

Ann Burnett

Title: FURTHER ADVENTURES IN DEMENTIA

Company: Steve Day

Venue: Laughing House @ City Café

Year: 2022

Dementia isn't funny so why am I laughing? It's hard not to as Steve takes us back to the '70s of his youth, and his memories of his dad with his Viva Zapata moustache, his love of disco dancing and his army-style parenting, his mum's Ewbank carpet sweeper and Steve's freedom to roam all day, every day.

Of introducing his future wife to his family, all black Olympic champion of her, and his dad's attempts to show he wasn't a racist, Steve riffs on him offering to play draughts with her and not being able to select a colour.

Top of the Pops on TV, the highlight of the week: Steve's energetic take on Pan's People's interpretation of a hit Stylistics number is a joy.

But then dementia strikes and I have to hold back my tears as he describes his dad's descent into the darkness. So much of what he relates chimes with me and my own experiences – the personality change, the loss of memories, his dad's physical infirmities. Steve shares his own feelings regarding visiting his dad who is no longer the dad of his youth and how seeing him like that upsets him and makes visiting difficult.

And how all we have left are our memories.

It's a show more suitable for carers and families as the jokes and comments come fast. One distraction was the signer for the deaf (Steve himself lost his hearing when a teenager) as she was as energetic a performer as he was but a minor criticism. There were only 8 of us in the audience in a small stuffy room in the basement but that only served to increase the intimacy and directness of his performance.