

Autumn 2022

**dyscover**  
specialist aphasia support

# NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events



## Not quite farewell to Rosemary

**Dyscover's founder, Gill Jackson, remembers:**

Rosemary was at home on maternity leave in 1999 when I first phoned her and asked if she'd like to come and work at Dyscover. Her son was only 6 weeks old (he graduated recently!) but, having worked with her in the NHS, I knew Rosemary would be an ideal therapist for us.

She took over from me to lead the service in 2015. Since then she has **developed all areas of Dyscover's work**. She has gained great recognition and respect from many colleagues both here and around the world.



Rosemary is insightful, **innovative and totally dedicated to her work**, but above all cares deeply for members, families, staff, volunteers and the wider Dyscover family.

Following Rosemary's departure from her Director of Service role, the groups enjoyed showing their appreciation and showered her with 'thank you' gifts, including a **photobook (left) showing many members living their lives with confidence and enthusiasm**.

Rosemary will now focus on our **Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) services** – we look forward to sharing the development of these specialist and unique services soon!


### Rosemary's leaving message to us is:

- ★ Stay true to Dyscover's vision – hope, opportunity and fulfilment for people with aphasia.
- ★ Grow and develop but always ensure individuals are known and valued (that includes members, staff and volunteers).
- ★ Work hard, work together and share Dyscover's good work with the aphasia world.

### To find out more about Dyscover

Please go to [www.dyscover.org.uk](http://www.dyscover.org.uk) or contact us for details of our online visitor sessions on Zoom, or to receive our regular newsletters.

#### Follow us on social media

 To find our page on Facebook search for Dyscover non-profit organisation.

 @dyscoveraphasia

 @DyscoverAphasia



**Long-term support and opportunities for people with aphasia**

Registered Charity No: 1099432

## Update from the Trustees

It will be strange starting our new term without Rosemary but she will not be gone long before she **starts on her PPA work** in October.

We are very grateful to **Rhona for stepping up to lead our service team** and to the other staff members and Trustees who have taken on extra tasks to help the transition.

We have succeeded in our financial objectives and ended a very difficult period during the pandemic in **a good financial state**; many thanks to you all for your support for our fundraising activities.

We have also raised our fundraising target for the **development phase of our expansion project**. The aim is to expand our reach to more people with aphasia. Our working party for the six-month research and development phase will launch in early September.

We are blessed with terrific, **committed staff and amazing volunteers** and they will stand us in good stead. All the Trustees are going to visit groups this term and we look forward to seeing our members in person.

**John Woollatt,**



### Spotlight on Treasurer Stuart Knee

For most readers, the idea of building a career in one of the largest audit and accounting firms in the world does not conjure up visions of visits to Wembley Stadium and **Universal Studios in Los Angeles**. Our Treasurer, Stuart Knee, was **with KPMG for over 30 years**, the last 17 as a partner. When he moved from the international finance sector to leisure and entertainment, his clients included everything from ITV franchises to early video games such as Tomb Raider.

Stuart took early retirement in 2003 and decided he would like a less stressful life. For 10 years he **volunteered with St John Ambulance** on their financial side and then moved on to smaller local charities. He was 'recruited' to Dyscover by our Chairman, John Woollatt.

His work for us takes up more time than he originally envisaged, but, says Stuart, "I do enjoy it. Dyscover is **a very worthwhile charity and the people involved have a strong work ethic**, coupled with commitment and camaraderie. I am grateful for the support of Christine Atkinson, Dyscover's excellent bookkeeper."

**Travelling has always been one of Stuart's interests**, and retirement has given him and his wife Pauline the opportunity for some lengthy overseas trips. They have two sons, one has followed his father into accounting, while the other is a lawyer who settled in the Cayman Islands. Now that Covid restrictions are being lifted, the Caribbean will feature strongly in future travel plans. Nearer to home, Stuart and Pauline are **undertaking babysitting duties for their first grandchild**.

# Around Dyscover

## Volunteers

**Our wonderful volunteers make up 85% of Dyscover's team. Whether helping in our groups, with activities, fundraising, marketing, admin, gardening or outreach and governance, we couldn't provide our vital services without them.**

We have 32 brilliant volunteers **helping in our conversational support groups** and nine of these are in our online zoom groups. Over the last year 17 new group volunteers have joined us.

'Dyscover has a family feel to it' and '**It is the highlight of my week**' were some of the comments volunteers made.

Many of them **go on to study Speech and Language Therapy** or get a job in this field - five volunteers have done this over the last 12 months. Our online groups mean that we are now able to take on volunteers regardless of where they live and our monthly volunteer meetings on zoom help to ensure that **everyone feels a part of Dyscover.**



*We held a thank you lunch for our volunteers at Leatherhead. They enjoyed sandwiches and cakes made by the staff team.*



*Christine Dearsley (right) is stepping back after 16 amazing years. She helped with the weekly groups, activities, fundraising and ran Dyscover's Choir.*

## Funding update from Alice

We reached our fundraising target and can now embark upon the **development phase of our Online Expansion Project.**



*Alice and Board members discuss future plans*

A small, in-house team of staff (Lin, Liz and Helen) will work on this during the next two terms. It aims to **establish the need for online aphasia services within the UK**, promoting our expertise and forming new relationships with the view to expanding our current services. The staff will undertake this in addition to their existing roles.

I am also seeking more **funds for our PPA services** and am continuing to work with a volunteer designer and our chosen website developers on our **new website.**

## What do you think?

**Our annual survey showed that members and their relatives continue to value Dyscover's services.**

**79%** of members and **96%** of relatives rate the long term nature of Dyscover's work and its leadership by Speech and Language Therapists as 'very important'.

**97%** of members and **92%** of relatives gave Dyscover a performance rating of 4 or 5 out of 5.

**When asked how Dyscover had helped members**

**71%** said 'confidence'

**65%** said 'communication'

**63%** said 'adapting to living with aphasia'

It is important to collect feedback so that we can **demonstrate the positive impact Dyscover has to our funders**, and incorporate members' suggestions into future services.



# Groups in action

## New Foundation Group

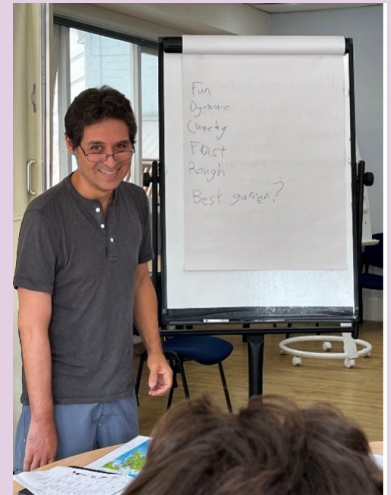
There are five members of our new Foundation Group which started last term. Its aim is to develop communication, confidence and tactics.

Members all had their strokes within approximately the last two years. It has been wonderful to witness them getting to know each other and **gain confidence in speaking in a group.**

There has been a lot of sharing of ideas, from Apps to kitchen gadgets! Marc shared his tuna pasta recipe, writing down the ingredients on his whiteboard to help him describe it. This prompted members to **share their experiences of finding useful kitchen gadgets** for chopping, opening tins and cooking with the use of one hand.

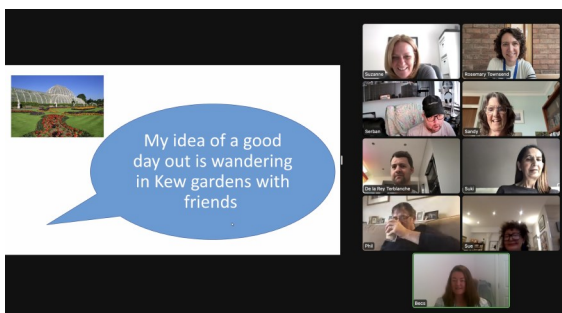
The group is led by **Maggie Stapleton**, a Speech and Language Therapist who recently joined Dyscover. She is joined by experienced SLT Assistant Caroline and volunteers Geoff and Danni.

We are **expecting numbers in this group to increase** as we get new referrals. Current members provided input to discussions about what topics to cover next term.



*Member Marc Tolentino presented his **spotlight on basketball**, a lifelong interest. Marc did a brilliant job, preparing notes for his talk, using writing and a drawing of **Michael Jordan's basketball vest!***

## Getting to know you



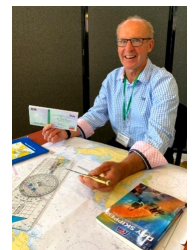
**Members of the Tuesday zoom group tested their knowledge of one another by seeing if they could match statements about interests and achievements to the right person.**

Most statements were matched quickly, and led on to questions, discussion, and greater insights into their fellow members.

When we work online we often adapt our approach and materials to achieve engaging, interesting and productive conversations.

## Day Skipper Gary

Wednesday morning group were so impressed to hear that fellow member, Gary, had **passed the first part of his Day Skipper course**. It took a huge amount of time and perseverance, with the moral support of the Friday reading group, to tackle the amount of written information in the assessment process. Text to speech technology was very helpful during his eight-hour exam.



## Reading group

Member Elaine has led the Friday zoom group for two years. Members (including Gary above) have **grown in confidence, insight and reading fluency**. The next Aphasia Forum will feature a talk about the group.

This term we plan to **expand the group** from three members to six.

# Groups in action

## Apps and technology

Our discussion topic on technology quickly moved on to **sharing useful Apps**, particularly text to speech functions.



Later, members shared worrying experiences of being **targeted by scammers**, and the best approach to avoid becoming a victim. We discussed the particular challenges of scammers exploiting reading and auditory comprehension problems with **fake letters and phone calls**.

Hardly anyone was unaffected, suggesting **this is a topic we should regularly revisit**.

## Singing

While aphasia affects the ability of a person to communicate using day-to-day language, singing and the **recollection of song lyrics is often easier** and can be a therapeutic and uplifting exercise. We invited Sue Cook back to the Wednesday Group to **practise breathing, posture and vocal exercises** before launching into some popular favourites.



## Leisure interests

**Are you an avid sports fan** or do you have a passion for music? Aphasia makes it hard to share our interests and talk about past achievements. When offered some options, our **members could join the conversation**.



## Spotlight on Nial Brown



**certainly shows this belief in action.**

Nial's stroke occurred nine years ago and this was followed by physio and speech therapy.

His wife Sarah found out about Dyscover and Nial joined our Kingston group eight years ago. Here he found **people who shared his experiences** and made new friends.

During his time with us, Nial has always been **ready to take on new challenges**. He is a very active Aphasia Ambassador. He also took part in the EVA Park research project, an online virtual

community for people with aphasia. Afterwards Nial **put together a professional video** of Dyscover's participation.

Nial was drawing on his career with the BBC, where he was a video editor. The highlight, he remembers, was **recording the Blue Peter theme tune in the Abbey Road Studios!** And for the past eighteen months Nial has been doing some freelance computer effects work from home. "It is difficult, exciting and amazing", he says.

Nial is also a computer whizz and **uses his tablet to supplement conversation** where necessary. And the keyboards in Nial's photo? For many years he played them professionally and toured the country.

Nial has two sons in their twenties and the elder has just started his first job.

Nial is now driving again and **comes to two Dyscover sessions a week**. And that is not all, after being interviewed by our newsletter editor,

# Have you Heard

## Irish Heart Foundation



Our first 12-week **Foundation Course with the Irish Heart Foundation** was much appreciated by

participants. SALT Barbara Greenwood (top left) led the project team.

Positive comments included:

*'It's so good to meet people like us'*

*'For me, speaking to you in this format is huge progress'*

*'Seeing how we've all come on, I'm smiling'*

*'We are not frightened to see the future'*

Course members will continue to receive support and conversation opportunity from IHF. We are delighted that **IHF have asked Dyscover to run another Foundation Course** for a new group of people with aphasia this autumn.

## Garden plans

It takes a great deal of **planning and expertise** to maintain and develop the courtyard garden at Leatherhead. Suzanne joined regulars Sue (left) and Elaine to discuss the very **welcome help from QEF volunteers** in rebuilding a wall, sanding and repainting benches and clearing pathways.



## Race Night

Our first ever Race Night on **22nd September** looks set to be a great social event. We are most grateful to **Tyrrell's Wood Golf Club** for **hosting it**. Enjoy a two-course meal and then have fun placing your bets on the screened races.

Book your tickets at:

<https://jumblebee.co.uk/dyscoverracenight>



*Our thanks to all those who are sponsoring the event.*

## Champions needed!

Apart from members' fees, the only income that we can rely on is the **regular donations from Dyscover Champions**.

There are currently almost 50 supporters who donate monthly, quarterly or annually. We hope that more people will **invest in Dyscover's future** in this way.

There are four levels of giving, starting with Bronze at under £15 a month. Please see the accompanying flyer.

## Neuro-physiotherapy

We welcomed Specialist Neuro-Physiotherapist Kim Wilson and final year student, Sam, to our Wednesday group.



**Members had many questions** about tone and tightness, especially in the upper limb. They also wanted advice on how to

accommodate other changes, often several years after a stroke, and how to approach self-directed exercise. There was discussion on pain management and the **importance of looking after posture** and the weaker side whilst doing other activities (such as having a conversation!).

Kim made **great use of props**, drawing and writing key words to ensure that everyone was able to follow her clear

## Bridge Masterclass

**15th November is the date** for keen Bridge players. The **Times Bridge Correspondent, Andrew Robson**, will be leading a masterclass in Bookham. Tea is provided. Book your tickets online at:

<https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/dyscoverbridgemasterclass>



# Fundraising

## London to Edinburgh and back!

This **gruelling cycling challenge** is only held once every four years and we were lucky enough to have two riders who completed it, raising an **amazing £6,635**.

Jon (left) and Stuart, partner of volunteer Dee, had to cope with extreme heat during the day, only 3-4 hours' sleep per 24 hours and freezing temperatures while riding at night.



Jon felt a huge sense of satisfaction at the finish and, at 68, was **one of the oldest competitors**. Stuart's mantra was 'It's not about going fast, but **about keeping going.**'

## Ride London

Chris Moore completed the 103 challenging miles of **Ride London Essex** in 6 hours and 20 minutes, raising £587.



## Marathon

Joe Grace, husband of our Community Fundraising Coordinator, Liz, is **training hard for this year's London Marathon** in October. You can support him at <https://tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/joe-grace-415bc>



## Swimming, too!

Theresa Peterson is taking on a **whole year of challenges** to raise funds for us. She is adding three more walks in September, plus a swim in the Serpentine. To support her go to: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/theresa-peterson6](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/theresa-peterson6)



## Halloween quiz

We are returning to L'Ultimo Italian restaurant in Leatherhead for another quiz, this time to **celebrate Halloween on Monday, 31st October**. There will be a delicious two-course meal and a fun evening of quizzing. Book tickets at <https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/dyscoverhalloweenquizandmeal>

## Nick's challenge

Dyscover member, **Nick Page**, had a stroke in 2019 and has gone from not being able to walk at all to walking 40 metres with a stick.

He has now **challenged himself to walk 100 metres** to raise funds for us. Please support him at:

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nick-g-page](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nick-g-page)



## Thank you

### BANSTEAD ROTARY CHARITY WALK

Dyscover's team raised £1,250.

**ECLIPSE CHOIR** We provided the bar at their summer performance and made £705.

**COINS4CASH** The last batch of foreign coins and notes raised £233.

**ASSTEAD STATION** book sharing scheme has raised £592 in 18 months.

## Flamingo cards

Sarah Stanley is again supporting us through the sale of her **popular Flamingo Paperie products**. She will donate 15% of the sale of Christmas products and 10% of everyday products. Last year this raised over £100.

**Email Sarah for a brochure:**

[sjmstanley@aol.com](mailto:sjmstanley@aol.com)

# Holiday Activities

We were delighted to see so many members at the Summer Challenge events, including a new activity, Gymnastics. We hope to return to the Leatherhead and Dorking Gymnastics Club.



The old favourites were not forgotten:

Pilates, Companion Cycling, Art and Shooting.



## Top Draw - a different Christmas gift

Anyone who is given a share in Dyscover's Top Draw Club as a Christmas present has the chance to win 25 cash prizes during 2023.

Annual shares in the club cost just £10 and there are five draws throughout the year. Half of the cost of each share goes to Dyscover, with the rest distributed as prizes. Full details are on our website: [www.dyscover.org.uk](http://www.dyscover.org.uk)

## Mole Valley Lottery

Dyscover joined the celebrations of Mole Valley Lottery's first birthday. The lottery not only **raises funds for local charities**, but also helps local environmental causes. Draws are held weekly and tickets start at £1 each week. You can **buy tickets to support Dyscover** at:

[www.molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/](http://www.molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/)



## CONTACT US

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