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# Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today

## Reminiscence in Dementia Care: A Guide to Good Practice

*Pam Schweitzer and Errollyn Bruce*

*Foreword by Faith Gibson*

**May 2008 192pp 978 1 84310 649 4 Paperback £19.99**



Reminiscence is a vital way to stimulate communication and promote confidence and self-worth in people with dementia. This practical guide is designed to give those who care for people with dementia a clear sense of how reminiscence can be used to greatly improve their quality of life.

The book explores how reminiscence can contribute to person-centred dementia care and contains detailed descriptions of activities that can be used in a group setting, for one-to-one reminiscence at home or in a variety of care settings. Based on ideas developed and tested internationally over a period of ten years, the book offers imaginative approaches to reminiscence and a wealth of resources for use in a wide range of situations. The book includes advice on organising a reminiscence project and provides a useful planning tool for group sessions.

*Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today* highlights the value of reminiscence for those with dementia and is an essential guide to good practice for family and professional carers.

**Pam Schweitzer** became fascinated by reminiscence and oral history after many years working in Theatre in Education and Educational Drama. In 1983, she founded Age Exchange Theatre Trust, the first full-time professional theatre company to specialise in reminiscence theatre. For the last decade she has been actively developing reminiscence projects for people with dementia and their carers. In 2000, she was awarded an MBE for services to Reminiscence and she continues to direct the European Reminiscence Network, lecturing, directing and training in reminiscence and related fields. **Errollyn Bruce** is a lecturer in Dementia Studies at the University of Bradford. In 1997, after joining Bradford Dementia Group she met Pam Schweitzer and joined the Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today project as an evaluator. The experience of bringing ideas together from the fields of reminiscence and person-centred dementia care fascinated her and fuelled an enduring interest in working with life histories in dementia care.

**Contents:** Foreword by Faith Gibson, Emeritus professor of Social Work, University of Ulster. Preface by Bob Woods, Professor of Clinical Psychology of Older People, University of Wales Bangor. Introduction. 1. Dementia and Reminiscence: Current Thinking. 2. Reminiscence in Dementia Care. 3. Reminiscence Skills and Methods. 4. Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today: A Programme and an Approach. 5. Organising an RYCT Reminiscence Project. 6. Training for RYCT. 7. Retracing the Life Course Through Reminiscence Sessions. 8. Final Comments and Future Hopes. Appendix : Useful documents. References. Index.

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*Also By Pam Schweitzer*

# Reminiscence Theatre

## Making Theatre from Memories

*Pam Schweitzer*

*Foreword by Glenda Jackson MP*

**2006 272pp 978 1 84310 430 8 Paperback £19.99**

Reminiscence theatre is about seeing and realising the dramatic potential in real life stories. It takes verbatim memories as the basis for theatre scripts, using the experiences of older people as a source of artistic productions and therapeutic creativity.

This book is a comprehensive guide to the nature, practice and therapeutic effects of reminiscence theatre. Drawing on examples from a range of real-life case studies, Pam Schweitzer provides practical advice on the process of taking an oral history, creating from it a written script and developing that into a dramatic production, on whatever scale.

The book outlines five components of key significance that the form affords: artistic development through creating original productions; cultural development, by creating reminiscence theatre in multi-cultural contexts, including dual-language productions; educational development through the intergenerational sharing and enactment of memories; psycho-social development for older people by reliving and reshaping past experiences; and health care, by using improvised reminiscence drama therapeutically with people with dementia and their carers.

This book will be of great interest to theatre workers, social work professionals and carers of older people, arts therapy practitioners and students in these fields.

**Pam Schweitzer** founded Age Exchange Theatre Trust in 1983. It was the first full-time professional theatre company to specialise in touring reminiscence theatre across the UK and Europe and Pam remained its Artistic Director until 2005. In 2000 she was awarded the MBE for services to Reminiscence and she continues to direct the European Reminiscence Network, lecturing, directing and training in reminiscence and related fields. She is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Greenwich.

**Contents.** Foreword by Glenda Jackson MP. Preface. Introduction by Faith Gibson. About this book. Background. **Part 1. Reminiscence Theatre. Process and Product.** 1. Setting Up a Reminiscence Theatre Company. 2. From Interviews to Verbatim Script. 3. Development of Verbatim Plays. 4. Reflecting a Multi-cultural Society. 5. Dramatising Jewish and Irish Elders' Memories. 6. A Sense of Time and Place. 7. Staging and Touring Reminiscence Theatre. **Part 2. Participatory and Inter-generational Projects.** 8. Theatrical Scenes Stimulating Audience Participation. 9. Reminiscence Theatre-in-Education Projects. 10. Reminiscence in a Youth Theatre Context. 11. Inter-generational Playmaking in Schools. **Part 3. Older People Dramatising their Own Memories.** 12. Older People Enacting their Own Memories. 13. Minority Ethnic Elders Make Theatre from their Lives. 14. Using Drama in Outreach Work and in Dementia Care. Conclusion. References. Index.

