Creativity Dementia and Storytelling – the wider context
Background

• Equal Arts 25 years experience of delivering projects with older people
• We aim to combat the isolation of older people by developing and delivering creative opportunities
• Currently working with 24 groups across the region and partnership work with Tyne & Wear Care Alliance, Housing 21, Gateshead Housing Company, Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums and individual residential care homes. We run an Activities Co-ordinators’ Network and an Arts & Dementia Network with 500 members.
Knitted Lives
creating the new from old stories
Brief history of reminiscence movement

• Life Review pioneered by Robert Butler (1963)

Why Survive – Being Old in America (1975)

Looking back to review your life in order to get ready for death – not developed for people with dementia
Roots of reminiscence theatre/storytelling

• Age Exchange established in 1983 – using verbatim theatre – emphasis on quality outcomes

• International Reminiscence Network in 1993

• Has had a major influence on emphasising the importance of “lifestory”
when the tunnel was being dug out you could tell how far the miners had got to by the sight of bubbles on the surface of the river
I went down a hill
I screamed
I thought it would
never stop
Reminiscence v Imagination

• Life Story work is now widespread – and the House of Memories project is based on the reminiscence model

• Ideas about working from a more creative/imaginative/multi-sensory place particularly with people with dementia
TimeSlips

• Creative storytelling method
• Devised by Anne Basting and developed at the Center on Age and Community at the University of Wisconsin
• Use imagination to create stories, triggered by a photograph
• Everything gets written down and repeated to the group
Mary F. Someone like us to teach tricks to Pogo.

Joy Loud no longer.

Mary F. We see our dog. Merry. Our dog.

Phil. 4 or 5 sleep as often.


Mary F. A little pool by the fence on it.

Phil. Surrounded by a fence around.

Mary D. What about the dog. What has the phil. It has.

Mary D. It it!
Other examples of storytelling

• Spare Tyre’s *Once Upon a Time*

“the here, the now and the future, recognising people’s creative abilities without resorting to prejudice, pity or notions of reminiscence about the good old days”  Arti Prashar