

# Your stories about friends and family with Alzheimer's.

Those who knew someone were keen to share the highs and lows, the small joys and cherished moments as well as the heart-breaking sadness when the person's symptoms deteriorated...

## I have a friend...

Her lovely old mum was a dancer back in the 1930's. Her mum's Alzheimer's was very severe by the end of her life. One Saturday evening they were at home watching a dancing competition on television. She suddenly became incredibly nervous during an advertising break... she thought she was going to be the next contestant on the show! Utterly tragic, but equally comical...

## From a relatively young age...

My grandfather first started showing signs of Alzheimer's in his late 50s. Apart from the usual things like not knowing who we were or where he was, the one thing we found extraordinary was that he began to steal things.

After returning home from visiting us he would take off his coat and we'd find a knife or fork hidden in his pockets or sleeves. He also started buying the same things over and over again - it wasn't unusual to find him with 20 or 30 of the same chocolate bars in his kitchen cupboard. The local shopkeeper was very understanding and always smiled when we took them back.

## My grandmother was the best 'chef' I have ever met in my life...

Her food was simply delicious! Family and friends would drop in just to eat her delicious, typical Portuguese food (even when not invited!).

At Christmas, Easter and birthdays my grandmother would prepare enough food to feed a small country - starters, main course, cakes and dessert! We were the popular children!

After my grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's she started to forget how to cook, or put too much salt on the food, or not put any salt on at all.

Five years on it's now our turn to cook for her and happily we can still all enjoy our family meals together.

## Who knew our family was so fascinating ...

I remember one summer holiday spending many hours looking through old family photo albums with my mother. She talked about the adventures in India and China - things I would never have known or connected with my ancestors. Now sitting here, writing my novel, I am inspired by my family's brave explorations at a time when travel was so much more challenging. I feel lucky that I had the chance to hear these stories before my mother's Alzheimer's became too severe.