

Toolkit



Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing



The aim of this toolkit is to help nursing and care home workers, voluntary groups and independent carers to use the documentary film clips from the enclosed DVD, as well as films available on the Internet, DVDs or the TV, to get the most benefit possible from the experience of communal film viewing involving older people.



Introduction

This toolkit is based on the results of a pilot project carried out by the University of Liverpool with local nursing and care homes, as well as a GP's practice in the city of Petrópolis in Brazil. According to health professionals and researchers, activities that promote wellbeing are most successful when they are not presented as a form of therapy but as social or leisure activities. It has also been shown that for older people, including those with memory impairment, the important thing for wellbeing is to live in the moment, and activities such as these leave them with a lasting positive emotional benefit, even if they cannot remember having participated. The emotional response (sometimes referred to as affect) to film and music does not disappear in old age. In fact, it has been proved that musical memory is preserved even during the later stages of dementia. Music and film used in tandem stimulate the senses of both sight and hearing, and can promote autobiographical reminiscence.



The results of the pilot study show that group viewing of clips from films, ranging from musical comedies to documentary footage of local places

- stimulates memory via reminiscences shared with other participants
- stimulates the wellbeing of participants, helping to prevent emotional and health problems
- creates opportunities to promote independence, inviting participants to plan similar future activities
- promotes confidence and self-esteem
- combats isolation, social exclusion and loneliness
- reduces anxiety and low mood/depression
- creates a means to show older people how to live with what they still have instead of what they have lost
- generates a sense of collective wellbeing via group activities and communal and personal interaction



Comments made by previous participants in Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing events:

They were good memories you gave me. I remembered lots of things. And I laughed a lot. I thought it was a sensational idea.

It was great fun!
When can we do this again?!

It relaxed us. We felt good. Everyone was happy, cheerful. If it happens again, we'll go again.

It brought back good memories

This gives older people encouragement to overcome certain things

Afterwards I felt much better and more lively

A benefit was that it distracted me, making me forget some problems at home.

Fantastic! I felt like I was travelling back in time



Oh! I remember walking down those steps with my mother!



I remember walking through bombed out houses!

My dad used to sing that song!

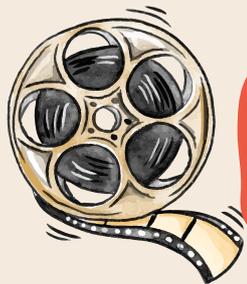
My brother had a stall on the old [St. John's] market. ... There was a woman selling flowers – a couple of them. We all used to go there for flowers.

You used to get stuck in them tram lines with your bike wheels!

I used to work in that Co-op. I served Bessie Braddock once! I was about 20 or 22.

Great memories of my youth!

I remember the cinema I used to go to when I was young – it reminded me of that



I used to travel on the Overhead Railway. I worked at Tate and Lyle's





Comments by care home workers and health care professionals who have been involved in Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing events:

“It was a surprising and positive experience. On the day of the event it was gratifying to see the older people enjoying themselves, re-living moments from their lives intensely.”

“I was very pleased with the participation of all the staff. We really came together as a team. The older people had a great reaction to the event, congratulating us on the initiative and thanking us.”

“The event gave us more motivation. After I was more enthusiastic about my work. It gave us more ideas. We’re thinking of doing more events this year with older people, and as a team we have improved greatly.”



Comments by care home workers and health care professionals who have been involved in Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing events:

“It was great to introduce our resident group to new and interesting people and encourage conversation, interest and social engagement. We are always looking for ways to help our residents maintain community connections and feel part of the wider city around them – which this project did. The project was also of genuine interest to the staff supporting our residents and encouraged reminiscence across generations.”

“I was actually thinking of leaving the profession but after the event I had second thoughts, as I realised my job was worthwhile and that I was needed. I felt more valued. In our team we became closer afterwards, even with difficult colleagues.”



To hold a Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing event you will only need the following equipment:

- a laptop, speakers, projector and screen (or white wall) or a large-screen TV and DVD player
- a room with black-out curtains to ensure the images are clearly visible
- comfortable chairs for the participants
- popcorn, drinks, ice cream or sweets for the “interval”

The enclosed DVD (see page 2) can be used on its own, or can be followed by a feature film, recreating the experience of going to the pictures in the 1940s and 1950s, when there were newsreels before the main film.

You could also invite a local amateur historian or filmmaker to come and talk to your audience about local history, cinemas, filmmaking in the local area etc. (see page 19 for contacts and suggestions)

Tip: you can even use the Pearl and Dean theme tune “Asteroid” by Pete Moore to re-create the atmosphere of a cinema – see page 18



How to hold a Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing event

Role of care home staff/volunteers/health professionals during the event:

- Decide who will be the presenter. The presenter needs to watch the clips on the enclosed DVD (or other film material selected for the event from the Internet or the TV) beforehand to familiarize themselves with the content and prepare open questions to be put to the audience during the screening (see pages 13-17 for tips and a summary of the content)
- Check the equipment is working properly.
- Prepare the room before the event, making sure the chairs are positioned so that everyone can see the screen/TV and hear the soundtrack.
- Welcome the participants when they arrive, re-creating the experience of 'going to the pictures' with simple costumes and props (e.g. usherette uniforms, cinema tickets) and refreshments if possible, possibly during an "interval" part way though the screening.
- Distribute themed refreshments e.g. popcorn, old fashioned boiled sweets or ice creams, and if possible have some of the staff serve them as "usherettes".
- During the event sit among the participants and help the presenter to stimulate conversation and the exchange of reminiscences during the pauses. Give support and encouragement to individuals who might need it.



A 'RUMMAGE BOX' is an effective way to unlock memories during the interval or after the screening – it might contain hats, costume jewellery, percussion instruments, photos of film stars/old cinemas (downloaded from the Internet), old fashioned household items and kitchen equipment or tools, old records, fan magazines, the kind of things you can pick up cheaply in charity shops or borrow from the Museum of Liverpool's House of Memories project (see page 19 for details and contacts). Encourage participants to handle and pass round the objects.

How to hold a Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing event

Role of the presenter on the day of the Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing event:

- Welcome the audience; briefly explain what will happen during the event, and the nature of the film clips to be shown; give practical information (location of toilets, timing of the interval/refreshments etc.) Ask the audience a couple of general questions e.g. about their favourite films and the cinemas they went to when they were younger. Be enthusiastic, smile and tell the audience that the aim is for them to enjoy themselves! And to talk to each other, not keep quiet!
- Screen the enclosed DVD (see page 2) or chosen film material, pausing after each clip to ask the audience some open questions and to encourage them to talk about their impressions and reminiscences with each other (examples of open questions are on pages 13-17). Keep the clips short, to allow for shorter concentration spans, and try to keep sessions to about one hour in length with a break for the interval.
- In the pauses show genuine interest in your audience members' responses and be a good listener, nodding, smiling and repeating key phrases. Let the discussion and interaction flow – DON'T FORCE PEOPLE TO SPEAK IF THEY DON'T WANT TO! Use open questions as much as possible (avoiding simple yes or no answers). You can simply invite people to "tell us about....." Don't worry if there is silence, just move on to a different clip.
- Try to stimulate the senses of the audience e.g. talk to them about the taste and smell of the ice cream or popcorn, the music they are listening to, or use props and ask people to describe how they feel when they touch them.
- If someone has unhappy memories this should be acknowledged – sad memories are important too. If someone is clearly distressed move on to a different topic and be empathetic – if necessary ask a staff member or volunteer to sit with them and maybe get them a drink.

Note: it may be more appropriate to do a one-to-one session with some older people (such as those affected by early to moderate stages of dementia) using a laptop or tablet

Content of the DVD “Liverpool in the 50s: Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing project” and suggested questions and prompts:

CLIP 1: Aintree Racecourse

What does anyone remember from the time when this was a car racing track?

What is it used for today? (horse racing)

What are your memories of going there?

Tell me about going to the horse races there

Tell me about anyone you know who worked there

CLIP 2: Anglican Cathedral

What are your memories of it being built and of that part of the city centre?

Tell me about anyone you know who worked on it

Tell me about a time you have been inside the cathedral

What other memories does it bring back?

CLIP 3: Liverpool Docks

What memories do you have of working on the docks, the ships or in a shipyard or of knowing someone who did?

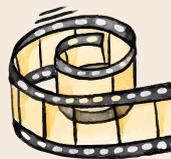
What kind of work did you and your family members do?

Tell me about any trips you made on the Overhead Railway.

Does anyone know what it was nicknamed?

(known as the Dockers’ Umbrella)

What places seen in this clip have you been to/seen before
e.g. Tate and Lyle’s?



Content of the DVD “Liverpool in the 50s: Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing project” and suggested questions and prompts:

CLIP 4: Lime Street Station

How do you think the station and this part of the city is different from how it looks today?

Tell me about times when you used the station

There are buses in the clip too – tell me about when you used the buses to get to work or go shopping? The trams? The trains?

What memories did this clip bring back of any cars you or your family members had in the past?

CLIP 5: Liverpool Overhead Railway

Opened in 1893 and closed in 1956; at its peak almost 20 million people used it every year

Tell me about your memories of Dingle Station and that part of the city.

Tell me about your memories of the overhead railway. Where did you go on it?

To the beach at Seaforth? (It ran from the Dingle to Seaforth & Litherland)

Did anyone use it to get to work? Where did you work at that time? What was your journey like?

CLIP 6: The Ferries

How many of you used the ferries regularly?

What do you remember about going on the ferries?

Where did you go on them?

Do you associate any songs with the ferries?

What memories does seeing the ferries bring back for you?

Content of the DVD “Liverpool in the 50s: Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing project” and suggested questions and prompts:

CLIP 7: The Metropolitan Cathedral

What memories do you have of it being built and that part of the city centre?

Did you know anyone who worked on it?

Tell me about times you have been inside the cathedral.

What other memories does seeing this clip bring back?

CLIP 8: Parks and Gardens

Did you recognise any places in this clip? (William Brown Street, Central Library, St. James Gardens, Calderstones Park; and finally the Port of Liverpool building – the HQ of the Docks and Harbour Board on the waterfront)

Can you remember other parks and public gardens in Liverpool? (Stanley Park, Bootle; Newsham Park; Sefton Park (Palm House); the Botanical Gardens in Wavertree; Walton Hall Park; Princes Park; Birkenhead Park)

What memories do you have of going to any of these parks? What did you do there?

CLIP 9: Queen Square

What familiar shops or streets did you see in this clip?

Did seeing the Stork Hotel bring back any particular memories?

What are your memories of the outdoor fruit and veg market held in this square?

What are your memories of the old St. John’s Market? What was it like? When did you go there? What did you buy?

Content of the DVD “Liverpool in the 50s: Cinema, Memory and Wellbeing project” and suggested questions and prompts:



CLIP 10: The Old Opera House

Do you see any places you remember?

What is different about Williamson Square compared with how it looks today?

What was the Union Cold Storage Company building used for originally? (It was an old Opera House called the Theatre Royal, demolished in 1972). The Playhouse is the oldest theatre in Liverpool (still there but has a new section added to it). Were you a theatre goer? What kind of shows / plays do you like?

Can you spot the Royal Court theatre? Tell me about any time you have seen a show there.

Blacklers department store (in the background). What did you like about shopping in Blacklers?

The old Fish Market? (now demolished) Did you go to any of those places?

CLIP 11: Working Lives

What places did you recognise? (Speke Boulevard; Evans Medical; Dunlop factory)

Did anyone work around there? Did anyone you know work there? Tell me about what you/they did there.

The Dunlop factory? The pharmaceutical industry? Evans Medical?

What other factories were there at Speke? (Triumph cars, Ford...)



Questions

Open questions and prompts that can be asked in relation to any film clips:

What places/ film stars/ songs did you recognise?

Did this clip remind you of anything? What memories did it bring back?

Tell me about the kinds of films you used to go and see?

Which cinemas did you go to? Who did you go with?

Which actors/actresses did you like best?

Do you remember any favourite films? Why did you like them?

TIP: It is a good idea to show the audience photos of old cinemas in the local area – these can be found in a book by Keith Rose called *After the Pictures*. A couple of other books can also be found in local libraries such as *Picture Palaces of Liverpool* by Harold Ackroyd and *The Lost Cinemas of Liverpool* by Vicky Andrews. There are also numerous pictures available on the Liverpool Echo's website, <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/incoming/article6069341.ece>



Other activities and tips:

- Play some music to welcome the audience and during the interval to re-create the era in question (you can use www.spotify.com for free) e.g. for the 1950s-1960s we used Dean Martin's "Red Roses for a Blue Lady", Connie Francis's "Whose Sorry Now", Perry Como's "Catch a Falling Star" and Bobby Vinton's "Blue Moon". Begin the event with the Pearl and Dean theme tune ("Asteroid") by Pete Moore.
- Create posters to promote the event and decorate the room – possibly using some of the images or comments included in this toolkit
- Create simple hats/ costumes to be tried on by the staff and/or the audience members e.g. usherettes.
- Ask the participants if they would like to have a photo taken with one of the presenters or members of staff, perhaps in costume or using props.
- If you choose to show a film or clips from a film on DVD or the Internet you can research basic information about it, such as the names of the stars, when it was made etc. on the website www.imdb.com and find images of old film stars on www.google.co.uk
- Organise a quiz about old Liverpool (use Wikipedia or Google to research the places covered in the enclosed DVD and base a quiz around them using photos).
- Organise a quiz of faces of well-known actors and actresses from a particular decade (e.g. 1950s) and ask the audience to try to recognise them.

Information on local organisations that might be able to send a guest speaker to your event and useful websites:

Liverpool History Society

www.liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk

Merseyside on Film

Facebook page, where you can access dozens of films of the local area made by local filmmakers

<https://www.facebook.com/MerseysideOnFilm/>

City in Film project, University of Liverpool

holds a database of information on over 1700 films made in or about Liverpool, ranging from the earliest factual films, newsreels and amateur films, to more recent feature films, television dramas and documentaries. The website includes details and images of over 170 cinema locations
www.liverpool.ac.uk/architecture/research/cava/cityfilm/

North West Film Archive

<https://www.nwfa.mmu.ac.uk>, contact Marion Hewitt.

There are lots of short films made in and about

Liverpool on Youtube: try entering Liverpool 1950s and see what you get.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Liverpool+1950s

A **memory suitcase** can be borrowed from the House of Memories, National Museums Liverpool: call 0151 478 4240 or email learning@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/houseofmemories

The House of Memories website includes a short film and a FREE downloadable digital memory app called “My House of Memories” for iPads, other tablets and mobile phones, which contains images of objects from the 1920s to the 1980s that are good prompts for the memory, as well as sound effects, music and video. The objects are organised by theme e.g. “Seafarers and Dockers”; “School”; “Work” and “Leisure” so can be tailored to suit individuals or groups or to fit the content of the film clips.

Liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/memoryapp

Reliving the city and
Its black and white past
Moorfields. Lime Street. New Brighton
The Dockers' Umbrella
Our buildings reaching to Heaven
Only the best will do
They gather the past
Like pearls of time
And make all our dreams come true

By Rodger Moir

Produced by Dr Lisa Shaw
and Professor Julia Hallam

