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Memories of the Caribbean

Sharing life experiences, memories and stories
from the past.

WINDRUSH
DAY

Reminiscence and Dementia

'Reminiscence' means sharing life experiences and memories from the past. Typically, a person living with dementia is more able to recall things from many years ago than recent memories, so reminiscence draws on this strength. Many of our conversations and interactions rely on short-term memory, so reminiscence can give people living with dementia a sense of competence and confidence using a skill they still have.

When a person shares something about their past and another shows interest or enjoyment, it is a wonderful opportunity to feel a sense of purpose and value.

Talking about the past can also bring up happy memories and good feelings, increasing someone's wellbeing.

It is also the case that reminiscence can sometimes provoke painful memories. Emotional reactions are not necessarily a bad thing, but we need to respond sensitively.

This reminiscence box, carefully and lovingly created by members of the Caribbean Social Forum, with the National Maritime Museum's resources, provides prompts and stimuli inspired by their experiences from the Caribbean and early years in the UK.



To start, explore some of the memories shared here by members of the Caribbean Social Forum in response to images from the Waterline Collection.



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This picture reminds me of Carriacou Grenada getting ready for Regatta which happens on the 1st August every year. It's a sport where all the little boats go racing and it starts from Hillsborough which is the Capital on the jetty and there are loads of people gathering round ready to watch the race.

Brenda

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This picture reminds me of my dad's district of Arcadia which is just past Morant Bay in St Thomas on the east side of Jamaica. When you're looking down you can see the sea and the houses. It reminds me of back in the 90's even up to last year [2020] when I went up there it remains the same.

Henry

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I was born in Jamaica, Kingston, and this reminds me of ... the seafront in Kingston. I used to go there and swim at a place called Hatton Cove. You had a big tank out in the sea where the ships used to come and deliver whatsoever. Why I remember it so much is because I used to go out there and swim and a friend of mine used to say "oh he can swim and he is good at swimming". We went out there one Sunday swimming. You know the inner tube for the car we used to have one of them and blow it up and we go swimming on it. What happened suddenly you hear psssssssss and it start leaking and we were the distance (approx 20 feet) from the land and he panicked and jumped off. He used to say he can swim ... but he couldn't swim and he keeps on trying and trying to get up and I was quite a young little boy, nearly 11 then, and he drowned. The only thing I could do was swim from there to where people were swimming and I tell them that he is drowning. Everyone swam out there and couldn't find him. The next time I see him was in the box.

Neville

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This reminds me of when you go to the beach, and you see the fishing boats coming in. The people are there, and the beach houses are there where you could go and buy your fish cakes and things. This reminds me very much of home in Barbados seeing all of that.

Peggy

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This particular picture reminds me of the beach in Carriacou Grenada in Hillsborough the town where, as a child growing up, we always used to go there. I always used to think those palm trees were quite frightening because they hung over, and especially in the shade, for a 7-year-old, you do feel frightened by that. It very much reminds of that beach.

Velmar

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This picture reminds me of when my father left Jamaica to come to England. My mother took me down to Kingston Harbour and the impression of this ship is so vivid as my father boarded the ship bound for England and I was only a wee boy of about 7, the memory still stays with me.

Winston

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This project was instigated by the Caribbean Social Forum in response to a growing need in their community. Thank you to members of their working group who volunteered their time, skills and memories to develop this resource.

Thank you to Urban Dandelion for facilitating the development of this resource.

For more resources to support those living with dementia and inspired by the collections of the National Maritime Museum, visit rmg.co.uk/remembrance



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