

# Banbury Museum & Gallery

# REMINISCENCE

## A Skill Sharing Toolkit



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# PART 1

# INTRODUCTION



Images of our Younger Self - Reminiscence June 2024

## WHAT IS REMINISCENCE

A Reminiscence session seeks to engage senior members of a community or group through the experience of exploring and sharing memories. It offers the chance to meet and share stories, images and objects of life experiences.

## WHY RUN A REMINISCENCE SESSION?

Reminiscence sessions encourage social inclusion and emotional well-being. They reduce loneliness, help people feel heard, reinforce their sense of belonging and reaffirm their identities and roles. Reminiscence also encourages cognitive stimulation through social interaction, mitigating some of the cognitive decline that occurs with age.

At Banbury Museum & Gallery we know that this peer support fosters friendships and social well-being within our participating groups.

## WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM REMINISCENCE SESSIONS?

Reminiscence sessions can benefit all kinds of people, from a range of backgrounds and life experiences. Understanding your audience will help you determine the commonalities between your group participants.

At Banbury Museum & Gallery our sessions are advertised for older people aged 50+ but predominantly utilised by those in their 80's & 90's. Understanding our age profile, helps determine suitable topics and resources that will relate to them.



# WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit is for groups, organisations, care settings, community leaders or anyone involved with organising events for older people, to understand how to put together a successful Reminiscence Session or programme.

It has been designed to give a framework from which to design your own session.

To build this toolkit the team at Banbury Museum & Gallery has drawn on more than 15 years of experience of running and supporting Reminiscence Sessions. It has been designed to offer practical support as well as guidance on best practice and give an indication of resources that may be needed. However, it is not exhaustive and depending on the needs of the participants involved, some groups or individuals may benefit from additional resources or support.

# WHAT IS IN THIS TOOLKIT?

- Format framework
- Suggested session seating layouts
- Case Study-Banbury Museum & Gallery
- Example session resources including memory prompt sheet.
- Example consent form.



Above: Reminiscence group canal boat trip

**"If you like history,  
this gives you value."**

Reminiscence participant



Above: Reminiscence Heritage Walk, Bridge Street area, Banbury, July 2025



# PART 2

# FORMAT FRAMEWORK

## Planning Your Session

### Audience

Your audience may already be a pre-assembled group, through a museum, history society or caring organisation. Or you may need to advertise or market your event to reach new participants.

A pilot programme of 3 sessions is a good way of introducing a reminiscence activity to a group of participants.

**We recommend contacting Banbury Museum & Gallery to arrange to observe one of our Reminiscence Sessions first hand.**

Seeing a real life session in action will help you discover if the aims of your project can be met through these types of sessions. It will show how a session runs in practice and how to utilise some of the resources in this guide.

When funding your session may need to consider venue rental hire, printing and distribution of promotional material, prompt materials on the topic and refreshments.

You will also need to think about how your sessions will be run and who will be responsible for assembling session content, providing and making refreshments, set up and clear away the space, and be responsible for the secure storage of consent and contact forms.

### Ideas for Marketing

If this is a new service, here are some cost effective ways to spread the word!

- Posters in community centres, libraries, shopping centres and partner organisations.
- Parish council newsletters
- Leafleting in your local area.
- Email Newsletters
- Social media platforms like Facebook offer spaces where posts are easy to share and where specific communities, ages and interest groups can be targeted.

**Don't forget 'Word of Mouth' is a very powerful tool. Engage with those already interested in your project or group.**



# Venue & Accessibility

## Things to consider when choosing your venue:

- How participants will travel to your venue and how easy is it for them to do so?
- Can transport be funded or will walking, driving, parking, and public transport be available. Does guidance need to be offered to participants prior to the session?
- How easy is access to the room for participants using mobility aids? Consider step free and level access routes.
- Providing refreshments, how and where can these be accessed?
- Are toilets and emergency exits easily accessible?
- The space should be in a quiet environment avoiding distractions to produce the best results.

## Session Length

- Sessions range between **45 - 75mins** depending on needs of participants and venue availability.
- Remember to leave additional time for room set up, break down and for refreshments.

## Session Size?

Suggestions for different group sizes:

- **Small groups:** Between 10-12 participants seated around a single table space (2 or 3 tables together). This allows for better eye contact, ease of hearing and more opportunities to contribute to discussions.
- **Larger groups (15+)** may require 2-3 table set ups. Very large groups of 20+ may require more than one facilitator to guide the session.

## Role of the Facilitator

A good facilitator will:

- Be a good listener.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as 'when', 'how' and 'what' to encourage deeper reflection.
- Be organised and able to guide a group, keeping them to time and ensuring fairness.
- There may be times when they need to gently intervene when sessions go off topic and encourage everyone to participate.



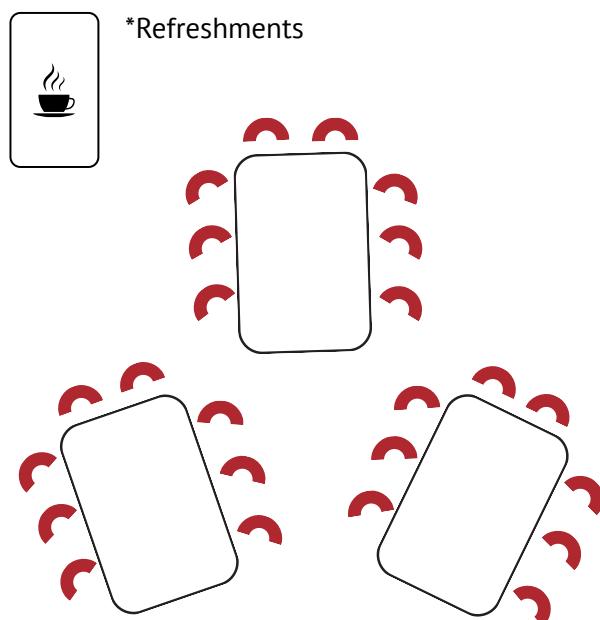
# Room Set-Up

Your room set up will depend on your participants needs and space available. The diagrams right give two examples.

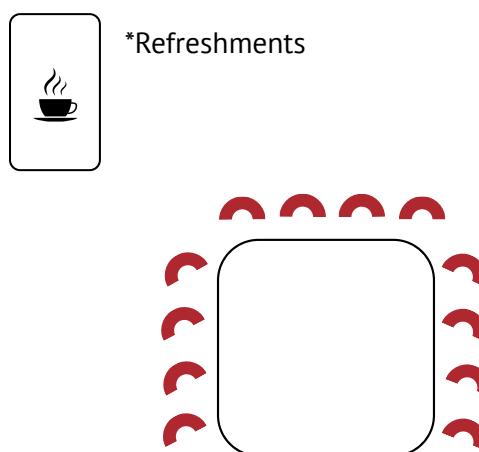
- Tables and chairs set up with space to move around them.
- Include seating placed at a slight distance from the table arrangement to allow anxious participants the opportunity to have a quieter space.
- Decide where the front of the room is for set up of screen, handling table, sound amplification equipment etc. (positioning of laptops and power supplies may determine this if they are needed).

- Your projector or display will act as a means to share resources, provide prompts or visual cues. Slides should include large fonts and high contrast content. Keep the number to a minimum to aid discussion.
- Smaller group (up to 12 persons)  
1 x large table area with seating around 3 sides if focal point is at the front of the room.
- Larger group (15 persons +)  
3 x table area with seating around 3 sides arranged to enable all participants to see forward (see diagrams)
- Designated refreshment area unless drinks etc. are prepared outside the room



## Projector/Display



## Projector/Display



# Session Content

## Choosing Your Topics

Organisers/facilitators could suggest generic subjects such as 'the first home I remember', school days, decades of housework for example. Local locations are popular as they evoke the concept of place-based identity, particularly meaningful for older adults who have seen these spaces change over time. Also popular are memories of lifetime landmarks such as marriage.

With an existing group or care setting, service users could be consulted on ideas for subjects to discuss prior to a reminiscence activity. Once the activity is established, participants can be encouraged to suggest subjects for discussion. This can promote engagement and ownership of the activity.

## Session Resources

Prior to the session(s) a selection of subject linked resources to stimulate discussion and memory should be provided for participants.

This could be in the form of an interactive resource relating to the subject to draw participants attention. For example:

- Poem
- Reading
- Object
- Film clip\*
- Music\*
- Sound clip\* (\*may need internet access)

**Subject choice will determine the success of your session(s). It's crucial to engage your participants and incorporate their contributions and choices into your programme.**



Reminiscence Session - Kidlington

A selection of open, memory prompt questions printed and placed on the table(s) for participants to read when sat down is very useful for supporting memory recall (larger print for those with visually impairment) and an indicator of the session content.

Encouraging participants to bring along personal items to share (preferably relating to the session topic) is key to participants feeling valued and provides the opportunity for a bonding process.

**See overleaf for a case study & example memory prompt sheet**



# Case Study

## Reminiscence Session

### Topic: 'Delivered to your Door'

Banbury  
Museum  
& Gallery

From a session delivered to  
'Times Gone by' Banbury, Banbury Museum & Gallery,  
7<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

#### Slide Show Resources



James Hobbs  
New Road, Grimsbury

Hobbs  
dealer in  
Oils & Hardware  
(1879 - 1977)



Arthur Hobbs elder son  
of James Hobbs

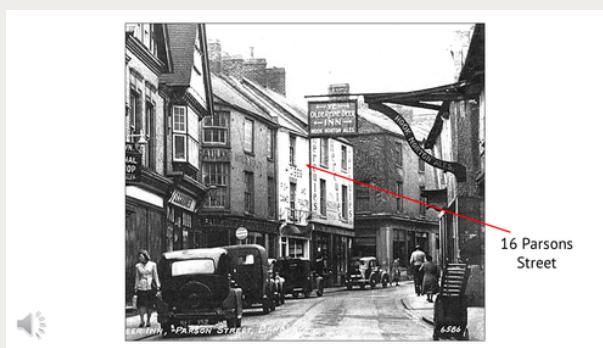
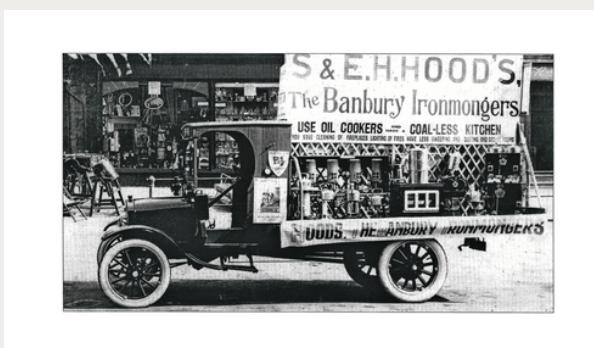


#### Farewell to business



William Hobbs younger son  
of James Hobbs

Ronald Hobbs son of  
William retires in 1977



Co-op delivery van 1930s



Banbury Dairy delivery van



Included in this pack were two sound clips 1-2min in length.  
You can listen to them using the QR code (right) or visit:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@BanburyMuseumandGallery>





## **Memory Prompt Sheet**

### **'Delivered to Your Door'**

- 1. What do you recall being delivered to your door when you were a child?  
(ie. coal, bread, milk)**
- 2. Which of the local businesses provided a delivery service or had a van that would park up in the street?**
- 3. How familiar or well known to you were those people who made the deliveries?**
- 4. What form of transport did they use?**
- 5. How dependant were your parents on goods being brought to the house?**
- 6. Why did those delivery services that were a large part of everyday life die out?**
- 7. How do the modern day delivery services compare to those of yesteryear?**

**PLEASE USE THESE QUESTIONS AS A GUIDE FOR THE DISCUSSION AND MAKE NOTES IN THE SPACES TO REMIND YOU IF YOU WISH.**



Reminiscence Session - Kidlington

## RECORDING & CONSENT

You may be planning to record your sessions either for an oral history project or as a way to preserve the outcomes of the project.

Facilitators will have to decide how they would like this recording to take place and what equipment they might need.

It might be as simple as using a phone or tablet as a recording device or you may decide to invest in a more established set up.

As a minimum we recommend:

- Audio or video recording device.
- Wireless microphones
- Portable speakers- for amplification

Wireless microphones are also useful to ensure contributions can be heard by all during your sessions.

Participants are required to complete a consent form to allow the group facilitator to make and store audio or video recordings, photographs taken during sessions and storing personal contact details that have been recorded on the contact form.

Be aware the contents of your sessions might include personal, sensitive or emotional content so communication with your participants over this data is crucial.

**Participants need to understand what they are consenting to, how this information may be used, especially if it is to be shared in marketing, or report making. An example of a consent form can be seen on page 13.**

## CONTACT

Personal contact details are required in case of an emergency, to update and remind participants of future activities and to alert them to any necessary changes that have been made to planned activities.

Care services may already hold this information but new groups will need to ensure this process is undertaken at the beginning of the programme or session.

Not all your participants will have access to email or be computer literate. With established groups, informal networks between members might help to ensure any changes to schedules are communicated or travel arrangements made.

However it is the facilitator's responsibility to ensure they have a primary means of contact for all.



## Collecting & Storing Consent Forms

If you are storing personal data, you need to be familiar with the principles and best practice of GDPR regulations in the UK.

This includes:

- Only collecting and storing personal data that you need and reviewing this regularly. Any outdated or unnecessary data should be removed from your records.
- Participants can request to know what data you hold on them and withdraw consent at anytime. Ensure you have practices to respond to requests for personal access.
- Personal data needs to be kept secure. Access should be restricted to those that use or need it such as the session organiser. Consider passwords for digital documents or secure storage for paper records.
- Never give out any form of participant personal data such as contact details to another participant or organisation without express permission from the attendee.

This list is not exhaustive and more information can be found on the website for the Information Commissioners Office <https://ico.org.uk/>.



Reminiscence Session - Kidlington

See overleaf for a an example  
Consent form.



# Consent Form

## Photography and Oral Recording at Banbury Museum & Gallery

On occasion Banbury Museum & Gallery like to photograph Reminiscence Sessions and events that we organise. The images taken may be used for marketing and promotional material. They may feature online, through social media, digital outlets, in printed marketing materials and for evaluating activities and events.

We are also compiling an oral history archive of memories, stories and details from the past to be used in the follow ways:

- with school groups and other educational establishments including use in research
- as part of an exhibition or public performance including lectures and talks
- on our website to promote our services to the public

Please complete and sign the statement below if you are willing to be included in photographs and oral recordings.

I..... (PLEASE PRINT) agree to feature in photographs and oral history recordings commissioned by Banbury Museum & Gallery. I understand that photographs taken may be used in any media, and in marketing, promotional and evaluation material. Also, recordings made may be used in ways as stated above.

Date:

Signed:

Contact No:

Address:

Note: Banbury Museum will not share your personal details with any other party, unless specified on this form. All images and recordings will be held securely by Banbury Museum & Gallery, and images will not be altered in any way but recordings may be edited. All material will be treated respectfully by the museum. Under GDPR legislation you may remove or change your consent at anytime however we cannot promise we will be able to remove printed material already in circulation. Should you wish to change or update us on your provided consent for the images used, please contact [enquiries@banburymuseum.org](mailto:enquiries@banburymuseum.org).

# FAQ'S

These are some final things to consider. For any other additional help or support you can contact the Reminiscence Team at Banbury Museum & Gallery at [enquiries@banburymuseum.org](mailto:enquiries@banburymuseum.org).

## Should we charge for our sessions?

You will have to make a decision as to whether your session will be fully funded or if participants will need to contribute.

Fully-funded can broaden inclusion, while a small charge to cover refreshments may encourage commitment and perception of value in the activity.

## How to deal with dominant voices?

How to make everyone feel welcome and ensure everyone feels heard can be one of the more challenging aspects of running a Reminiscence Session.

Facilitators might try using prompts, or time keeping to keep discussions on track. Time and space for topic tangents can be useful and engaging but ultimately, strategies to ensure all participants are able to contribute may have to be deployed. Diversifying topics for discussion, may allow different members to contribute at each session.

## Where can I find information about how to make oral recordings?

We recommend looking up The Oral History Society website ([www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org)).

## Where do I look for information about local history groups, events and publicise our reminiscence activity?

The Oxfordshire Local History Association has lots of useful information. Visit [www.olha.org.uk](http://www.olha.org.uk) for more help and useful resources.



Times Gone By Banbury accessible theatre trip 2024

# WITH THANKS



This document has been put together with contributions from the Banbury Museum & Gallery Reminiscence Team.

Special thanks go to Bridget Duru, who whilst doing her Occupational Therapy training, provided us with her thoughtful observations and help with our sessions. Her thoughts have greatly contributed to this document.

## Supported by



## Next Steps:

Contact us to arrange to observe one of our Reminiscence Sessions first hand.

[Enquiries@banburymuseum.org](mailto:Enquiries@banburymuseum.org)