



March 2014

Newsletter No. 72

Brain Waves



A monthly newsletter from Innovations in Dementia CIC

The aim of these newsletters is to keep people with dementia and their allies informed about the work of Innovations in Dementia Community Interest Company.

Celebration at Royal Albert Memorial Museum

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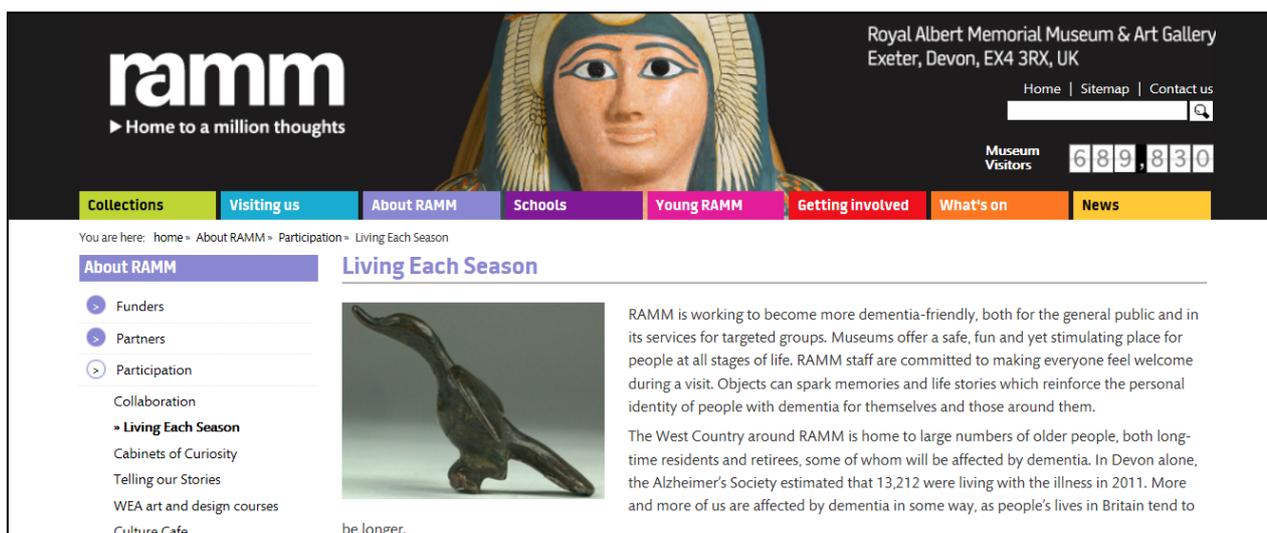
Celebration at Royal Albert Memorial Museum

In late March, we marked the end of our joint project with the Exeter Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) with a celebration.

We were working with the museum to explore different ways in which the museum could work with people with dementia. We also wanted to find out how the museum could make its mainstream provision more dementia-friendly.

We started last spring with two “walk-throughs” with people with dementia. We identified a range of issues affecting people with dementia. We used the results to raise awareness of dementia with staff and volunteers. We pointed out areas where people with dementia might have difficulty and what staff and volunteers might do to help.

Then, in October we started working with a group of people with dementia around the theme of “the seasons”.



The screenshot shows the RAMM website interface. At the top, the RAMM logo is displayed with the tagline "Home to a million thoughts". The header includes the museum's name and location: "Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3RX, UK". Navigation links for Home, Sitemap, and Contact us are present, along with a search bar and a "Museum Visitors" counter showing 689,830. A horizontal menu bar contains categories: Collections, Visiting us, About RAMM, Schools, Young RAMM, Getting involved, What's on, and News. The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail: "You are here: home » About RAMM » Participation » Living Each Season". The "About RAMM" sidebar lists: Funders, Partners, Participation (with sub-items: Collaboration, Living Each Season, Cabinets of Curiosity, Telling our Stories, WEA art and design courses, Culture Cafe), and a "be longer." link. The main content area is titled "Living Each Season" and features an image of a dark bird sculpture. The text below the image states: "RAMM is working to become more dementia-friendly, both for the general public and in its services for targeted groups. Museums offer a safe, fun and yet stimulating place for people at all stages of life. RAMM staff are committed to making everyone feel welcome during a visit. Objects can spark memories and life stories which reinforce the personal identity of people with dementia for themselves and those around them. The West Country around RAMM is home to large numbers of older people, both long-time residents and retirees, some of whom will be affected by dementia. In Devon alone, the Alzheimer's Society estimated that 13,212 were living with the illness in 2011. More and more of us are affected by dementia in some way, as people's lives in Britain tend to

Curators bought in a range of different objects for us to handle, including jewellery, textiles, stuffed birds, carvings from around the world, coral, and bird eggs.

The thoughts of the group about each item were recorded and many of them will be added as commentary to the items in the museum's online collection. We thought that people with dementia would bring a unique perspective, and we were not disappointed.

At the final celebration, people were presented with “talking picture books”. Each page of the book contained a picture of an object they particularly connected with. At the bottom of each page was a button which triggers a short audio clip which reminds the person what they had said about the object.

Although this project has finished, it was such a success that we are now talking to RAMM about the possibilities for future collaborations.

An evaluation report will be available soon.

European awards for dementia projects

On 25 March 2014 in Brussels, a number of awards were made for innovative projects that improve the quality of life for older people. Ten awards were made by the “European



Foundations’ Initiative on Dementia” (EFID) to projects in eight different countries. All the initiatives help people with dementia and their families to lead fulfilling lives and play an active part in their local communities.

Two projects from the UK won awards. They are ‘Dementia is Everyone’s Business – North Lanarkshire Partnership’ from Alzheimer Scotland and ‘Coming Together’ from EDUCATE (Early Dementia Users Cooperative Aiming To Educate) in Stockport.

Last year Steve from Innovations in Dementia supported the Forget me Not Group in Swindon to give their views on applications for these awards. As the awards were all about dementia, we were really pleased that EFID asked us to gather the views of people with dementia. Steve reported the views back at the selection panel meeting and was really impressed by how well the panel listened to what people with dementia had to say.

Before the awards ceremony Steve delivered a workshop to support the winners to improve their engagement of people with dementia. His workshop was based largely on the guides produced through the Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project (DEEP) with people with dementia - a lesson in itself to people who think that people with dementia have little to contribute.

Involving people with dementia in developing dementia-friendly communities in Australia

Alzheimer's Australia is working to develop dementia-friendly communities and organisations in Australia to tackle the stigma and social isolation which can be associated with a diagnosis of dementia.

They have invited Rachael to give a series of interactive workshops about involving people with dementia in the development of dementia-friendly communities. The workshops will be for people with dementia, carers, service providers, businesses, and local government representatives in nine different locations across Australia.

Rachael will be discussing strategies and approaches for involving people with dementia based on the outcomes of the Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project (DEEP), and providing an overview of the dementia-friendly work taking place in the United Kingdom in order to share the experiences and lessons learnt from this work.



**Innovations
in Dementia**

Innovations in Dementia is run by three directors – Rachael, Steve and Nada. We are a Community Interest Company. This means that any profit we make is put back into the organisation.

We do not offer services for people with dementia.

Instead we work with other organisations to make sure that people with dementia can continue to take part in their communities and have active lives.

Please share your ideas, experiences and positive stories with us.

Contact us

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