

Autumn 2022/Winter 2023



NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events



A busy Autumn Term

Since our return in September, we have had a steady stream of new people coming to look at what we do.

We are delighted that, of the 12 people with aphasia who have completed a trial group session, **11 have decided to join as regular members**. This means that our Thursday Foundation Group has doubled in size. We have enjoyed learning about new members' interests and opinions whilst building the **vital**



supportive atmosphere that makes all our groups so special.

The importance of confidence building in ongoing recovery

is something we are fostering and developing in our Zoom groups. We use **supported conversation in breakout rooms**, alongside tailor made resources to keep the discussion flowing.

Seven members who have joined since 2020 have offered to take on an **online ambassador role**. Some have helped with online visitor sessions and with the education of Reading University Speech and Language Therapy students. Read about the **students' very positive response on page 3**.

Expanding our services

Could more people across the UK benefit from online aphasia groups? We launched a new

project to see what the need is, beyond Surrey and South London. Our in-house team is Helen, Lin, who leads the project, and Liz. Following many good conversations with people who have not heard of Dyscover before, they are starting to see how expanding our online service might look. There is certainly a **great demand for it**.



Visit us online

We invite SLTs, and other health and social care professionals, with an interest in aphasia, to join our online visitor session on Zoom on **7 February**. It runs from **10.30 to 11.30** and is **free of charge**.

Hear about Dyscover's services from SLT staff; meet some of our members with aphasia; join in discussion and ask questions.

Spaces are limited. Please book your place by emailing Rhona Palmer.
rpalmer@dyscover.org.uk

Fast news

Do you want to keep up-to-date with all the latest developments at Dyscover? **Please follow us on social media**: full details in the panel below.

To find out more about Dyscover

Please go to **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



Update from the Trustees

I have recently completed my first year as a Trustee and remain in awe of this amazing organisation. My husband had a stroke three years ago and he's benefitted hugely from his group; we are now able to have good conversations despite him not being able to talk at all.



Just as important are Dyscover's other services which **help members and their relatives live the best lives they can.** Activities like golf, and coffees with fellow partners, give us both social opportunities and support.

Suzanne has, as usual, done a brilliant job of organising activities like shooting and Zoom Pilates this year, and **we hope more members will take advantage of such life enhancing pursuits.**

Dyscover is mindful that some members may face new challenges with the current cost of living crisis. We encourage you to discuss any concerns about coming to your group with your group's therapist. We're currently **trying to establish a bursary fund; details of how to support it on Page 3.**

The demand for Rosemary's PPA services is far bigger than we'd anticipated, but it is rewarding to help so many people living with this condition. As we report on page 1, there is also an **enormous demand for an online service** with a wider geographical reach.

None of this would be possible without our incredible staff, ambassadors and volunteers. They are the lifeblood of this organisation and **we're always on the lookout for more people to join the Dyscover family.**



Spotlight on Trustee Achim Vogt

Presentations by our staff and Aphasia Ambassadors play a key role in raising both awareness of aphasia and funds for our work; they can also **help to recruit more volunteers.** Our Company Secretary Achim Vogt was prompted to offer his services **after presentations to his Rotary Club.**

Achim brings **over 40 years of experience in the financial sector**, mainly related to property. He has worked in Germany, the UK, India and Luxembourg. In India he supported a charity looking after street children. Achim settled in the UK after his retirement and for several years has been a Trustee of First Touch, which supports the Neonatal Unit at St George's Tooting.

Achim joined us in 2021 as a **Trustee and Company Secretary.** He also serves on the Finance and Fundraising Committees. He helps out at several activity sessions, including golf, shooting and swimming.

What does Achim enjoy most about Dyscover? "I like the feel of the charity and the committed people I work with. **It is a small charity but it has ambitions.**"

Achim and his wife Jacqui have three children who are still studying.

In his leisure time Achim walks a very energetic black labrador each day. He also enjoys sport and reading.

Around Dyscover

PPA

Rosemary's new role at Dyscover is to expand and **develop our support services for people with Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA)**. This is a rare form of dementia and support is hard to find. Part of Rosemary's role is to ensure neurologists and SLTs know about Dyscover and how we can help.

Twenty-three people with PPA received support from Dyscover in the last six months. Support ranges from advice and signposting over the phone to Conversation Partner training for couples. We also 'match make', introducing people who have a similar type and stage of PPA **so they feel less alone**.

Last term, Rosemary, Barbara and our volunteer Jane led **five PPA online sessions**, which included information, discussion and conversation.

Funding update from Alice

Director of Business Alice, writes: I am pleased to report that we have had several **successful grant applications for PPA** recently; they will support the dedicated work Rosemary now focuses on.

As we report on page 1, our in-house project team are making good progress on the **development phase of our online aphasia expansion project**. I'll be working closely with them to shape a funding bid for support to develop phase 2 and beyond.

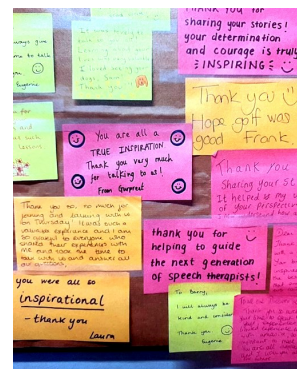


The Tavistock Trust for Aphasia is one of the organisations supporting this project and we shall be sharing results with them.

However, having concentrated on funding specific projects such as these, **we are not hitting our targets** for grant fundraising of core unrestricted funds. Our core costs include **essentials like premises and room hire costs, staff salaries** and our IT and administration support. I will be spending some time over the coming weeks seeking out funders to support such items.

Notes from Reading Uni

No fewer than 18 Aphasia Ambassadors helped our staff to lead an **online training session for SLT students** at Reading University. We received some very positive feedback in an unusual format - individually written post-it notes. The **most frequently used word was 'inspirational'**.



Bursaries

We would never want any member to feel that they can no longer come to Dyscover because of financial hardship. **Please do approach us in confidence if you are struggling to pay fees**. We are seeking support to set up a Bursary Fund. To make a donation towards this, please visit: www.justgiving.com/campaign/dyscovercostoflivingcrisisappeal

Social media volunteer

Can you help us to **publicise Dyscover's work on social media**? There is always a lot going on and we want to share our news as widely as possible. **Please get in touch** if you have experience with Facebook and Twitter. [Contact lgrace@dyscover.org.uk](mailto:lgrace@dyscover.org.uk)

Thank you

WENDELA ELSEN resigned as a Trustee at the AGM as she has returned to full-time employment in a demanding City role and no longer has the time to devote to Dyscover. She has been **key to the process of developing our strategy** and her wise counsel on HR issues is missed by us all. **MIKE McCARTNEY**, who joined us last year as a Trustee, has had a series of personal family issues and is now forced to spend a large part of his time overseas. Mike's **support for our IT project earlier this year** was very much appreciated.

Groups in action

Boost your confidence

When Leatherhead member Nick decided to attempt a sponsored walk, his only **aim was to raise funds for Dyscover**. He certainly did that, raising a staggering £5,734. But he **didn't expect that he would also benefit**.

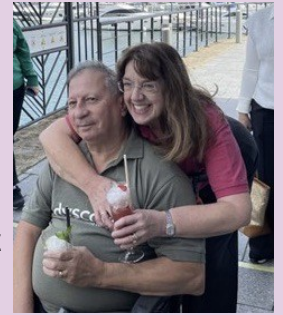
Nick's stroke in 2019 left him with severe physical disabilities as well as aphasia. He was gradually able to walk short distances with just his stick, but **set himself a 100 metre challenge** for his fundraising attempt. By 80m his legs were very wobbly and it was a real battle to reach the finishing line. It

was an emotional moment when he realised that **he can still achieve substantive** goals, if he sets his mind to it. He's now looking for new challenges to boost his confidence and self-esteem.



Kingston members shared some challenges. Melle tackled using an escalator in the Bentall Centre. A daunting task because she cannot hold onto the rail with her right hand. After a few aborted attempts she succeeded and felt really proud of herself.

Neil tried painting again nine years after his stroke and was delighted that his ability was unaffected. He brought along this picture of Teddington Bridge.



Zoom meet-up

The Tuesday Morning Zoom group have been meeting virtually for over a year and know each other really well. But they had **never met in person until last November**.

Group leader Suzanne planned a get-together at a central location and the eagerness to meet up, at last, was very special.

Many **individual challenges were met and overcome** to make it possible, including planning the journey, arranging transport and building confidence to come along. Support for one another is so important for stroke recovery and everyone agreed they want to **make this a regular occasion**.



Tower building

Two teams were pitched against each other in the Thursday morning group. Their task, to construct the highest tower able to **support**

the weight of an orange - using only lollipop sticks, masking tape and blu-tack! **Indra's team won** by a centimetre. He carefully planned and directed the building of his team's tower, **showing great leadership skills**, despite the challenge of having no words.



Favourite country

Our discussion topics inspire members to bring **objects and photos to share their story**. This is particularly useful for those with severe aphasia, where finding the words is hardest.

Tim's **favourite country for a holiday was Egypt**, a place that his conversation partner Mick has also visited. They shared many anecdotes and memories using Mick's **photos, maps and the iPad** to extend their conversation.



Groups in action

Schooldays

When members bring in memorabilia, it always generates lively discussion. The topic of schooldays certainly **inspired Kingston members.**

Maureen shared a letter she had written home from her Irish boarding school in the 1950s. **Deena brought along her Duke of Edinburgh's gold award** and a photo of herself in grammar school uniform.



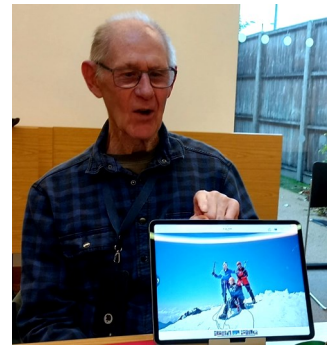
Food!

Thursday afternoon members discussed **food likes and dislikes.** Andrew, who used to be a professional gardener, **gathered herbs** from the flowerbeds and did an impromptu smell test.



Sharing skills

Members across all **groups showcased their knowledge** and many varied skills. These ranged from pottery and tap dancing to plastering and mountaineering. John amused Kingston members with his anecdotes of **vodka-swilling Russian climbers** and had them in awe with his tales and stunning photos of climbs he had done across the world.



In the Thursday group Tony brought in an impressive collection of **beautiful fossils.** He shared his expert knowledge of trilobites, ammonites and a 'devil's toenail'!



Spotlight on John Berry



Thursday morning member John had a busy **career as an electrical engineer** for over 40 years, becoming a director of his company. However, he found time to develop **great DIY skills** and built a large extension to his house in Worcester Park.

His stroke occurred while he was gardening. After **six weeks in hospital** he came home on crutches. His right arm and leg were useless and he could not speak at all. John was **determined to fight back** and after physio, he continued to exercise by himself. He also wanted to regain his independence and after passing a test was **able to drive again.**

When he and his wife Jan moved house they were just a few miles from Dyscover and he

joined us when we were at Walton. Sadly, Jan had a severe stroke in 2015; she spent five years in a wheelchair and **John looked after her.** He didn't have time to continue at Dyscover.

Over the years, John's speech gradually improved and after Jan's death **he joined us again, this time at Leatherhead.** John lives alone and really appreciates **the laughter and friendship** he finds in his group. He is always ready to try something new and has **joined in many activities**, including Pilates, shooting and gymnastics. He drives new member Phil to the weekly group meetings.

John loves chess and fellow member Brian Spickett has come over to play with him. Joe Grace, husband of our fundraising and volunteer coordinator Liz, visits on Saturday for a game.

John has a daughter and son and three grandchildren. Last November he became a great grandfather. And just before Christmas he **celebrated his 80th birthday.**

Have you Heard

Activities

Ten members enjoyed **coaching and practice** sessions at **Leatherhead Golf Club**. Maggie said, "The tuition from Karl, Barry, Bruce and Achim has been invaluable."



De la Rey (right) has been a sportsman and getting back to it is crucial for his recovery. He has been a Zoom member, but is **now enjoying face to face meetings**.



Our **swimming** teacher Helen has been a great support and everyone has **gained strength, skills and confidence**. She will be returning to support us in the future.



Seventeen members joined **seated Pilates** last term. They found the classes physically **challenging, but always good fun**.

Reading group

Elaine (left) has **led our reading group for two years**, helping three other members to grow their skills and confidence. At the Aphasia Forum, they explained how the group runs and **what benefits they have gained**.



Meeting in the garden

Wednesday members took advantage of the beautiful garden for a discussion on television and film. **Dyscover members** and volunteers maintain the garden, but **they always need extra help**.



Ambassador visits

Six of our Aphasia Ambassadors **visited Dyscover groups**, both in person and on Zoom, to talk about their experiences. They received a warm welcome and inspired **other members to become ambassadors**. After Deena's talk, no fewer than eight Tuesday Zoom members decided to become involved.



It was a **huge task for Ambassador Coordinator Caroline** to match up visitors on days when they do not usually attend and liaise on Zoom links.

CFC new team

Our **Community Fundraising Committee** has some new members, Trustees Achim and Simone and group volunteer Camilla. They are working on plans for lots of activities and events in 2023.



Anne Edney

We are delighted that group volunteer Anne has received a **Reigate and Banstead Volunteer Award** that



recognises all her hard work and commitment to Dyscover for the last six years.

She has **helped in many different groups** and with our specialist Conversation Partners and PPA courses. Anne is always ready to support other activities such as Pilates and swimming.

Fundraising

A year's fundraising!

Many thanks and congratulations to **Theresa Paterson**, who has collected no fewer than seven medals this year, after **completing seven walks in 2022**, including the Virtual London Marathon. She has raised a magnificent £1,530 for Dyscover.



Nork Christmas

Our team of ten volunteers helped **Banstead Rotary** with their Christmas collections. Santa and his team spent a very chilly evening collecting donations and bringing **some festive cheer to the people of Nork**. We received £356.



Halloween Quiz

Our spooky **Halloween quiz was a sell out**. We are very grateful to L'Ultimo Italian restaurant in Leatherhead for hosting another event for us. Quiz master Simon Edmonds, aka The Mad Hatter, **had put together a great set of questions**. The event raised £777.



Flamingo Cards

Our **thanks to Sarah Stanley** for again supporting us through the sale of her Christmas Flamingo Paperie products. **She raised £100**.

Mole Valley Lottery

Please do support us and buy tickets in the Mole Valley Lottery to **help raise funds for Dyscover** and also for our local community. Weekly cash prizes up to £25,000 are available and tickets cost just £1.

<https://www.molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/dyscover>

Joe's Marathon

Joe Grace completed the London Marathon in 3 hours 53 minutes. This beat his previous marathon - run 23 years ago - by 22 minutes. He was cheered on by his wife Liz (our Community Fundraising Coordinator) and two of his daughters. Joe raised a splendid £1,311 for us.



Race Night

Our Race Night held at **Tyrrells Wood Golf Club** was a great success, raising £1,801. Thanks to all the sponsors who supported the event and to the Golf Club for being **such generous hosts**.



Open Garden

Our grateful thanks to **Sue Edwards** for holding another Open Garden at her home for us. The sun shone, **her garden looked beautiful** and the afternoon raised £486.

Masterclass

Bridge enthusiasts had a great afternoon when **Andrew Robson, The Times Bridge Correspondent**, shared his knowledge. The event raised £2,057



.True Crime Fans - save the date!

Join us at our new fundraising event, a **Crime Scene Investigation evening on Friday 21 April** from 7 - 10.30pm. It will be hosted by a **retired Scotland Yard homicide detective**. **Contact Liz** to be added to the mailing list: lgrace@dyscover.org.uk

Round Up

Christmas lunch

After a three-year wait, we were finally able to have our much-loved Christmas lunch. Over 80 guests attended, some braving the icy weather to come from as far afield as the South Coast and Devon.



It was held at the beautiful Tyrrells Wood Golf Club. Our thanks to Suzanne for organising it so efficiently.

After a delicious lunch, long service awards for volunteers were presented, followed by our Christmas Super Top Draw and the luxury hamper raffle.

Hamper raffle

For the first time we sold tickets for the raffle both online and at the lunch. This resulted in the magnificent total of £1,100.

Our grateful thanks to **everyone who donated** items for the raffle and the team who **assembled 21 attractive hampers**: 13 for the lunch and 8 for the online draw.



Top Draw

Every Christmas there is the chance of a large prize in the **bumper**

seasonal draw for our Top Draw Club. There are four other draws throughout the year, so everyone who has bought - or been given - a share has **25 chances of winning**.

Annual shares in the club cost just £10 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

Our grateful thanks to Nick Clark, who organises the Club. It has already raised £1,800 this financial year, so far.



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