

Mr Alzheimer's Goes to Toyland



Emma Smith and Dr Joy Watson
Illustrated by Paul Loudon



This is the first published edition of Mr Alzheimer's Goes to Toyland and is part of the Mr Alzheimer's Goes to School campaign. The campaign has been developed by Salford Inspire, an Age UK Salford project.

Written by Emma Smith and Dr Joy Watson and illustrated by Paul Loudon, it is based on the character Mr Alzheimer's created by Dr Joy Watson.

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For more information – www.ageuk.org.uk/salford

Salford Inspire, Age UK Salford, 108 Church Street, Eccles, M30 0LH



Improving
Dementia Care
ESRC-NIHR

A bit about Mr Alzheimer's...



About Mr Alzheimer's

Mr Alzheimer's was designed by Joy to help her explain to her own grandchildren how her dementia makes her feel. The teddy bear has a happy side in yellow and a sad side in blue. In this story Mr Alzheimer's turns blue when he feels sad! Joy wanted Mr Alzheimer's to help other children to learn more about dementia, which was the start of the Mr Alzheimer's Goes to School Campaign. Joy and Emma both work on the Salford Inspire project.

What is the Mr Alzheimer's Goes to School Campaign?

If you are reading these words then you are part of this Campaign!

Joy and Emma wanted to do something that would get young people talking more about dementia. They spent two years working with three Salford primary schools to decide what this 'Campaign' should look like.

They designed the Mr Alzheimer's pack with help from children (just like you!) from St John's CE Primary Schools in Salford. The children suggested that Mr Alzheimer's needed a bag

and a diary for them to record their adventures in, they also thought that the teddy should be smaller (he was really big when they first met him!). Later they helped to develop the cartoon cards, puzzles, games and this story! The Mr A Team at St Andrew's CofE primary school also provided some amazing ideas around this Campaign.

When we chatted with children in the pilot schools we found out that some of them had grandparents or family members living with dementia but nobody had talked to them about dementia. This Campaign gave them a different way to talk about dementia with their family. Children who didn't know anybody living with dementia were interested to find out more about the disease with their families and friends. All of the children loved taking Mr Alzheimer's home!

So now we need you! We want you to talk about Mr Alzheimer's and dementia in school with your teachers, dinner ladies, caretakers and friends, at home with your family and in the places you go to with your friends and family.

Enjoy Mr Alzheimer's Goes to Toyland!



Mr Alzheimer's Goes to Toyland

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Mr Alzheimer's needs to buy a birthday present for his granddaughter, Chloe!

It's morning time, Mr Alzheimer's stretches his long arms. He spots a post-it note on the lamp.

'Oh it's Chloe's birthday, I need to buy her that jigsaw!'

He has put post-it notes all over the house to help him remember. (Can you spot them in the pictures?)

Mr Alzheimer's goes to the bathroom and washes his face. He sees another post-it on the mug where his false teeth are soaking. He puts his clean teeth in – *'hmmmm – nice and shiny!'*

Mr Alzheimer's dresses, pops his favourite slippers on and goes down to the kitchen singing:

♪ *'Post-it notes help me to remember, to buy a jigsaw from the shopping centre'* ♪



'Oh it's Chloe's birthday, I need to buy her that jigsaw!'





‘Where’s the milk? Why is it not in the fridge? Oh it’s in the washing machine – how did that happen?’, Mr Alzheimer’s doesn’t know!

He spots another post-it note on the fridge – ‘Oh it’s *Chloe’s birthday! Righto – let’s get that bus!*’ He goes off to find his coat singing a song:

♪ ‘Post-it notes help me to remember, to buy a jigsaw from the shopping centre’ ♪

Mr Alzheimer’s puts on his coat and checks he has change for the bus and his wallet to buy the present.

Mr Alzheimer’s makes a cup of tea.

‘Why is it so sweet?’

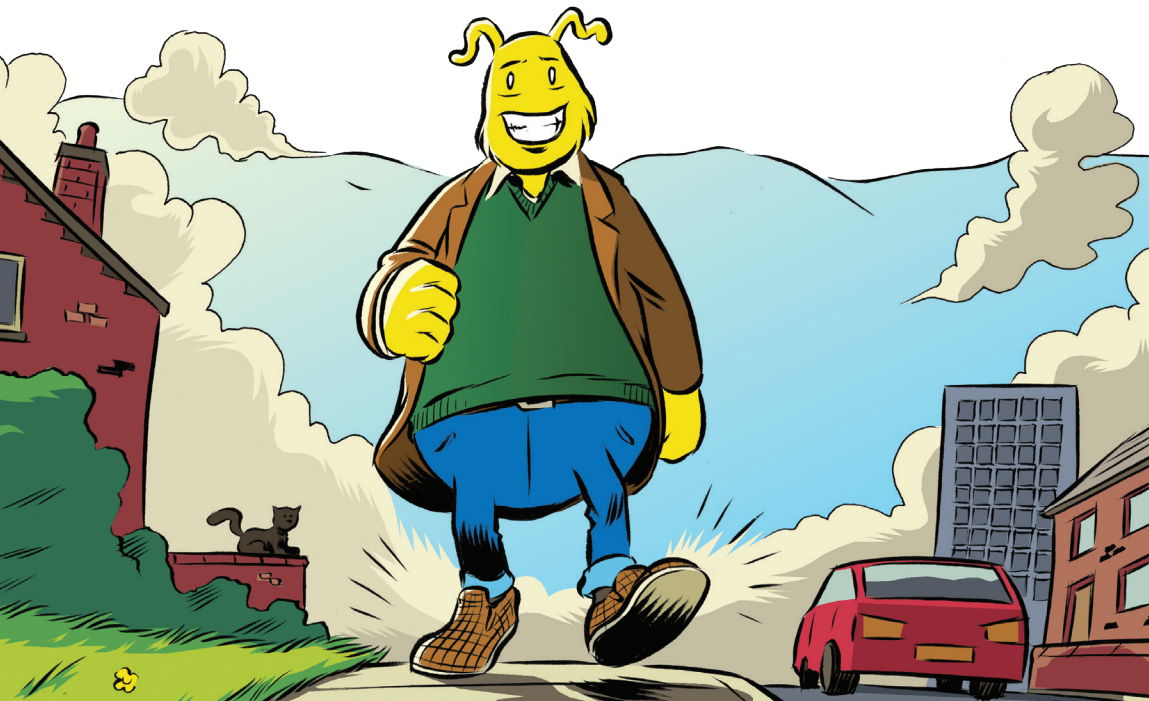
(oh no – he’s made his tea in the sugar bowl). His tummy rumbles and it reminds him that it’s breakfast time. He gets out a bowl, spoon and a box of cereal.



Mr Alzheimer's is ready to leave the house.

But he can't find his keys, 'oh there they are!', he spots them on a special hook near the door. 'Off we go then!'

Mr Alzheimer's walks to the bus stop. It's such a lovely blue sky day. He feels so happy, he smiles at his neighbours and tickles a black cat sitting on a wall, who gives him the loudest purr!



'Here it is' Mr Alzheimer's has arrived at the bus stop. He looks down at his feet

'Arghhh

I'm still wearing my slippers!
Oh no, the bus is on it's way.'



He shrugs his shoulders, 'never mind!' and gets his money out ready to pay.

'I don't want to be struggling when the bus gets here!' thinks Mr Alzheimer's. 'One for town please?' he asks the driver. He has a handful of coins but can't quite work out which ones he needs to pay with.

The kind driver helps him to find the right bus fare and gives him a ticket. Mr Alzheimer's is so happy that he can still find his way around town.

The bus is really busy.

Mr Alzheimer's finds a seat next to a woman and her little girl.

She looks about the same age as Chloe thinks Mr Alzheimer's as he gives her a big smile. *'I'm off to that big toy shop in town to buy my granddaughter a jigsaw for her birthday'*, he tells the little girl and her mum.

'I love jigsaws, I have a seaside jigsaw with donkeys on the beach. What's the shop called?' asks the little girl. Mr Alzheimer's thinks for a while but the name just won't come! *'I I I I can't remember the name but I know exactly where it is!'*, he replies. The little girl gives him a lovely big smile!



'We're walking past that big toy shop, would you like to walk with us?'



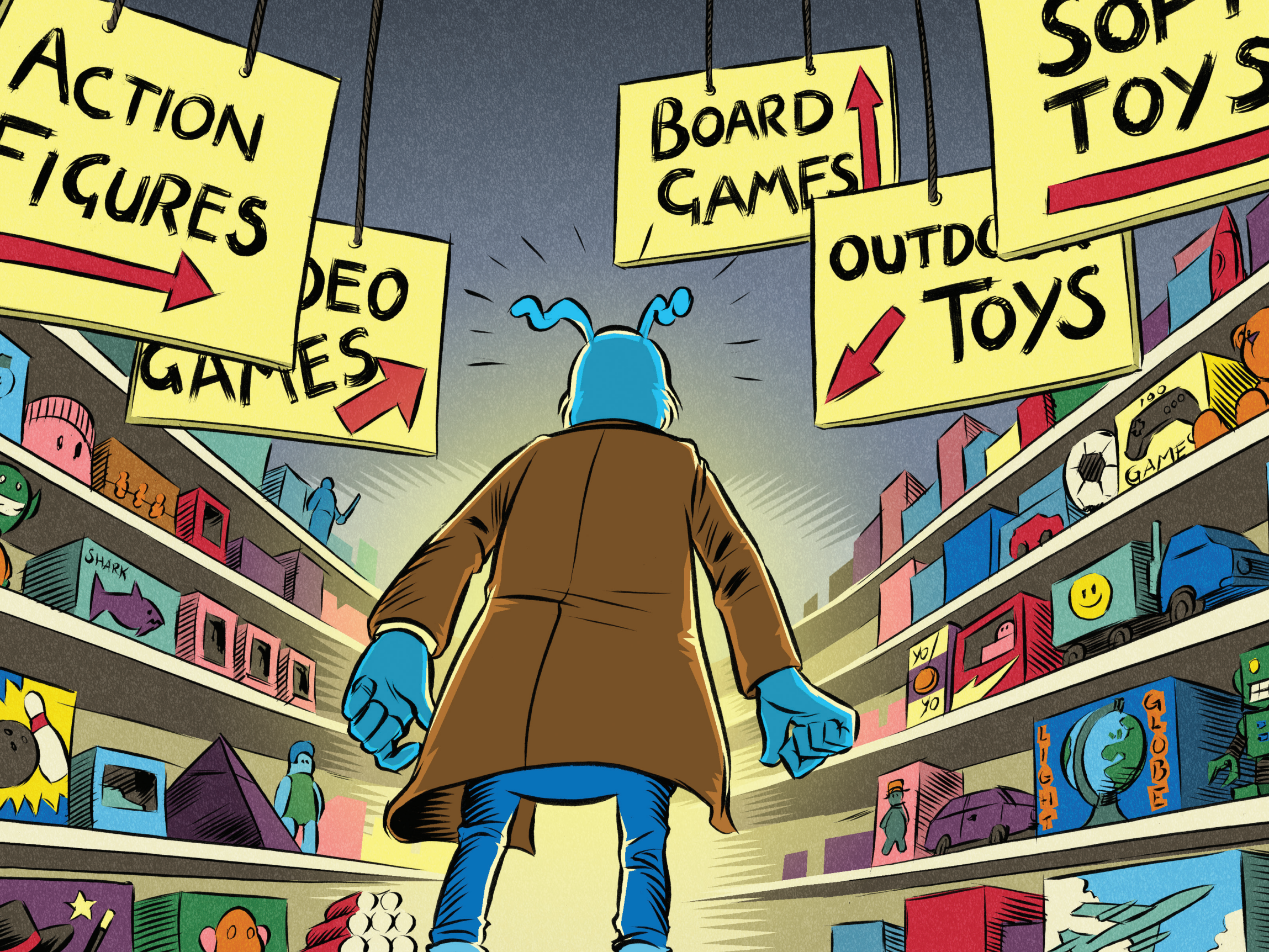
The bus arrives in town and Mr Alzheimer's gets off.

'Thank you driver'. He looks around. It all looks so new. So different! He can't spot any of the old shops. 'Oh dear!' he mutters to himself.

The little girl and her mum get off the bus, they go over to say goodbye to Mr Alzheimer's. They quickly notice that he looks lost.

'We're walking past that big toy shop, would you like to walk with us?' asks the mum. 'That would be lovely, thank you', replies a very relieved Mr Alzheimer's.

'Lovely chatting to you both, cheerio', says Mr Alzheimer's to the mum and little girl as he walks through the automatic doors of the toy shop.



The toy shop is enormous!

'Right then, let's find that jigsaw for Chloe'.

There are so many aisles with shelves that reach the ceilings, filled with brightly coloured toys, books, teddies and more.

Mr Alzheimer's starts on the first aisle, *'how will I ever find the right present for Chloe?'* he worries.

It feels like he's been looking at toys for hours, his head hurts, his feet are sore, so many bright colours, so much noise.

Just when he feels like going home, he spots it – the perfect present. A giant, round, sunshine yellow space hopper with a smiley face on it.

'Perfect', says Mr Alzheimer's as he looks for the tills so that he can pay.



Mr Alzheimer's finds the tills!

It's so busy, there's already a queue behind him. The friendly shop assistant asks, *'have you got your L Plates for that space hopper?'* Mr Alzheimer's chuckles and explains that it's for his granddaughter.



Where should he put the card? He can't remember. So many people in the queue now – he can hear them muttering *'hurry up'*. The shop assistant presses a button, *'aisle 4 opening now'*, an electronic voice announces, in the blink of an eye the queue of people shuffle off.

'You can just tap your card here', suggests the shop assistant. *'Oh yes, I'd forgotten. Thank you'*, he says as he picks up the enormous space hopper and squeezes it under his arm. *'Righto, let's get that bus home!'*, Mr Alzheimer's says to himself as he leaves the toy shop.



Mr Alzheimer's is going home.

He steps out of the toy shop and takes a deep breath. He feels happy that he has bought Chloe's present. The sky is a beautiful blue. He turns right and spots some shops that he remembers. 'Ha ha, I've still got it', he mutters to himself and he starts to whistle a jolly tune.

'Alright Mr A', says a gruff voice from behind, 'it's me, Peter from down your road!' 'Oh hello Peter, it's good to see a friendly face. Look what I've bought for my granddaughter!'

Peter is heading home so they walk back to the bus stop, 'so many new buildings Peter, I can't believe that I haven't got lost!' They catch the bus together.

'It's good to see a
friendly face'

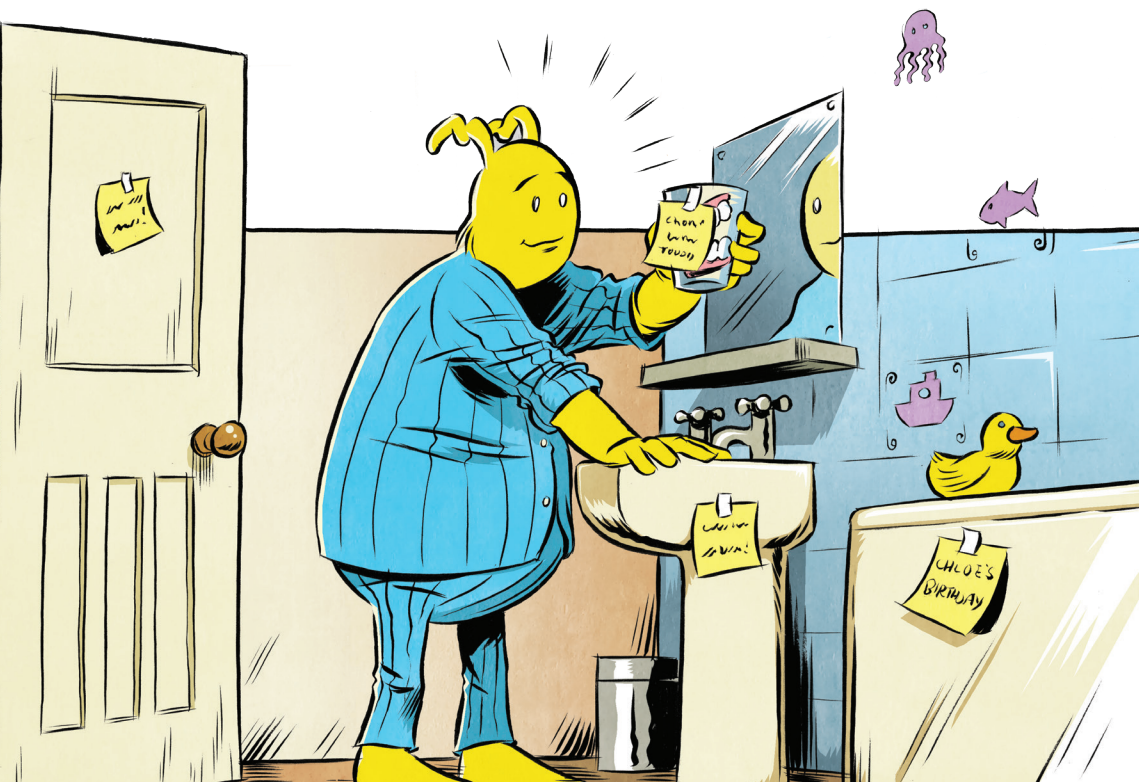


Today is Chloe's birthday!

Mr Alzheimer's wakes up and spots a reminder on his lamp – *'oh it's Chloe's birthday today! I need to wrap her present.'*

He has left post-it notes all over the house to help him – can you spot them?

♪ *'Post-it notes help me to remember, Important dates in my calendar!'* ♪



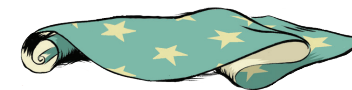
Mr Alzheimer's washes his face and sees another post-it note on the mug where his false teeth are soaking. He puts his cleaned teeth in – *'hmmmm – nice and shiny!'*

He gets dressed and puts his favourite slippers on.

In the kitchen he makes a cup of tea, *'why is it cold?'* (Mr Alzheimer's has forgotten to boil the kettle).

His tummy grumbles so he gets a bowl, spoon and a box of cereal – *'Where's the milk? Why's it not in the fridge? Oh it's in the oven – how did that happen?'* Mr Alzheimer's can't think how that happened.

He spots another post-it on the fridge – *'Oh it's Chloe's birthday! Righto – let's wrap that present!'*





Just as he finishes wrapping the present, there's a knock at the door. Mr Alzheimer's hurries to let his family and most especially, the birthday girl in.

'Happy Birthday Sarah' Mr Alzheimer's beams as he passes the enormous round present over to his granddaughter, Chloe to open.

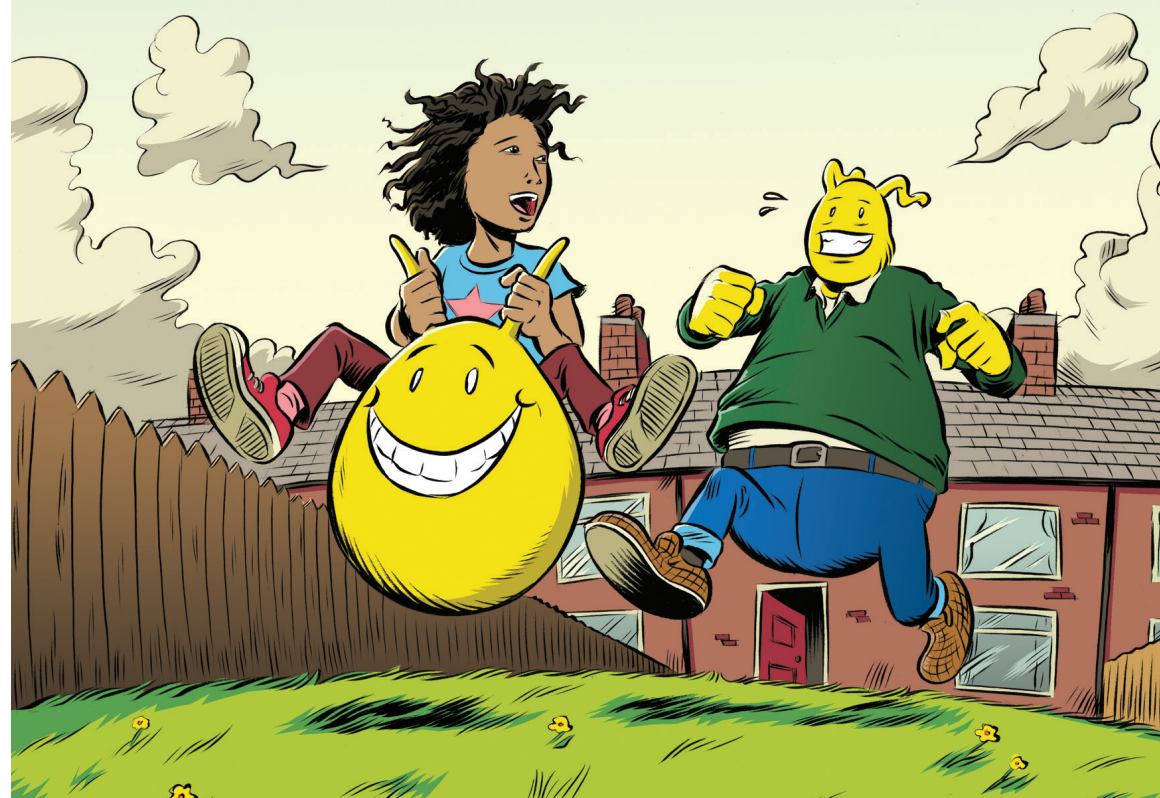
Chloe rips off the paper, *'I love it grandad!'* Chloe gives Mr Alzheimer's the biggest hug.

'I'll make us a nice hot cuppa' shouts Sarah, his daughter, as Mr Alzheimer's and Chloe head out in to the garden to play with the giant space hopper!



'Woohoooo.....'

Chloe loves her special present and her wonderfully forgetful grandad!



The end

A bit more
about dementia...



Our brains are amazing! The brain is the computer that controls our bodies; it helps us to talk, dance, think, run, learn, taste, remember, understand a joke and lots more. To do this they are jam packed with around 100 billion cells called neurons that send signals to one another. Dementia can stop these neurons and signals working properly.

What is dementia? Dementia is the name used for over 100 diseases that affect different parts of the brain. Alzheimer's Disease and Vascular Dementia are two well-known types of dementia.

Each type of dementia will affect a person differently; so even if two people of the same age get the same type of dementia their symptoms (or how it affects them) may be very different. Dementia mainly affects people over the age of 65 years old but it can affect younger people.

Is there a cure? There isn't a cure for dementia but there are a few medicines people can take if they have dementia, these don't make them better but they can help with some of the symptoms!

The good news is that following a healthy lifestyle (lots of exercise and good healthy food) can reduce the risks of dementia! A healthy heart can really help to keep your brain healthy.



What happens when you get dementia? We are going to use the story of Mr Alzheimer's Goes to Toyland to answer this question. Let's see what you noticed in the story!

Mr Alzheimer's has used bright yellow post-its to help him to remember!

Memory is often one of the first signs of dementia. People with dementia may struggle to remember recent things, maybe even what they have had for breakfast. Mr Alzheimer's has a great way around this – he has written on post-its and popped them around the house to remind him that he has to buy Chloe a birthday present.

Did you spot any other times when Mr Alzheimer's struggled to remember?

Mr Alzheimer's also forgot to swap his slippers over for his shoes, the name of the Toy Shop, where the shop is and how to use his cash card to buy the Space Hopper.

At the end of the story, Mr Alzheimer's calls his granddaughter Sarah! Did you notice that Chloe's mum is called Sarah? Chloe does not react to this; she knows that her grandad loves her even if he calls her by the wrong name sometimes!





Why does he make his cup of tea in the sugar bowl?

Have you ever heard somebody say ‘oh I did that without thinking?’ It might be making a cup of tea or getting dressed, things that we do all of the time without concentrating hard. People with dementia may start to find it hard to do things that they have done all of their lives. They might struggle to get dressed in the right order or make a cup of tea. Mr Alzheimer’s has tried to make a cup of tea but instead of putting a spoonful of sugar in to a cup he’s popped the tea bag in to the sugar bowl.

Activity: Get your mum, dad, nanna or somebody who normally makes cups of tea to write down all of the different steps to making the perfect cuppa!

There are almost 100 different steps to making a cup of tea; it’s easy to see why the next time he makes a cup of tea Mr Alzheimer’s forgets to boil the kettle!



The milk is in the washing machine one day and in the oven the next day!

People living with dementia may start to **misplace** things around the house. Mr Alzheimer’s might have forgotten where the milk should go or he might have just thought that the washing machine or oven was indeed the fridge.

Mr Alzheimer’s has a special hook near to the front door so that he always knows where to find his house keys! Some people living with dementia use labels on cupboard doors to help them to find stuff.

Why do you think Mr Alzheimer’s struggled to pay the bus driver?

People with dementia may find it hard to **count out the right change** when shopping or catching the bus. Mr Alzheimer’s has the money ready to buy his bus ticket to get around this but he still struggles and needs a bit of help from the driver.

How do you feel when your mum or teacher makes you rush?

Mr Alzheimer’s might have felt a bit rushed which made it harder for him to count out his bus fare!

In Toyland the noise and lights start to make Mr Alzheimer's head hurt.

People with dementia may become very sensitive to sound and lights. A sudden noise can make a person with dementia jump. Joy is very sensitive to doors slamming or sirens. In a noisy toy shop filled with shoppers, young children, music, toys and bright lights it is easy to see why Mr Alzheimer's head starts to hurt!

Did you notice that Mr Alzheimer's buys a space hopper instead of a jigsaw?

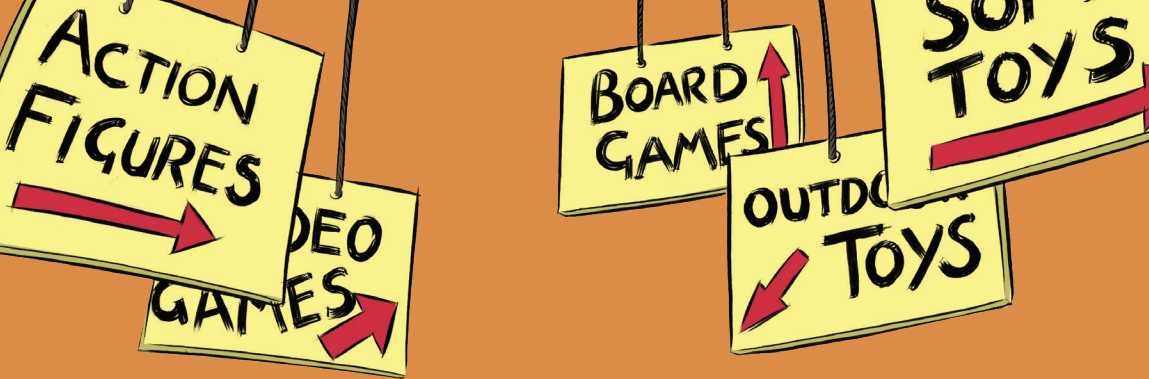
He might have forgotten that he was planning to buy a jigsaw or maybe he just spotted the spacehopper instead!

The story is fictional but it is based on stories that people living with dementia and their family members have shared with us over the years.

Who helped Mr Alzheimer's in the story?

From the patient bus driver to the helpful mum and daughter, Mr Alzheimer's was helped by people throughout the story. The patience, kindness and understanding from the people Mr Alzheimer's meets helps him to get Chloe's present on his own!





Mr Alzheimer's Goes to Toyland

Mr Alzheimer's needs to remember to buy
his granddaughter a birthday present,
but will he find the toyshop?



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