

**Imagined futures : designing future environments for the care of older people**

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# **Imagined futures: designing future environments for the care of older people**

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**Imagine the place you  
would like to live when you  
are very, very old...**



# Definitions

**Care home:** *An institution which provides accommodation together with nursing or personal care...* (Meyer et al 2011)

## Interesting spaces



# Aims of research

- To form an understanding of the practices and principles of the image making process as a technique for beneficial engagement of older people
- To examine whether the process of taking photographs by older people in residential care provides them with a means of describing and illustrating their experiences
- To explore the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which influence people's ability to use photography as a medium for expression in the care setting
- To understand some of the cultural and organizational factors impacting on the process

**Reflexive Photography**

**Identification of Setting**

**Ethical Approval and Permissions to Undertake Research**

**Strand 1: Ethnography**

Culture of photography in the care home

- Observations
- Informal Interviews
- Formal Interviews
- Hypothesis and Checking Theory

Workshops  
Participant  
Observation  
Recruitment

**Strand 2: IPA**

Life world of older person

- Phenomenological Interviews





# Findings

- The lived experience of residents was broad and wide ranging.
- Even within the same care home there was no single experience,
- Multiple transitions
- Design did not always support this process



# Familiar activities become alien



*I love to have a drink from a nice cup. This isn't the kind of establishment where you get china though. It is strictly pot here dear.*

# My things but not me...

- A number of participants described how other members of the family or staff had chosen the objects and possessions in their rooms. The lack of opportunity to plan for the move to the care home meant that they had been denied the opportunity to make their own choices as to what to bring. The objects they were surrounded with therefore reflected something of how others saw them or the priorities others placed on particular items.
- The objects and possessions individuals used to engage in meaningful activity in many instances were lost

# The meaning of things...



*I took this picture, well because it is the only link I have to my life before. Everything else was sold to pay for me to come in here. I went into hospital and they said 'we'd like you to visit a place where you'll be looked after but you'll have to make your mind up quick. I left the hospital and came here and just never saw my house again. This was the only thing the staff brought back. I think everything else that couldn't be sold was put in a skip....I feel sad about that...a lifetime of memories in a skip*

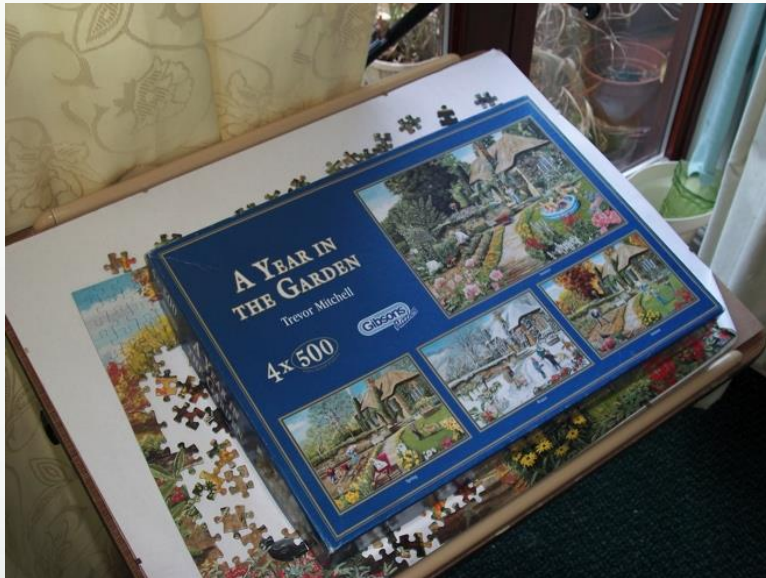
Participants were not only coming to terms with living in an alien environment they were also coming to terms with the physical changes and the medical conditions that had directly contributed to the decision to move into the care home.

# Navigating spaces

*That walker is really important...I bought that myself..I used to have two sticks and I'd be padding along and they'd say why don't you have one of those three walkers and then Jane said why don't you buy something so she got me a catalogue and I chose that out and they came and showed me how to use it and I find it very useful. I put my handbag in there...it makes you feel capable of doing something*



# **Value of methods used**



## Creative use of metaphor

The puzzle

*'There are so many pieces, I am trying to find where they all fit.'*

*'It's tricky. I think I have all the pieces and then there is another one which I need to place. It is always necessary to find the key...I spend much of my time thinking, putting everyone into their place. I need to unlock the answer.'*



# As a 'bargaining tool'



*You'll think I'm crafty but I said to x [names member of staff] I'm doing this work for Claire and I need to take photographs to show what's important. Well I could murder a box of chocolates!! And guess what they bought me some. And so they should. I've also used it to get that nice orange juice instead of that let down stuff*

# Power



*From now on I intend to call her Mrs. Prickle. Well she just is and there isn't any need for it. I'm going to stick this on the wall and then when she comes in bossing me around I'm going to stare at it really hard.*

**Value of the method as a meaningful  
activity: families and staff**

# Reflections: the role of design

- Rich area for design to focus
- Design has important role to play in supporting individuals in managing transition particularly in relation to initial transition/archiving and curating of valuable objects, understanding their meaning
- Design of environments can support individuals facilitating access to elements of the home, providing opportunities to continue to engage in the things people find meaningful
- Need to explore further this interpretation of 'designing for home' and what that means

- Design and creative practice as methods in research are a good starting point in giving people a voice
- Perhaps greater question is the role of design in helping society to re-think the bigger picture in relation to the care of older people

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