

BBC Reminiscence Archive and running effective reminiscence sessions: A guide for families and carers.

Introduction

This guide explains how to use the BBC Reminiscence Archive (RemArc) and how to run an effective reminiscence session for a person with dementia (PWD).

RemArc can be accessed here:
<https://bbc.in/ra>

About reminiscence work

The principle of reminiscence work is to assist people who have dementia to interact and converse in a natural way by stimulating their long-term memory with material from the past. It is often the case that long-term memory can still function when the person's short-term memory is degraded.

Tapping into long-term memory can make it possible once again for them to enjoy interacting with others, through their stories and memories. Typically, people with dementia's strongest memories are from when they were aged between 14 and 40 years old.

Academic studies have shown that reminiscence work can improve the relationship between people with dementia and carers. Various reminiscence 'tools' have been developed and are in use around the world.

About BBC RemArc

This online archive of BBC video clips, audio clips and images provides access to a selection of content from the BBC Archives, designed to support reminiscence work with people with dementia, their carers and families.

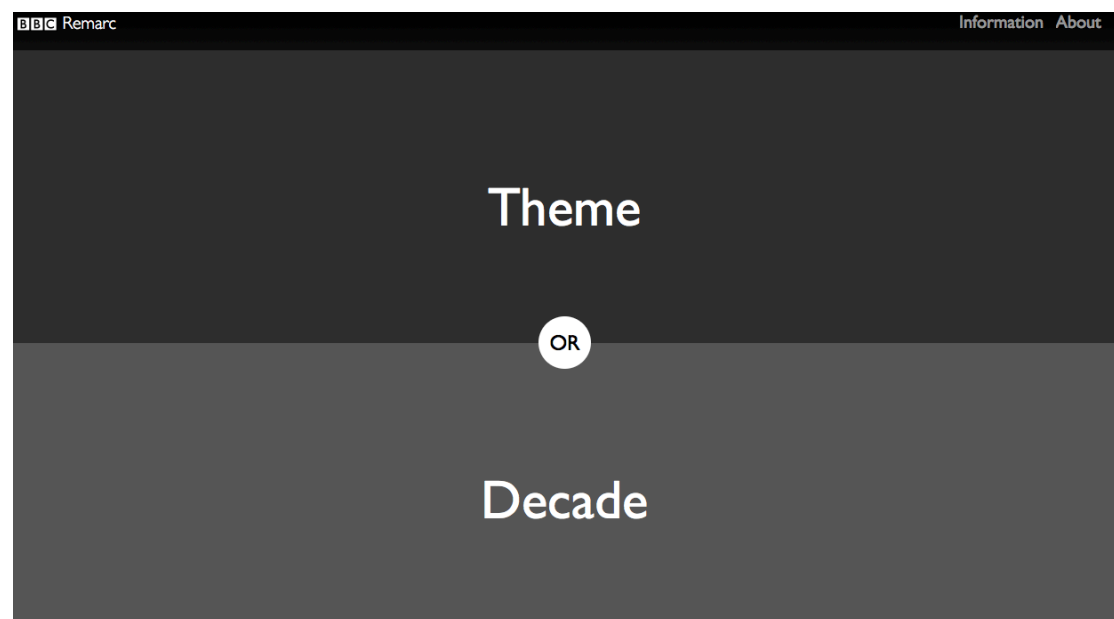
The pictures and clips are organised in to *Theme*, such as family, childhood, sport; and *Decade*, ranging from the 1930s to the 2000s.

RemArc can be accessed via a computer, a tablet (such as an iPad) or a smartphone. An Internet connection is required.

Using RemArc

This section explains how to operate RemArc. The section below explains how to run a good reminiscence session.

When you go the RemArc URL, you will see this



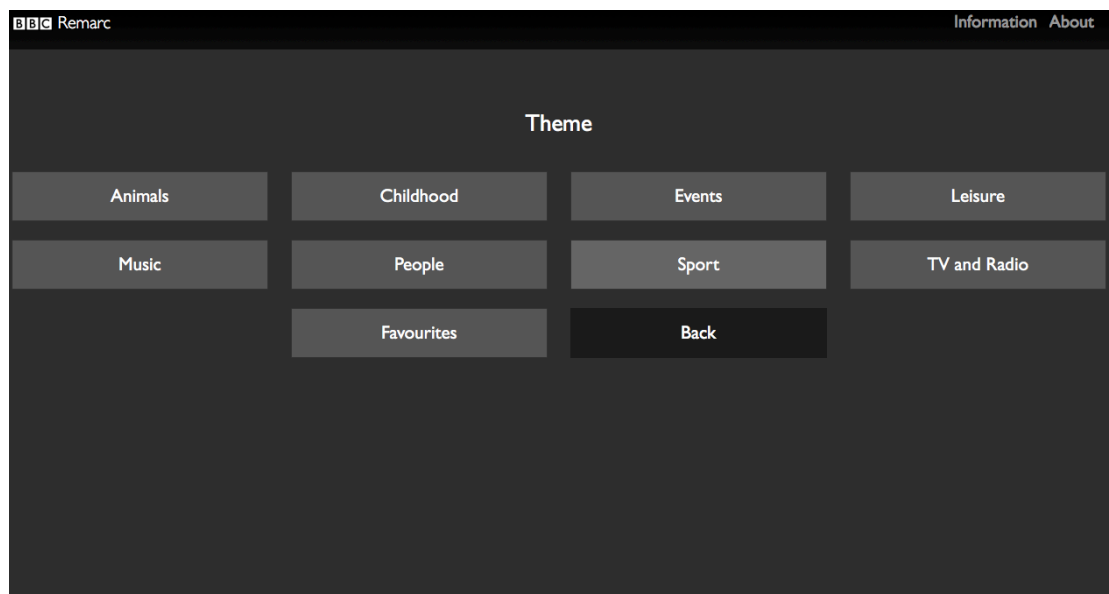
You can either 'operate' RemArc on behalf of the PWD or let them do it themselves.

Firstly, either ask the PWD whether they want to select from 'themes' or 'decades', or choose which yourself.

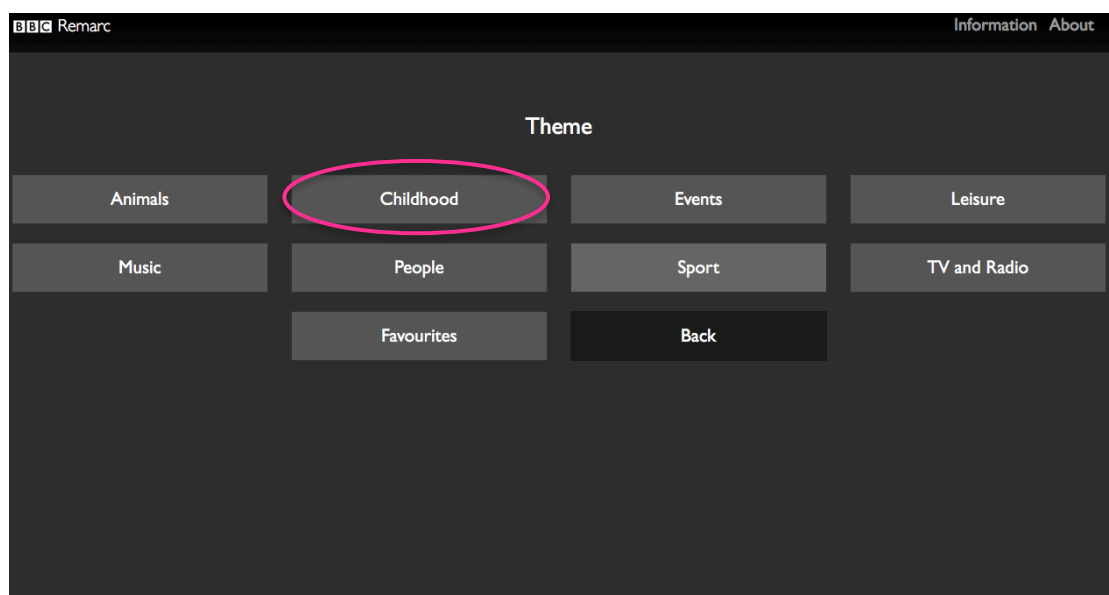
If they want 'theme', touch the top half of the screen.

If they want 'decade', touch the bottom half of the screen.

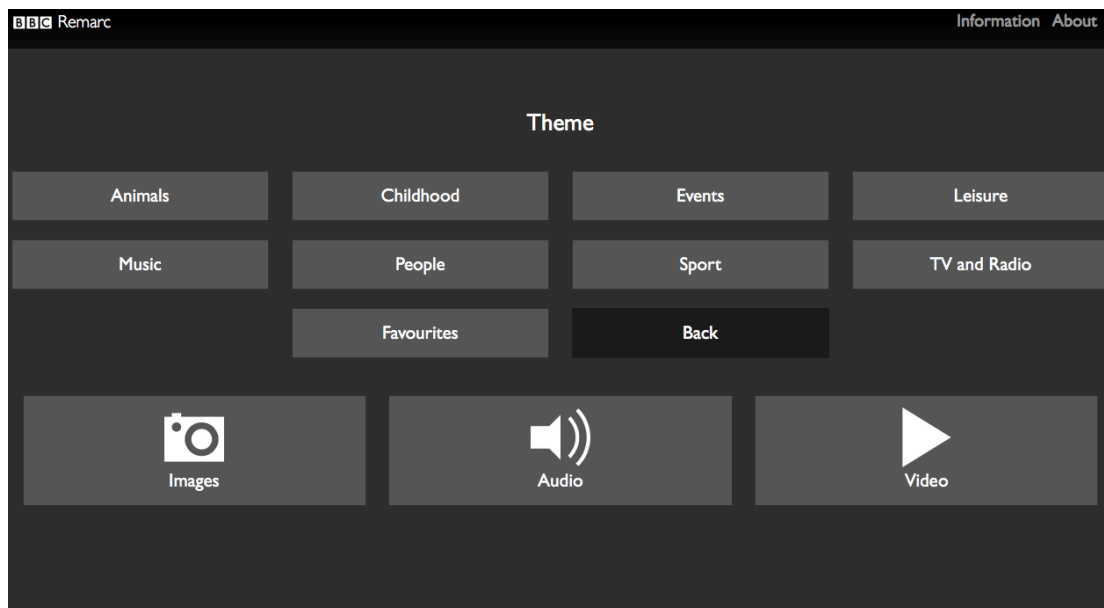
If you select 'theme' it will look like this:



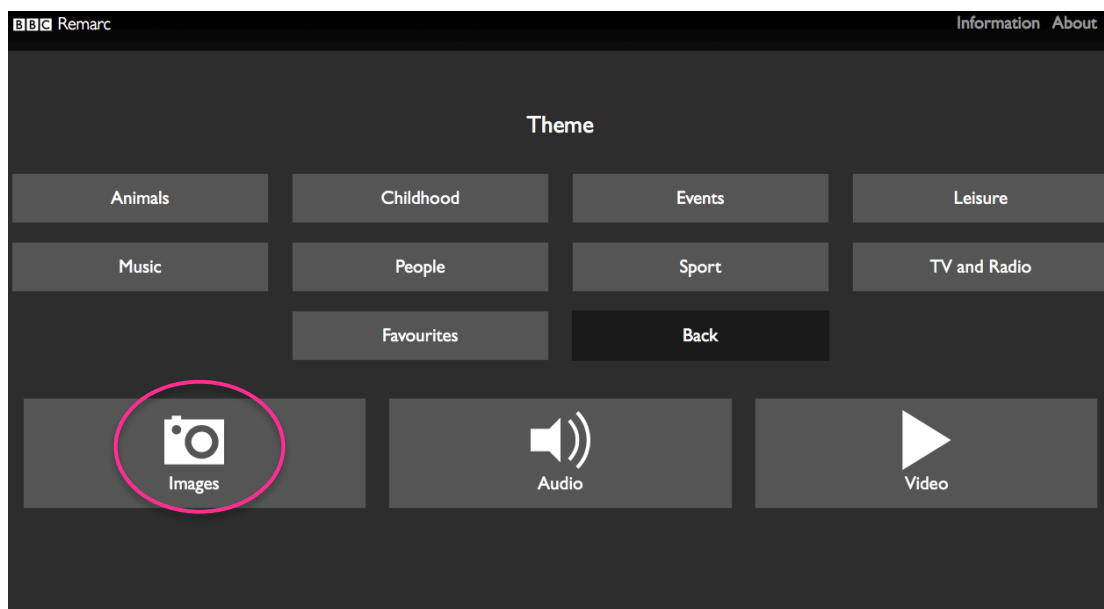
Then select a theme by touching the relevant button:



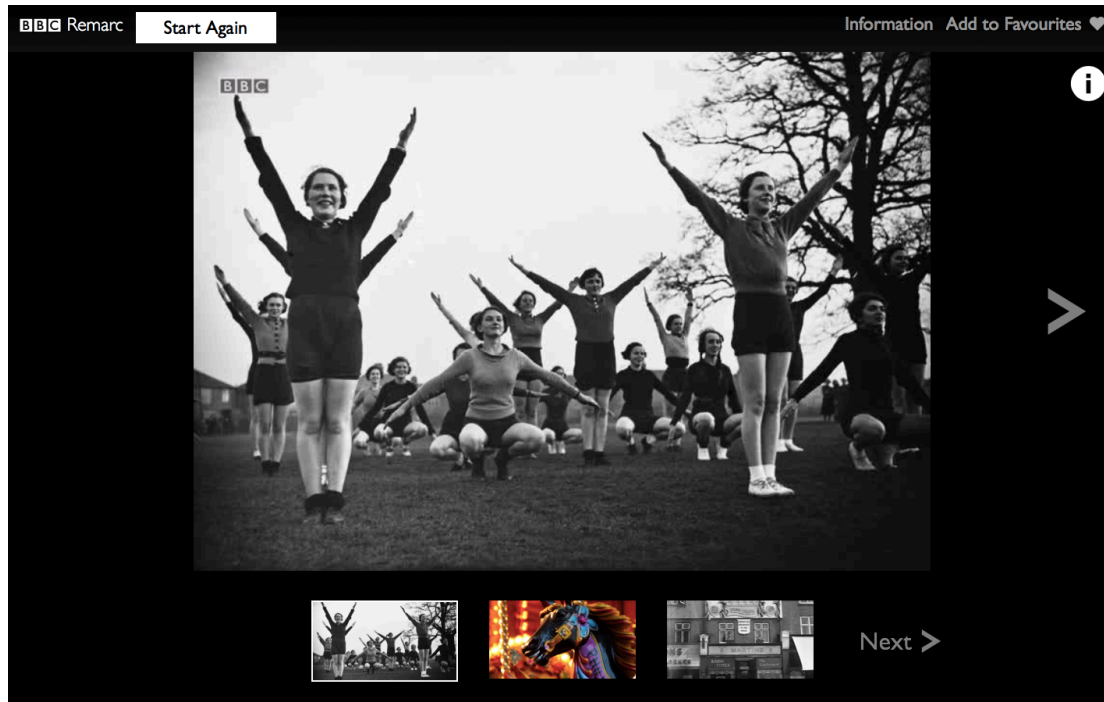
The screen will look like this:



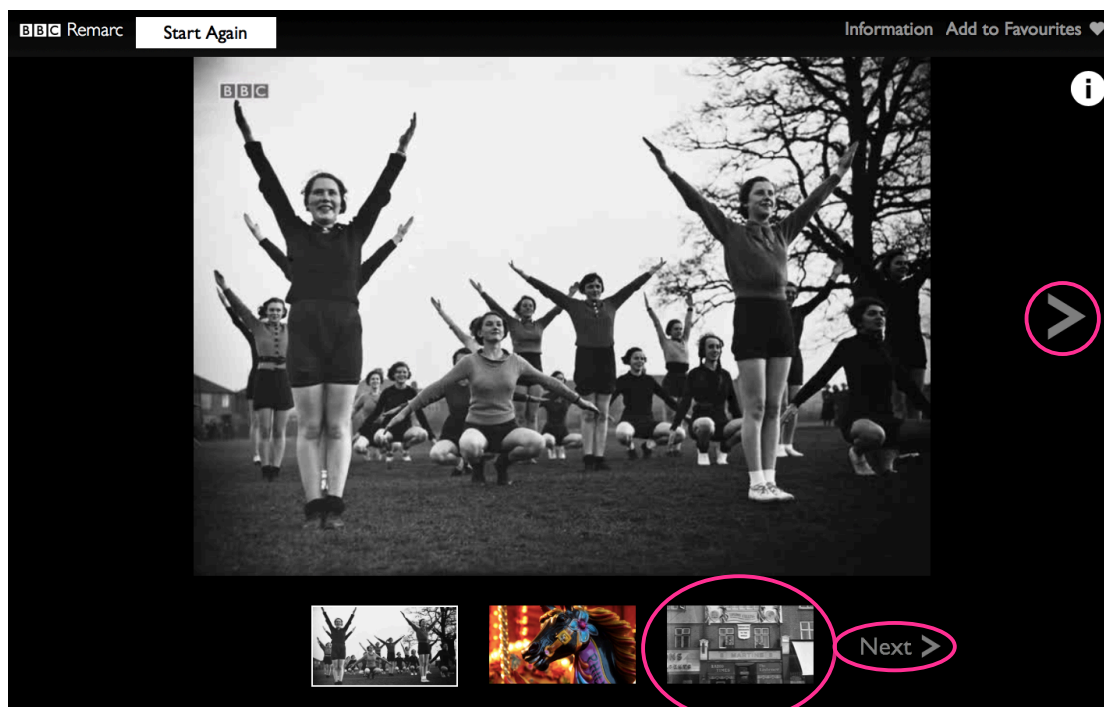
You then need to choose whether you want to see images, listen to sounds or watch film clips.



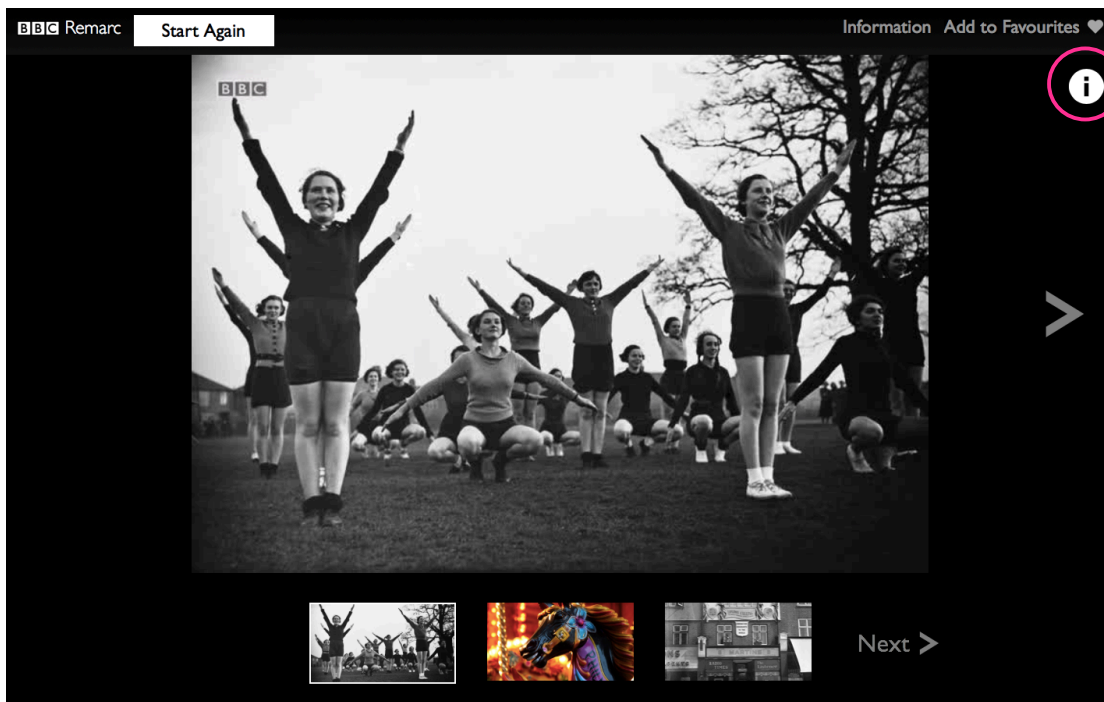
If you chose 'Images', the screen will look something like this:



At this point, you or the PWD can either talk about the image displayed, or look through other images until they find something they want to talk about, either by 'swiping' the screen, or by touching one of the small images at the bottom of the screen, or by touching the small grey arrows:

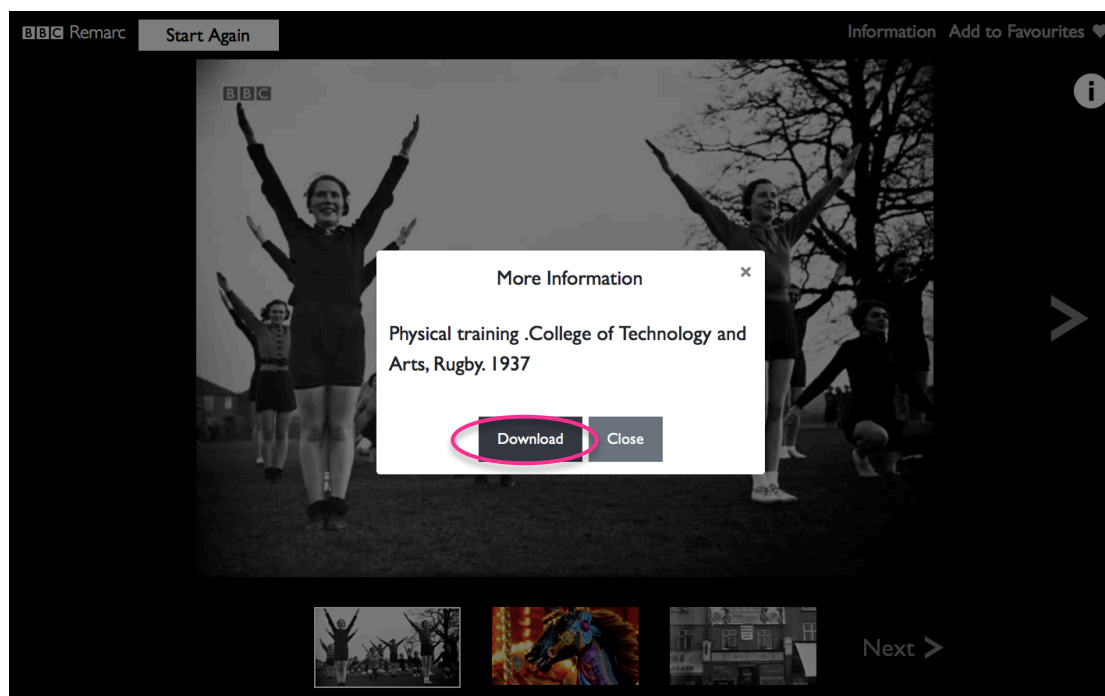


If you wish to find out more information about the photo, video or audio clip, you can press the 'i' button, as shown here:



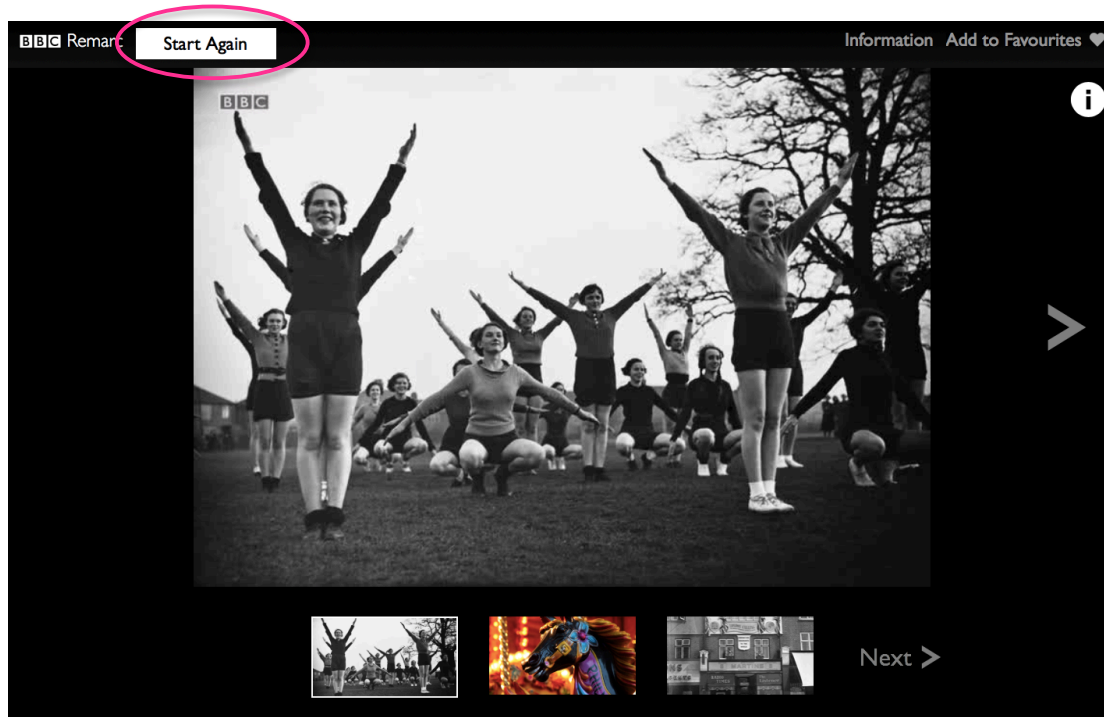
You will then see an information box pop up:

You can download this image by selecting 'Download'. This will save a copy of this image to your device.



You can close this pop up by pressing 'Close' or touching anywhere else on the screen.

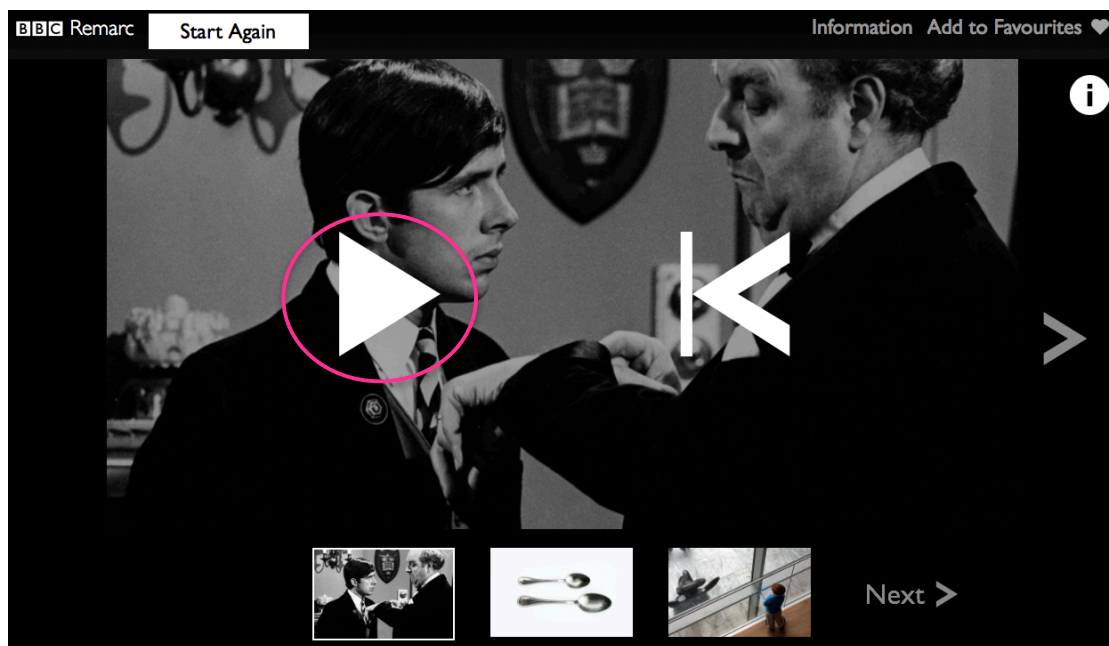
You can return to the first screen at any time by pressing 'Start Again':



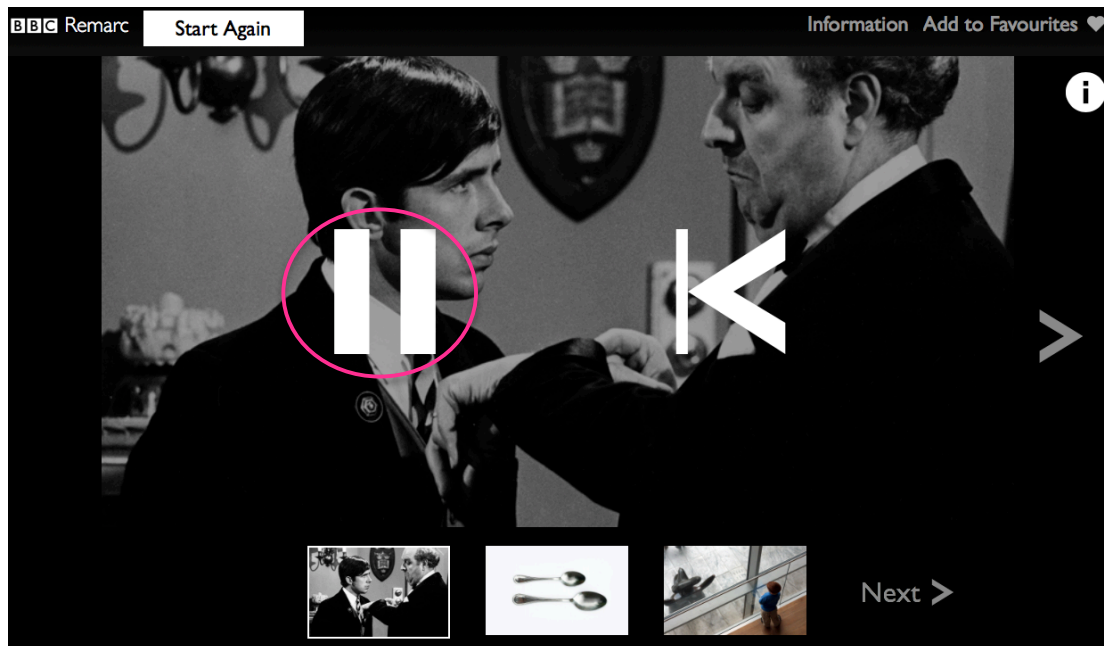
OTHER OPTIONS – VIDEO AND AUDIO

If you selected 'Decades' instead of 'Themes', the process will be more-or-less identical to above: you can use the arrow buttons to scroll through different audio or video clips, or swipe the screen to move on to the next item.

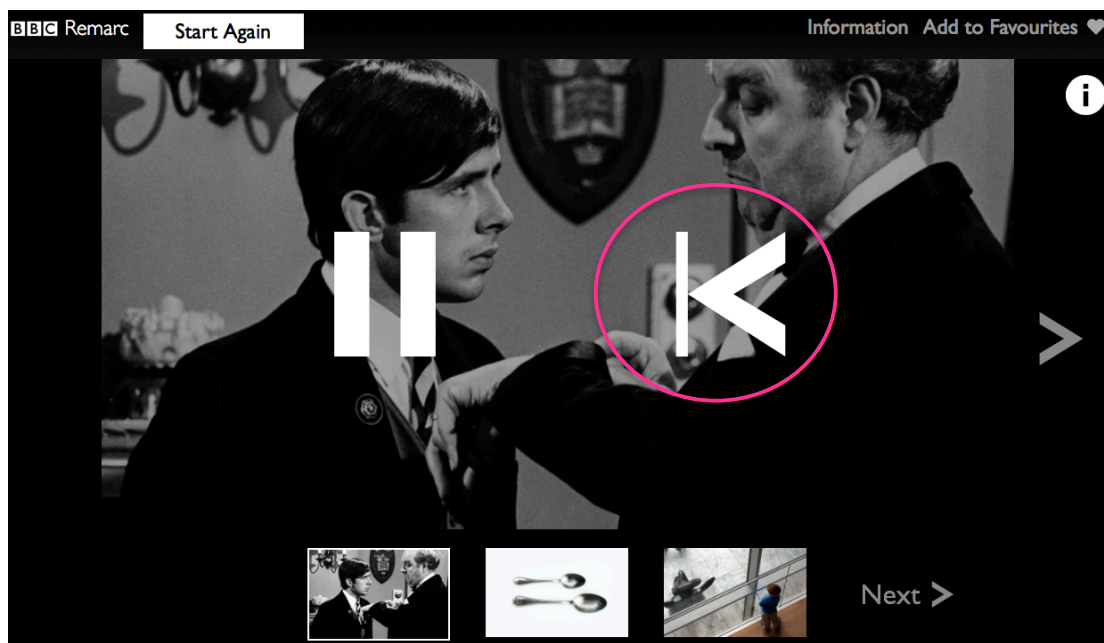
If you selected 'Audio' or 'Video' instead of 'Images', the material should start playing automatically after a few seconds. If not, press the button as per the picture below:



If you need to pause the image when the PWD starts talking, press the same button.

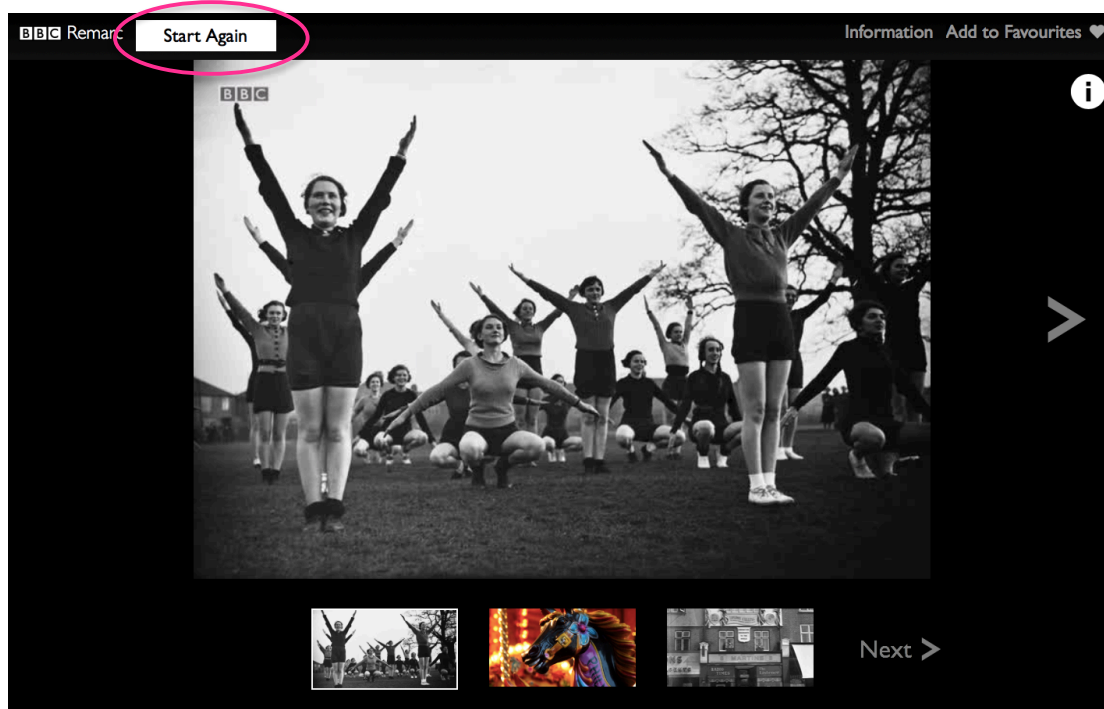


If you need to return to the start of the clip, press the arrow shown in the picture below.



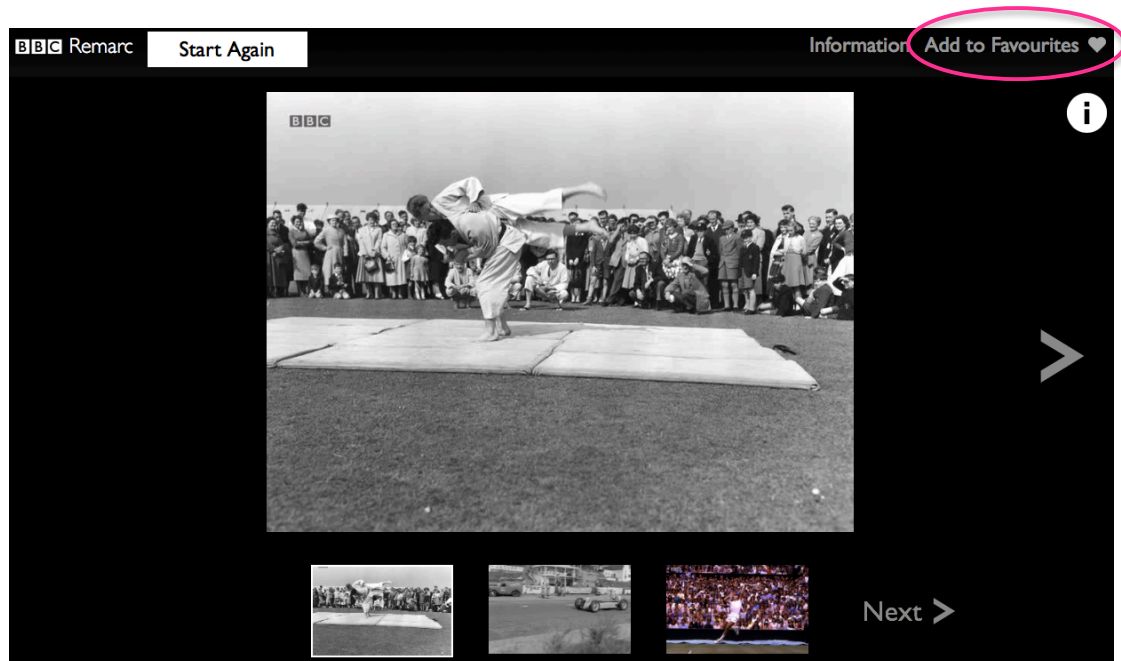
GOING BACK TO THE FIRST PAGE

If you make a mistake, or if you want to return to the first page, simply press 'RemArc' which is at the top left of the screen, or press the 'Start Again' button, as shown below:



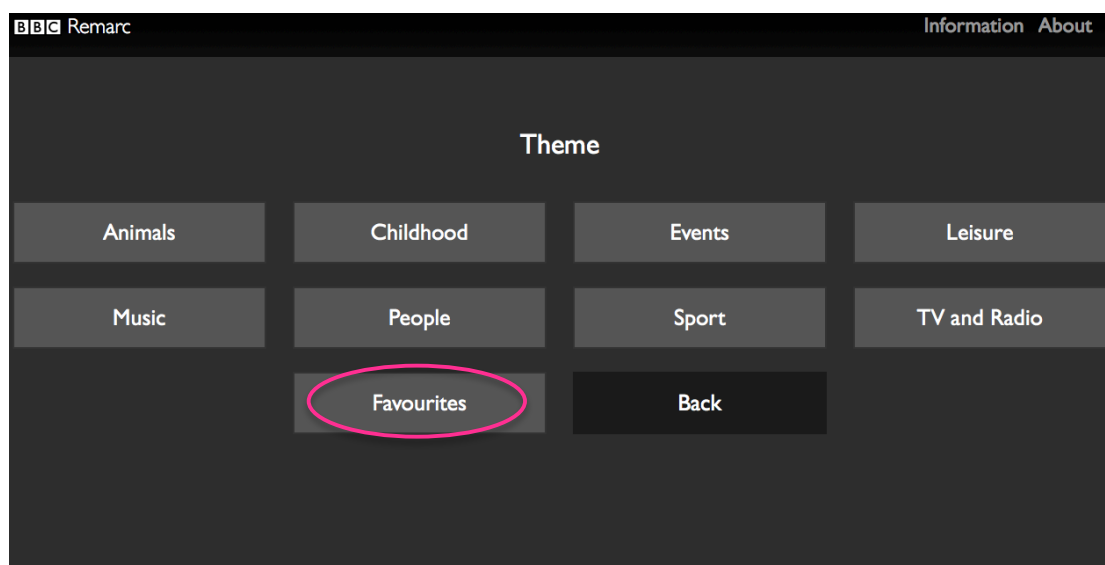
SAVING FAVOURITES

If you want to come back to a particular picture, audio clip of film clip later, you can click on the 'Add to favourites' icon in the top right corner of the page, as shown below.



VIEWING FAVOURITES

You can find your saved 'Favourites' by clicking on the favourites button on either the 'Theme' page or the 'Decade' page, as shown below, then selecting 'Image', 'Audio' or 'Video'.



Guide to running RemArc Reminiscence sessions

A good session length is about 20 minutes.

On-to-one (one carer / facilitator sitting with one PWD) sessions are best.

Two or three people together is also ok but you will need to ensure that all of the people in the group get a chance to participate.

The purpose of the session is to get the PWD to talk and / engage in conversation. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' things to say.

In introducing what is going to happen do not refer to 'computers' or 'tablets' or 'the internet'.

Don't make it a quiz show! Don't say things like '*Remember this? Remember that?*' or '*Who is this?, Where is that?*'

It is best to say things like:

'We have some wonderful old photos and clips from the BBC here we thought you would enjoy.'

Or

'Would you like to see some great old photos and film clips?'

NOTE: The purpose of the media is not its value in itself but its ability to stir the memories of the PWD. Sometimes these memories may be about things which are only indirectly related to what is being shown. For example, a picture from VE Day might not be recognized by the PWD, but perhaps they remember their father having a trilby hat similar to that worn a man in the picture, and want to tell you about this.

The facilitator / carer should give as much opportunity for the PWD to be active and not just a passive recipient. For example, asking *'What would you like to see - photos, films or music - 1950s? 1960s?'*

Then saying e.g.

'Wow - what do you think is happening here?'

*'Have *you* ever [name of activity being shown]'*

'He/she looks awfully sad/peculiar/pleased with himself '

If a PWD starts to speak during a film or sound clip pause it right away and let them have their say.

If they are not speaking as you go through a number of photos, give your own running commentary about what the photos are showing and ask them for their thoughts regularly.

Photos are often best for prompting stories and recollections.

Spoken word and film clips are good in that they might provoke a memory that a photo would not.

Finally, remember that it does not matter if the story provoked is not really to do with the material on screen!