moving talk is... I am starting from where they are, not from how I would like them to be" (Crichton 1997).

Tessa Perrin observed the session and concluded that above all, it is the personal qualities of the therapist/activity leader that makes the difference: "Jabadao is a wonderful experience, dynamic and elemental, colourful and tactile; it is about letting go...being yourself just as you are, and being valued, just as you are... Jabadao is all these things, but I have wondered if its secret is more in person than technique, in the activity leader more than the activity. For above all things I have been impressed with the exquisite courtesy of the approach, the equality of attention to all participants no matter how damaged or overtly objectionable, the self-confident use of body and voice, the skilled reading of

Exploring feelings

Jeannie Donald and Sue Hall (1999) describe how a dance therapy group for people just diagnosed, in early stages of dementia, helped them explore difficult feelings: "At the end of this session, Margaret opened the topic of her fear of 'Alzheimer's'. It was as if the chord of emotional energy released through the vivacious dancing had reduced tension and allowed the group the feeling of safety necessary to broach this terrifying subject." But the short (10-week) programme did not give enough time and space for real progress, the therapists felt.

In the same issue Dorothy Jerrome (1999) wrote about the benefits of circle dancing, how it can provide emotional security, encourage expression of feelings, and observed that "the capacity of carers to communicate acceptance and love through touch helps to preserve a sense of self".

"The arts is all that's left – give them us!"

1999 saw the start of a landmark series by John Killick and Kate Allan on the arts in dementia care. The importance of the arts is encapsulated in an urgent comment made to John as he showed paintings to a group: "The arts is all that's left – give them us!" (Killick & Allan 1999b). People with dementia may be near the end of their lives – *in extremis* – and the authors see this striking remark as expressing an urgency to give shape to inner experience before the opportunity is lost.

In their first article (1999a) Killick & Allan focus on music, reviewing an abundance of scholarly work and research, considering the difference between music therapy and music as an activity, ranging from case studies of individual benefits to studies (from the perspective of a medicalised understanding of 'problem behaviours') of how music can have a calming effect. They quote the research observation that "singing is really slow and sustained speech, enabling you more time to process, comprehend and participate successfully" and others describe how music and singing can bring back pleasurable, self-affirming memories. This last is a well-known benefit that lies behind many interventions – all the better for being informed by individual preferences and access to culturally specific music.

Fruitful partnerships

Notable musical institutions have shared their talent and facilities in community projects such as Mindsong, innovative music therapy linked to the Three Choirs Festival

in Gloucestershire (Holland & Crampton 2009; Crampton *et al* 2012). Glyndebourne Opera House, set in beautiful countryside on the South Downs, ran a series of sessions for people living with dementia and their family carers (Wynn-Jones *et al* 2010). Feedback highlighted the significance of this classy setting, as well as high quality music: “We are provided with other help and opportunities to get together but so often the events are in dusty and rather down-at-heel village halls. Being at Glyndebourne makes us feel respected and valued again. It’s such a lovely place and we get to share in its qualities.” Another carer commented: “It awoke something that was dormant in my husband, gave him a whole month of pleasure.”

The partnership between Manchester Camerata’s Music in Mind programme for people living with dementia and the University of Manchester grew over ten years to encompass live improvised music-making sessions and interdisciplinary research as well as training for staff in care homes. The collaborative relationship “has allowed for the development of creative research methods which centre the voices and lived experiences of people living with dementia”, exploring the role and meaning of music in their lives and developing new methods for capturing these experiences (Dowlen 2024).

Planning, training and staff support

We first described the work of Music for Life - professional musicians in care homes, day centres and hospitals - in 2001. They worked in small groups of two or three musicians and a few residents (selected and supported by staff) improvising with varied instruments – with some moving stories of individuals. The article highlights the importance of mutual planning for such projects to have any chance of success:

When arts projects with their open-endedness move into care settings, they meet a highly structured world... Arts projects bring with them the unfamiliar – the artists themselves, the strange tools of their trade, the demand for space and time and cooperation.... Where these differences are taken account of in training and project planning, the work has a chance of benefiting the community... We have learned that the more we address the structural needs of the project – organisational, managerial, session content – the greater the chance for sensitive and meaningful interactions. (Rose & Schlingen-Siepen 2001).

Music for Life’s activities have grown and widened, supported by the Wigmore Hall in London. Their work for Jewish Care over many years was described in a further article (Rose *et al* 2008).

“A dynamic, interactive circle of play, movement and song” is how movement psychotherapist Marion Violets Gibson described her work in care homes and day care. It is a lovely example of practice and another article that stresses the importance of training and support for all staff involved. The Links project she describes “developed out of the need



An emphasis on planning and supporting staff, in articles on the Links project and Music for Life



to train staff working in dementia care to use very specific evidence-based techniques which would enable them to run social activity groups, even when people were severely ill” (Violets Gibson 2002). Jackie Kindell and dance therapist Diane Amans describe how planning and working closely with staff in a continuing care ward and day hospital led to striking results and special moments, such as when “Cherry, who never usually sat for more than a few moments, engaged for nearly an hour... Sadie’s constant swearing and irritable comments gradually transformed into positive praise and warm comment.”

Benefits of individual work

For many years Maria Mullan ran lively music sessions culminating in a boisterous “performance” with instruments and voices. A comment from one woman in particular about the group experience “...what you’re producing is not your own – it’s some dry stuff, not very feeling” was the stimulus that led her, with support, to explore individual work, and she describes the rich rewards it brought for both parties:

Gradually I had come to understand that music should not be used as a quick ‘fix’ for distress, frustration or agitation. It slowly dawned on me that music could become a means for a person experiencing dementia to express the emotions that underlie distress and frustration. As my ideas changed, so did my practice....I offer the person time, space and freedom to communicate, to follow their own path, their own music.’ (Mullan 2005)

Creative expression - vital for all

Skilled work can point the way, but creativity is not just for artists. It is vitally important for us all, and enabling creative expression is a skill that can be learned, as dance therapist and researcher Richard Coaten has urged:

The arts can be an ideal medium through which to support, train and develop care workers in a person-centred approach to care. This does not mean staff need to learn all the skills of professional arts workers; the valuable skill they learn is how to use their own skills and life experiences more effectively.

I believe care workers can be taught these skills, as they primarily involve an increase in perception and awareness, an alertness for recognising these creative opportunities and the ability to celebrate them in the preferred art form

Creative expression is not the responsibility of a few gifted individuals we label “artists”. It is a vitally important activity for us all. (Coaten 2001)

A full list of all references for the articles on pp22-32 of this issue is included in the pdf version of this issue. This pdf and a special Resources list will be available on our website. JDC subscribers can access all past articles.

Folding back the years:

2. Drama, poetry and visual arts

Sally Knocker reflects on some of the drama, poetry and visual arts work featured in over 31 years of *JDC*

Having trained as a dramatherapist in my 30s and been actively involved as a facilitator and a trainer in some wonderful arts-based projects over the years with Magic Me, NAPA, Ladder to the Moon and the European Reminiscence Network, I am a passionate advocate for arts and creativity to become more integrated into the everyday “offer” for those living in care homes or using day or hospital services. In my culture change work with Meaningful Care Matters, I use many techniques to draw out the playful spirit in care teams, and use poetry, stories and movement-based activities in both my training and my direct work in care homes. In my personal life, I know that creativity feeds my core spirit, particularly when I write, read poems, take photographs and (more rarely!) dance. But I share Sarah Zoutewelle-Morris’s view, “You don’t have to do art, sing or perform to be ‘creative.’ In the broadest sense, creativity starts with breaking away from the ‘way things are always done’ in order to discover or imagine fresh approaches” (Zoutewelle-Morris 2009). This sense of breaking new ground is at the heart of many of the great arts initiatives featured here. Lots of the artists who approached the work didn’t have much previous experience of relating to older adults or those living with dementia. This seems to have given them a more open mind to what Zoutewelle-Morris describes as an awareness of ‘potential, rather than limitations’ and a ‘What if...?’ approach to the possibilities.



go and new beginnings, loss and finding what has been lost, reaching peace after a long journey, and so on. Paul Batson’s later article featuring his groups using drama and storytelling echoes some of these themes. He also stresses that the “use of story can provide a safe way in which to express our hopes and fears” (Batson 1998).

Dramatherapists refer to the importance of props to unlock memories or create moments of playfulness and engagement. Batson used his cuddly bear Branson as a familiar face with a ritual to open each group. He also used lots of hats, which encourage people to “become” different characters as well as link them with special occasions or memories and to be more open to miming and role playing.

The power of the imagination and the possibilities of pretend worlds

Ladder to the Moon pioneered the concept of a theatre residency in a care home over two weeks which devised a “soap opera” type story in a care home with professional actors creating lots of improvisational elements within a broad agreed story line. By being present every day, relationships could be nurtured, and the story could be held and developed more easily than the traditional once a week structure of many arts projects. (This obviously comes with a significant investment, which sadly many care groups might not commit to.) Chris Gage, Ladder’s founder and creative director talks about interactive theatre creating a “playful space” where “with a nod and a wink, we acknowledge that we are all playing together, we can do everything we like, everything is accepted” (Benson

2009). I had the pleasure of visiting Compton Lodge on one of these days, where The Grand, an “upstairs, downstairs” story about a maid and a well-to-do gentleman in a hotel culminated in their wedding at the end of the residency.

Truth and lies?

Gage acknowledged that this pretend world can sometimes raise questions about the ethics and lines between truth and lies, and indeed whether it might increase confusion for people. Ladder’s experience was that it did not cause

Telling and sharing stories – universal themes

One of the first articles I remember was Judith Hodgkinson (1994) talking about attending a course run by dramatherapists, Alison Kelly and Paula Crimmens. The parts played by people with dementia were not just conventional roles, but elements of the story, for example playing the “seeds of life”, “a little star”, the skyline and the sea. Crimmens and Kelly used fairy tales as a basis for some of their work with older adults with dementia, as these tales touch on universal themes ... letting



The Grand at Compton Lodge, Swiss Cottage, London



In a Frames of Mind film project, a group of people in a care home developed a story of budding romance, and the “animated chairs” were moved accordingly

problems, but he stressed the sensitivity of the actors in reading the non-verbal and sometimes vocal responses of individuals to each unique encounter. The sense of excitement and fun in the home was palpable and the actors were highly skilled in ensuring that even those who were much quieter or more advanced in their dementia were not forgotten. Perhaps equally significant was the ways in which the Ladder team were able to involve care staff too – “When residents see their carers dancing and singing and wearing costumes, the shared experience leaves behind more of a legacy after we leave the home”.

Pushing boundaries

At the heart of a lot of great artistic projects is the ability to take risks and have a tolerance for uncertainty to explore uncharted territory and often then reap rich rewards.

One such initiative has always stayed in my memory: the Frames of Mind project (Flynn & Chapman 2011). The elements of Frames of Mind were:

- creating animated films using personal objects and belongings to prompt a narrative
- recording voice-overs to narrate the story
- using music of the person’s choice.

They explained: “We draw on our experiences as filmmakers to explore new ways of communicating. For example, we plugged a video camera into a large screen TV, and this enabled residents to see themselves on TV.”

They described how an Irish woman, Mary, chose a framed photograph of her mother when she was a young woman, a china horse and a crucifix: “She was able to move the objects, direct the action and operate the animation software on the laptop.” They were keen to stress that “none of the people with dementia we have worked with have been intimidated or reticent to try something new.”

I vividly remember another scene from their films where two chairs draped in clothes were set up as a budding romance story between a man and a woman, and how people in the group developed the story and the animated chairs (pictured above) moved accordingly. The result was

both bizarre and curiously emotional and magical. Thirteen years on from this exciting initiative, we can only imagine how many more digital technology developments there must now be to further expand these creative possibilities.

Vamos, the Mask Theatre Company also pushed boundaries, as many would expect there to be complications around using masks for audiences for those living with dementia. (Hoskins 2018). They did a tour of interactive performances in care homes, hospitals and other venues, delivered training to carers and enabled families and care staff to see their award-winning show, *Finding Joy*. The show combined music, dance, nostalgia, masks and puppetry. Vamos’s way of working is very non-verbal and so their *Listening With Your Eyes* training for care teams explored how to make connections, particularly when words don’t make sense. This is another example of how artists have something special to offer care workers in terms of distinct skills and fresh approaches.

The right mix - integrating different arts approaches and abilities

Some of the most successful projects featured in the Journal recognised the value of integrating different arts approaches within one project. This was my own experience of a *Magic Me Sense of Adventure* project (Gilfoy & Knocker 2009) with a group of nine-year-olds working alongside residents in a care home in East London. We did lots of working in pairs creating collages and other visual art activities, which provided a quieter more focused sense of collaboration between people, and then more drama-based, storytelling activities in the wider group, which were more enlivening and playful (and at times it must be said, more unpredictable and chaotic!). Having the mix of both seemed to create a good shift in energy and atmosphere during the session. The visual arts activities seemed to create a safer place for more introverted personalities, while the dramatic elements brought out the extroverts! A special memory of this project shared in the article was of Betty who loved the drawing activities and confided that when she was younger, she had always wanted to go to art school, but her mother had not felt it was a “sensible career”. There are many other wonderful examples of other individuals coming to life when given permission to explore their, often suppressed, creative sides.

Patricia Aspinall (1997) used a combination of poems and painting to stimulate responses and she also involved a postgrad photography student to take photographs of people involved in various creative activities. The writing group then chose pictures to go with the words, which again involved a mixed media approach.

Artists can involve people differently according to their abilities and interests, for example a murals project by Elisha Maran-Barnell enabled one man to do lots of the larger scale painting directly on the wall, while others worked in a group to create the detailed sensory elements of the seasonal collage (Maran-Barnell 2002).

Judith Perry (1997) leading a wall hangings project linked to Tudor-inspired and wartime themes over eight months in Warwickshire described the power of those who just enjoy watching the work too: “Three ladies stayed all afternoon. We chatted about their memories of sewing. One lady told me of the quilts her mother used to make.”



▷ Process and/or Product?

The other constant dynamic is balancing the *process* of involvement with the idea that there needs to be an end *product* – a finished painting, a performance, a complete poem etc. Batson (1999) sums up his perspective: “Putting on a performance is too stressful for some clients, but for others it can provide an exhilarating sense of achievement.”

The Photobook project (Robinson-Carter 2024) is an example of where both the process of participation and the product of a professional curated book was rewarding. One of their projects, partnered with David Truswell and Ronald Amanze, focused on those living with dementia with ethnically diverse heritage. Participants took one photograph a day over four weeks, capturing the experience of life in the Covid 19 lockdown of the summer of 2020. One man felt he didn’t have much to share, since he spent a lot of time in bed, but his book showed some striking, small changes in the photographs taken in the same space at different times. Participants were also invited to respond to specific questions: “What is your story?”, “What are your favourite things to do?” etc. The cultural variations were interesting: for example Chinese participants didn’t include their faces in any of the images. Funding enabled the books to be translated into people’s first language. When participants were given back their curated books, many described the positive experience of returning to them: “I went through it again and again, I had the feeling...” Cultural diversity is an area of focus which deserves to be prioritised in future arts initiatives.

I was involved in a small photography workshop in a care home, funded by the NAPA Arts in Care Homes initiative, and found it incredibly powerful. It proved an accessible way of involving people in making choices about the images they wanted to take - and they delighted in the outcome, especially when this followed immediately, with a Polaroid or equivalent camera.

Many initiatives featured in *JDC* took place in care settings, but a lovely example of a Welsh community-based initiative in a mental health unit (Wood 2003) told of a couple living in their own home. Ginty learned to spin her own wool and then her husband Bob used this to weave, creating cushion covers and a wall hanging, “...an absorbing way to spend time, especially during the winter months.”

There are many other stories over the years of individuals

Sally Knocker is a Consultant Trainer with Meaningful Care Matters, an international culture change organisation. She has been involved in a range of arts-based initiatives with Magic Me, NAPA, the European Reminiscence Network and Ladder to the Moon. She recently was involved in supporting Magic Me to create a new resource, Dare To Imagine – a care home’s guide to creativity. For more information about Meaningful Care Matters and the Butterfly Approach, please contact admin@meaningfulcarematters.com

Creativity in Dementia Care Calendar

For several years from 2006 onwards, *JDC* produced a calendar featuring art of all kinds, and poetry by John Killick and others.

This cover image (right), introducing the calendar in November 2005, featured the Treasure Chest banner made by older people living with dementia in a specialist hospital in Sandwell, West Midlands, working with Sandwell Third Age Arts. Techniques used included podging (rag rugging) batik, free machine embroidery, collage, metalwork and fabric painting.



who emerge to find their voice, their talent, their pride and, in the above example a restored relationship, through the process of involvement in the arts experiences.

Authorship: Who’s in charge?

Sitar Rose (Rose 2006) an independent documentary film maker, was involved in creating video portraits with and for people with dementia. Some of these focused on life stories but others focused on elements of everyday life, for example one woman’s relationship with her cat. Sometimes she would go and film places they had spoken about, to bring the footage back. Rose explored the issues around ownership of the material: as a filmmaker her focus was to edit in order for the essence and the character of the person to come through, but she stresses, “I do, however, as much as possible regard the person conceptually as the ‘director’ looking over my shoulder even though they may not be there in person.” She learnt that some of the work she created, while pleasing to her from an aesthetic point of view, was too fast or too abstract for the person themselves to grasp. Sharing her experience with “Eileen”, Rose said she had to learn to hold shots still for a long enough time for Eileen to look at them and understand what was happening. Many artists featured in the *JDC* articles discuss this tension of satisfying artistic integrity with maintaining the core focus on the person living with dementia who is ultimately “in control” and owns the finished product.

Those creating poems written by and with people living with dementia are also conscious of the role of the listener in terms of how words might be received and interpreted.

In his fascinating piece reflecting on thirty years of poetry and dementia, John Killick acknowledges the issue of the attribution of poems. He says that in his early years of the work, he could not get permission from his employers to print the names of his subjects under their poems (Killick 2022). Another brilliant poet pioneering this work is Karen Hayes, and her way of acknowledging the collaborative process, in her two books *The Edges of Everywhere* and *Only Just Orchid*, is to print both names under the text.

An important contributor in the field of poetry and dementia is Susanna Howard and her work with *Living Words* on many projects through the years. Her *Listen Out*



“The clown is a symbolic figure, both comic and tragic, and so can uniquely hold elements of sadness and fun for people” - the Elderflowers Hearts and Minds programme (Killick 2003)

Loud action learning methodology, to develop staff skills and confidence, included powerful virtual support sessions for care staff during the pandemic, which culminated in a moving book detailing their experiences of that extraordinary time (Howard 2022).

Existing talents or new pursuits?

It is important to consider the way we work with those people living with dementia who are already talented amateur or professional artists in their lives before dementia. For some there may be frustration, especially when they have insight that their work is not as it used to be, and this realisation might make continuing painting, writing etc. a painful process. However, there are others like the well-known Jamaican poet, James Berry who worked in partnership with Susanna Howard, who found a way to continue his creative process through his dementia. As Susanna describes:

James is aware of using different words and often asks me if the word that has presented itself “makes sense” within context. When I repeat James’ words back to him, we often find ourselves revelling in the alternative words that present themselves. James is able to find humour in his frustration, and when he slips into complete metaphor and I follow, we trust the new “Berryisms” will bring affirmation and personal clarity. (Quoted in Killick 2022.)

Neil McCarthy emphasises the importance of finding out more about individuals and balancing building on previous interests **and** trying new things (McCarthy 2022). He describes the work of activity coordinator Josephine Ibrahim in sheltered housing settings: a range of artistic activities, including card making, collage, sculptures, making model homes as well as using “magic table” technology to do creative things in the digital arena.

A space to share complex emotions

John Killick’s work with the Elderflower Hearts and Minds programme in Scotland (Killick 2003) stayed with me: the clown can be a relatable figure for a person who is struggling with aspects of everyday life, as the clown frequently ‘falls over’ and yet can still retain humour in the situation. As Killick describes it, “The clown is a symbolic figure, both comic and tragic, and so can uniquely hold elements of sadness and fun for people.”

Killick’s feature *Communication: A matter of life and death of the mind* (1997) explored where the worlds of “art” and “therapy” meet. The central message of his work is to never dismiss muddled communication as meaningless and

therefore no longer listen. By taking the time to record and share the words, “the profundity of some of the communication is incredible and shows much higher levels of insight than many would expect of those living with dementia.”

Paula Jennings (2006), a poet and creative arts worker, used reading poems to people as a way of eliciting reactions and feelings—sometimes with people reading to her:

Mim also reads poetry to me, repeating a phrase until she is satisfied.. she exercises choice in her reading sometimes rejecting one book in favour of another...

Jen, another of the Scottish women Jennings worked with, was a keen hill walker. She expresses feelings of both comfort and loss when she describes the hills: “They are quietly telling you all the time that they are out there.” This connection with the natural world is a recurring theme in many arts projects, sometimes as a type of metaphor for the internal world an individual is experiencing.

Metaphor provides a way of accessing difficult personal material and creating some safe distance through the use of imagery and allusion, which is explored in my own article on Play and metaphor in dementia care (Knocker 2002). Duggen and Grainger (1997), quoted in this article, say metaphor “both distances us from our pain and lets us communicate with it.”

Who is creative? Can this work be done by those who aren’t trained artists?

This is an ongoing area of debate in terms of the extent to which untrained care staff might be able to learn from artists and continue some aspects of the arts-based activities once the artists have left. Many artists like Killick and Zoutewelle-Morris have run training and written books (Killick 2013; Zoutewelle-Morris 2011) providing many practical ideas for activities coordinators or care teams to try out. Organisations like NAPA and Magic Me, funded by forward-thinking arts funders, also have a huge range of resources aimed at sharing art-based ideas. Yet, the reality remains that many of these initiatives are highly reliant on the motivation and interests of team members and can quickly get lost when those individuals leave. This has been my experience in all culture change work in care services and it is still work in progress to create structures in place to sustain creative approaches, beyond individuals of influence in post at any given time.

Challenges and learning from our mistakes

Some of the article writers are refreshingly open about some of the difficulties and barriers to success in making things happen in care services. Chris Sherratt, a sculptor leading the

Lighting Up arts project in Bristol (Sherratt 2010) gives an honest account of some of the practical challenges of delivering a project in a care home. These frustrations are reiterated with so many of the arts projects I have been involved with. Moving forward, there perhaps could be more exploration of how to address these obstacles. More projects are building in team engagement and training at the outset and ongoing, to ensure that care staff do become more involved and can continue the experiences.

Sherratt compares the care home experience with a much more successful project in a day service creating three outdoor murals of a tropical island dream, a hot air balloon activity and the Clifton Suspension Bridge, a famous local landmark. Was the reason for this success because people in the day service were more independent and able to engage, or was it more that the culture of day care is more focused on activity and enablement?

Conclusions: What next?

As we discover the person who has dementia, we also discover something of ourselves. For what we ultimately have is not technical expertise, but ordinary faculties raised to a higher level; our power to feel, to give, to stand in the shoes of another through use of our imagination. (Killick & Allan 2001.)

Reading back issues of *JDC* was like a reminiscence experience for me, reflecting on my own professional and personal experiences in dementia care. So many of the names and voices are familiar, uplifting and rooted in the same core positive beliefs around what it means to work creatively alongside those living with dementia and to learn from each other. I have a sense of being among old friends who continue to inspire me, and I want to thank every one.

I long for a time when arts-based initiatives aren't just called "projects" as this inevitably implies a limited life. The Baring Foundation funded NAPA's publication *A Manager's guide to Arts in Care Homes*; its director David Cutler said: "We have known for a long time that whether or not a care home resident has access to creative opportunities is entirely a lottery and therefore inequitable." (See Teader 2024.)

Cutler also stresses that in order for arts and cultural participation to be embedded there will need to be a systems approach which will require the input of all stakeholders "including the regulators". The NAPA National Day of Arts in Care Homes has celebrated many great initiatives in recent years which it is hoped will inspire others (Teader 2023).

However, the issue of sustainability and legacy underlies much of the work I have highlighted here. Some of the organisations are still struggling to survive in the current financial climate, others have retired or closed the chapter on this part of their work. I try not to regard these as "losses" as these individuals and organisations have undoubtedly left their own ripples of influence.

Holding on to blue-sky dreaming, I feel that the 'artist in residence' concept is one which has the most potential: I mean a writer, visual artist, musician or drama worker (or one who combines these skills) who is on the payroll and works regularly in the home over months or even years. This enables deeper relationships to be forged, and for spontaneous creative opportunities to be woven into the fabric of the service. Some activities coordinators have arts backgrounds, but they have many other jobs to do, so will be pulled in too many directions. By investing in an artist residency, a care provider is giving a clear indication of the priority it is giving this work. This is not to minimise the many great things which can be done to bring everyday creativity into life in a care service (Magic Me 2024).

I am concerned and excited in equal measure that we continue to cultivate the next generation of artists from all disciplines to take us forward with new stories and possibilities for **all** our creative futures.

It feels appropriate to end with the words of a poet and a man who lived with dementia capturing the essence of what creativity gives us:

We have thoughts, all away along through life. Your thinking machine within you realizes it has been switched on and it delves and there is wisdom in you. There is wisdom in the creative drive. It's your own ideas that are dormant within you. That is the joy to stitch yourself on to.

James Berry talking to Susanna Howard (Howard, 2013)

Resources

Magic Me (2024) – Dare to Imagine – a care home's guide to creativity <https://magicme.co.uk/resource/dare-to-imagine-a-care-homes-guide-to-creativity/>

NAPA has many excellent resources on the arts and creativity, including here: <https://napa-activities.co.uk/arts-in-care-homes/arts-resources/everyday-creativity>

A full list of all references for the articles on pp22-32 of this issue is included in the pdf version of this issue. This pdf and a special Resources list will be available on our website. JDC subscribers can access all past articles.



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Creative Space: enabling empowerment and joy

Shelley Hastings describes Resonate Arts' Creative Spaces — inclusive social sessions where people living with dementia and their carers feel welcome and safe to participate in a wide range of arts activities including print-making, film making, animation, clowning, physical theatre, improvisation, yoga, storytelling, poetry, movement therapy and performance art

Resonate Arts is a small charity that produces a pioneering programme of creative activities and experiences for and with people living with and affected by dementia in the London boroughs of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea.

Resonate Arts' Creative Space groups are multi art-form, friendly and inclusive social spaces. They started in 2021 to provide artist-led sessions in local community spaces rather than in large arts venues, initially a monthly art group and now a weekly session at the Penfold Community Hub in the Church St ward of Westminster and a monthly session at Regent Hall on Oxford Street. The sessions encompass a whole range of arts activities, enabling our group members to work with exciting artist facilitators who have a diverse and eclectic range of skills. In the past few years we have explored: print-making, film making, animation, clowning, physical theatre, improvisation, yoga, storytelling, poetry, movement therapy and performance art.

At their heart, our sessions are emotionally, culturally and cognitively inclusive community spaces where people living with dementia and their carers can feel welcome and safe. Members' needs are considered and held, there is no pressure to participate, and people are able to just sit and 'be' if that is what is right for them that day. It is through this gentle person-centred approach that a transformation happens and creativity is given a safe space to flourish. Through support and modelling, group members understand that there is no wrong response or emotion, so they relax, feel stimulated and valued, connect with each other, create and learn together, and often try out something new. Friendships are forged and carers and family members have time to connect too.

Creative Space Art

In Creative Space Art sessions we use improvisation techniques as a guiding principle for the way we facilitate. This means we come in with a loose plan, but approach each session as flexibly and intuitively as possible and we take inspiration for the direction of the session from the creativity of our group members.

We follow the flow and see where it takes us. Each

Shelley Hastings is Projects Manager at Resonate Arts. To find our more contact Shelley or our Director Sam Curtis, at info@resonatearts.org or call 0300 030 7212.

Top tips for creating a Creative Space

- **Welcome** and emotional check-in at every session. Never rush the activity, make time to meet the group where they are.
- **Well supported sessions – volunteers are invaluable.** We work with an artist, projects manager and are supported by our brilliant volunteer Creative Befrienders which enables us to have the capacity to support multiple needs.
- **Follow the flow and be flexible.** Improvisational methods where you adapt and give agency to the group.
- **Give space for ideas to grow.** We believe everyone is creative, be open to ideas growing organically, give power to your participants, encourage experimentation and play!
- **Listening and wellbeing monitoring.** Be alert to the needs in the room throughout the session.
- **Check out and reflective debrief.** Make time to reflect after each session, both with group members and as a facilitation team. Use this learning to build relationships and inform future sessions.

session informs the next so the work grows organically with the interests of the group. People living with dementia often experience a loss of confidence and agency and our groups are a flexible environment where we give creative control to members, so that they are leading, creating and collaborating on work they have ownership of and can feel proud of. This process is empowering and joyful.

Over the last couple of years we have been running Creative Space Art at Regent Hall with the artist Georgia Akbar, who specialises in visual arts and film making, led by the ideas and narratives of the people she works with. This past year with Georgia we have been exploring using unusual materials, from fabric strips from her grandmother's old saris, to wire sculpture and torches to make shadow and light, to powder and spray paints that we have used to make stop-frame animation using accessible technology. The beauty of using unusual materials to create abstract art is



Creative Space groups encourage experimentation and play—a joyful and empowering process.

Photographer: Richard Gray



that the work is received on its own terms and can transform and be interpreted into many imaginative things. Members are not saying – ‘that doesn’t look right’ or ‘I can’t draw very well’, but instead - ‘These blues are like the sea at home in Mauritius’, ‘This is a tree but also a fish if you turn it sideways’. This encourages personal involvement, play and experimentation and builds a confidence that lasts long after the session ends:

I arrived and felt all ‘fussed up’ and then everything unravelled in the session in a good way. I feel wonderful, happy, content. Group member.

At a recent session we were experimenting with acetate and a laminator creating stained glass window-type hangings. One of our regulars took her work home with her and just a few days later called us:

I have just been in my living room with the panels we did working out where to put them, and they look absolutely gorgeous, they have filled my room with pink and purple light. Group member.

Other group members have taken materials home and worked independently or with family carers, bringing their finished creations in to share at the next session. The group is ever growing with incredibly diverse life experiences but the commonality is a generosity and kindness towards each other, a willingness to learn together and experiment and an appreciation of what each other creates.

This just gets better and better, we are a real gang now! Group member.

The first stop frame animation we made grew out of us talking about how we like to celebrate. We talked about the simple things that give us pleasure or things we could see in the art we were making. You can watch this animation here: [Summertime Celebrations \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SummertimeCelebrations)

These sessions and working in this way help me untangle things, helps me untangle my mind. Group member



Creative Space Movement

Our Creative Space Movement sessions came about after several of our choir members (Singing with Friends*) expressed a desire to do more of the free physical movement we had started to introduce to some of our choir rehearsals.

Inspired by this, in 2023 with funding from the Postcode Society Trust we began a monthly group at Penfold Community Hub. The movement in choir during singing was often spontaneous and improvised. We moved our bodies to the music in whatever way felt good, took cues from each other, and there was laughter, playfulness and joy. For the first block of Creative Space Movement sessions we worked with artist Edith Tankus, an experienced physical theatre facilitator and clown.

Our movement sessions always begin with the essential emotional ‘check in’. We often use a prop like a talking stick or a feather, going round the group and asking people how they are, how their bodies are feeling that day, anything to be mindful of or to share. The power of people listening and acknowledging each other and what it has taken to get to the room that day sets an intention for us to support each other throughout the session. Like all the work we do, it isn’t rigid, people are welcome to make an action or sound, or check in in the way that feels right for them. One of our regulars often bursts into song. At the end of each session we repeat this process with a ‘check out’.

Like Creative Space Art, each session has a loose plan. With Edith we began each session with gentle breathing and yoga inspired stretching, listening to songs chosen by the group (Bill Withers – Lean on Me and Culture Club – Kharma Chameleon are two favourites). We build a safe emotional space where members can feel relaxed before a gentle build-up to more improvised, imaginative places. We might go on an imagined journey, a walk in the woods, a night out on the town. Edith would start the physicality and movement and then take cues from the group about where we could go next, how we could move as one, mirror each other and rhythms we could play. Spontaneous movements are encouraged as well as partner and solo work. We use props like scarves or shakers, or theatrical hats, as ways of connecting and giving moments in the spotlight. The key to creating a safe space for improvisation to thrive is a deep listening from us as facilitators, being alert to the needs and



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creativity of members and the group in every present moment – this can sometimes mean letting go of an idea or splitting a group to work in smaller groups or even one on one when there are varying dynamics and needs at play. Flexibility is key and a willingness to follow where the group takes us.

I feel happy for this space today and this happiness has helped with my pain. I surprised myself with what I could do. Group member.

I feel like I have smoothed out the edges being here.
Group member.

In 2024, building on the success of the group, we secured funding from Westminster City Council to increase the frequency of sessions to weekly and we have been working with art therapist and project manager Katie Turnbull to run the sessions. We have three different blocks across the year with different practitioners sharing their expertise. This year we have worked with movement therapist Liwen Wang and performance artist and theatre maker Fauve Alice. We now have an established group of regular members who are flourishing, confident at moving and improvising together, and wonderful new group members from people living with dementia at Penfold Court.

Building community

One key thing that is central to building the Creative Space communities is the work that goes into building relationships all around it. Taking part in a session doesn't start and end in those two hours. We always call people to check in before and on the day of the session, we keep in touch when we have breaks, and take time if we are working with a new referral to get to know their needs and interests. We take great care to welcome people fully to each session and see them off home safely. Our members understand that at our groups there is no wrong way to join in, you don't need to be an expert, trained in the arts, or even consider yourself a creative person. We meet people where they are with kindness and compassion, giving space for them to be heard and respected and an opportunity to express themselves in a way that feels comfortable for them. This approach fosters a confidence in the emotional safety and acceptance in our spaces. As one of our regulars often says 'Remember, this is a non-judgemental space!' or another who says 'You don't have to pretend you are something you're not here!'

As the groups have grown, people have had the confidence to move between them, trying art or movement or singing for the first time, taking risks, experimenting and challenging themselves in a way that didn't seem possible at the time of their referral.

You have to understand I am experiencing things in my life that I have never experienced, and I'm 82! It's incredible. Group member.

Each Creative Space session is followed by a debrief and reflection with staff and volunteers. We follow these headings as a guide:

- **Celebrations** – what worked well, what flowed, who or what we want to celebrate
- **Clearances** – what was trickier, what was hard, what do we need to get off our chests
- **Desires** – what would we like to do, ideas for next time

** Singing with Friends is a choir for people living with dementia, their family members and carers run in collaboration with Wigmore Hall and The Royal Academy of Music.*

Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today

Nurturing relationships through the arts

Pam Schweitzer describes a typical RYCT session in which trained volunteers welcome and support eight couples to explore key memories through the arts, a process that helps to put their current challenging situations into the context of a lifetime, build up self-confidence and the sense of being valued members of the group

Imagine a large light room set out with twenty chairs in a circle. On each seat are placed images for people to look at on the theme of the day, which in this case, is ‘Starting Work and Working Lives’. Someone is unpacking a suitcase full of memorabilia connected with that theme and laying it out on a central table for people to look at on arrival. Someone is drawing on a flip-chart images of topics we hope to touch on. Shortly before the session starts, the team now comes together for a short physical and vocal warm-up and a last check through the planned order of events.

The team are the two session leaders, two volunteers and five or six apprentices. The apprentices are free-lance arts and health workers, who have followed a two-day experiential training course in Reminiscence in Dementia Care. They will now participate in the weekly sessions with the participating families, with a view to starting their own groups or using the ideas in their ongoing work.

Here they come

Now the eight families start to arrive: couples, aged between seventy and ninety, all living with dementia, caring or being cared for at home. Every couple is welcomed, hugged (where that feels appropriate) given a name badge and shown to the table of work-related items to handle and documents to look at. This helps focus everyone’s minds on the topic of the day. Some people have brought items from home, such as certificates and photos of fellow workers. When everyone has arrived, the families join the circle for a more formal welcome, often choosing to sit with a family or volunteer they have got to know already. The session begins with a recap on what we did at the previous session, referring back to special contributions made by people with dementia, and an introduction to the topic of the day.

Stimulating body memories

To warm up, everyone who can do so stands up. The rest participate from a sitting position. The leader shows an action connected with work, and everyone copies that action. Someone else takes over with a different action, and everyone follows that, until several new actions have been

Pam Schweitzer directs the European Reminiscence Network (1993 to the present) specialising in international reminiscence festivals and conferences and co-ordinating a Europe-wide project on reminiscence in dementia care. She founded and continues to coordinate the international project Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today (RYCT) supporting people with dementia and their family carers in twelve European Union countries.

Summary

The project Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today (RYCT) is a reminiscence arts programme in which people with dementia revisit their past lives together with their carers and with eight or nine other families. They meet as a group on a weekly basis with a different focus each week. Over the course of twelve weeks, they work through the key stages of their lives, from earliest memories up to the present, thus putting their current challenging situations in the wider context of a lifetime. Practical working together enables new connections and friendships to form with people in similar situations, and these friendships often endure well beyond the project itself.

In this article I explain what happens in a typical meeting and then show how each activity relates to the underlying broader aims of the project. I suggest that there is a particular value in stimulating and sharing personal memories in a group. By exploring these memories through a variety of kinetic, visual and expressive arts, we aim to build up the self-confidence of participants and their sense of being valued members of the group.

introduced and tried out by all. Actions include clocking in, hammering, laying bricks, painting a wall, tailoring, typing, making tea, waitressing, shop work, etc.

Playing a memory

Now the big circle breaks into four or five small groups, each group supported by a volunteer, an apprentice, or one of the group leaders. In these groups, participants listen to one another’s work stories, including how much they were paid, what skills did they learn, what friends did they have at work and what bosses or supervisors.

Then the group leader invites the groups to see if they can make a scene out of one of the stories emerging from their discussion. Because the ‘actors’ (everyone in the small group) need more to make the scene come to life, they ask the ‘story teller’ for additional information, often on points of detail. Then they try putting their ideas ‘on the floor’. This improvisation process generates additional memories from the ‘story-tellers’ and increases the adrenaline level in the room. After about ten minutes of ‘rehearsal’, everyone is fired up and ready to show their scene, prompting each other as necessary. Each scene lasts about a minute and is totally improvised. The ‘audience’ is everyone in the other groups, and the little scenes seem to stimulate a sense of recognition and a spontaneous round of applause and laughter. ▷

▷ Show Time

One lady, Beryl, finds a notebook and pencil and goes into her boss's room to 'take a letter' in shorthand. Another person in that group is the boss and dictates a standard letter, which Beryl actually writes in shorthand. She then reads it back, word for word, from the shorthand, to everyone's surprise and admiration. She mentions where she worked and shows her shorthand notes to everyone. She has surprised herself with what she can still do. One man, Josef, measures the arm and inside leg of another man in his group; a third takes notes for tailoring and a fourth starts machine stitching. Barbara enters the role of factory foreman and tells everyone to stop chattering and get on with their work. She tells how she was a strict boss and barks at her juniors to show she still can. Joyce is busy with a needle and thread, remembering her work in a high-class firm of tailors. There is plenty to talk about in the tea break that follows.

Drawing or writing a memory

The volunteers or apprentices find the personal scrapbooks one for each family. These have already been filled in for the three previous chronological sessions: introductions and origins, childhood and family life, school days. While further discussion takes place, often enlisting the help of the family carer, the volunteer or apprentice offers to draw or write their memory and put in captions for the pictures. Two apprentices have taken copies from the Internet of people and places relating to a story told the previous week and this goes into the personal scrapbook with explanatory captions. This is a quiet one-to-one activity going at a gentle pace. When it finishes, some of the scrapbooks are shown around the group, which again stimulates more memories to share.

Wrapping up with a song

The imminent end of the session is announced, but first people are asked to think of any songs they can sing together related to the session: quite a challenge with this topic. Someone comes up with the seven dwarfs singing "Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to work we go" and another recalls the tune of "Workers Playtime" the radio show. Sometimes, the group leaders use digital sources with added speakers to remind people how the song goes.

There is then a recap of what has happened in the session, with high praise for memorable contributions by individual participants. Everyone gets an individual goodbye and a hug or handshake and thanks for their presence and for sharing their memories. The theme for the next week is given and people are asked to search their homes for relevant objects and photos on the topic of 'Going Out and Having Fun'.

Debriefing and evaluation

Each session is followed by a period of reflection. What worked well? What didn't? Was everyone supported to participate? Was anyone overlooked? Each member of the team gives feedback. There are forms to record both the session and the discussion that follows, and the apprentices take turns to complete the session's evaluation, which is then circulated to all.

Good practice points that underlie these activities

Welcome: Preparing the room so that it is a stimulating visual and tactile environment enables early arrivals to explore the theme-related resources, handling objects and images, while being supported by one of the team. It also



Working together, sharing and congratulating each other on their wall-papering know-how

shows the families that we have thought about them as individuals between our meetings and found pictures related to what they have talked about.

The greeting of participants, whether it be with a handshake or a hug given to each couple as they arrive, emphasises their importance as individuals and members of the group, rather as one would greet a valued guest arriving at a party. Participants who may be anxious or shy quickly feel, "I belong here. They like me here." As they are being given a name badge, they are informally reminded of something they said or did in the last meeting, which people in the group had enjoyed and remembered.

Inclusivity: Gathering together in a circle is an important means of demonstrating the democratic inclusive atmosphere in the group. One of our team summarises the subjects we explored the previous week. Reminding everyone of what we did in our last meeting helps people to feel that the project has a shape and a progression through time, as in each session they revisit a different chronological point their earlier lives. Highlighting some of the memorable moments of the previous session shows participants that their contributions are held in the group memory, and that the stories they shared are valued like gifts.

Positivity: We lay the emphasis on what people can still do, rather than on their deficits. There is a great deal of encouragement and stimulus in every session, enabling people to participate successfully, even when words no longer come readily to mind. We aim to create a level playing field, so that a stranger watching the group would have difficulty working out who has dementia and who doesn't. That stranger might also be surprised at the frequent spontaneous wit and laughter generated.

Physical warming up and relaxation as a whole group: Standing or sitting in a circle and joining in a physical warm-up helps people relax. The work-related movements help people recall past work skills and help them to engage and keep wide awake. The movements evoke the younger, more energetic version of themselves, as though they have brought their past vitality into the present.

Work together in small groups: Participants are divided into small groups to exchange experience more informally than in the big circle and with the help of one or two of the project team. Here, they often find memories in common, tapping into a 'community of memory' related to particular

times and events. Often a common bond is established between them; friendships with other families develop and some of these friendships last well beyond the project itself.

The presence of the family carer: It is important to have the family carer present to support their person, but they must also be there to benefit in their own right from the reminiscence process. We run separate sessions for the carers discussing how best they can support their person throughout the project. By active participation, the family carers gain ideas they can try at home to engage their partner, and the project often helps couples to look more fondly on each other as they revisit their joint past through all its ups and downs. When the family carer is a son or daughter, the sessions offer a chance to learn much more about their parent's younger days, and many report being startled by newly unearthed memories. Out come the family photo albums and notes are added as the project throws up previously unheard stories.

Playing the past in the present and having fun together: When the session leader asks each group to come up with a little scene, the adrenaline level rises and so does the noise as people rehearse their stories. A strong sense of fun is generated as they find a way to show the experience of someone in their group. A feeling of playfulness fills the room. Everyone gets laughter and applause, which boosts the morale of all players. The performances, however short, tend to stay quite a long time in the minds of the participants and are often referred back to with pleasure later in the project.

Making an individual record of the project: The families all receive a scrapbook to use in the sessions and to take home with them at the end of the project. Apprentices and volunteers write in these books the stories they have discussed or draw illustrations to go with them. Having someone draw for them is a very engaging process, as the 'artist' has to ask what they should put in the picture and in what colours. From week to week, we give out photos of the participants joining in the activities, so they can stick these into their album too. The families can then refer back to the project with pleasure when it finishes. Many families go on adding to the book, and take time to explore photos in old family albums and add captions if more is recalled.

Celebration and appreciation: All the activities have the same purpose: to give pleasure to the people with dementia and their carers together and a sense of being valued members of a special group. The aim is to stimulate participants to re-connect with their earlier selves, so that their present testing situation is seen in the broader context of their long lives. Ending is always difficult, but in RYCT it always involves a celebration of our past as a group and the high points we have shared. In our final session we invite the group participants to offer a celebration of their partner. This has elicited extremely tender tributes from the person with dementia as well as the carer, always showing how crucial that mutual life-long affection is proving. There are often tears shed by the carer when their relative with dementia recognises and acknowledges this reality.

A durable project

Although the RYCT project is nearly thirty years old, it continues to run in many of our European Union partner countries, in Canada, Japan and in Singapore. Hundreds of families have participated in it over the years. Our European Reminiscence Network has met every two years since 1997 to share experience and gain fresh ideas. Most of our partners have joined in the apprenticeship scheme we launched in 2012. Many of the graduate apprentices have gone on to run creative reminiscence projects with people with dementia and carers in the community, and others have added their learning to their work in care homes. We have all followed the same basic programme, which the original team devised. This has proved robust but of course there have been many variants emerging to suit different countries and different strengths within the project teams.

On-going evaluation

Many different forms of evaluation have been applied to the RYCT project, with varying results, most basically positive. However, it has been hard to do justice to the warm sense of celebration and affection it invariably generates for the families involved. Clearly, a multi-faceted intervention like this does not lend itself readily to a quasi-scientific and quantitative analysis. Families participating are asked for feedback at the end of the project via a simple form which asks them what they have enjoyed most, surprises they may have experienced, what was their favourite session and why. The apprentices and volunteers record and assess each session, using our specific 'adherence to schedule' evaluation forms to ensure that the project remains true to our objectives. Writing a reflective essay on what they have learned on the project is a crucial part of the apprenticeship.

Websites and further reading

www.rememberingyesterdaycaringtoday.com
www.reminiscencetheatrearchive.org.uk
www.europeanreminiscencenetwork.org
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Schweitzer PK, Bruce E (2008) *Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today: Reminiscence in Dementia Care*, Jessica Kingsley, London.
Schweitzer PK (1999) Remembering yesterday: a European project. *Journal of Dementia Care* 7(1) 18-21.
Garvey G (2004) 'The place where I grew up': ethnic minority reminiscence comes of age. *Journal of Dementia Care* 12(2) 20-21.

The image shows a logo for 'Meaningful Connections Community' with a grid of eight icons. The icons are: 1. Person Centred Care (pink box, image of a person being held), 2. Freedom & Control (yellow box, image of puzzle pieces with 'FREEDOM', 'GAP', 'CONTROL' labels), 3. End of Life Care (blue box, image of hands holding a person), 4. Engaging Mealtimes (green box, image of a table with food), 5. Spirituality, Equality & Diversity (orange box, image of diverse people), 6. Leadership & Building Teams (purple box, image of people in a meeting), 7. Looking after Self & Others (teal box, image of hands holding a smiley face), 8. Supporting Family & Friends (pink box, image of a family walking in a park). Below the grid is the text: 'Online education for your team! meaningfulcarematters.com/mcc'



NAPA Arts in Care Homes

The National Activity Providers Association (NAPA) is the UK's professional association for Activity Providers and activity provision. NAPA's core mission is to ensure that meaningful activities and person-centred engagement are integral parts of care.

In collaboration with key partners in supporting arts initiatives within care settings, NAPA has produced a series of influential reports and resources, shining a spotlight on the vital role that creative and meaningful activities play in the health and wellbeing of older adults.

One of the key areas of our work is the extensive range of resources we provide, which are designed to support care services to provide varied and engaging activities. These resources cater to diverse needs and preferences, recognising that every individual deserves access to stimulating and person-centred experiences.

Our resources offer practical advice on integrating arts into care settings, demonstrating how creative practices such as painting, storytelling, music, and drama can significantly improve wellbeing. *It?* highlights best practices and showcases successful examples from across the UK, helping care services to make arts a regular and valued part of their care culture.

NAPA has long recognised the importance of professional development. Offering a professional development pathway and a range of accredited training programmes, NAPA ensures that those working in care settings have the skills and confidence needed to deliver high-quality, meaningful activities.

A key highlight of NAPA's work is the coordination of the Annual National Day of Arts in Care Homes which



takes place every year on the 24th September.

The National Day aims to highlight the wellbeing benefits of arts, creativity and cultural engagement. We promote the beneficial outcomes, champion good practice and encourage care settings to develop more creative activities and opportunities.

This National Day, supported by The Baring Foundation and The Rayne Foundation for the last six years, has grown year on year, demonstrating the widespread enthusiasm for incorporating arts into care. It provides an opportunity for care homes to showcase their innovative approaches and for residents to experience the joy and therapeutic benefits of creative expression.

Explore our **directory** to find skilled professionals who bring creativity, compassion and expertise to care homes, creating a vibrant and stimulating environment through the arts. Whether it's music, painting, dance or theatre, our facilitators are here to inspire and support meaningful engagement and connection.

For more information and to access resources to support art based activity and engagement visit our website and dedicated **National Day** webpage.

Further resources

Arts in Care Homes webpage - <https://napa-activities.co.uk/arts-in-care-homes/art-in-care-homes>

Arts in Care Homes Directory - <https://napa-activities.co.uk/arts-in-care-homes/napa-arts-in-care-homes-directory>

Managers Guide - <https://digital.napa-activities.co.uk/view/766522243/>

Arts in Care Homes Evaluation 2023 - <https://digital.napa-activities.co.uk/view/944517596/>

Evidence for practice/Research news

This section aims to keep readers up to date with research in dementia care and the current best evidence to support practice. We aim to provide a channel of two-way communication between researchers and practitioners, so that research findings influence practice and practitioners' concerns are fed into the research agenda.

We welcome contributions such as:

- Information on recently-completed studies that are available to readers
- Notice of the publication (recent or imminent) of peer reviewed research papers with practical relevance to dementia care
- Requests or offers for sharing research information and experience in particular fields of interest
- Short comment on important research papers recently published, drawing readers' attention to new evidence and key points that should inform practice.

The research papers summarised here are selected for their relevance and importance to dementia care practice by the section editor, Hazel Heath. We welcome suggestions of papers to be included: please contact sue@dementiapublishing.community

Arts on prescription at home (AoP@Home)

This participatory art-based approach involves a professional artist engaging a person with dementia (and their carer) in art-making in their own home. This study evaluated the implementation of AoP@Home in a real-world community aged care context. All participants with dementia reported improvements in their overall health and wellbeing and wellbeing scores improved for all carers. Implementation was feasible using existing government funding mechanisms and programs were acceptable to all stakeholders. The study concludes that it is possible to deliver participatory arts programs for community-dwelling people with dementia and their family, in their home, using sustainable and available funding models. It recommends that such programmes be made more accessible alongside health and care services. O'Connor CMC, Poulos RG, Heldon M. et al. Implementing Arts on Prescription at Home for people living with dementia: a hybrid-effectiveness feasibility study. *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology*. Published July 23 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08919887241267335>. Open access.

Arts at home: learning from stakeholders

This study explores experiences of people with dementia and family carers who participated in an Arts on Prescription at Home (AoP@Home) program, artists who delivered the program and the managers who coordinated the programs. Interview highlighted themes of 'what worked well', 'challenges' and 'moving forward'. The study concludes that AoP@Home offers important potential for community-dwelling people with dementia who may no longer be able to access group-based community programs. The authors stress that, as AoP@Home is expanded, ongoing implementation monitoring and quality improvement will be essential to ensure maximal applicability of the program across the community aged care sector.

O'Connor CMC, Poulos RG, Heldon M et al. Implementation of an Arts at Home program for people living with dementia: Learnings from key stakeholders. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*. Published July 2 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.897>. Open access

Collaboration between arts and care sectors

This article reflects on qualitative findings from the Artists' Residencies in Care Homes (ARCH) programme led by Magic Me, which paired four leading arts organisations with four care homes in Essex who worked together over four years to deliver creative arts for the residents. Building trusted relationships and collaborative working between the artists and care home staff was essential for the success of the residencies and for generating and embedding sustainable creative practice in the homes.

Dadswell A, Wilson C, Bungay H. Sustainable Creative Practice with Older People: A Collaborative Approach between Arts and Care Sectors. *Sustainability* 2024. 6(9). Published April 24 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16093587>. Open access.

Improvisational drama workshops

This study sheds new light on causal links and challenges surrounding the impact of improvisational drama workshops on people with dementia and their carers at care facilities. Findings are discussed in the context of key considerations for arts impact: negative impacts, uniqueness of the arts, artistic quality, and long-term outcomes. The authors conclude that sustained efforts can lead to significant long-term outcomes, extending beyond individual behavioural changes to community growth.

Nakamura M, Sejima K, Sakurai K et al. Addressing causality: participatory evaluation on improvisational drama workshops for people with dementia and their carers. *Cultural Trends*. Publ. online Sept 20 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2024.2402863>. Open access

Community arts activities

In order to examine the opportunities and barriers to community-based arts activities for people with dementia, this research sought the views of key stakeholders, artists and art planners. Three themes emerged: perceptions and knowledge of dementia, the inherently inclusive qualities of arts, and practical approaches to delivery of the activity. Both artists and art planners felt that understanding motivations and expectations, effective communication, access, and

support for themselves and people with dementia were crucial to deliver dementia-inclusive arts in communities. The study concludes that community-based art activities can be inclusive of people living with dementia with empowering design, delivery mode, communication, and access to the activities.

Bazooband A, Courteney-Pratt H, Doherty K, Tierney L. Engaging People with Dementia in Community Art Activities: The Perspective of Art Collaborators. *Health and Social Care in the Community*. Publ. Aug 1 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2024/9921792>. Open access.

Music psychology and social connections: young onset

In the context of limited interventions aimed at supporting couples affected by young-onset dementia, this pilot study aimed to assess the feasibility and acceptability of an online group program for people with young-onset dementia and their care-partners living at home in Australia. The Music And Psychology and Social connections (MAPS) program involved six weekly two-hour sessions co-facilitated by a psychologist and music therapist, and a private Facebook group. The high retention rate, qualitative findings and positive program evaluation suggest MAPS may be a promising, feasible and acceptable program for couples affected by young-onset dementia.

Loi SM, Cadwallader CJ, Baker FA. A mixed methods evaluation of the music and psychology and social connections (MAPS) pilot – A dyadic intervention for couples affected by young-onset dementia. *Dementia*. Published June 21 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14713012241263151>. Restricted access.

Dance Music Therapy

This scoping review sought to better understand the health and well-being outcomes of Dance Music Therapy (DMT)/ dance interventions for older adults living with dementia. Most studies reported a positive effect in the outcomes measured. The authors conclude that the overall quality of studies remains low, although both the quantity and quality of studies have recently improved. They conclude that DMT and dance interventions address numerous symptoms of dementia and that the frameworks they applied can serve both as orientation for practitioners and as a point of departure for further interdisciplinary research and policy development.

Cornary C, Koch SC. Dance music therapy and dance interventions for people living with dementia: a PRISMA scoping review on health and well-being outcomes, assessments and interventions. *GMS Journal of Art Therapies*. Published Sept 9 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3205/jat000039>. Open access

Museum and art gallery-based heritage activities

This literature review explored primary studies into the effects of museum and art gallery-based heritage activities and programmes on the wellbeing of a range of groups including people living with dementia. The interactive environment of museums had positive health outcomes for people with dementia. The authors conclude that museum art-based interventions may be integrated as part of the non-pharmacological management of people of varying ages experiencing mental health issues, as well as improving the wellbeing of younger and older populations

Fares J, Hadjicosti I, Sonstantinou C. Rethinking culture: a narrative review on the evolving role of museum and art gallery-based heritage activities and programmes on wellbeing. *Perspectives in Public Health*. Published online Sept 27 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17579139241268446>. Open access

Arts-based risk reduction

This research introduced an arts-based exhibit offering an immersive experience for altering adults' perceptions of risk reduction and lifestyle behaviours. Results highlight participants' positive experiences, particularly being engaged by the artistic aspects of the exhibit. This research concluded that arts-based educational initiatives have the potential to advance public understanding and promote behavioural changes for dementia risk reduction.

Connor RA, Catanzaro M, Siette J. "I know now that it's something that you can do something about": Deductive thematic analysis of experiences at an arts-based dementia risk reduction exhibit. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*. Vol 123. Published Aug 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2024.105440>. Open access.

Virtual reality creations in art therapy

This study investigated the impact of virtual reality artistic creation on the creativity of individuals with varying degrees of dementia. The participants' virtual reality artistic creations were collected, and three experts analysed the artistic elements and creativity using the Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS). Results indicate that virtual reality artistic creation tools can stimulate creativity in individuals with varying degrees of dementia. However, those with more severe cognitive impairments predominantly engaged in imitative creations, exhibiting lower creative abilities, which suggested a negative correlation between dementia severity and the potential for creative expression.

Fan K-Y, Wu P-F. The artistic elements of virtual reality creations in art therapy for individuals with dementia and suboptimal health. *IPRPD International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2693-2555 (Online) Volume 05; Issue no 08: Published Aug 2024. <https://doi.org/10.56734/ijahss.v5n8a7>. Open access

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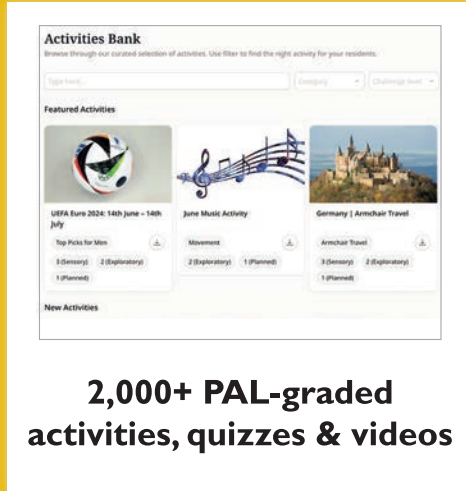
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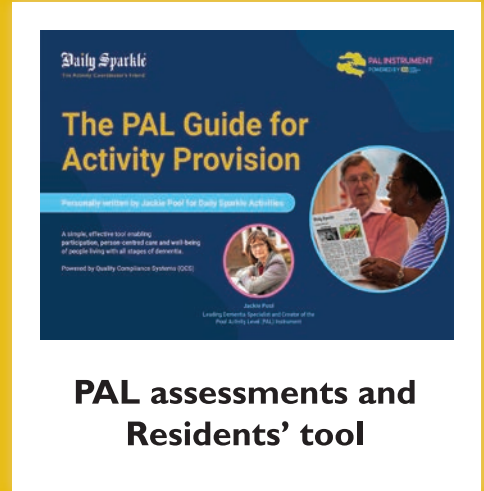
A collection of newspaper pages from Daily Sparkle, featuring various articles, photos, and illustrations. The pages are arranged in a collage, showing different sections like 'Over To You', 'That's Entertainment', 'Spotlight On Sport', and 'Songs Of The 1950s'.

Award-winning reminiscence newspapers



A screenshot of the 'Activities Bank' website interface. It shows a search bar, filters for 'Category' and 'Challenge level', and a list of featured activities including 'UFA Euro 2024: 14th June - 14th July', 'June Music Activity', and 'Germany | Airchair Travel'. Each activity has a small image and a difficulty rating.

2,000+ PAL-graded activities, quizzes & videos



The cover of the 'PAL Guide for Activity Provision' book. It features the Daily Sparkle logo, the title 'The PAL Guide for Activity Provision', and a photo of a woman and a man looking at a document. The text on the cover describes it as a simple, effective tool for enabling participation, person-centred care, and well-being for people living with all stages of dementia.

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