

# Dementia together

October/November 2019  
Alzheimer's Society's magazine

**Plain sailing**  
Breaking barriers

**Friends through hens**  
Caring together

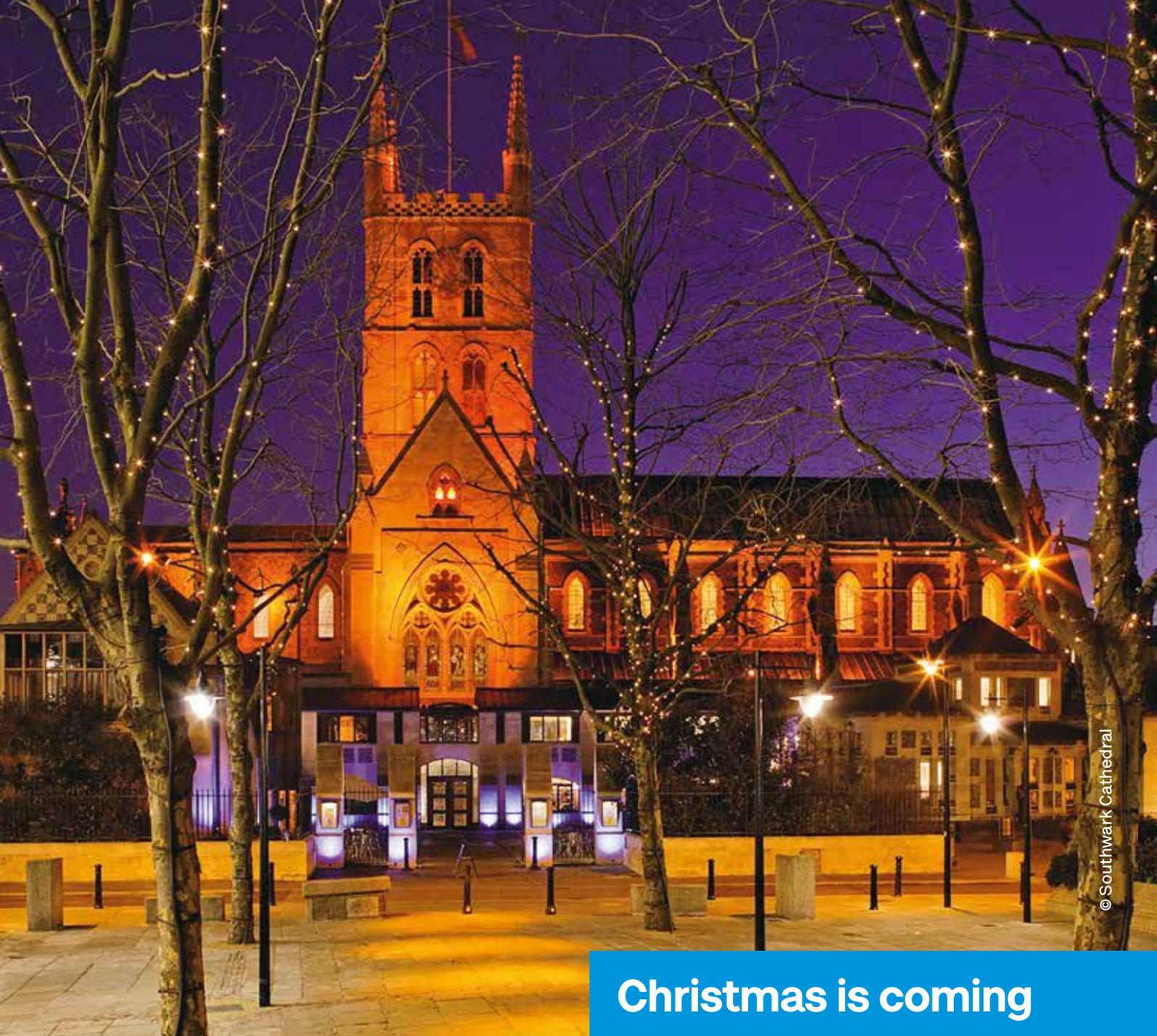
**Fight for a fair deal**  
End the injustice

**Also in this issue**  
Dementia care crisis  
Elf Day  
Handy objects

**40** years  
2019



**Anything I can do**  
Starting conversations



## Christmas is coming

This Christmas, join Alzheimer's Society for an evening of music and celebration in three beautiful venues across London, Manchester and Sheffield.

Each of our Carols at Christmas concerts will feature festive readings and uplifting performances from some very special guests.

Find your nearest concert and buy your tickets at [alzheimers.org.uk/carolsatchristmas](http://alzheimers.org.uk/carolsatchristmas)



# Carols at Christmas



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Alzheimer's Society operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.  
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**40** years  
2019





## Welcome

In times of uncertainty, it can be hard to keep track of what is or isn't important. Neither we nor our supporters have any difficulty in keeping the dementia care crisis at the front of our minds. However, we've been having some unprecedented successes in making sure everyone else knows about it too.

Your continued support is vital to turn the promises of politicians into reality – see the news story on p4 and Jeremy Hughes's Directions article on p5 for more.

I'm extremely proud to present the winners of our 2019 poetry competition in this issue (p26–29). Selecting from the large number of entries was a massive task, and we're hugely grateful to everyone who took part.

Our magazine shares real-life stories and ideas to help you, whether you're supporting the cause or living with the day-to-day realities of dementia. Let us know what you think, and make sure your friends, family and colleagues know how to subscribe (see below).

**Danny Ratnaik, Magazine Editor**

### Questions about dementia? See p38

**This is the October/November 2019 issue of Dementia together, the magazine for all Alzheimer's Society supporters and people affected by dementia.**

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## We Are Undefeatable

Alzheimer's Society is one of 15 charities behind a new campaign to help people with long-term conditions stay physically active and involved in sports.

We Are Undefeatable, backed by Sport England and the National Lottery, is sharing inspiring stories across TV, radio and social media.

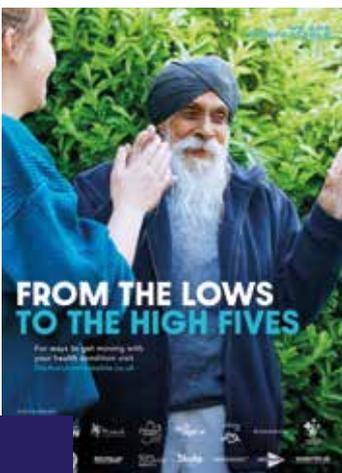
Packs are also being distributed to every GP practice and community pharmacy in England so that healthcare professionals understand how they can best promote physical activity.

Jeremy Hughes, our Chief Executive Officer, underlined the importance of supporting and actively including people with dementia so they can enjoy the many physical and mental benefits of sport and physical activity.

'We hear too often from people with dementia that, due to symptoms like memory loss and problems with understanding, more traditional classes can leave people feeling alienated and unable to keep up,' says Jeremy.

'Support to keep active at home and in their local area ensures that people with dementia maintain that vital link with the community, as well as staying active.'

**See [alzheimers.org.uk/active](http://alzheimers.org.uk/active) for inspiration and tips to get active in ways that suit you.**



## Dementia care crisis: Delivering our message

Alzheimer's Society Ambassadors Dame Barbara Windsor and her husband Scott Mitchell have joined thousands of our supporters in demanding that the government brings an end to the social care crisis.

Scott and Barbara, who is living with dementia, presented an open letter signed by more than 112,000 people to 10 Downing Street. It called on the Prime Minister to fix social care by investing now and by prioritising long-term reform of the system.

As part of our Fix Dementia Care campaign, the Society has been calling for a long-term funding solution. This is even more important after a recent government Spending Review pledged only £1.5 billion extra for local councils to spend on adult social care. This money is only enough to keep things running as they are – with a care system in such bad shape, it's not enough.

Jeremy Hughes, our Chief Executive Officer, said, 'We now need to see concrete plans for reform that address the unfair and catastrophic care costs for people with dementia, and the daily battle that they and their families face to get the care and support they so badly need.'

**Demand an end to the social care crisis – visit [alzheimers.org.uk/fixdementiacare](http://alzheimers.org.uk/fixdementiacare)**

## Will to Remember: Five years

We're celebrating five years of our will writing service, Will to Remember, this November. Through the scheme, people get £150 off the cost of a new or updated will with a participating local solicitor of their choice, at no extra cost to the Society.

Thanks to the support of solicitors all around Northern Ireland, Wales and England, we've been able to support nearly 5,000 individuals with writing their will. Michael Graham, a director at Cleaver Fulton Rankin in Belfast, was one of the first solicitors to take part in the scheme.

'My experience has been that, where people have an opportunity to put appropriate planning in place early, it makes life much easier for them and their loved ones,' says Michael.

'Working with the Society has really helped me and my colleagues to understand the issues affecting people with dementia and their carers. There is no doubt that this helps us provide the appropriate support and advice that people need when facing these difficult issues.'

**Get your free Will to Remember pack at [alzheimers.org.uk/wills](http://alzheimers.org.uk/wills) or call 0330 333 0804 (local rate).**

## Memory Walk



Thousands of you united against dementia in this year's Memory Walk – thank you!

Society supporters joined forces with famous faces and people living with dementia to walk for their loved ones and a better future.

In Plymouth, 68-year-old Sarah Redford, whose grandmother and mother both had dementia, cut the ribbon to start the walk.

Chris Norris, an Alzheimer's Society Ambassador with frontotemporal dementia,

gave a moving speech at the beginning of Maidstone Memory Walk in Kent.

'Events like Memory Walk today are so important to raise funds for vital research into the cure and cause of all types of dementia,' he said.

Our celebrity supporters were out in force, including in Nottingham, where actor Vicky McClure was reunited with members of her dementia choir from the BBC TV programme.

Emmerdale actor Adele Silva, who took part in the Leeds event, said, 'I've been to lots of Memory Walks over the years and the event is just getting better and better. I've come here to Memory Walk to shout the message out loud and clear – that we will defeat dementia.'

**Our night-time GLOW walks continue next March – find out more at [memorywalk.org.uk/glow](http://memorywalk.org.uk/glow) or call 0300 330 5452 (local rate).**

## Our 40th: Take stock, take action

As we come to the end of our 40th year, Alzheimer's Society is looking ahead to how we will continue to unite against dementia.

Since 1979, thanks to your support we've helped vast numbers of people, changed the conversation on dementia, invested millions in research and campaigned hard for people affected by the condition to have the support they deserve.

To help mark the occasion, a 40th Anniversary – Lifetime Achievement award will be announced at our Dementia Friendly Awards in November.

In 40 years' time, more than 2 million people in the UK will have dementia. To ensure that people with dementia face a better future, we need your continued support, whether that's through volunteering, campaigning or fundraising.

**Watch our video and take action at [alzheimers.org.uk/40thanniversary](http://alzheimers.org.uk/40thanniversary)**

## Carols at Christmas

Enjoy a wonderful evening of festivities with Alzheimer's Society this Christmas. Our annual Carols at Christmas events are taking place in Manchester, Sheffield and London during December.

Delight in the sounds of renowned choirs, sing along to your favourite carols and listen to readings from some very special guests.

All friends and family are invited to join us in song and make a difference for people affected by dementia, so get your tickets now.

**Find out more at [alzheimers.org.uk/carolsatchristmas](http://alzheimers.org.uk/carolsatchristmas) or call 0330 333 0804 (local rate).**

**A**s I write, there is a lot of talk about an imminent General Election – for all I know, it may have happened by the time you read this. Either way, our Fix Dementia Care campaign needs your support to make sure the government finally addresses the injustice faced by people with dementia.

Our message is simple: If you have a health condition, then you have a right to support from the government. That should be as true for dementia as it is for cancer, heart disease or diabetes. This support needs to include meeting the costs of care – costs that are currently often £100,000 or more, paid out of your own pocket.

At the beginning of September, over 100,000 of you signed our letter to the Prime Minister. I was humbled and inspired by Barbara Windsor who, at 82 and with advancing Alzheimer's, sat in the garden at Number 10 and said loudly and clearly, 'You must fix dementia care.'

Thank you if you signed that letter. Now I must ask you to act again. Please make clear to your MP, or candidates standing for election, that this injustice must end. Even if we have pledges from an actual or potential Prime Minister, it will take work to turn promises into reality.

We're not there yet, but with your help I believe we can win.

**Jeremy Hughes**  
Chief Executive Officer



## In the press

# Tau vaccine: Early results

There's been some hopeful – though very early – news from the trial of a vaccine targeting tau, one of the two proteins that build up in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

Many clinical trials of potential new Alzheimer's drugs have tried to prevent or reduce the build-up of the other protein, amyloid. These haven't succeeded, whether because the disease had already developed too far before treatment or because amyloid isn't the right thing to target.

Testing of the possible new tau vaccine is in its earliest stages, designed to see if it's safe and acting correctly in the brain. This stage is an important first step, but it's too small and brief to show whether the drug will stop or slow Alzheimer's.

The trial tested the vaccine in 196 people with 'mild' Alzheimer's. It triggered a strong and long-lasting immune response against tau without any major negative side effects. Although there were positive signs that the vaccine might help brain cells to survive, this was only tested in a small number of participants.

James Pickett, our Head of Research, says, 'The results suggest the mechanics of the drug are working, but we shouldn't get too excited yet – we've seen this before in early trials of drugs that have later turned out to fail.

'What we need now are large-scale trials to find out whether this drug could be capable of slowing down Alzheimer's. Research will beat dementia, but we need funding to make it happen.'



## Summer of action

We've had a fantastic summer reaching people at festivals and events this year. Alzheimer's Society is here for everyone affected by dementia, and we want to unite everyone against it.

Taking part in a wide variety of events helps us to connect with new people in new ways, including at Leicester Caribbean Carnival, Cleethorpes Armed Forces Day, Devon County Show, Croydon Mela, Latitude, Green Man Festival and an array of Pride events from Belfast to Brighton. Our stands and activities have prompted new conversations with over 14,000 people, with many more seeing us on parades.

Laura Ganpot, our Senior Events Officer, says, 'It's been a really great step forward for us – we've had a lot of engagement with people from a whole range of communities at these events. Even going to music festivals, there's been a lot of interest and involvement from younger people.'

We take part in summer festivals in addition to visiting high streets, shopping centres and other sites across Wales, England and Northern Ireland with our Alzheimer's Society Roadshow from March to October.

## Elf Day is back!

Elf Day returns on 6 December, though you can dress up to celebrate it on any day that suits. So dust off your elf ears and jingly shoes to get festive and raise money to help beat dementia.

Sign up for your Elf Day fundraising kit at [alzheimers.org.uk/elfday](https://alzheimers.org.uk/elfday)





## Dementia Connect: Over the counter

In an exciting innovation, seven branches of LloydsPharmacy in Lancashire are referring people into our Dementia Connect service.

This will make it easier for people who have questions or concerns about dementia to get the support and information that they need. Every time the pharmacy provides a referral, our specialist Dementia Advisers will reach out to the person directly.

LloydsPharmacy is the first pharmacy to introduce the service, which means more people will get face-to-face, telephone, print and online support and advice as and when they need it.

Kevin Birch, Chief Retail Officer at McKesson UK, owner of LloydsPharmacy, said, 'Often conversations like this can be quite challenging and patients tend to avoid them. However, as a lot of our pharmacy colleagues are part of the community where they are based, patients may feel more comfortable talking to them about any worries they have.'

LloydsPharmacy has been working in partnership with Alzheimer's Society for four years. Teams across McKesson UK have raised over £600,000 through corporate fundraising days, individual charity events and challenges. They also recruited over 27,000 Dementia Friends.

Our new Dementia Connect service is reaching people affected by dementia in a growing number of areas. Combining face-to-face, telephone, print and online support and advice, Dementia Connect means we can keep in touch as people's needs change. It also brings people with dementia together with volunteers through Side by Side, so they can continue doing the things they love in their community.

**Dementia Connect isn't available everywhere yet – see [alzheimers.org.uk/getsupport](https://alzheimers.org.uk/getsupport) to find support near you.**

## In briefs

### Game Over Dementia

Alzheimer's Society is calling on video gamers to help us raise £10,000 to improve the lives of people with dementia.

To get involved in Game Over Dementia, you can either stream your games and ask people to donate while watching you play, or host a sponsored gaming marathon.

**Find out more about Game Over Dementia at [alzheimers.org.uk/gameoverdementia](https://alzheimers.org.uk/gameoverdementia)**

### Winter flu vaccination

People with dementia can be at increased risk of severe illness if they catch flu, and are urged to have the winter flu vaccination. Vaccinations are also recommended for anyone born on or before 31 March 1955, people in care homes, and carers. They are available on the NHS from your GP surgery and many local pharmacies.

### Correction: BBC Music Day

BBC Music Day 2019 took place on 26 September, not 24 September as stated in the print edition of our last magazine – we apologise for any confusion caused.

## 3 million Dementia Friends

In September, we reached an incredible 3 million Dementia Friends in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. That's one in 20 people committing to tackle stigma and take action.

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme is the biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia. It aims to transform the way that we all think, talk and act about the condition.

Whether you attend a face-to-face information session or watch the online video, becoming a Dementia Friend means learning more about the condition and how you can help. This could be having a cuppa with a neighbour, fundraising for vital support or making sure family and friends know how to become Dementia Friends too. Every action, however small, adds to the great wave of change we're making for people affected by dementia.

With more people joining us and taking action, we can make sure the shops, workplaces, schools and family homes at the heart of our communities all play a part in creating a dementia-friendly society.

**Find out more at [dementiafriends.org.uk](https://dementiafriends.org.uk)**



## Quick read

Raymond James, 79, is embracing the opportunity to raise awareness of dementia and encourage others to seek support.

Diagnosed with Alzheimer's in April 2017, Raymond had doubts whether the groups Alzheimer's Society put him in touch with were right for him.

However he has made good friends at the groups, which his wife Cynthia says have helped him 'come alive'.

Raymond appeared in a film for Dementia Action Week that encouraged everyone to start conversations with people who have dementia.

# Anything I can do

Raymond James has 'come alive' with the support he's found through Alzheimer's Society. **Gareth Bracken** meets a man doing all he can for the cause.

**D**ementia was not known widely when I was a boy, but now even the littlest child would know what it is – that's a very good thing,' says Raymond James, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in April 2017.

Having better come to terms with his condition through the support of his wife and Alzheimer's Society, 79-year old Raymond is putting himself in the public eye to help increase people's awareness of dementia.

## The Dew Drops

Raymond was born and raised on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, where he lived until his mid-20s.

'It was fantastic growing up there,' he says. 'I lived with my grandmother and got a good little job as an apprentice engineer, learning to repair outboard motors.'

Raymond also developed a passion for the steel pan, the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago.

'One of my brothers had a steel band in a competition in San Fernando, but the tune they were going to play, to me it wasn't any good,' he recalls. 'So I tune all the instruments properly for them and teach them a new arrangement. The next week he phoned me and said they came second!'

The teenage Raymond had his own steel band, The Dew Drops, who performed all over Trinidad, even appearing on television. Raymond also played at Notting Hill Carnival after moving to London in the 1960s.

He migrated in his mid-20s and was a laboratory steward for British Gas for 27 years. After turning down the option of relocating to Loughborough, he was made redundant and later worked for a friend's building and restoration firm.

Raymond lives in Fulham, south west London, with his wife Cynthia – a former manager at BT and hospital receptionist – and the couple have two children and three grandchildren.

## Not the same

It was Cynthia who first noticed that something was wrong with Raymond's health, long before her husband was actually diagnosed with dementia.

'For five years I was saying to Raymond and the kids that something was wrong,' she says. 'He would just sit there like a little child lost, or he'd get annoyed for no reason and scream out. He wasn't the same guy.'

Raymond acknowledged he was experiencing memory problems but didn't think they were related to a condition such as dementia.

'I only thought I was very forgetful,' he says. 'When I went upstairs, I didn't know what I'd gone up for. But most people do that, so I didn't think.'

Raymond went to the doctor's on Cynthia's advice but wasn't diagnosed with dementia until a later visit to the neurologist after experiencing sudden hearing loss. They sent him for a brain scan,

which led to a diagnosis from the dementia service at a hospital in nearby Hammersmith.

## Active and independent

Raymond now enjoys attending a day centre in Hammersmith that Alzheimer's Society put him in touch with. However, he admits to being unsure about going to them at first.

'I'm a lively person and my impression of people with Alzheimer's was this,' he says, dropping his head to his shoulder to mime someone who is uncommunicative or sleeping.

'But they've got two guys there I'm very good friends with. We talk, make jokes and laugh. We chat about football, cricket, anything that's in the papers. We talk about Boris! It's good for us – we have a good time.'

The activities include exercises, singing, dancing and general knowledge quizzes, and they sometimes go on walks or trips.

'What makes it great is the staff – they're wonderful people. They make you feel happy, and if you need anything they get it for you. I'd recommend it to anybody,' says Raymond.

Cynthia, who attends carer support sessions at the same venue, says the service has helped Raymond come to terms with his diagnosis and 'come alive', leaving him in a 'completely different place' to where he was in 2017.

'It makes me a more active and independent person,' Raymond adds.

Another success story is the drawing that Raymond started to do at classes in Hammersmith.

This has led to him producing some excellent artwork, including portraits and still life drawings.

'I'd never done anything like it – I couldn't draw anything at all,' he says. 'But I had about 10 up at the centre. The lady who teaches me said I was the best student.'

### Family support

Raymond sometimes feels less able to do certain household tasks, such as DIY, while Cynthia now deals with all paperwork and telephone calls. However, Raymond remains positive about his overall situation. Spending time with people whose dementia is more progressed than his own has also given him perspective.

'Dementia isn't a nice thing to have but you can't say, "Why me?" These things happen and you've got to accept it,' he says.

'It doesn't affect me as bad as some of the other guys. If I want to get the bus or train I'll just get it – I just tell people where I'm going first.'

Raymond feels more confident to travel alone because of a special wristband that he can press to alert those back at home if he gets into any difficulty. He takes a small bag containing food and water wherever he goes. Cynthia also ties his travel pass to this bag since he once lost it while out.

To help Raymond maintain his independence, Cynthia also put whiteboards around the house with reminders written on them.

Other family members are also very supportive, and Raymond was delighted when his teenage granddaughter Aaliyah did some impromptu fundraising for the Society. She set up an online donations page and quickly raised over £600.

'I was so happy about that because no one asked her to do it, she just did it on her own,' says Raymond. 'I thought that was brilliant.'

### Ask us anything

Although generally upbeat, Raymond admits to some concerns about how much more dementia could affect his life in future.

He and Cynthia are regulars at their local supermarket, and while many of the staff there know that Raymond might need additional support, he preferred to tell only one that he specifically has dementia.

'This world is not like it used to be and my belief is that, if people know you have dementia, they can take advantage of that,' he says.

He also chooses not to dwell on how his dementia may progress.

'I don't want to think that I'm going to become like some of the people I've seen,' he says. 'I wouldn't like to get to that stage.'

Earlier this year, Raymond featured in a high profile campaign for Alzheimer's Society as part of Dementia Action Week. This encouraged everyone to help tackle loneliness and isolation by starting conversations with people who have dementia.

He appeared in a film called Ask Us Anything, which showed children interviewing people with dementia. It was designed to challenge misconceptions and show that people with the condition are still themselves, despite the challenges they may face.

'It was good, I enjoyed it,' says Raymond. 'One of the little boys asked me, "Have you ever gone outside without your trousers?" He was so funny!'

These Dementia Action Week films have been watched over 8 million times online, while 28,000 new Dementia Friends were

created amid more than 1,000 local events during the week.

Raymond hopes that appearing in the film and sharing his experiences will add to increasing awareness and encourage others to seek support.

'In the past, if you see a guy acting strange you would say he's drunk or he's mad, but now you might think that he's got dementia,' says Raymond.

'People might read my story and think, "I keep forgetting things," so it might help.

'Anything I can do, I'll do it.'



**Hear Raymond's story**  
Listen to this and previous stories  
at [alzheimers.org.uk/podcast](http://alzheimers.org.uk/podcast)



## Next steps

- Help other people like Raymond regain their confidence – visit [alzheimers.org.uk/give](https://alzheimers.org.uk/give) or call **0330 333 0804** (local rate) to donate.
- Use our Dementia Directory to find dementia services near you – see [alzheimers.org.uk/dementiaconnect](https://alzheimers.org.uk/dementiaconnect)
- Visit [alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities](https://alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities) for more about dementia-friendly communities.

# Transforming lives

Our 40th anniversary is a turning point as we roll out Dementia Connect. We meet volunteers transforming the lives of people affected by dementia through our new service.

Since 1979, millions of people have received vital information, advice and support from Alzheimer's Society. However, far too many still don't have the help they need when they need it.

We want to reach everyone affected by dementia. Dementia Connect, our new service, links people to the right support, at the right time, in the right way.

Just as the Society was set up by determined volunteers, it's volunteers who are key to making Dementia Connect work.

## Keeping in touch

Support from Dementia Connect changes as things change, and it can be in person, over the phone, by post or online.

When someone is first in contact with us, we see how we or anyone else can help right then. But our KIT (keeping in touch) volunteers also call back at agreed times to make sure we know when they might need something else.

'We check in with people to see whether any support is required and how they are doing in general,' says Rhiannon Peters, a KIT volunteer in Neath Port Talbot, south Wales.

'I am able to signpost or refer them to local services, send them useful information or help them receive further support if needed, such as a home visit.'

Some people may need to be in touch quite often, but we might not have spoken to others for a few months.

'A lot can change in this time,' says Rhiannon, 'and my role is to ensure people continue to be supported.'

Rhiannon adds, 'Even when there are no particular issues, people are grateful to know where they can get support if needed and appreciate having somebody to talk to.'

## Side by Side

Our Side by Side service is another important element of Dementia Connect. For a person with dementia who needs that bit of extra support, a volunteer helps them carry on doing the things they love, whether that's hang-gliding, seeing the football or tea and cake.

Sue Lysons in Colne, near Burnley in Lancashire, has experience of dementia within her own family. She volunteered for Side by Side to make a difference for others.

'It's affecting so many people,' she says. 'I just wanted to do something to help.'

Norma doesn't like to go out alone, but Sue's visits means she can get out to the shops or for a spot of lunch, all in good company.

'I'm getting to know her,' says Sue, 'building up a picture of her likes and dislikes.'

'Norma bumped into someone she knew while we were out and she introduced me as her friend. She has a big beaming smile every week, and always says, "Thank you very much."'

## Wider team

James Smith, a Dementia Adviser in east Lancashire, started out at the Society as a KIT volunteer.

'As dementia advisers, we always seek to help people to develop practical and emotional strategies so they can manage the challenges they are facing. In this role, we need the support of a wider team.'

'Without the work of volunteers, we simply would not be able to reach as many people who need Dementia Connect.'

Sue and Norma.



Find volunteering opportunities in your area, see [alzheimers.org.uk/volunteer](https://alzheimers.org.uk/volunteer) or call 0300 222 5706 (local rate).



Dementia Connect isn't available nationally yet – to find support near you, visit [alzheimers.org.uk/getsupport](https://alzheimers.org.uk/getsupport)



## Elf-y enthusiasm

A Dementia Friends Champion in south Wales is planning another opportunity to dress up and raise money this Elf Day.

Last year's Elf Day was such a success at Ebbw Vale's Learning Action Centre in Blaenau Gwent that they're determined to make an even bigger splash for 2019.

Julie Thomas, a local Dementia Friends Champion, says, 'It was amazing last year! I spent the whole day surrounded by lots of smiley faces, hearing laughter in every corner of the building, and everyone loved the activities.'

The day was packed with a singalong, a gentle exercise session, mince pies, a Christmas quiz, a visit from Santa and even some festive line dancing.

'Nearly 100 people joined us to celebrate and raise funds, and Santa was a great success with the families,' says Julie.

'All of us in the organising group want to do it again in 2019, and we are committed to make it even better this year.'

### Fun, funds and more

Apart from being another good excuse to get dressed up and enjoy the lead-up to Christmas – all while raising vital funds – Elf Day can also spark greater awareness about dementia. Last year, this led to Julie running a Dementia Friends information session later that month.

'The session was for the staff at the centre, community connectors and tutors from other agencies – about 40 people,' says Julie.

'Having taken part in Elf Day, they learned a little bit about dementia and were very keen to take up my offer of an information session to learn even more.'

'More people knowing about the condition will stop them being frightened of it and they will know how to help a person affected by dementia. I see some wonderful results across our area – dementia-friendly cafés, churches, theatres, museums, shops, hotels and restaurants all help to change the world for the better.'

### Learning into action

As a long-time supporter and volunteer, Julie has been involved in many Society events over the years, including for Memory Walk and Dementia Action Week. However, she encourages anyone to host an Elf Day event and recommends getting support from local networks, where people are often keen to play their part.

'We had help from a local church to provide refreshments, the singalong was with a lady from activities organiser Goldies Cymru, and a line dancing tutor helped us learn the moves. The Learning Action Centre provided raffle prizes and Santa was from another church in Ebbw Vale!'

## Try something new



### Quit for a Bit

One month, one challenge – will you Quit for a Bit this November and raise money to fight dementia? Sugar, alcohol or both? You decide. 30 days to put your will power to the test and raise money to help everyone affected by dementia.

Sign up at [alzheimers.org.uk/quit](http://alzheimers.org.uk/quit)

### Become a champion



Dementia Friends Champions give people the information and encouragement they need to make a difference for everyone affected by dementia. Champions attend an induction and get support when needed to help create dementia-friendly communities everywhere.

Find out more at [dementiafriends.org.uk](http://dementiafriends.org.uk)

### Read Care and cure

Autumn's Care and cure – our quarterly research magazine – features research into gene therapy, support for carers and scans for Lewy body disease, and much more.

Visit [alzheimers.org.uk/careandcure](http://alzheimers.org.uk/careandcure)



Dress up and enjoy the fun for Elf Day on 6 December  
– visit [alzheimers.org.uk/elfday](http://alzheimers.org.uk/elfday) or call 0330 333 0804 (local rate).

# Real caring for customers

Supporters working at Damart have improved how they support customers affected by dementia while also raising thousands of pounds.

**W**hen staff at Damart, the fashion retailer for over 50s, realised that some of their customers needed extra support due to dementia, they decided to do something about it.

'I had a customer who I was contacting for around two months to try to collect a payment, as her account had fallen into arrears,' says Michelle Rhodes, who has worked at Damart's head office in Bingley, West Yorkshire, for 12 years.

'She kept forgetting to make her payments even after repeat reminders. I felt she was genuine but suspected she was vulnerable.'

Since the customer had mentioned having no family, Michelle contacted social services to make sure she was getting the right support. This person did have dementia, and social services helped her to set up repayments that she could afford, avoiding any more chasing.

'Our average customer is 74 years old,' says Michelle. 'We deal with a lot of vulnerable people, and supporting them is something we are very passionate about.'

## Training and support

However, this was just the beginning. Michelle and her colleagues saw there were many people who needed similar understanding and support.

Eve Martin, Michelle's teammate, says, 'We started to recognise signs of vulnerability with other customers and wanted to ensure that we could all help them with sensitivity.'

After approaching Alzheimer's Society, everyone on Damart's Credit team attended our training course called Supporting people with dementia on the phone.

'We had amazing feedback from the employees who attended,' says Eve, 'and people found it helpful with their day-to-day interactions. We decided to roll this course out to as many of our employees as possible – about 150 people.'

'Hearing them open up about their own experiences with dementia showed that, not only did the course provide guidance and support for when they were dealing with vulnerable customers, it also helped our employees on a personal level.'

Michelle says, 'We've found it easier to recognise when someone might have dementia, and this has made our jobs noticeably less challenging. We know who to contact if we are unsure of how to proceed.'

## Raising funds

As well as improving their support for customers affected by dementia, Michelle and Eve have regularly involved their colleagues in raising funds to fight the condition.

'We took part in Cupcake Day 2017 and raised close to £300,' says Michelle. 'This led to further fundraising through two Elf Days, where donations combined came to almost £1,000!'

Earlier this year, Damart also donated £5,000 towards our Side by Side service. This means we can connect more people who have dementia with Side by Side volunteers, to help them carry on doing the things that they enjoy.

'We would love to continue to support the charity wherever possible,' says Eve, 'and we hope to take part in Elf Day again this year.'

'Just knowing that members of our staff are now trained to be reassuring and friendly when a person feels so vulnerable makes it all worthwhile,' adds Michelle.



Left to right: Abi Davidson and Teresa Batty from Alzheimer's Society with Michelle, Eve and Damart's Head of Customer Services, Jeanette Askin.



Visit [alzheimers.org.uk/training](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/training) for more information about Alzheimer's Society training and consultancy, or call 01904 929464.

# Researching the 'obvious'

Have you ever looked at research findings and thought, 'I could have told you that'? **Nicola Hart**, in our Research Translation team, explains why this kind of knowledge is vital.



**A**lzheimer's Society funds research to find a cure for dementia. However, we're also committed to research that will improve the quality of care for people who are living with the condition.

For the best dementia care and support, we need to understand what really helps people to have the best quality of life. We also need to prioritise resources and funding for this, and one of the research projects I work on – IDEAL – is a prime example.

IDEAL researchers are interviewing over 1,500 people with dementia and more than 1,200 friends and relatives who support them, asking a huge range of questions about their lives. This will enable the researchers to work out what things make the most difference to their quality of life.

The findings of this kind of research can sometimes feel obvious, especially if you have your own experience of dementia. However, for us to influence people making decisions in government and elsewhere, this is the evidence we need – to get their attention and make a case for the kinds of care and support that we know are vital.

We rely on your support and involvement to ensure that the right research helps to create the change we all want to see.

Read more about our Research programme at [alzheimers.org.uk/ourresearch](http://alzheimers.org.uk/ourresearch)



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## Art for everyone

An award-winning art gallery in West Yorkshire has been working with Alzheimer's Society to involve people affected by dementia so that everyone can enjoy getting creative.

The Hepworth Wakefield began by holding artist-led workshops at local dementia cafés and support groups, using stories, crafts, song and movement to understand what provided the most enjoyment and benefit.

Back at the gallery, they produced special resources, including giant domino cards that people can play as a game or use to explore the collections. They also began their own monthly café, where people with dementia and carers enjoy creative and sensory activities in the inspiring venue.

One carer, who has been involved in the project with her husband, said, 'He never paints and draws at home – I give him paper and pencils, but no interest. At the gallery, he doesn't stop!'

## Home to Home

A supporter in east Belfast has raised over £11,000 by trekking more than 125km in three days from her home in Ballyhackamore to her family home in St. Johnston, County Donegal, accompanied by her cocker spaniel Lucy.

Elaine McConnell, a 35-year old special needs teacher, completed the 'Home to Home' walk in memory of her uncle Bill McVitty, who died in May with Alzheimer's. Elaine says he 'was always trying to go home'.

'With so much support and encouragement, I felt like I was carried the whole way,' she adds.

The funds came to us and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, and Elaine and Lucy also went on to open Belfast Memory Walk in September.

**Find out how you can raise funds – visit [alzheimers.org.uk/fundraise](http://alzheimers.org.uk/fundraise) or call 0330 333 0804 (local rate).**

## Aylesbury anniversary

Aylesbury Singing for the Brain group fulfilled a promise to our Chief Executive Officer as it celebrated 40 years of Alzheimer's Society.

After they sang at last Christmas's anniversary launch in St Paul's Cathedral, the group's co-ordinator, Cathy Hill, told Jeremy Hughes they'd 'show him how to party' when he visited them in Buckinghamshire.

They certainly did that, bringing service users, supporters and volunteers together for an upbeat, heartwarming event. Jeremy thanked everyone for all that they do, and long-time supporter Eric Abbott – who has raised over £25,000 over the years – presented him with a cheque. David Gasson, who began volunteering after his dementia diagnosis in 2017, also received his Society People Award in recognition of the range of roles that he fulfils.

Cathy said, 'It was such an amazing event! Everyone sang with gusto and the positive power of singing was so evident in people's faces. We're still talking about it.'

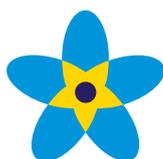




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**Dementia  
Friends**

An Alzheimer's Society initiative





# Fight for a fair deal

Sandy Sweet has seen first-hand how the system of paying for care fails people with dementia. Gareth Bracken meets a campaigner calling for the injustice to end.

‘There have been heads in the sand from successive governments about adult social care,’ says Sandy Sweet, an Alzheimer’s Society campaigner whose mother has dementia.

‘The mindset has been, “It’s too difficult to deal with so we’ll just ignore it until people get really cross, then someone else will deal with it.”’

Sandy is drawing on her family’s experiences to demand that those in power take action to end the injustice faced by them and many others.

## Quick read

Sandy Sweet, an Alzheimer’s Society campaigner in Berkshire, is calling for changes to social care funding for people with dementia.

Sandy, whose mother Maureen has dementia, says the NHS should offer greater financial support to people with the condition.

She says people are penalised for having dementia, since they have to cover costs that people with other conditions wouldn’t.

Sandy is drawing on her family’s experience to demand that the government ends this injustice.

## Hardworking family

Sandy’s mother Maureen, now 87, worked as a secretary, while her father was a plumbing and heating engineer.

‘They were the average middle-class family working their way through a troubled period of power cuts and huge inflation,’ says Sandy. ‘My parents were very hardworking – Dad built up a business from nothing to keep the family.’

Maureen was a very artistic woman with a passion for flower arranging.

‘She was also a superb cook who loved to entertain,’ says Sandy, a retired chartered accountant.

Sandy’s parents were living in a small village in the Yorkshire Dales when Maureen was diagnosed with dementia, believed to be Alzheimer’s, over 12 years ago.

‘My parents were great as grandparents. They would drive 250 miles down the M1 at short notice to spend the weekend with their grandchildren,’ says Sandy, who lives in Wokingham, Berkshire.

‘They knew many of our friends, but once Mum stopped recognising some of them, that’s when I became aware of the deterioration in her condition.’

Sandy says that Maureen’s dementia progressed in a way that led to her becoming very isolated.

‘Mum developed a lot of issues with people who she didn’t recognise being in the house, so Dad had to limit who came in.’

## Crisis point

Sandy and her brother supported their parents while juggling their own family and working lives at the other end of the country.

‘For Dad it was “in sickness and in health”. He wanted to care for Mum and nothing was going to stop him carrying on,’ says Sandy.

Everything changed suddenly when Sandy’s father had a heart attack.

‘That was our crisis point,’ says Sandy. ‘The GP said, “If you want your father to have a longer life, you need to make a different caring arrangement for your Mum.”’

Sandy’s father sold his home and moved to a bungalow closer to Sandy and her brother, while a suitable care home was found for Maureen nearby.

‘Yorkshire was their life – they loved it there, but we had no alternative,’ says Sandy.

## Turned down

Maureen moved into a care home in 2009, with costs shared by her family and social services.

A few years ago, Maureen’s condition deteriorated further. They applied for NHS continuing healthcare funding, where people with long-term complex health needs have care costs paid for by the NHS. However, their application was rejected.

Sandy feels they were turned down primarily because, although her Mum needs help with all her personal care and her mobility is very limited, ‘She is a gentle person,

and so at the time the “aggression” box couldn’t be ticked.

‘Good quality dementia care is expensive,’ says Sandy, ‘and people living with the condition who need care pay significantly more than people who do not have dementia. This seems to me to be an illness penalty.’

Sandy says that underfunding of the NHS means the full cost of care falls to families or social services, even care related to dementia as a health condition.

‘If you have cancer or some other life-limiting illness you might expect some assistance from the NHS, but it seems that dementia is the wrong sort of illness!’

‘Part of the problem,’ says Sandy, ‘is that health and social care budgets are separate. If there was one pot for both, people might receive more joined up and equitable funding.’

‘It is unfair to expect social services to bear the full cost of dementia care when they are already severely underfunded and struggling to meet the demands of many difficult social care needs.’

### Complex system

Alzheimer’s Society is calling for

the specific needs of people with dementia to be addressed in the government’s social care reforms, which are due to be announced in the Queen’s Speech in October.

‘The government has got to start governing, then we can have a proper open debate about the costs of dementia,’ says Sandy.

Although Maureen receives good dementia care, elsewhere the quality of care can be a major issue, as is the difficulty of navigating the social care system. Sandy has attended party conferences as part of our Fix Dementia Care campaign.

‘The system is inordinately complex,’ says Sandy. ‘Trying to fight my way through and find what was out there and what we were entitled to was such a learning curve. For a lot of people it’s overwhelming and if you’re older it’s all too difficult.’

Sandy sees great value in Alzheimer’s Society’s new Dementia Connect service, which offers people affected by dementia a single point of referral.

‘I think that sort of navigator role is incredibly important,’ she

says. ‘People who get a dementia diagnosis should be signposted to a person who can help.’

### No less a person

Sandy has appeared on conference panels, given talks at events and supported efforts to make Wokingham more dementia friendly.

‘I feel passionately that people with dementia are not getting a fair deal in terms of money or government mindset. They are right at the very bottom of the pile,’ she says.

‘My mum is no less of a person than she was 20 years ago but now has no voice. She can’t vote, so she’s effectively disenfranchised.’

Sandy credits Alzheimer’s Society with raising the profile of people with dementia and carers, though there is still much to be done.

‘The mark of a country is how we respect and care for our sick and vulnerable. We mustn’t give up on people with dementia,’ she says.

‘It’s our job to care for them to the best of our ability – the government can’t walk away from it.’



## Next steps

- Call on the government to Fix Dementia Care at [alzheimers.org.uk/fixdementiacare](https://alzheimers.org.uk/fixdementiacare)
- For our booklet, When does the NHS pay for care? (813), see [alzheimers.org.uk/publications](https://alzheimers.org.uk/publications) or call **0300 303 5933** (local rate).
- Visit [alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities](https://alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities) for more about dementia-friendly communities.





# Plain sailing

Sailing can offer relaxation, friendship and activity for people with dementia. **Gareth Bracken** reports on a sailing club that's making it easier to take part.

## Quick read

Whitefriars Sailing Club at the Cotswold Water Park supports Swindon's Forget Me Not group to enjoy sailing.

The group is part of Sailability, a national project to enable people with a range of disabilities to be active.

Harry Davis, who has dementia, enjoys the sailing and finds it relaxing to get out on the water.

Christine also has dementia and says the group feels like an extended family because people look out for each other.

**E**very week for six months of the year, Whitefriars Sailing Club at the Cotswold Water Park welcomes the Forget Me Not group from Swindon. They encourage people with dementia to get out on the water and enjoy sailing.

This is part of the Wiltshire club's Sailability programme, which enables people with disabilities, or who aren't as mobile as they once were, to lead more active lives and be part of their community.

'We try to understand each person, and either get them sailing independently or get them with a buddy just going out and enjoying it on a therapeutic basis,' says David Durston, Principal of Sailability at the club.

'Whatever your age or sailing ability – diehard racer, newcomer to sailing or you simply love mucking about on the water – we're keen to make sailing fun and accessible for all.'

Boats at Whitefriars have special adaptations, such as more supportive seating that helps keep the sailor in the centre of the craft. They are also very stable, and some cannot capsize at all. Some can be worked electrically for people who wouldn't be able to manage ropes, while others can be operated by blowing and sucking air through special controls.

A large pontoon has been purpose-built to be accessible

and stable for wheelchairs and people with walking difficulties. Secure hoists are also available on both the pontoon and the shore.

### Relaxing experience

Harry Davis, who is in his early 60s and living with dementia, has been sailing with the Forget Me Not group for more than three years.

'I like coming sailing because it's relaxing to be able to get out on the water,' he says. 'It's a little bit of a challenge trying to remember what ropes to pull and which way to turn, but it's not strenuous, there's no hassle. I enjoy coming here and I'll keep coming for as long as I can.'

Experienced volunteers are on standby in safety boats throughout Sailability sessions. Group members can also sail with a volunteer until they get a feel for the wind and learn the broad principles of sailing.

Alzheimer's Society is working with Sailability to encourage volunteers – who don't necessarily have to be on the water – to become Dementia Friends so that they can best support people with dementia.

Nick, a volunteer, and Forget Me Not attendee, Derek, used to work together in Swindon and have now been reunited on the water.

'It's good fun and I get a lot of pleasure helping these guys and ladies, and it helps me



as well,' says Nick. 'It's very rewarding, and Derek enjoys the quiet when we're out sailing.'

Once a sailor is more confident, they can begin to sail independently or with others. They may also work towards special certification, learn how to race or even become an instructor themselves.

### Extended family

Forget Me Not member Christine, who also has dementia, hadn't ever sailed prior to joining the group.

'I've never been a person who sits around – it's great to try things you've never tried before as it keeps you thinking,' she says. 'I enjoy everything about sailing, especially when the sun's shining.'

She particularly appreciates the supportive side of the sessions.

'The volunteers who help us are just brilliant,' she says. 'Everyone at the sailing club is so kind and friendly and everyone helps one another, which makes it something that you really appreciate and enjoy.'

### Adapting activities

Sailability is a national project run by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) at about 225 UK sites. 'It's about socialising, doing new things, getting out in the environment and being physically active,' says Leon Ward, Disability Development Officer for RYA Sailability.

'Learning new skills and building confidence is really important for people's mental health and wellbeing.'

Alzheimer's Society and Sport England are calling on other leisure centres, sports clubs and gyms to follow Whitefriars in reducing the barriers that can prevent people affected by dementia from taking part in sport and physical activity.

'We want to see this happening across the country,' says Steven McFadyen, our Programme Partnerships Officer for Sport and Leisure.

'It's about being open and adapting what you have to enable people with dementia to continue doing the activities they love.'



Photographs: Thousand Word Media

## Next steps

- Find out how to stay active when you have dementia – visit [alzheimers.org.uk/active](https://alzheimers.org.uk/active)
- Download our guide for sport and leisure organisations about becoming dementia friendly at [alzheimers.org.uk/sport](https://alzheimers.org.uk/sport)
- See [dementiafriends.org.uk](https://dementiafriends.org.uk) for more about Dementia Friends.



# Friends through hens

Being with animals can be comforting and stimulating, and they don't have to be traditional pets. **Julie Penfold** finds out how caring for hens helped to bring a community together.

**W**ood Green is a sheltered housing scheme in Gateshead that's home to two very different types of resident – older people and hens. Caring for hens is a big part of people's lives at Wood Green, and it's helping to combat loneliness and isolation.

'We've been caring for hens for seven years now,' says Lynne Walker, the sheltered scheme manager. 'It's made a remarkable difference to all the residents, but particularly the men.

'Before the introduction of the hens, they just didn't interact with each other. The men have been able to bond around the hens and their care. They would never stand and chat with each other before, but since we've introduced a table outside the communal lounge that overlooks the hen pens, that's all changed.

'The men will come out and sit and chat together for hours now. In the summer, they gather around and have a drink together. They're all much more outgoing now.'

## Owen's care

HenPower is a project run by Equal Arts, a charity that involves older people in creative activities. The idea of bringing hens into care settings came from people like Owen Turnbull, who lives at Wood Green.

Owen had told staff that he was frustrated as he missed his 'girls' – his hens. Lynne contacted Equal Arts and a week later, residents were introduced to hens from a nearby farm for the first

time. Since 2012, hens have been a big part of life at Wood Green, and they aren't alone – there are now 60 HenPower projects across the UK. Through these, professional artists also lead creative sessions to help improve wellbeing.

The hens at Wood Green are looked after by head hen keeper Owen, who enjoyed looking after chickens and hens when he was younger. Owen gets up at 7am every morning to clean out the pens, change the hens' water and feed them. Wood Green is also home to three hens from a nearby primary school.

Owen lived at the sheltered scheme with his wife Bell for 14 years. When the hens first arrived, Bell had mild dementia. Bell moved into a care home as her dementia advanced, and she died in February. Owen and Bell had been married for 67 years.

For Owen, caring for the hens gives him a sense of purpose and routine.

'I look after the hens seven days a week,' says a proud Owen.

'After their morning feed, I like to let them out to wander around for a while. I also tend to the coops and look after the gardens.'

## Bell's orchard

'Bell would always come to the HenPower sessions and actively take a lead,' says Jos Forester-Melville, HenPower's programme manager.

'Even as her dementia became more advanced, Bell was still involved. It's relationship-centred

## Quick read

HenPower helps to improve people's wellbeing through interaction with hens and in creative sessions.

Hens have been a big part of life at Wood Green, a sheltered housing scheme in Gateshead, since 2012.

'Hensioners' share their experiences widely throughout the community, including in schools and universities.

Nursing students visited Wood Green to better understand the impact of this kind of interaction and activity.



care and the hens are integral to their day-to-day living.'

Residents created a community orchard in memory of Bell. Today's HenPower session includes choosing wildflower seeds to plant around the gardens and orchard. Owen created the stepping stones that feature around the orchard and the stones were decorated by schoolchildren. The wooden bench has a plaque that's dedicated to Bell.

'Bell loved sitting there and being around the hens,' says Owen.

### Everyone's benefit

Wood Green's HenPower volunteers, such as Owen, are known as 'hensioners'. They share their experiences and knowledge in local schools, universities, care settings, summer fairs and as part of HenPower roadshows.

Owen's experience of being a carer is also helping fellow resident George Wright. His wife Carol was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in November 2018.

'It was a shock when we received the diagnosis,' says

George. 'There are already signs of her changing and she has good and bad days. She enjoys the creative activities and it's a break for me. You've just got to get through it.'

'The residents here and our family are a good help. I really enjoy the hens being around. I like to sit outside and just watch the hens going about their day. It's so peaceful.'

Adult nursing students from Northumbria University are also here today to find out more about HenPower and life at Wood Green.

'It's the first time we have visited, as we're just about to start a module on older people's care,' says student nurse, Sarah. 'This isn't like anything we've experienced so far on the course.'

'Caring for the hens gives the residents a sense of purpose, as the hens rely on them and they rely on the hens. Being around the hens is therapeutic – even if they don't touch the hens they still benefit.'



## Next steps

- Find out more about HenPower at [www.equalarts.org.uk/henpower](http://www.equalarts.org.uk/henpower)
- For our Keeping active and involved (1506) booklet, visit [alzheimers.org.uk/publications](http://alzheimers.org.uk/publications) or call 0300 303 5933 (local rate).
- Use our Dementia Directory to find dementia services near you – see [alzheimers.org.uk/dementiaconnect](http://alzheimers.org.uk/dementiaconnect)

# ‘Their voices rise together’

## Winning and commended entries from our 2019 poetry competition.

Thank you everyone who took part in our poetry competition – you sent us over 120 poems full of feeling and insight, and it was a privilege to include each and every entry.

Heartfelt thanks also to our shortlisting panel, including four people affected by dementia from the Forget Me Nots in Kent – Chris and Rachael Norris, and Keith and Rosemary Oliver (pictured). Our 2017 competition winners – Susan Benton in West Yorkshire, Vivienne Ward in Dorset and Karen Riddick in Dumfries and Galloway – joined the panel, as did Helen Helmer, who leads our Publishing team.

We’re extremely grateful to resident poets from Rhymes with Orange – London’s best spoken word night – who also took part in the shortlisting, and especially to Ellie Dawes and Athos Athanasiou, who made this possible.

Our guest judge was Colette Bryce (also pictured), the award-winning poet from Derry who lives in Newcastle upon Tyne. Her latest collection of poems, *The M pages*, is due out next year and we’re delighted she was able to take time to select winners.

Colette says, ‘Reading the shortlisted poems, with their images from so many lives, was a rich experience; at times moving, at others uplifting. Always I felt the charge of connection that poetry sparks between the writer and the reader. I have no doubt the winning poems will resonate with many people.’



### Change

‘Tenderly’ by Miranda Overett, in London, won in the Change category.

Colette says, ‘This concerns itself with parts of speech we often edit out in poetry: not the action, but the adverb, “how” something is done. This is key to what the poem communicates about the woman interacting with her father, “tenderly”, “reverently” and “gently” are rejected in favour of “quickly” and a manner that is “cheerful, uncompromising”, in effect – unchanged.

‘I was drawn to the line in the centre of the poem where she “does not tread gently”, bringing echoes simultaneously of Dylan Thomas’s “Do not go gentle into that good night” and Yeats’s “tread softly because you tread upon my dreams”.’

Miranda says, ‘I wrote “Tenderly” about my mother. Every time we go to visit my grandfather, who has Alzheimer’s, I’m struck by her compassion. She accepts him completely as he is, even though she now acts more as parent than child to him.

‘Her ability to balance caring for his practical needs with always being open to finding new ways to emotionally connect with him is so strong and full of love that I wanted to capture it.’



Miranda Overett

### Tenderly

She does not brush the crumbs tenderly  
from her father's suit,  
she does not speak reverently,  
in fact,  
she offers him a biscuit  
and takes one herself.

She ties his shoelaces quickly, with an eye  
on the state of his socks  
and does not tread gently  
across the dozing room  
or hold back the day –  
allows the light to break in,  
cheerful, uncompromising.

She does not refrain  
from telling him  
what he has forgotten,  
but listens  
to every song he sings  
and learns the words  
so that their voices rise  
together.

© Miranda Overett

Colette adds, 'A special mention goes to "Time of sands" by Mark Cowan in County Durham, with its "time traveller" speaker.'

Mark says, 'I have recently seen a number of examples of the challenges of dementia for everyone concerned. Better exposure of these and how people can be supported, through fantastic organisations such as

Alzheimer's Society, is crucial. There are so many examples of small things making a positive difference to people affected by dementia. I hope the poem strikes a chord – the more exposure and support that can be provided for families, the better.'



Mark Cowan

### Time of sands

Forgetting but not forgotten.  
1945 is a fresh memory.  
The crazy paving memory tendrils  
Connect past to present.  
There's Mother's freshly baked  
bread  
With her bun in the oven.  
I'm at her knee, tugging at her skirt.  
Her hem,  
Hemmed in remembrance.  
Pulling, pulling  
At the memory chords of the  
kitchen blind.  
Blind to the present.  
Birthday presents.  
I'm six.  
I'm eighty.  
The Birthday candles flicker.  
Victoria sandwich,  
Queen Victoria.  
The reign has ended  
But the rain on the window  
Rolls, streaks, mists the glass of  
time.  
My hour glass is topsy turvy.  
Mother, sister, child, Grandma;  
A west end stage show  
Where I play every part.  
Not an act,  
All a life drama.  
Time traveller.

**I need a Doctor Who  
Can understand.  
The time, the sands,  
The sands of time.  
Who am I tomorrow?  
The same person I was yesterday,  
I'm a golden oldie,  
A Fibonacci sequence.  
The ripples in my pool are in reverse.**

© Mark Cowan

### Celebrate

Looking at the Celebrate category, Colette says, 'There were several poems about the importance of music for people living with dementia; not only its power to evoke memories, but also to suffuse us momentarily with pleasure and calm.'

'I liked the chiselled economy of "Bobby's Girl" by Ruth Foy in County Down, the song title repeated through the three stanzas as a refrain, at first signifying the woman's transportation back to "when she sang" and later, movingly, as the song is played to celebrate her.'

'The poem is almost entirely without punctuation, the writer instead making rhythmic use of the short lines and choppy line breaks to pull us forward three times to the refrain.'

Ruth says, 'I wrote this in celebration and memory of my aunt, Belle Johnston. She loved her holidays in Spain, where she would take the stage and sing before the days of karaoke. When Alzheimer's hindered her memory of a lot of things, we would start singing the first line of Bobby's Girl and she would take over and sing her heart out. It brought her and her family so much comfort to hear. Music has a deep place in our memories.'

'Winning this category means so much, as it is a way of keeping the happy memories of Belle alive.'



Ruth Foy and her aunt

### Bobby's girl

When she sang her eyes  
lost vacant look and  
life returned to when she stood  
before the crowd  
in smoky room and  
wished she was Bobby's girl

Each word remembered  
perfect chord, breathing  
out memories of evenings  
when it was warm and  
she in summer dress  
wished she was Bobby's girl

We play the song, see  
sparks that set a  
Spanish bar alight, as  
she with arms outstretched  
to grasp the past  
wished she was Bobby's girl

© Ruth Foy

'A special mention goes to "My little big mum" by Christian Oliver in Devon,' says Colette, 'a poem that enacts a heart-breaking turn in the centre lines, creating an inverse reflection of the bright personality we met in the first half.'

Christian says, 'I was halfway through the creative writing section of the Open University English Literature degree in April. We were tasked with writing a story or poem for a publication of our choice.'

'My mother died in April 2013 so around Easter every

year, my thoughts turn to her and the terrible circumstances of her death. She suffered from Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's for years before her death, so it was natural for me to consider a celebration of her life or a record of her struggle for my piece.

'It's wonderful to find out that my poem was commended – my mum would have liked that!'



Christian Oliver and his mum

### My big little mum

My mum was a little sparkler,  
Tiny, bright and fierce.  
She had a cheeky 100 watt grin,  
And a trenchant wit.  
Five foot nothing in her nurse's  
clogs but,  
When they poured in the love and  
the life,  
She forgot to say "when."  
She bubbled over,  
She effervesced.  
She had so much love and life,  
It took a while to drain away.  
Drop by drop.  
Inch by inch.  
I had to watch as Alzheimer's  
hollowed her out,  
I had to watch as it ate her brain.  
She died by inches.  
The 100 watt dimmed.  
The sparkle went out.  
My lovely little mum died,  
Quite a while before her body did.

© Christian Oliver

### Share

Damon Young, in Berkshire, wrote 'Rice paper', the winning poem in the Share category.

Colette says, 'This conversational poem shifts gear in the second half as "delight" gives way to "the bodily buzz of loss".'

'Images are what we most remember from poems, and after reading this I held in my mind the grandmother's "tumbleweed hair", her "lovebeam of a greeting", and her gold wedding band, snipped with pliers to relieve its "unsustainable pressure".'

Damon says, 'I was inspired to write the poem by the experiences of my grandmother: both my sense of her as my nan and my reflections on the last months of her life.'

'I hope I have done my nan justice. I hope also that I have contributed to a greater understanding of the lived reality of dementia.'



Damon Young

### Rice paper

When I was about seven, my mum  
and I discovered  
the novelty of biting through rice  
paper and letting

it snowflake on our tongues. It was  
our exotic secret,  
pasted fish-skin thin onto a pulpy,  
seed-ridged fruit bar.

My nan joined us once and we  
formed a street coven to  
sample these strange, freshly  
bought treats. Mum and I

mischievously withheld our  
 knowledge of the miraculous  
 edible wrapper and nan's wise,  
 steel-sprung fingers padded  
  
 ineffectively at the vacuum-shrunk  
 white  
 cover. Her face peering at their failure.

My delight at being the bearer of  
 a hidden truth gave way  
 to the bodily buzz of loss. Those  
 life-coarsened fingers that

seemed to have ripped a place in  
 the world for me, were now  
 diligent but outfoxed; reduced to  
 the cluelessness of childhood.

Her last days, decades later,  
 seemed a slow erosion back  
 to the earth from which she was  
 shaped. There was a wildness

beneath her tumbleweed hair and  
 feeding, soothing  
 and tending became dependant  
 on the hands of others.

A lovebeam of a greeting was late  
 to disappear, but eventually  
 gave way to a frown of alarm, as  
 my shape in the doorway

became unfamiliar to her. Her  
 fingers, stripped of certainty,  
 became swollen and her gold  
 wedding band began to bite.

Pliers held with surgical care  
 snipped it in two, in  
 order to relieve its unsustainable  
 pressure. As I looked

at the waxy white circle of newly  
 uncovered skin where  
 the ring had been, I felt rice paper  
 sadness once more.

© Damon Young

Colette adds, 'A special mention  
 goes to "Beautiful full moon" by  
 Jan Smithies in West Yorkshire,  
 which enacts a scenario familiar to  
 many, when a shared experience  
 can be embraced despite the facts.'

Jan says, 'The poem was  
 inspired by a real experience  
 with my mum, in the last month  
 of her life (she died in March). As  
 her dementia progressed, her  
 physical, mental and emotional  
 worlds condensed. Up to autumn  
 2018, I was still able, with great  
 effort on both our parts, to get  
 Mum ready, heave her into the  
 car and go for drives together. We  
 both often pointed out lovely light  
 on a field, an interesting shaped  
 cloud, a beautiful tree.

'Her seeing the "moon" in  
 her bedroom window was an  
 emotional reminder of all we had  
 both lost over the last five years,  
 but also what limited, but still  
 precious, connections we could  
 still make when sharing something  
 beautiful with each other.'



Jan Smithies

### Beautiful full moon

Look at that beautiful full moon  
 shining in my window  
 You beamed, wafting your fragile  
 hand pane-ward  
 To ensure I didn't miss sharing  
 your lunar loveliness  
 And indeed, there was a bright  
 silver circle shimmering there

Mum, it's just the room light  
 reflecting back I said  
 Immediately regretting taking  
 away your joyful vision  
 For who am I to bring such stark  
 reality  
 Into your shrinking world, an eight  
 foot square room  
 In which you lie in your six foot by  
 two foot bed  
 Housing your withering body, your  
 retreating mind  
 Now the only realm where you still  
 hold court  
 Five minutes later you exclaim  
 again  
 Look at that beautiful full moon  
 shining in my window  
 Yes Mum, I enthuse, it's really lovely,  
 shimmering there  
 Moments where we share joy are  
 rare and precious  
 To be part of, to share in your  
 reality today  
 Our mutual love of beauty, of each  
 other,  
 Cemented as a memory I will  
 treasure for us both

© Jan Smithies

### Other poems that were shortlisted

- **Demet Yesiltepe** – A hand or a clue (Change)
- **William Thomas** – My life (Change)
- **Tracie Heard** – Dementia (Change) and Forgive me (Share)
- **Andy McFarlane** – Do not open until I've lost my mind (Share)
- **Nick Hook** – Eyes of glass (Share)
- **Ann Thomasson** – Love transcends it all (Share)
- **Pen Kease** – The visitor (Celebrate)
- **Sarah Veness** – They speak another language (Celebrate)
- **Sarah Mills** – The golden store (Celebrate)



**‘My father’s dementia was only recently diagnosed but it’s getting worse quickly. How can we explain what’s happening to him to our teenage children?’**

## Explaining to the kids

**G**etting a dementia diagnosis can be confusing and upsetting for everyone in the person’s family. Explaining what’s happening to teenagers can be difficult, especially if they’re also dealing with other significant events like exams or their first relationship. However, it can be reassuring for them to understand what is happening and how they could help.

### Talk and acknowledge

Try speaking to your children clearly and calmly, and at the right level for them. If you can get a sense of how much detail they can cope with, you can tailor your conversation to that. For younger teens in particular, it’s worth checking that they understand any special terms that you’re using.

If your father is doing things that might seem strange to them, such as forgetting names or behaving differently, then acknowledge that this is happening.

Explaining that dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by a disease, such as Alzheimer’s or strokes, may help them to understand that changes in your father’s behaviour are due to this and not directed at them.

A common concern among children is that they, or other family members, may develop dementia. They might even need reassurance that it can’t be ‘caught’ like some diseases.

### Listen and reassure

Feeling listened to and heard can be the most valuable part of a conversation. Allow your children to express their feelings without judgement. Encourage them to be open about how your father’s condition is affecting them.

Teenagers might respond by expressing sadness or anger, or they could feel anxious or stressed. Alternatively, they may retreat from the situation. If they’re finding it harder to concentrate, they might have problems with school or other work.

Make sure your children know that you’re there for them and that you’re facing the situation together. It’s important that they understand they’re still loved no matter how preoccupied, sad or frustrated the adults around them may be.

### Again and more

You might need to repeat your explanations at different times – your children could need reminding why their grandad sometimes behaves in an unusual way, especially if something upsetting happens.

If your father is able to talk about his condition directly with your children, then he may need support, so it could be helpful if you’re there too.

**There are many online resources for children to find out more about dementia and how to make a difference – see [alzheimers.org.uk/youtube](http://alzheimers.org.uk/youtube)**



Photograph: Freeimages.com/Martin Walls



### Resources to draw on

See p35 for resources to help explain dementia to younger children.

Our toolkits help schools and youth groups to create a dementia-friendly generation – visit [alzheimers.org.uk/youngpeople](http://alzheimers.org.uk/youngpeople)



France with his wife Helen

## France Savarimuthu Newport, aged 69 with dementia with Parkinsonism

### What would you take to your desert island?

I would take the Bible to read but mostly I would take music. Reggae, soul, Indian music, bhangra, French music – I would take a little of everything.

I used to write songs and play the harmonium, I did weddings. My mum would wait up until 5am until I came home, to check I was alright. I love music and I'll never stop listening to new things.

### How has Alzheimer's Society helped you?

My friend Barry takes me out every Friday afternoon as part of Side by Side. I plan where I want to go and he takes me there. He's very kind and supportive, he's just a real friend. In a way he has helped me to be the way I was before.

### If you could go back in time, where would you go?

To when I was helping people as a nurse and at the same time training new nurses. I specialised in infectious disease, learning disabilities and general nursing. There's something special about being part of generations of nurses and medical professionals, helping people every day through some of their darkest times.

### What is your most treasured possession?

What I've been through and the road I've taken. If I was still in Mauritius, I'd be heavily involved in politics because I don't like injustice. I've worked in the NHS, oil rigs, steelworks and an airport. I have a wonderful wife and a lovely son – they get me through everything.

If you have dementia and would like to answer our questions for a future column, please email [magazine@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:magazine@alzheimers.org.uk) or write to the address on p3.

Challenge  
your friends.  
Beat dementia.

Host your own Games Night  
this autumn and fundraise to  
help find a cure.

Sign up at  
[alzheimers.org.uk/  
gamesnight](http://alzheimers.org.uk/gamesnight)



People living with dementia at a group in Kent looked at products designed to be felt, handled and fiddled with.

## Handy objects



**T**he Tunbridge Wells Peer Support Group meets twice a month in Southborough, a northern area of the Kent town. It provides a relaxed, friendly and supportive place for people with dementia to meet each other, get information and share experiences.

We visited them to hear what they thought of two products from our shop that are designed to help stimulate and relax people with dementia.

### Fidget Widgets

Five Fidget Widgets have been developed by the University of Central Lancashire, Alzheimer's Society and Active Minds, each using a specific motion – spin, slide, twist, turn or roll. They're designed to give people with dementia engaging and interactive things to do with their hands.

As Kathleen at the group observed, 'Later on, people have often got fiddly hands.'

The widgets are available singly or altogether as the Fidget Widget Tool Kit, and people liked the fact that they were all made out of wood.

Sue said, 'I prefer wood to plastic,' and John agreed, saying wood feels more 'real'. Isabel added that plastic can feel sharper on corners and edges than wood.

'Wood feels warmer,' said Kathleen.

Sue said she uses a fidget spinner when she's feeling nervous while out and about, because it's small enough to carry in her handbag. Sarah wondered if there could be smaller versions of widgets that could fit into a bag or pocket, and if one widget could combine different motions.

Bob said, 'These are all great – I like the beads on the Slide widget.'

John liked the Roll widget, 'It's a challenge to try and stop the ball bearing from going around.'

Although Ray liked the noises that some widgets made when used, he wondered if others might be irritated by them. However, no one thought they would, and Isabel said she found the sound of the Roll widget relaxing.

Fay wondered if the Spin widget would break if you squeezed its two sections together, as some might want to do when using it. Isabel also said it was the least obvious to know how to use, as your fingers could get in the way of the movement.

John asked how much you'd have to pull the string on the Slide widget before it snapped and the beads came off. Isabel noted that the widgets should all be child friendly, especially since they'd make good activities to do with younger relatives.

John said the individual widgets would make good stocking fillers, and the Roll and Twist widgets were the most popular among group members.

### Bud Sensory Cushion

The group tried out the Bud Sensory Cushion, undoing buttons and poppers to open up the fabric outer 'petals'. This in turn revealed inner petal shapes of various textures and sounds – shiny and dull, crunchy and smooth. There were also places to attach small items with special meaning for the person.

'They're nice bright colours,' said Kathleen. 'It's something to fiddle with, open and close up again.'

'I love the fleecy feel,' said Sue, stroking one of the inner surfaces. 'It's like having a cat,' Sarah added, to which Ray joked, 'Except you don't have to feed it!'

Clive said, 'You can organise the "petals", stack them together and pull them around.'

'You can take it apart,' said Sarah, 'but it's easy to reassemble too – good for people with different levels of dexterity.'

'I don't think we are at the stage where we would need this,' said John, 'but we need to think ahead.'

He added, 'It's like twiddle boards that we make at Sherwood Men's Shed for people with dementia staying in the local hospital. Those have attachments like plug sockets and chains to fiddle with.'

The group enjoyed the idea that they felt a bit like the millionaires on the BBC show Dragons' Den, with us pitching ideas to them, and we were very grateful for their feedback.



The Fidget Widget Tool Kit, individual Fidget Widgets and Bud Sensory Cushion – along with a range of other helpful products – are available from our online shop, see [shop.alzheimers.org.uk](http://shop.alzheimers.org.uk) or call 0300 124 0900 (local rate).

Without VAT, the Fidget Widget Tool Kit is £49.96, individual Fidget Widgets are £10.82 and the Bud Sensory Cushion is £39.95 (you don't have to pay VAT if it's bought to be used by a person with dementia or other condition).



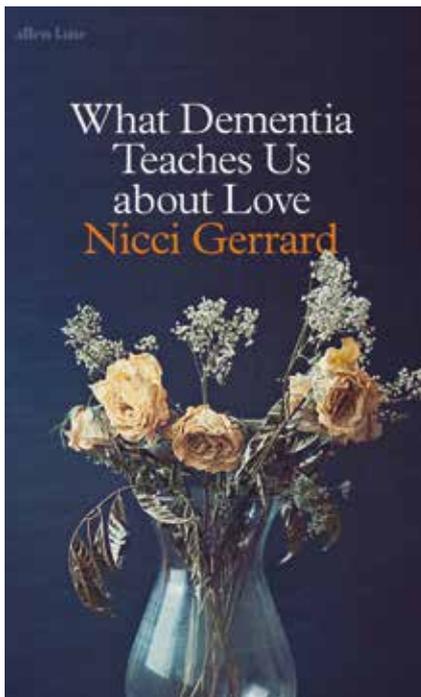
**Win Fidget Widgets**

See p39 for a chance to win.



We hear readers' comments about a thoughtful and emotional book that's firmly rooted in real-life experience.

## What dementia teaches us about love



**W**hen Nicci Gerrard's father, John, died with Alzheimer's in 2014, she was sure that a five-week stay in hospital had contributed to his rapid decline. John's Campaign to improve hospital care for people with dementia, set up by Nicci and friend Julia Jones, has had great practical success.

Her new book, *What dementia teaches us about love*, looks at how we think and feel about the condition, but it's borne from the same need to make sense of its real-world impact.

'Having seen her father's health rapidly deteriorate after admission to hospital, Nicci explores dementia from all angles, from the

science of the disease and the psychology of advance planning through to the healing process that is so necessary for long-term carers.' says Neroli Harris in our Dementia Knowledge Centre.

'As Nicci says, it is all to do with thinking about dementia better – diagnosis is not a sentence but the beginning of a new chapter, albeit it a scary one.'

Gail Gregory in Lancashire, who has Alzheimer's disease, says, 'I found the book hard to get into initially, but once I got to the third chapter – The brain, the mind and the self – I was hooked and found it hard to put down.'

'This book is more than a narrative of a personal journey involving loved ones having lived with dementia,' says Neroli. 'Nicci refers to it as a "meditation on what dementia means".'

### True to life

These aims might make the book sound like an intellectual exercise. However, it remains rooted in the reality of people's experiences of dementia and the difference that greater understanding can make.

'The writer has really captured moments that are touching, emotional and moving,' says Gail, 'a true representation of care homes, hospitals and how society turns away from dementia.'

Neroli says, 'This is a book of accounts of science, courage, joyfulness and stoicism. The

ongoing theme is about understanding, communication and caring – making and keeping connections for as long as possible and learning new ways of communicating as things progress.

'It is also a homage to carers, whether they recognise themselves in this role, as much as a person living with dementia recognises themselves.'

### Real emotion

Of course, the book's credibility also means that it can pack quite an emotional punch.

Mrs A Rosewell in Bristol cared for her husband John, who had Alzheimer's, at home until his death a year ago. She listened to Nicci's reading of this book for the audio version.

'I cried a lot listening to the book, and sometimes it was really hard to keep listening,' she says.

'I think all professionals, including GPs, should listen to this audio book and learn not to talk over people with dementia, as if they are not a person with feelings and emotions.'

Another reader, John from Leeds, was diagnosed with mixed dementia – Alzheimer's and vascular dementia – three years ago. He says he found the book overwhelming at times.

'Several times I had to put it down; I couldn't continue reading because of the tears in my eyes,' he says.

# Explaining dementia to children

## Dementia Superheroes



Our comic book series makes dementia a little less scary for primary school-aged children. Monthly packs include activities, collectable cards and a comic that shows how children can become 'dementia superheroes' themselves. Call 0330 333 0804 (local rate) or visit [alzheimers.org.uk/superheroes](http://alzheimers.org.uk/superheroes) to donate and sign up for your child.

However, John is glad that he kept returning to the book.

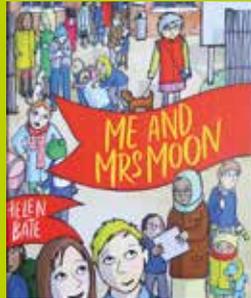
'I would strongly recommend anyone, whether they themselves have dementia or are married to or related to someone who has, to read this powerful book – you will not regret it.'

Gail agrees, 'Dementia is still misunderstood, and Nicci is very honest and open. Her experiences are a true representation, which draws you in.'

'It is enthralling, touching, emotional, descriptive and moving.'

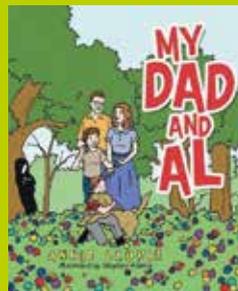
**What dementia teaches us about love**, by Nicci Gerrard (Allen Lane, 2019), 272 pages, £16.99, ISBN: 9780241347454.

## Me and Mrs Moon



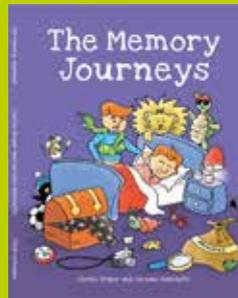
Maisie and Dylan love Mrs Moon, but strange things start happening. What can the children do? Love, loyalty and resilience shine through this graphic novel – based on real events – about two children determined to help their friend. For ages seven and above. **Me and Mrs Moon**, by Helen Bate (Otter-Barry, 2019), 48 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 9781910959947.

## My dad and Al



When Charlie's dad is told he has Alzheimer's, the family think of it as an unwanted guest called Al who they can blame, and even laugh at, for the things he makes Dad do. A book from a former teacher that helps families talk to children aged eight-plus about dementia. **My dad and Al**, by Annie Laurie (AuthorHouse UK, 2019) 40 pages, £14.99, ISBN: 9781728390321.

## The memory journeys

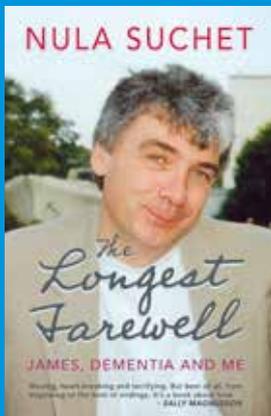


A story for children aged six to nine that portrays changes in behaviours and roles as dementia develops. The book is supported by an education toolkit with games, puzzles and a prompt sheet for parents reading it with a child. **The memory journeys**, by Charlie Draper and Caroline Blanchette (YPWD Berkshire, 2016), 30 pages, £5.99, ISBN: 9781366869630.

See [alzheimers.org.uk/publications](http://alzheimers.org.uk/publications) for our **Explaining dementia to children and young people (515) factsheet**, or call 0330 333 0804 (local rate).



## Your turn



For the next issue, we invite you to read *The longest farewell* by Nula Suchet (Seren, 2019), 280 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 9781781725184.

Let us know what you think about this heartfelt account of caring for someone with frontotemporal dementia – set to become a feature film – by 10 November so we can share it in our next issue. Email [magazine@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:magazine@alzheimers.org.uk) or write to the address on p3.



## Book giveaway

We have five copies of *The longest farewell* to give away – email [magazine@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:magazine@alzheimers.org.uk) or write to the address on p3 by 17 October quoting 'Longest' for a chance to win one (see p39 for terms and conditions).



Readers and members of our online community, **Dementia Talking Point**, share advice about helping someone with dementia manage their finances.

## Managing money

'We spoke to the bank and they were very good with us. If Mum is going to the bank she can ring before she gets there, so they expect her and someone will help no matter what the problem is. As a family, if Mum is finding it hard looking after money, we can contact the bank by phone, text or email. It helps if you have a lasting power of attorney (LPA), which you can download and do yourself from the government website for a fraction of the price of a solicitor.' **Clive**

'My aunt was always very private about her financial affairs, so I was surprised to be asked to go to the bank with her to help her sort out her investments. I did of course. But I would say keep an eye on relatives and if they need help offer it. Look out for hints that they may not be managing as well as they used to.

'I initially helped my aunt with her finances using a third party bank mandate and had an LPA ready to use, but I never had to. But with my dad, who had mixed dementia, I found that the LPA was absolutely necessary. It certainly made things simpler when dealing with his bills, especially when he needed care but wouldn't accept that there was anything wrong with him.' **Bunpoos**

'When Dad had the beginnings of vascular dementia, he was always susceptible to overspending. I went to the bank and got them to allow a withdrawal limit per day.' **TNJJ**

'You could open a separate account to have a debit card only for day-to-day use, with a spending limit on it. Then their main current account can be for their income to be paid into, their bills paid by direct debit

(so they don't have to worry about key things such as utilities) and an agreed weekly allowance automatically transferred to their new day-to-day account.' **Shedrech**

'I have paper statements for his bank account and write on them what any unusual payments are for, so that if I need to provide copies for any official purposes – benefits etc – there is a written record.

'I ask him if he is happy with me sending money to his daughters for birthdays and Christmas and agree an amount. While he has capacity to make those decisions I will keep him in the loop, but once he can no longer let me know his wishes I know what he would have done.

'Now he is in residential care I use his account to buy food treats, biscuits and drinks that I know he will enjoy but that aren't supplied by the home. When he lived by himself, I would take ready meals and other food in that I bought with my card on his account. He would still go shopping at his village store or go out for a drink or meal with family or friends using his debit card. I couldn't account for every penny but just accepted what he had spent.' **Banjomansmate**

Visit [alzheimers.org.uk/talkingpoint](http://alzheimers.org.uk/talkingpoint) to read more and join our online community.

See [alzheimers.org.uk/publications](http://alzheimers.org.uk/publications) or call 0300 303 5933 (local rate) for our **Lasting power of attorney (472) factsheet for people in Wales or England, or our Northern Ireland factsheet: Enduring power of attorney and controllership (NI472)**.

Visit [alzheimers.org.uk/talkingpoint](http://alzheimers.org.uk/talkingpoint) to read the full thread and join our online community.

## Next issue

What advice would you give about dealing with other people's lack of understanding about what it's like to care for someone with dementia? Email [magazine@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:magazine@alzheimers.org.uk) or write to the address on p3.

## Card and board games

**T**abletop games can be an enjoyable way for a person with dementia to spend time with others, whether discovering new games or reconnecting with older ones.

The person could teach others about card and other games they played when young. If they can't recall all the rules, you may be able to find them online or at your local library.

If someone spent time in another part of the world, they might like playing games from there. For example, go is popular in east Asia, carrom in south Asia and oware in west Africa.

Themed or local versions of classic games could appeal to individual interests – anything from Monopoly set in a home city to Beatles or Star Trek editions of Scrabble and Trivial Pursuit. Some versions are made for you to customise with pictures and names. If you have the time and resources, there are also websites that produce games from scratch using your artwork and specifications.

Our new Games Night (see p31) provides a great excuse to get together to play, as could visiting a board game café or bar – there are more of these opening in towns and cities across the country.

As dementia progresses, a person may enjoy simpler or simplified games. Some specially designed games, such as Link and Think and Category Snap, are available in our online shop.

Visit [shop.alzheimers.org.uk](http://shop.alzheimers.org.uk) or call 0300 124 0900 (local rate) for many helpful products, including our guide **Taking part: activities for people with dementia (£10 plus postage).**

## Dementia information for you

Do you have a diagnosis of dementia? Are you a carer? Maybe you just want some general information.

Whether you're looking for a place to begin or guidance on a specific topic, our Publications catalogue is written for you. It lists:

- practical guides
- booklets
- detailed factsheets
- other languages and formats.

Order your free copy today by calling **0300 303 5933** or email [orders@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:orders@alzheimers.org.uk) quoting code PL1



# We're here to help

Contact us with all your questions or concerns about dementia.

## Online

Visit our website for information and advice or to find local support services on our Dementia Directory. You can also talk to others with our online community, Dementia Talking Point.

[alzheimers.org.uk/get-support](http://alzheimers.org.uk/get-support)

## Phone

Our specialist dementia advisers are here to listen, offer tailored information and provide you with the right support.

Call us now on **0300 222 1122** or email [helpline@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:helpline@alzheimers.org.uk)

## Information and publications

We produce a wide range of resources covering all aspects of dementia and dementia care. Order or download for free.

[alzheimers.org.uk/publications](http://alzheimers.org.uk/publications)

**'Was able to find out about a local activity group which my Mum and I attended for the first time this week.'**

**'No matter what you're going through, there is someone who understands. I don't feel alone now.'**

**'The information provided has been very helpful, interesting and easy to understand. I have a friend who has just been diagnosed with vascular dementia and what I've read will, I hope, enable me to be more empathetic to her situation. Thank you.'**

[alzheimers.org.uk](http://alzheimers.org.uk)

 [@alzheimerssocietyuk](https://www.facebook.com/alzheimerssocietyuk)

 [@alzheimerssoc](https://twitter.com/alzheimerssoc)



## Fidget Widget Tool Kit



We have a Fidget Widget Tool Kit for one winner, and individual Fidget Widgets for three runners-up, drawn from correct entries that we receive by 8 November.

**Q: The five Fidget Widget tools support a person to use their hands and fingers to:**

- A. Bake, roast, barbecue, boil and grill.**
- B. Ride, drive, cycle, steer and swim.**
- C. Turn, slide, roll, spin and twist.**

Send us your answers with your name and address – email [magazine@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:magazine@alzheimers.org.uk) or post to the address on p3.

**Terms and conditions for competitions and giveaways** Competitions are free to enter and open to residents, aged 16 and over, of the UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands. Winners will be drawn randomly from entries received by midnight on the end date and results are final. Winners will be notified soon after and announced in the following issue. Prizes are subject to availability, and will be sent by Alzheimer's Society or our supplier.

## Reusable coffee cups

We have new Alzheimer's Society reusable coffee cups for 10 lucky winners drawn from correct entries received by 1 November.

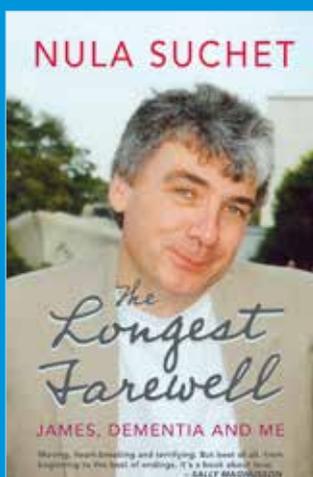
**Q: The World Wide Fund for Nature expected the number of single-use drink cups and lids used in the UK last year to be:**



- A. 410.**
- B. 4.1 billion.**
- C. 4,100.**

### Book giveaway

See p35 for a chance to win a copy of *The Longest Farewell*, by Nula Suchet.



### Memory Walk T-shirt competition

L Robey in Lincolnshire won a Memory Walk T-shirt. Answer: If you visit [memorywalk.org.uk](http://memorywalk.org.uk) or call 0300 330 5452 (local rate), the types of walks that you'll be able to find are Memory Walk (2–10km), Memory Walk Plus (over 15km) and GLOW (2–10km at night).

### Simple MP3 Music Player competition

J Hepworth in West Yorkshire won a Simple MP3 Music Player. Answer: The UK number one single that topped the charts for the longest time during 1975 was Queen's 'Bohemian rhapsody'.

### What dementia teaches us about love giveaway

The five readers who each won a copy of *What dementia teaches us about love*, by Nicci Gerrard, were Mrs F in West Yorkshire, T Chapman in Hampshire, H Homan in Cornwall, K Lilley in Essex and G Gregory in Lancashire.



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