



Dementia Toolkit – Stay connected

Language and heritage



Dementia Toolkit
Living your life with hope



Stay connected

Language and heritage

First languages are important. We feel very connected to them. Dementia can make it harder to operate in another language. We need to consider how to stay connected to our first language and the heritage which reminds us of our identity.

In this booklet you will:

- hear how Welsh language and heritage can help people to live with dementia
- hear two perspectives on dementia in South Asian languages
- hear from museum officer Elen about writing a Welsh language book on dementia care



We speak in the same Mother Language so that we can express our feelings and opinion more easily.

A member of Chinese Wellbeing Liverpool's Dementia Network talking about speaking in Cantonese



Welsh language and heritage

We collaborated with Dr Catrin Hedd Jones from Bangor University and National Museums Wales to film at the National Slate Museum, Llanberis.

We have created two videos which you can watch on our website. These two videos are in Welsh with subtitles available in either English or Welsh.

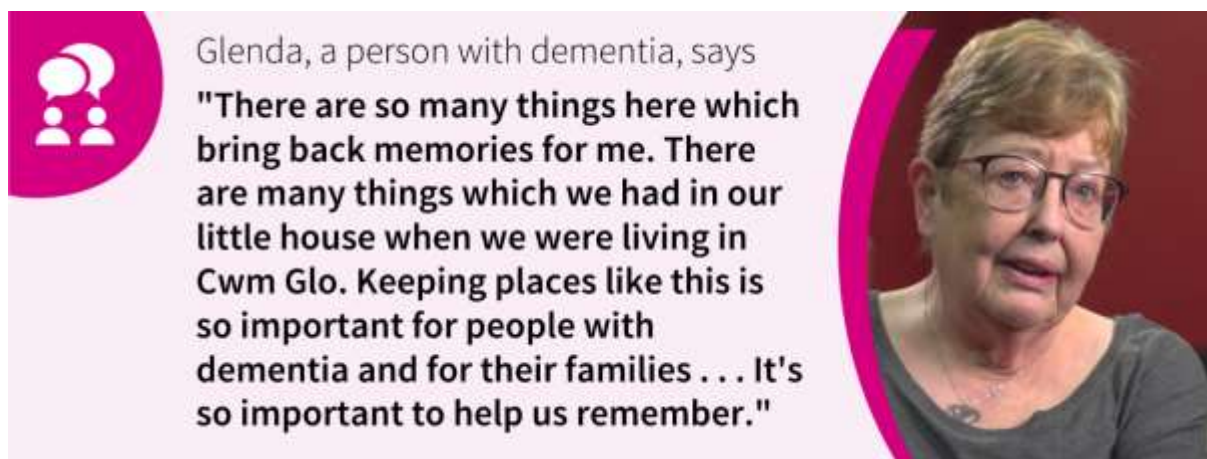
In the first video, Glenda (who lives with dementia), Catrin and Elen (who works at the museum) are in the caban. They discuss:

- the importance of mining to Llanberis areas nearby
- Glenda's memories of her own mining family
- passing on history to Bangor University students
- how museum spaces and collections can help prompt memories



In the second video, Glenda is in cottage at the museum which is decorated as it would have been in 1969. Among the things she discusses are:

- similarities between this house and ones she lived in as a girl and young woman
- the importance of children seeing how people used to live
- remembering watching Neil Armstrong landing on the moon!



South Asian languages

People living with dementia from a South Asian background may find it easier to speak in their first language. According to Census 2021, Panjabi and Urdu are the third and fourth most commonly spoken languages after English in the UK.

With the help of Abdul Shakoor, Dementia Link Worker, Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind, we are delighted to bring you two perspectives on dementia in these languages on the next page.

The first is a conversation in Panjabi with a British Pakistani woman living with dementia in Oldham.

The following quote is taken from this conversation. You can listen to this conversation in full and download an English translation on our website.

“

I don't talk to anyone outside my family: it's just you I talk to. My neighbours call me, my son and daughter in law say, "talk to us" so I say "ok, talk to me", but I just feel isolated and don't feel like talking.

A British Pakistani woman living with dementia

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The second is a conversation in Urdu with a British Pakistani man living with dementia in Oldham. He served in the British Army during World War II.

The following quote is taken from this conversation. You can watch a video of the full conversation and download an English translation on our website.

“

When someone comes it makes me feel good. Like you came today to see me, so I feel good.

A British Pakistani man living with dementia

”

A Welsh-language memory book

There are many resources out there to help document somebody's life, but Elen created something new: one in Welsh. On our website you can watch a video in which she explains:

- why she created the book
- which memories might be specific to Welsh culture and which are shared
- how readers have responded to the book

The following quotes are taken from this video:



Elen Roberts, Museum Officer at the National Slate Museum, says

"I just could not imagine asking her the questions in this book about her childhood, about how she felt about various things, through the medium of English because that was our second language."



Elen Roberts, Museum Officer at the National Slate Museum, says

"You can talk about things like the Brownies and the Guides in the English experience, but for the Welsh it would be the Urdd and how important going to Glan Llyn or Llangrannog was. And also, how important things like Sunday school trips were."





“

Sometimes I will say "Guten Morgen, Mutti" to trigger her back to her youth (she is Austrian), but this doesn't always work.

A carer speaking to our researchers

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This resource is on the internet. Use the camera on your phone or tablet to scan the QR code below to visit the webpage.



Contact us

We would love to know what you think of the toolkit. We want to improve it based on your feedback.

Please get in touch with us by emailing
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