



Dementia together

Power of love

A carer's strength inside

Real-life research

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Great and small

Miniature donkeys delight

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Social care: Urgent action

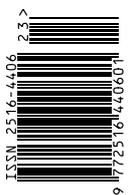
GLOW: Back with purpose

A HUG for everyone



Looking forward

Still much to give



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Welcome



As the evenings continue to draw in, we hope to bring you some warmth and light with another selection of moving real-life stories and inspiring ideas.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and similar could be said of each issue of Dementia together magazine. I'm always amazed and humbled by the number of you who contribute your stories and views, without which there would be no magazine.

Nothing stands still at Alzheimer's Society, and the world promises no let-up in challenges to overcome and problems to solve. However, with your support and involvement, we know we'll continue to create meaningful change in 2022.

For the magazine's part in this, we benefit hugely from your suggestions and comments. So, whether you're living with dementia, caring for someone who is or supporting the cause in another way, please carry on sending us these using the contact details below.

Danny Ratnaik, Magazine Editor



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Need support? We're here for you – see p 18.

Dementia together is the magazine for all Alzheimer's Society supporters and people affected by dementia. Contact us on magazine@alzheimers.org.uk, 020 7264 2667 or 020 7423 3676.

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See alzheimers.org.uk/magazine for online articles, PDFs and podcasts.



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NI: Highlight dementia

Help us make sure that dementia is included in the Northern Ireland (NI) government's budget.

The Department of Finance is drafting a budget for the next three years, which the public will be given 12 weeks to feed back on. Funding is needed to reform the social care system and roll out the Regional Dementia Care Pathway – a vision for high quality dementia services that's supported by the Society.

Martin Reilly, our Public Affairs and Campaigns Officer, said, 'It is really important for people living with dementia and their families that money is given to improving dementia care. The health minister has said this will contribute significantly to raising standards across all of Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care trusts, including tackling delays in dementia diagnosis.'

Help us make dementia a priority at alzheimers.org.uk/NI-campaigns

Trek for us in 2022!

This year's Trek26 saw an amazing 7,176 of you take on 13- or 26-mile treks at locations across England and Wales, raising £3.8 million and counting! We're very excited to launch our series of events for 2022, which includes four new locations alongside some familiar favourites. You can register for Trek26 at alzheimers.org.uk/trek26 or call **0330 333 0804** for more information.

Social care: Urgent action

Your support helped us to achieve outstanding success at recent political party conferences, where we made our case for social care reform in England and Wales to the health secretary and many other MPs.

An incredible 7,000 of you wrote to your MP to ask them to attend our stand at the Conservative and Labour conferences. This led to visits from more than 120 MPs, double the amount in 2019.

Visitors included Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid. He spoke with our CEO Kate Lee and Julie, a former nurse and social worker who is living with dementia, about what needs to happen next for social care reform. The health secretary visited very few stands, but personally requested to come to ours.

Julie said, 'The number of MPs and senior members of government who came to speak with me about my experiences and the Society's #CureTheCareSystem campaign was reassuring, but we really need to see action.'

'People affected by dementia must be able to access a social care system that they can rely on. Words are no longer enough. We now require action as a matter of urgency.'

Join our calls for action at alzheimers.org.uk/campaigns

Wales social care: Have your say

Alzheimer's Society Cymru wants your ideas on how to improve social care in Wales.

We're creating a report on what a new social care system could look like, which we'll use to influence those in power over the next five years.

Send your views on social care reform in Wales to huw.owen@alzheimers.org.uk or Huw Owen, Alzheimer's Society Cymru, S4C Building, Parc Ty Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5DU.

Budget: Nowhere near enough

The Society says the recent Autumn Budget has only 'added to the despair' of people affected by dementia.

We had said that an additional £3.9 billion a year was needed for adult social care in England, but this was not included in the Chancellor's funding plans. Instead, he announced an additional £4.8 billion over the next three years for local government, of which less than £1 billion per year can be expected to be allocated to adult social care.

Gavin Terry, our Head of Policy, said, 'After 20 months of devastation and trauma for people affected by dementia, the Chancellor has today added to their despair by effectively dealing them a real-terms spending cut to adult social care. The proposed additional local funding is nowhere near enough to prop up social care until 2023.'

We will not give up. The government will soon release white papers outlining its plans for the NHS and social care. As these plans develop, we'll make sure the experiences and needs of people affected by dementia are fully understood by those in power.

Join our campaigns for meaningful change at alzheimers.org.uk/campaigns

Memory Walk millions



This year's Memory Walk raised more than £2.3 million for people affected by dementia.

Over 24,000 of you took on your own Memory Walk or joined us at one of 19 events across Wales, Northern Ireland and England during August and September.

We had fantastic celebrity support from famous faces such as actor Vicky McClure, presenter Ruth Langsford and Made in Chelsea star Gareth Locke-Locke. Of course, the incredible success of Memory Walk was also down to the work of 1,500 volunteers at the events.

A huge thank you to everyone who got involved this autumn – Memory Walk would be nothing without you!



Directions

Making sure people know that the Society is here for everyone affected by dementia, and just how much health and social care needs to change, are always priorities for us. So, we're really excited about two recent successes that will help us do this.

ITV's Good Morning Britain has chosen us as a charity partner for their Christmas campaign, 1 Million Minutes. Throughout December, they're asking viewers to pledge time to volunteer and support good causes. The campaign is promoting the power of talking and listening to break down barriers and improve wellbeing, and we're asking people to pledge their time and become a Dementia Friend.

After being nominated by staff at The Telegraph, we've also been selected as one of four charities for their Christmas Charity Appeal. This runs until mid-January, and last year it raised an impressive £836,000 total. We're working with them on powerful stories across all print and online Telegraph titles. They're also fundraising through a carol concert and a phone-in day involving celebrities and their senior staff – all fantastic opportunities to highlight what we do.

The festive period brings challenges as well as joy, but here at team Alzheimer's, we're really pleased to begin 2022 by reaching even more people through these partnerships. There'll be so much more to do in coming months, so thank you for your amazing support. In the meantime, here's to a happy Christmas and New Year!

Kate Lee, Chief Executive Officer
[@KateLeeCEO](#)

Carer support

Dementia has a huge mental and physical impact on the people close to someone diagnosed, but too often they don't have their needs met. Society-funded research at the University of Exeter has shown how online and phone support could benefit carers experiencing mild to moderate depression and anxiety.

The study compared the overall wellbeing of over 200 people caring for a relative or friend with dementia, before and after they received different kinds of help. These included online educational packages that provide practical information and advice, an online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) course, and an online CBT course with phone support. CBT is a talking therapy that can help you manage problems by changing the way you think and behave.

The educational packages and CBT course with phone support improved people's scores on mental health questionnaires after six months. These could provide much-needed help for carers with mild to moderate depression and anxiety.

Richard Oakley, our Head of Research, said, 'This research serves as a reminder of the desperate need for better quality of care for all those affected by dementia. Families urgently need extra support and the chance to take breaks from caring duties.'

'Through our funded research we are listening to those experiencing dementia first-hand and giving hope and support to those that need it most.'

For our Carers – looking after yourself (523) factsheet, see alzheimers.org.uk/publications or call 0300 303 5933.

Diagnosis delays

Alzheimer's Society is calling for more government support for GPs and memory clinics in England to tackle delays in people receiving a dementia diagnosis. Memory assessments have decreased by more than half since the start of the pandemic, with GP assessments down 30% compared to 2019.

Some people still haven't been allowed to visit relatives or friends with dementia in care homes. We'll continue to work with the government to make sure that visits are being restarted for all, so that every care home resident who has dementia receives essential contact and support.

Dementia and finance Q&A



We recently joined our corporate partner Santander for a live Q&A session on Facebook about dementia and finance. An expert panel from the Society and Santander answered advance and live questions during the one-hour event, offering support and guidance to people affected by dementia. To watch a recording of the session, visit www.youtube.com/alzheimersociety

Wonderful from Wilko

Our corporate partner Wilko has raised over £660,000 for the Society. We were one of three charities to benefit from their Together for Families programme, which has generated more than £2 million over the past four years. Wilko staff raised funds by dressing up, completing sponsored walks and even body waxing! A big thank you to them and everyone who donated in stores.

Sporting heroes join our campaign

An impressive line-up of sporting names is supporting our Sport United Against Dementia (SUAD) campaign.

They include legendary football stars Denis Law CBE, Sir Geoff Hurst and Harry Redknapp, former cricketers Shane Warne, Alec Stewart OBE and Freddie Flintoff MBE, and Rugby World Cup champion Ben Kay MBE.

They are all giving their time and backing to SUAD, which aims to raise funds and dementia awareness so that people in the sporting community get the support they deserve. The campaign will also fund research to further our understanding of dementia, including causes and risk factors particularly relating to sport.

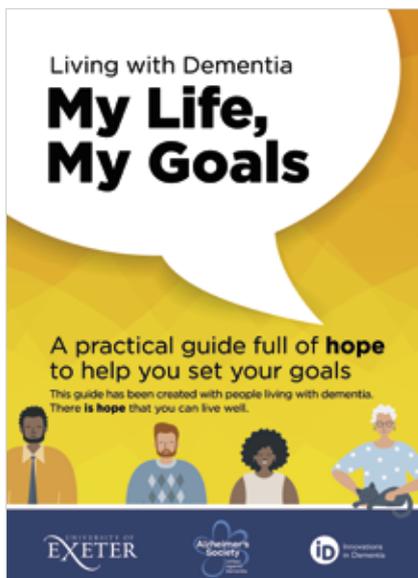
For more about Sport United Against Dementia visit alzheimers.org.uk/SUAD



New online self-help guide

My Life, My Goals is an online self-help guide for people in the early stages of dementia, created by people with dementia and researchers. It's designed to help people, step by step, try to achieve their goals.

Download your free digital copy at www.tinyurl.com/My-Life-My-Goals



Our Annual Conference

Join professionals, policy makers and people affected by dementia to discuss key issues relating to diagnosis and support at our Alzheimer's Society Annual Conference 2022. The conference takes place on 17 May, during Dementia Action Week, at the Park Plaza Victoria London hotel. Registration opens in early January. Register your interest now at alzheimers.org.uk/conference

Have your flu jab

Every year the flu vaccine saves lives by stopping thousands of people from becoming seriously ill from flu. This winter, it's more important than ever that people who are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 have their free flu jab. Visit www.nhs.uk/flujab for further information and to find local pharmacies that offer the flu vaccine.

Vegan and vegetarian values

A new guide aims to help people receiving care to protect their vegan and vegetarian values, both now and in the future. Created by charity Vegetarian for Life, the self-advocacy pack provides information, sources of support and suggested actions.

Download the pack for free at www.tinyurl.com/VfL-Publications or call 0161 257 0887 to order a copy for £2 plus postage.

Years of stories

It's been four years since we began sharing audio interviews online, so you can hear people with dementia tell their stories in their own words. Join our thousands of listeners today!

Listen at alzheimers.org.uk/podcast or wherever you get your podcasts.

Carols at Christmas

Carols at Christmas returns on 15 December, and this year we're doing something very special! Watch the festive extravaganza snuggled up on the sofa, or join us in person at Southwark Cathedral in London.

The evening of celebration is hosted by Grace Dent and Arielle Free, with special readings from Sir Jonathan Pryce CBE, Lesley Manville CBE and Ed Balls. There'll be music from singer-songwriter Bea Anderson, identical twin sopranos Classical Reflection and Britain's Got Talent semi-finalists Shalom Chorale.

Get your tickets at alzheimers.org.uk/carolstickets or by calling 0330 333 0804.



Don't miss...

Jim in Oxford, who has Alzheimer's and vascular dementia, says sleeping so much takes time away from him. [See p12.](#)

Ruth in County Down is looking forward to the return of night-time GLOW walks in March. [See p13.](#)

Emdad in London became a Dementia Friends Champion by accident but hasn't looked back since. [See p14.](#)

Meet Cherie, Research Engagement Officer, and Duncan, one of our trustees. [See p19 and p21.](#)

Society-funded research is involving more people affected by dementia in its design and development. [See p26.](#)



Quick read

Dave Gibbons, who is 56 and lives in Bradford, is focused on the future after enduring many challenges with his health.

Dave has Alzheimer's and Korsakoff's syndrome, which has many of the same symptoms of dementia and is caused by drinking too much alcohol.

Dave has experienced blackouts, confusion and memory loss, but has also received strong support from Alzheimer's Society.

He chooses not to dwell on the past and is instead looking forward to more positive times, as he still has much to give.

Looking forward

Despite his difficult past and many health issues, Dave Gibbons is focused on a more positive future. **Gareth Bracken** meets a man with dementia who still has much to give.

It's been a colourful one, without a doubt,' says Dave Gibbons, reflecting on his eventful life and the many health challenges he's faced.

Dave, who is 56 and lives in Bradford, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's last year. He already had Korsakoff's syndrome, a condition that has dementia-like symptoms.

Dave's relationship with alcohol is central to his story, which he is very keen to share.

'I've got no qualms over who I am, where I am or where I've been,' he says. 'I'm not ashamed of it, it's who I am.'

Obscure artists

Dave is from Halifax but lives on his own in nearby Bradford. His main hobby is listening to jive, rock and roll, and rockabilly music from the 1940s and 50s.

'I like the more obscure ones, not your mainstream. People who didn't make it into the charts,' he says. 'I used to have thousands of records but they got destroyed or damaged. Now I listen on YouTube.'

'I like to look as if I'm in the 1950s, hence the quiff!'

Dave also enjoys walking and cycling, following rugby and cricket, and spending as much time with his family as he can. He has four children and five grandchildren, with one more on the way.

Difficult time

Dave's first job after leaving school was as a wire cutter.

'I'd cut strips of wire to certain lengths for florists and clothes horses,' he says. 'I cut the metal bits that were used in sparklers in the 80s.'

He worked as a bricklayer for 15 years, before moving to London in his late 20s.

'My mum had passed away and I was just getting divorced, so it was a difficult and hectic time,' he says. 'I think I'd had a bit of a nervous breakdown, so I went to London to see if I could right myself.'

Dave spent five years as a street cleaner in Hillingdon before returning to Halifax to work as a night porter and hotel security guard.

'There was lots of partying going on,' he says. 'I was maybe drinking too much.'

Alcohol problem

Dave describes himself as someone who 'suffered with alcoholism'.

'I was a functioning alcoholic. I'll admit it did take over my life,' he says. 'It caused me a lot of trouble with family, friends and the police. I lived on the streets for a while.'

It took Dave a long time to come to terms with the fact that he had a problem.

'I like the atmosphere around drinking – it's just I can't drink in a social way. I don't have a stop button. I don't know when that last drink is,' he says.

'I still find it hard that other people can drink every day and

I can't. What's the difference between them and me?'

Dave used to have blackouts that left him unable to remember conversations from the night before.

'It got quite dangerous and I ended up in hospital,' he says. 'The alcohol people there said I had Korsakoff's – I didn't know what it was.'

Low awareness

Around six or seven years ago, Dave was diagnosed with Korsakoff's syndrome, a condition that has many of the same symptoms of dementia, including confusion and memory loss. It is caused by drinking too much alcohol.

'Korsakoff's is a dangerous thing,' says Dave. 'You're not only an alcoholic but you've got dementia problems as well.'

'I think awareness of Korsakoff's is low. They might be the silent dementia people who only get recognition for their alcoholism. "Don't bother with them, they're an alcoholic". I've had it all the time.'

Dave attended rehab groups for alcoholism, later gaining the qualifications to facilitate groups for others with drug and alcohol problems. He became chair of a service user group and gave talks across West Yorkshire about the importance of listening to the views of people who are using healthcare services.

House fires

Dave was also diagnosed with Alzheimer's in June 2020, after some worrying incidents.

'I've had a few house fires, because I've been forgetting when I'm cooking,' he says. 'I tried to put one of them out and ended up in hospital. After the last fire, the fire brigade got in touch with my doctor for me.'

Dave was also sometimes experiencing confusion and struggling to follow conversations. He visited the doctor in November 2019, who referred him to a memory clinic. He then had a home assessment and two brain scans, which led to the Alzheimer's diagnosis.

'It was quite a shock, I didn't want to believe it,' he says. 'I still find it hard believing it.'

It took a while for doctors to pinpoint the right medication for Dave, but he now feels that things have improved, though he can still sometimes display unexpected behaviour.

'I have arguments with people who aren't even there – it can be quite funny,' he says. 'If I didn't laugh at it, I'd be crying at it.'

Open up

Dave enjoys attending a support group called Pathways, part of DEEP (Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project), and two groups – one local and one national – run by Alzheimer's Society. These give Dave and others with dementia the opportunity to influence our and others' work.

'We make sure places are getting dementia friendly by giving feedback on what we'd like to see,' says Dave, who provided input into the refurbishment of his local Alhambra Theatre.

'The Face it Together group in Bradford is all nice people, and I've met them in person now as

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I was a functioning alcoholic. I'll admit it did take over my life,' he says. 'It caused me a lot of trouble with family, friends and the police.
”

well as Zoom, so even better,' he says. 'I find it hard when I first meet people to open up and be myself, but these groups have really helped me.'

Getting back

Dave has lymphoedema, a chronic condition that causes swelling in his ankles, which affects his mobility. He receives support from private care workers, arranged through Atiq Hassan, the Society Dementia Adviser who also put him in touch with the groups.

Atiq also helped Dave apply for Personal independence payments (PIP), a benefit he now receives for people with a long-term condition who have difficulty with everyday tasks or getting around.

'Atiq has done quite a lot for me,' says Dave. 'He points me in the right direction.'

Dave receives good support from his sons with the likes of shopping, and his neighbours also look out for him. He became

more withdrawn, however, after a period in hospital with pneumonia in the summer.

'I isolated a little bit from the groups and my family,' he says. 'I wasn't feeling confident enough in myself to be sitting and talking with people. I think I were a bit down and depressed.'

'Doing this article is another step to me getting back out there, getting my confidence back up.'

Good times

Dave also has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and found life very difficult during periods of lockdown. He's had both of his COVID vaccines and recently received a letter about booking his booster jab.

As we hopefully continue to emerge from the pandemic, Dave chooses to look forward rather than back.

'I've got no regrets – I can't do nowt about the past, so I don't dwell on it,' he says. 'It sounds harsh, but if I worried about the bad things I've done in the past... I can't change that. You've got to move on.'

'At the moment, life is OK and I'm looking forward to the future. My son has just completed his diploma for the building trade. There is gonna be some good times around there.'

'The Alzheimer's diagnosis means I can now focus on my own journey with alcohol. There's so much I can give back, if I stay sober.'

For our What is alcohol-related brain damage (438) factsheet, visit [alzheimers.org.uk/publications](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/publications) or call 0300 303 5933.



See alzheimers.org.uk/dementiadirectory to find support near you.

Donate

You can keep people diagnosed with dementia in touch with the support and help they need.

Donate now

Managing now

Jim Herrick in Cambridge, aged 77, tells us how Alzheimer's and vascular dementia are affecting his day-to-day life.



I think my illness has advanced reasonably slowly. I live on my own, I look after myself. So I can manage, although I'm not quite sure how long I can manage for. I fear I must expect the disease to advance. People seem to have enormously different experiences.

I read quite a lot. I can read a book and remember it, and not get lost. I can watch a television thriller and not get lost. I do forget things, but doesn't everyone?

The main thing – and I think it is due to the Alzheimer's – is that I go to bed for a couple of hours, at least twice a day, and that takes time away from me.

Control

I feel in control of my life at the moment. There's a certain amount of solitude, because I live on my own, but that was true even before the Alzheimer's.

My partner died of dementia with Lewy bodies some years ago. I had a grandmother and aunt who had Alzheimer's, which makes me wonder if it's in the family.

There's a park a few minutes away. I go there a few times a week for a short walk. I feel in command of that.

I have a carer who does shopping for me. I go to the theatre. I go for meals with people sometimes. I go to coffee bars. Life isn't too bad really.

I did a lot on the computer before I retired, but now I don't find it easy to proceed with the internet, which is a nuisance.

But I did do quite a few Zoom calls during lockdown, with friends and a book club. I played chess on Zoom, but I'm finding that more difficult now. I look at the strategy and my mind goes foggy.

I attend a mature gay men and women's group in Cambridge now and then. They meet once a week and during lockdown it had to be on Zoom.

Support

I used to get a call about once a month from Alzheimer's Society. I didn't know sleeping so much can be a symptom, but the dementia support lady told me that. It's really helpful to know.

Age UK organised someone who visits once a week, just to have a chat for an hour. I've been impressed by both Age UK and Alzheimer's Society.

I think the prejudice against Alzheimer's is possibly worse than the prejudice against gay people. I notice in myself – I don't mind

telling people some things about me, but I don't like telling them I have Alzheimer's.

I'd be prepared to consider attending a dementia-specific LGBT group, where I can be myself. I don't especially want 100% of my friends to be gay, but it's nice to have some.

For our Understanding sleep problems, night-time disturbance and dementia (534) factsheet or LGBTQ+: Living with dementia (1511) booklet, see alzheimers.org.uk/publications or call 0300 303 5933 to order.

Back with purpose

Ruth Fitzgerald in Newtownards, County Down is looking forward to the return of GLOW sponsored night walks in 2022.



I did my first Memory Walk in 2013 – I've got quite a few Memory Walk T-shirts and quite a few medals!

I found out that some of my family had dementia, and then discovered that two of my friends' parents had actually died from it. My father-in-law especially was the reason I did my last Memory Walk.

When I saw GLOW advertised, I thought, 'Walking in the dark – I quite fancy trying that for a change!'

Night-time walk

GLOW is a sponsored walk in the early evening, just as it's getting dark. It has a great fun atmosphere – we wore glowsticks because it was dark.

There were GLOW walks in nine cities in 2020, and I did the Belfast one, which began at Titanic Belfast.

There was a good atmosphere at the walk. When I turned up there

were so many people there. I didn't think so many people would walk at night! And there were loads of spectators. We were getting lots of support.

I later discovered there was somebody there who I knew, who did it as well, but I didn't know until afterwards – she saw me dancing about the stage while we were doing the warm-up!

I raised £130, and there was a Memory Tree where you can leave a message about the person you're walking for. It was full of messages by the end of the night.

I would do it again and I'd definitely recommend it. It's not just about going for a walk – you're doing it for a purpose.

GLOW is back this March in more locations than ever before. Find your nearest event at memorywalk.org.uk or call 0300 330 5452.

Give an hour or two

Photograph: iStock.com/Drazen



Spend an hour or two each week chatting to people affected by dementia on the phone as a Companion Call volunteer. A simple conversation about the weather or what you're watching on TV can be a lifeline for so many lonely and isolated people. To find out more, email CompanionCalls@alzheimers.org.uk or call 0115 959 6176.

Change future care

Share your experiences of dementia with healthcare students so that future professionals have a better understanding of the condition's real-life impact. Time for Dementia – which organises student visits with families in the south of England – is now involving people based anywhere in the UK through video calls. Email timefordementia@alzheimers.org.uk or call 07713 779582 to find out more.

Play a memory game

Enjoy simple, fun quizzes on the free Memory Lane Games app. Designed to be easy to use and to prompt reminiscence and conversation, try games with topics like Animals or Geography, or with questions about your local area.

Find Memory Lane Games on the App Store or Google Play.

Magical work

Emdad Rahman in east London shares how he became a Dementia Friends Champion and hasn't looked back since.



work and volunteer in Tower Hamlets and in Barking and Dagenham. I became a Dementia Friends Champion purely by accident!

Since the London 2012 Olympics I've loved the 'welcoming the world to my city' idea. I was at Lords, training to become a voluntary matchday steward.

The training started with a Dementia Friends information session from two champions. They said that I would be decent as Dementia Friends Champion. So I did the training and I haven't looked back since.

Amazing people

I've held information sessions at exciting places and with amazing people. I just finished a session with the official Speaker and First Citizen of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

I've held them at banks and the Mayor's Parlour, for matchday stewards at Leyton Orient Football

Club, a charity mountain climbing group, in town halls, mosques and community centres. I'm a practising Muslim but I went to a Sunday service at church – people were very welcoming and friendly.

A memorable moment for me was making a Dementia Friend of the late great Max Levitas, who fought off Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts. A complete folk hero and a good friend. He saw the leaflet in my hand and wanted to become a Dementia Friend, aged 100.

More recently, I did an information session with Dabirul Choudhury OBE, who's 101 years old (pictured). He's raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for coronavirus relief by walking, inspired by Captain Sir Tom Moore.

For everybody

My approach is for everybody, although because of my background, I can reach out to the Asian community in particular,

which is wonderful and really helps. I've also held a session at a synagogue, and the local gurdwara want me to go there.

The sessions can have a major effect. Sometimes people get emotional, I get a lot of gratitude. When we raise awareness, we have the support of the community. People still keep their badges five years on.

I'd 110% recommend becoming a Dementia Friends Champion, without a doubt. The main obstacle people face is time. But I say that if you love doing it, it's never a chore. You make the time for it. It's one of the best community things I've ever done. Alzheimer's Society provides support and training resources.

Together, we're making a difference all the time – every single day, and the results are wondrous. It's magical work and will continue to benefit and help countless people.

You can become a Dementia Friend by taking part in an online session, and also by watching our online videos. Visit dementiafriends.org.uk to get involved.

Meet the researcher: Moïse Roche

PhD Researcher at UCL in London.

Favourite things?

- Film – It's always a challenge when I am asked to pick one favourite thing in an area of interest, as I have quite an eclectic approach in life. My choice will also depend on my mood and what I fancy at the time. But, if I had a favourite film, it would probably be *The Shawshank Redemption*, with Morgan Freeman and Tim Robbins.
- Way to spend time – When I'm not working, I could be working out at the gym, catching up with family and friends or checking the latest outrage on social media.
- Memory – I don't think I have a favourite memory. But, in the current climate, memories of my holidays in Guadeloupe are surfacing more frequently.

Why dementia research?

I always had an interest in how memory works and what might affect it. But then, some years ago, I started to volunteer with Alzheimer's Society and became interested in finding out why so few people from Black backgrounds seemed to use dementia services. It was as if dementia did not affect people of Black ethnicity as much as other ethnic groups. Of course, we know this isn't the case.



How has Alzheimer's Society supported your work?

Alzheimer's Society has funded the research for my PhD, as well as making my initial proposal for it better by thoroughly reviewing it. Alzheimer's Society also provides ongoing advice and support through the monitoring done by Research Network volunteers.

What are you currently working on?

My main research is seeking to improve dementia support and experiences for people of Black ethnicity and their family carers.

I am also working on various other projects to address health inequalities of people living with

dementia, as well as improving the wellbeing of older adults through collaborative work.

What difference do you hope this will make?

I hope it will improve experiences and outcomes for Black families living with dementia and, at the very least, begin chipping at health inequalities related to social disparities. The current pandemic has further highlighted that, to address health inequalities, we need to consider the wider social context in which people live.

In what direction would you like to take your research in future?

I would be interested in seeing that research, services and interventions are developed from the outset with the whole population in mind, and include in their design a subset of each group they intend to serve.

Donate

Your donation helps us to better understand and address health inequalities in dementia. [Donate now](#)

How I enjoy sport and exercise

We ask people how they keep well, whether they have dementia or not. This issue, we hear about taking part in exercise and watching sport.

Dorothy Dwayre-Wood, 61 in Manchester



I enjoy going to watch our local football team, FC United of Manchester. Myself and my husband have been members since this fan-owned club started in 2005.

Our family ranges from 10 to 83 years old and we all enjoy being able to share in this pastime together. It's an afternoon where you can watch great 'grassroots' football together.

It takes you away from your 'normal' life, home commitments and work demands. During the pandemic, we were allowed to go to some matches by booking online and socially distancing. It was some sort of normality for us and, although not as busy as it used to be for obvious reasons, we still felt that 'life was good'.

Cassie Philip, 50 in Eastbourne

I play tennis with friends and others who are members of the tennis club, watch rugby with a select few friends who are fans, and go walking with friends when I can, and otherwise on my own.

It's for my fitness and wellbeing, and staying as young and healthy as I can into older age. I know that it makes me feel much better within myself when I exercise, especially with friends.

Michael Davies, 65 in Oxford with semantic dementia



Cycling with Oxford Cycling Club at least once a week and running about four days a week. I started in about 1978 and have always been focused on racing. I now don't do racing because I want to be cautious with my body, so I can always run each year.

My dementia doctor has suggested that maybe my current state is better because of my running and cycling life.

Sue Peters, 54 in Leicester



Walking, the best exercise a human can take! It's natural, healthy, outdoors and mentally stimulating. A different walk each time; new sights to see, new smells to sniff out and new experiences to indulge in.

It uplifts the soul and makes me feel relaxed, calm and at peace. I do it to lose weight, get fitter and improve my mental health.

Anne Baxter, 62 in London

I am a West Ham season ticket holder and go to the home games, and I like watching tennis, athletics and golf on the television.

I have always loved going to football matches, as my dad took me as a child and I find that it helps with my wellbeing.



Stay well

Some things, like age and genes, affect your chance of developing dementia but you can't change them.

Things you could do include keeping your mind and body active, enjoying healthier food, not smoking, drinking less alcohol, staying in touch with people, and dealing with any health problems.

If you already have dementia, the same things can help you to stay well. Visit www.nhs.uk/livewell for wellness advice for everyone.

Q&A: Gina Airey

Gina Airey in Lancashire, aged 62 with vascular dementia.



What's changed most since your diagnosis?

In many ways it has opened up new doors. I knew I would have to focus on my own wellbeing – keeping mentally and physically active and keeping positive.

I spend time every morning on crosswords and puzzles. I enjoy gardening and love to learn new skills, while continuing with my endless creative hobbies. I sew and knit clothes, try new recipes and bake my own bread. Occasionally I paint with acrylics and oils, and I wish I was a better photographer.

What would you take to your desert island?

I am not really attached to objects. I am resourceful and would probably embrace the environment and enjoy exploring, but maybe paper and pen to write about the experience. Teaching wasn't my first choice of career, I always wanted to be a writer. I would take the book I'm halfway through – *Driving Over Lemons* by Chris Stewart.

How has Alzheimer's Society helped you?

A real positive impact! Initially they helped me through Companion Calls, which are still ongoing – my friend rings me regularly and we chat about a range of subjects.

Recently I have got involved with Society visits to the local prison to give talks to staff and inmates on my own experiences. This has been truly empowering!

The sense of being purposeless in society can be difficult to manage when you have worked in a social profession. I was a primary headteacher when I had a stroke, which resulted in my later diagnosis of vascular dementia. It has been so rewarding to again feel I can help in some way.

What song or tune sums up your life so far?

We Are the Champions by Queen. I have faced a few challenges in my life, but I do think you should keep positive and you will always be victorious... and if I had to choose a tune for my life now it would be Don't Stop Me Now by Queen!

What single thing would improve your quality of life?

I would love to see and spend more time with my family. My children are grown up with their own work and family commitments, but they are very supportive (or as much I will let them). They know I am fiercely independent and, to quote them, I'm only following the saying 'Use it or lose it!'

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

Lots of happy memories during my teaching years and when my children were young, but the first image that came in my head when I read this question was me as a child on the beach with my dad on holiday – perfect!

What is your most treasured possession?

Currently it's my car. It means I can get out and about to see family, keep independent and continue to help through the Society visits.

If you have dementia and would like to answer our questions for a future column, email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk



We are here for you

Phone support

Our dementia advisers are available on the phone seven days a week, providing information, advice and emotional support to anyone affected by dementia.

Online support

Find a wide range of information on our website to help you understand and live with dementia. Visit our online community Talking Point to connect with others in a similar situation and search for local support services on our dementia directory.

Face to face support

Some face-to-face support services are reopening. Where it is safely available, our dementia advisers will connect you to relevant face-to-face support in your area, from one-to-one advice services to local support groups.

Contact us today

0333 150 3456

[alzheimers.org.uk/getsupport](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/getsupport)

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

Person living with dementia



Our research needs you

After a challenging year, Cherie Nyota, Research Engagement Officer, shares how our Research Network is looking forward to welcoming new volunteers.



Involving a diverse range of people affected by dementia in research is one of my biggest aims. We want people from all backgrounds to know how they can take part, and we have a wonderful group of volunteers who dedicate their time to support dementia research at Alzheimer's Society – the Research Network.

All our Research Network volunteers have a personal connection to dementia, whether as carers, former carers or people living with dementia. Their involvement ensures that the research we fund is relevant and credible, and could ultimately transform the lives of everyone affected by dementia.

Network volunteers review every application for research funding we receive, guiding our funding decisions alongside

expert researchers. Some monitor the research that we fund too, meeting with researchers once a year to review each project's progress. Importantly, this also gives researchers a chance to hear more about our volunteers' own experiences of dementia.

Due to the pandemic, we were forced to pause our research funding programme and the Research Network's usual activities in 2020. We quickly adjusted and focused our energy on how we could still support our volunteers and researchers. Online meetings were brand new to many volunteers, but we all learnt to navigate them and Zoom soon became our best friend!

Online Research Network meetings gave more volunteers than ever before the opportunity to share their experiences of involvement in research projects with each other. We also hosted regular 'Dementia Research Uncovered' webinars, with researchers presenting their projects and asking for feedback and advice from network volunteers.

We'll continue to incorporate these into how we work, with monthly online meetings and webinars. Since our funding programme recently reopened, our volunteers are now busy reviewing the latest funding applications submitted by researchers.

We are also delighted to offer the opportunity for more people affected by dementia to join our Research Network. To ensure that dementia research is truly representative of our

diverse society, researchers need to connect with people with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds.

We'd love to hear from people interested in joining the Research Network who have a dementia diagnosis or who are carers or former carers of people with dementia. And, since great research involves people affected by dementia from all backgrounds, we particularly want to include people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic and LGBTQ+ communities within this.

Find out more and apply to join our Research Network at alzheimers.org.uk/researchnetwork

In your area



Loomband love

A nine-year-old in Antrim has raised hundreds of pounds for the Society after seeing how dementia affected her grandfather.

Emma Kirkpatrick used her creativity and initiative to make beautiful loomband bracelets and raised £415 by selling them to family and friends. Sadly, her grandfather died just days before she presented a cheque to Society volunteer Mark Bingham (pictured).

Elaine, her mum, said, 'I'm so proud of Emma for her determination to make a difference to people affected by dementia after being inspired by her Granda and his journey with dementia. Despite her Granda's recent passing, Emma wanted to go ahead with the cheque presentation to Alzheimer's Society as a tribute to him.'

'Emma is delighted with all the support she received and is very proud that her efforts will help Alzheimer's Society be there for more people affected by dementia and create a lasting change.'

Linzi Stewart, Community Fundraiser, said, 'Following a difficult year for people with dementia, we are in awe of supporters like Emma whose brilliant fundraising efforts enable us to reach more people through our vital support services, like the Dementia Connect support line.'



Awesome heights

Care workers from Denbighshire County Council raised more than £1,100 for Alzheimer's Society in an eight-hour walk, taking in three peaks.

Staff walked three of the toughest walks in Denbighshire – Gwaenysgor, Moel Famau and Castell Dinas Brân in Llangollen – on 25 September, the peaks having a total height of over 1km.

Katie Newe, the council's Service Manager responsible for care homes and domiciliary care provision, said, 'I am so pleased we managed to complete this challenge. There were three challenging walks and 12 determined people, and we raised lots of money for a great charity as well as celebrating the amazing work that care workers do every single day.'

'I am very proud to be part of this awesome team and I would like to thank everyone who donated.'

The event also supported Social Care Wales's WeCare Wales campaign by highlighting the invaluable role of care workers in Denbighshire.

Andrew Hall, Community Fundraiser at the Society, said, 'We are so very grateful to Katie and her team. It is fantastic to see our amazing supporters undertaking these challenges after such a difficult 18 months. This will make a huge difference to people living with dementia.'



Scrivens support

A Solihull opticians marked World Alzheimer's Day on 21 September by raising both awareness and funds.

Staff at the Shirley branch of Scrivens Opticians & Hearing Care left their uniforms hanging in favour of their own colourful outfits. They also donated £1 for every hearing test taken that week.

Parveen Joyce, Branch Manager, told local press, 'Alzheimer's Society has been our company's charity for seven years and one that is close to our hearts because it affects so many families. My father has dementia, so I know first-hand what a cruel condition it is.'

Scrivens, a family business with roots in Birmingham and branches across England and Wales, has raised funds through everything from marathons to cake sales, as well as making sure their staff can better support people affected by dementia.

Uncorrected hearing loss has been linked to an increased risk of developing dementia, and hearing tests can help you manage any hearing loss early on.

Mark Bentley, Sales Assistant at the Shirley branch, lost both of his grandmothers to dementia. He became a Dementia Friend through our partnership with Scrivens.

Mark said, 'I now have the tools to help manage the situation when it arises, with empathy, kindness and patience being key.'

Photograph: Scrivens Opticians & Hearing Care

Duncan Jones, Trustee

Why dementia, why the Society?

My story is quite a familiar one. I first became involved with the Society when my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2009. I didn't know where to turn and Alzheimer's Society provided me with support and answered some of the questions buzzing around in my head.

In 2012, I took voluntary redundancy after 27 years with the BBC to support Mum and to give me time to volunteer for the Society.

How to fill an unexpected day off?

I love running so the day would start with some exercise. I'm hoping my wife, Mary, has an unexpected day off too. If so, we'd arrange to meet friends for a long, convivial lunch, ideally outdoors. There would also be time to listen to music, perhaps at a live concert, and to read.

Proudest achievement?

Personally, I think it's the new relationship I formed with my mum after she was diagnosed. We'd always been very close, but her dementia meant we needed to find new ways of connecting.

Professionally, it probably came during the first Gulf War. I was a sports producer and reporter for BBC News but was seconded to the general news reporting team to cover for colleagues in the Gulf. I suddenly found myself – at half an hour's notice – covering an IRA court case for the six o'clock news. It was the first time my face had appeared on the screen and, apparently, I looked so nervous my family didn't recognise me.



Duncan and Mary.



Duncan with his mum, Jan.

Worst advice you've been given?

While studying journalism, I was offered a job by the BBC in Kent. The person who'd interviewed me, and then offered it to me, turned around and told me I shouldn't take it because if I left my journalism course early, I'd never have a career at the BBC. I ignored the advice and am still working there, now as a freelance, 35 years later.

Biggest priority for coming months?

It has to be the delivery of Alzheimer's Society's new strategy. This is a watershed moment for the Society, coming out of the pandemic, and what we do and say now will shape what we can achieve for years to come.

Most important thing learned from a person with dementia?

It sounds obvious but everyone we speak to is an individual. See the person, not the dementia. Soon after diagnosis, my mum seemed to forget all of our shared memories and I quickly learned to try to be with her, wherever she was in her mind.

Most looking forward to?

I am looking forward to spending time with friends in person, rather than via my laptop, and returning to live sport, music and theatre. I'd say watching my football team trying to win promotion back to the Premier League, but I'm not sure how much I'm looking forward to that!

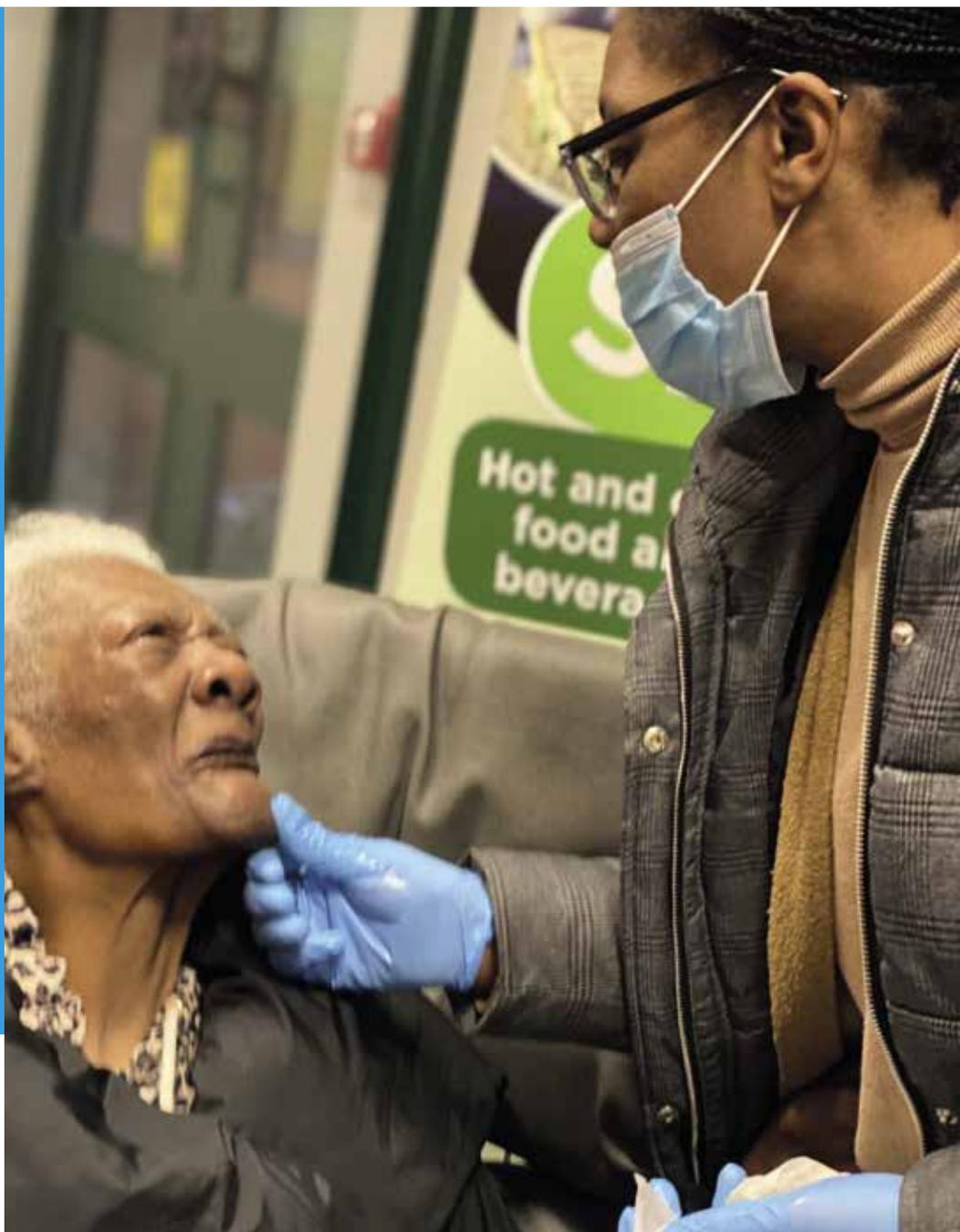
Quick read

Faith Walker in Cardiff wants to highlight the power of person-centred care for people living with dementia.

Faith's mum, known by all as Mrs Walker, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and vascular dementia in 2014.

Mrs Walker received poor care in a care home before much more positive experiences in hospital and in her current home.

Faith is passionate about the importance of care that embraces a person's culture, such as her mum's Jamaican heritage.



Power of love

Faith Walker has witnessed the best and worst of care while supporting her mother. **Gareth Bracken** meets a daughter passionate about never losing sight of the person with dementia.

‘I can’t find the words sometimes to explain the depth of pain, looking at someone who lived life to the fullest and was such an amazing person,’ says Faith Walker of her mum, who has Alzheimer’s and vascular dementia.

Faith finds it difficult to recount some of her more troubling experiences. However, she’s determined to highlight the best and worst of the care that her mum has received since being diagnosed.

‘I’ve seen it when it goes so wrong, and so right,’ says Faith, who lives in Cardiff, south Wales. This is also where her mum Ivy – known by all as Mrs Walker – is thankfully now happy and settled.

‘My mum is a very strong lady, and there’s a strength in me somewhere that’s pushing me to tell my story. Maybe it’s from my mum. It’s what she would want.’

Close community

Now 80, Mrs Walker grew up in Jamaica before coming to Port

Talbot in south Wales in the 1960s.

‘My parents were both from Jamaica, but they met and fell in love in Port Talbot,’ says Faith. ‘It’s where I was brought up, in a close-knit community of Jamaican, Welsh and Irish people.

‘Yes, there was racism, but there was also kindness and love.’

Faith is one of 10 children, many of whom represented Wales at sport, while the next generation have enjoyed successful working lives.

‘That shows the depth of my parents’ love and resilience, and my mum’s influence on the grandchildren, who she loved so much,’ says Faith, who also recalls her mum’s brilliant time management skills.

‘She’d come and watch our games and still manage her home so efficiently. We were all immaculate, well-mannered and had beautiful, healthy food to eat.

‘We all think we were her favourite because she had a way of knowing each of us and loving us all equally. My parents were about education, health, love, care and being your best self.’

Respect and rapport

Faith first noticed that something was the matter when her mum started to become less organised and efficient.

‘I’m thinking, “Oh my gosh, Mum’s forgetting dates. Something’s not right,”’ she says.

Mrs Walker visited a doctor and memory clinic, before receiving a home assessment

from a psychiatrist. In 2014, they diagnosed her with vascular dementia and Alzheimer’s.

‘I went into autopilot: “What can I get into place?”’ says Faith. ‘The community mental health nurse put us in touch with an occupational therapist, who was an absolute godsend.

‘She gave Mum respect and didn’t treat her like she was ill. She connected with Mum, built a rapport and put her at ease. It was textbook – better than textbook.’

Big decline

Mrs Walker’s husband had died many years earlier and she was now a carer for her fiancé. But the death of her own mother and partner in quick succession led to a big decline in her health.

‘It was grief, plus dementia, plus the lack of routine as a caregiver that made everything accelerate,’ says Faith.

‘She’d say, “I’m losing my mind and I don’t know what to do.” That was heartbreaking. She was petrified, it was horrible.’

After a fire at home, Mrs Walker went to stay with Faith’s sister in Germany, then went to live with Faith herself.

‘She was trying to be independent and formidable, but didn’t realise she was putting herself at risk,’ says Faith.

‘Carers came morning, lunch and evening, as her support needs became greater. Then she went into a care home. That’s when the nightmare really began.’





Hell to heaven

In August 2016, Mrs Walker moved into a large care home in Port Talbot, which it soon became clear couldn't meet her needs.

'They never followed her care plan,' says Faith. 'They were supposed to encourage her to eat, but they gave her food and walked away, then said she wasn't eating.'

'They were short-staffed and wanted her to stay still, so they increased her medication. When she was soiling and trying to clean herself, they used the word "disgusting."'

The following January, Mrs Walker was taken to hospital for a mental health assessment.

Faith refused to let her mum be assessed in a hospital unit that had cases of norovirus, so Mrs Walker was transferred to a psychiatric hospital in nearby Tonna, Neath.

'The nurses there were friendly and smiling. They were reassuring Mum,' says Faith. 'It was like going from hell to heaven.'

Dementia experts

No nursing home was available that could fully meet Mrs Walker's needs, and she stayed at Tonna Hospital for the next four years.

'Mum shouldn't have been there, but in the time she was there, they made it the best they could,' says Faith.

'They met her needs, cared for her, loved her. They tried different approaches, like creating a mock living room with family photos.'

'They weren't just dementia friendly, they were dementia experts.'

Faith was especially happy to see the hospital recognising and embracing her mum's cultural needs.

'All the staff were white, like in the care home, but they listened and wanted to learn,' she says.

'They had conversations about Jamaica as part of life story work. Occupational therapy activities included making dumplings, food that Mum could identify with. They told us to bring in CDs of music that Mum liked.'

'They created a safe environment where Mum felt she could belong. Mum was at the centre of her care, and the family was included in the process. It was amazing.'

Culturally competent

Last year, following pandemic restrictions on family visits, Mrs Walker was placed on an end of life care plan. Faith and the family were allowed in, one at a time, to say goodbye.

'I looked at Mum and in Patois she said, "I'm not ready to go yet,"' recalls Faith.

'The next day I came in and she was sitting up in bed talking! The nurse said it was the power of love.'

Mrs Walker eventually came off the end of life care plan, before contracting and recovering from COVID. She now lives in a nursing home in Cardiff, a three-minute walk from Faith, having been discharged from hospital in June under NHS continuing healthcare.

'The staff are beautiful – really diverse and culturally competent. Mum is so chilled!' says Faith.

Faith is passionate about addressing health and social inequality, and promoting the importance of high-quality dementia care. She has supported organisations such as Diverse Cymru and Carers Trust Wales with research, resources and reports.

She says, 'Person-centred care is paramount to meeting someone's complex and cultural needs, so never lose sight of the person who is living with dementia.'

To join our calls for a social care system that guarantees quality care and support, visit alzheimers.org.uk/campaigns



For our **Selecting and moving into a care home (690) booklet**, visit [alzheimers.org.uk/publications](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/publications) or call **0300 303 5933**.

Donate

Your support means we can ensure more people with dementia receive care from the very best. **Donate now**

Real-life research

Everyone benefits when dementia research draws on people's lived experiences. Gareth Bracken reports on projects designed and developed in true collaboration.

Most people with dementia want to remain living in their own homes for as long as possible. That's why Alzheimer's Society is funding research to better understand how families and professional carers can be helped to care for someone at home.

This is being used to develop personalised support sessions for people affected by dementia as well as specialist training for professionals.

Quick read

Society-funded research projects have been involving people affected by dementia and professionals in their design and development.

Carer Margaret Ogden is heavily involved with NIDUS-family, research which aims to help people with dementia stay in their homes.

NIDUS researcher Claudia Cooper says the input of family carers means the outcomes of the research can be used in practice.

The CHARM project has also seen researchers collaborate with care home staff on research that will benefit residents living with dementia.

NIDUS, the New interventions for Independence in Dementia Study, includes two programmes. NIDUS-professional has been designed and developed with the support of home care workers and other professionals, while NIDUS-family has involved people affected by dementia.

Detailed input

Margaret Ogden is part of our Research Network – volunteers who use their personal experiences of dementia to ensure that our research is relevant and credible. Margaret cared for her grandmother, who had Alzheimer's, and more recently took over the care of her uncle, who has vascular dementia.

'From the beginning, there's been an opportunity to be involved with different layers of NIDUS-family,' she says. 'I've been part of the Community of Interest, Project Management Group and Implementation Group – my involvement has been getting more intense and I've been giving detailed input.'

Margaret has used her experience of dementia to highlight issues about the health and wellbeing of carers.

'I made the point very early on that, whatever support we can give carers, there may be occasions when it's just not possible to keep a person with dementia at home,' she says.

Margaret was not only involved in the design of the research, but also the development of the strategies that have stemmed

from it. She helped to select and train people who'll go on to run support sessions by playing the role of a carer needing help. She also co-authored a research paper for the first time.

'For me, NIDUS went way beyond the traditional type of opportunities,' she says. 'The diverse activities offered made it really special and very meaningful.'

'I know that my involvement has had an impact, and I feel that the whole of the group's input has been really valued, and suggestions taken on board.'

Strongest voice

NIDUS is led by Professor Claudia Cooper at UCL in London, who values the input of volunteers such as Margaret.

'In every area where we involved people with lived experience, it really enriched our conversations and work. I learned a lot as a researcher,' she says.

'When the pandemic hit, they were very supportive as we adapted to an online approach.'

'We've been able to develop interventions that contain the understanding of family carers, so if they are effective they'll be able to be used.'

Visit [alzheimers.org.uk/researchnetwork](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/researchnetwork) or call **020 7423 3563** to find out more about our Research Network.



Golden thread

Research Network volunteers like Margaret are central to the work and culture of Alzheimer’s Society, explains Bronte Heath, our Senior Research Evidence Officer.

‘To have the greatest impact for people affected by dementia and ensure that all of our research activity is accurately identifying their needs, we need to hear from those who have lived through the experiences themselves,’ she says.

‘The Research Network is the golden thread – a dynamic and empowering network that feeds into all of our research activity.’

Huge benefits

Another area that’s benefited from this commitment to co-design and co-development is CHARM, the Care Home Action Research-in-residence Model.

In this Society-funded approach, experienced researchers support care home staff, residents and relatives to design and carry out their own research projects. Care homes were also involved in designing how this model of care homes and researchers working together would work in practice.

‘It turns on its head how research is usually done, with huge benefits,’ says Project Manager Isabelle Latham from the University of Worcester.

‘The care homes have such great expertise and ideas, and the projects we’ve completed have been really wide-ranging, from how to best design a garden to the impact of the pandemic on staff.

‘They’ve been really creative in thinking of how to involve residents, families and different staff, and how best to share their findings.’

More involved

April Dobson is Head of Dementia at Hallmark Care Homes, whose Anya Court home in Rugby worked on research projects relating to mealtimes and a positive culture of care. Both will directly benefit residents living with dementia.

‘It has been a true collaboration. We have been far more involved than in any previous research conducted in our care homes,’ she says.

‘The projects helped us to stop and reflect on what really matters, and to listen and involve.

‘The approach also meant that the research was completely relevant and meaningful to the care home, which made it so much easier to adopt what we learnt from the findings into practice.’

Donate

You can support people affected by dementia to get the right care. **Donate now**

To take part in NIDUS, call **07899 858684** or email **dop.nidus@ucl.ac.uk**



Great and small

Miniature donkeys offer joy and engagement for care home residents who have dementia. **Gareth Bracken** reports on a social enterprise that's creating some delightful moments.

Quick read

Minidonks is a social enterprise that takes miniature donkeys to care homes, boosting the wellbeing of residents with dementia.

Founder Sarah McPherson saw the positive effect that spending time with mini donkeys had on her mum, who had dementia.

Interacting with the donkeys brings joy and happiness to residents with dementia, including people who don't usually engage with activities.

Care home Activities Co-ordinator Sandra Goswell says that residents with dementia are often able to express themselves better during Minidonks visits.

I'd never heard of mini donkeys until eight or nine years ago,' says Sarah McPherson. 'I went out looking for a pet dog and came home with two donkeys!'

Sarah now runs Miniature Donkeys for Wellbeing, known as Minidonks. It's a South Norfolk social enterprise that takes miniature donkeys – about 91cm at the shoulder – to community groups and other settings across the east of England.

This includes care homes whose residents have dementia, and the idea is to boost people's wellbeing.

'There's just something really gentle in a donkey's nature,' says Sarah, whose parents both had dementia. 'A lot of the impact is in the moment. We get the little glimpses of pure joy and happiness.'

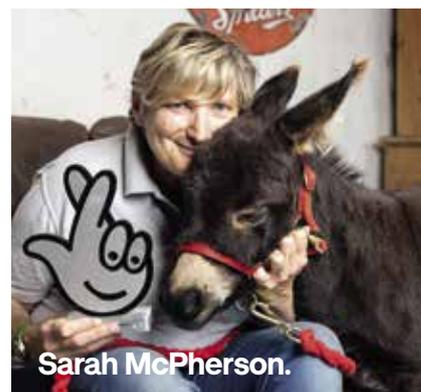
Precious time

Not long after Sarah got her first donkeys, her mum was diagnosed with vascular dementia. As this progressed, her dad was diagnosed with both Alzheimer's and vascular dementia.

'I split my time between home in Norfolk and my parents in Leicester, trying to arrange homecare,' says Sarah. 'It was a very difficult time. I'd come home, sit in the stable with the donkeys and howl, scream and cry.'

Sarah noticed that her mum particularly enjoyed spending time with the donkeys.

'It reminded her of being evacuated during the war,' she



says. 'I always used to feel that I got a bit of my mum back when she was with the donkeys. It was really precious.'

When her mum moved into a care home, Sarah was allowed to take the donkeys to visit, which provided the inspiration for Minidonks.

'Mum died in 2017, and I got drunk at her wake and told people I was going to hand in my notice at work and start taking the donkeys into care homes, and that's exactly what I did,' she says.

Open arms

Sarah is supported on visits by the 'best group' of highly valued volunteers, who facilitate interaction and activities suited to different residents, a lot of whom are from rural backgrounds.

For more about
Minidonks, visit
www.minidonks.org.uk
or call 07810 385633.

‘We might go for a walk around the grounds with a donkey, or people might have a go at grooming them,’ she says. ‘We’ll knock on someone’s door and the delight on their faces! People open their arms to invite the donkeys in.’

Care home staff often tell Sarah that residents who don’t usually join in with activities will come out and be part of the donkeys’ visits.

‘One man with dementia spent most of his day walking around, shuffling, with his hands curled up, but when he was stroking the donkey he started whistling and grooming it like a professional. He must have been a former jockey or horseman,’ says Sarah.

‘The staff had never seen him so animated. In that moment he was back doing something familiar and comfortable.’

Fighting fit

Because of the pandemic, Sarah and her team were unable to visit any care homes for 15 months. They did try some socially distanced visits when allowed, but these weren’t very successful. Thankfully, outdoor visits resumed in May and some homes have now welcomed indoor visits as well.

‘We’re fighting fit and loving being back,’ says Sarah, who recently visited a dementia specialist care home.

‘One lady was absolutely entranced with the donkeys and told us all about the horses she used to keep. We had a long chat about the care and feeding of donkeys and how they differ to horses.’

‘She thanked me for bringing the donkeys to see her and said, “It has been so nice to be able to talk horse to someone. Your donkeys are so beautifully kept that I know you know what you are doing. It has been so good to touch and smell a donkey after all these years.”’

Smile and laugh

Minidonks recently visited Chilton Court and Woodfield Court, care homes in Stowmarket, where Sandra Goswell is Activities Co-ordinator.

‘The visits provide great variety to our existing activities programme,’ she says. ‘Our residents aren’t able, or don’t have the opportunity, to go out and see animals like this, so for Minidonks to bring them in is amazing. The volunteers are wonderful and understand the issues that our residents have.’

‘The residents are amazed that the donkeys can come inside to see them, and 99% of those with dementia adore them! They chat to them and tell them how beautiful they are. They are suddenly able to articulate their feelings, which they can’t normally achieve. After each visit the buzz lasts for days!’

‘One lady with advanced dementia, who rarely smiles, had the best time with one of the donkeys, who made her smile and laugh.’

Sarah would love to see other people set up similar operations elsewhere in the UK and would be happy to share her expertise and support.

‘The more equine therapy the better!’ she says.

‘What we do is magic. I can’t imagine doing anything else with the rest of my life.’



Use our Dementia Directory to find dementia services near you – see [alzheimers.org.uk/dementiadirectory](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementiadirectory)

For personalised information and advice, call our Dementia Connect support line on **0333 150 3456**, or for Welsh speakers call **03300 947 400**.

Your letters, emails, social media posts and messages on our online community.

Marathon thanks

Letter of the month



I would like to say congratulations and a big thank you to our niece Sarah Dunning, who on 3 October completed her first marathon, running on behalf of Alzheimer's Society.

Until after the birth five years ago of her second child Ellie (pictured with her mum and a card she made to encourage her), Sarah had never done any running, but started doing short park runs to try to gain fitness.

This then progressed to 10K charity runs, which she decided to do on behalf of Alzheimer's Society, as my wife Olwyn, her Auntie who is fourth generation with the disease, is now into her 11th year. Starting

at the age of 67, she now has advanced Alzheimer's with no weight bearing and only a little speech.

This year Sarah decided she would do her first marathon, but without a place in London, like thousands of other runners, decided to run the virtual one round the area of St Albans where she lives.

As an individual runner she raised over £1,300, which added to her previous 10K runs makes a total of just under £3,000 raised for the Society. Well done Sarah.

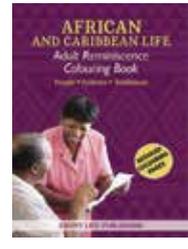
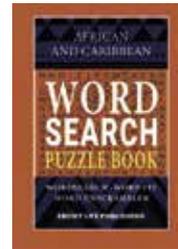
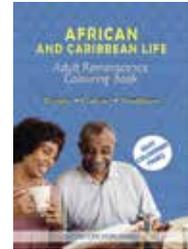
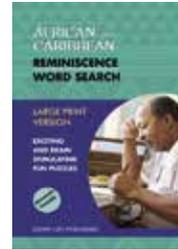
Owen Stewart

Congratulations to our letter of the month writer, who will receive a bouquet of flowers.

Incredible team

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in the London Marathon this year. This incredible team, who took part either on the streets of London or virtually in their local area like Sarah, have raised over £900,000 so far. This means we can reach and support more people through our vital services.

To find out how you can join our team next year, visit alzheimers.org.uk/londonmarathon or call 0330 333 0804.



Ebony Life activity books

Four new dementia-friendly activity books from publisher Ebony Life add to the growing range available for people with African or Caribbean heritage.

The books contain colouring pages and word puzzles that reflect the richness of African and Caribbean life, people, culture and traditions, with topics such as Black heroes, Windrush, African gods, famous Black Britons and Caribbean foods. They range from easy to more challenging and aim to provide hours of engagement and conversation through recollection, reflection and reminiscence.

Visit www.ebonylife.co.uk for the new Ebony Life activity books.

Jigsaw puzzles and activity books from the Black Dementia Company are also available from our online shop – see shop.alzheimers.org.uk or call 0300 124 0900.

Your turn

Tell us what you think – email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk Letters for the February/March issue to arrive by end of 5 January. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Alzheimer's Society. Letters may be edited.

Seen elsewhere...



After we shared a BBC Yorkshire story on Facebook about Steven Peacock, who taught himself the piano as a way to stay active after being diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia, his wife Brigit responded:

“ Thank you Alzheimer’s Society for sharing this feature. It’s really important to Steven and I to show that, although a diagnosis of dementia is devastating, it is not the end. There’s still a lot of living and learning to do. Music has been and continues to be a massive gift in our lives for which we are very grateful. If anyone would like to listen to more of Steven’s music it’s on Spotify “Leaves Falling on the Moon”. ”



On Twitter, Dementia Friendly Leeds posted after holding an information session with managers at White Rose shopping centre:

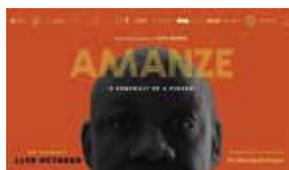
“ Great to deliver a #DementiaFriends session to the Senior Management team @whiteroseleeds today! We look forward to working together more in the future. Find out more about Age & Dementia Friendly Businesses: www.tinyurl.com/Age-Dementia-Friendly-Leeds @AgeFriendlyLDS @LeedsOPF @TTSLeeds ”



On Talking Point, our online community, Arty-girl was reassured after sharing her worries about telling people she just wants to do her own thing this Christmas:

“ Wow! What lovely replies! Thank you all for making me feel a whole lot better about wanting to spend Christmas on my own. I’m hoping that, by Christmas, I can get back into doing a bit of painting and drawing as I haven’t felt much like doing that over the past two years. Thank you again. ”

Amanze: A Portrait of a Pirate



A new short film from The Photobook Project captures Ronald Amanze’s continued wonder at life’s opportunities. Amanze: A Portrait of a Pirate touches

on his childhood, Jamaican roots and experiences in music production and pirate radio, as well as his dementia diagnosis.

The film, directed and produced by Lucy Hawes, was made to highlight Ronald’s involvement in My Dementia Life Matters, in which 20 people with dementia from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities documented what mattered to them by taking photos over a month. These were compiled into photobooks by Ellie Robinson Carter, The Photobook Project’s founder.

Ronald worked on the project with Ellie and David Truswell, Director of the Dementia Alliance of Culture and Ethnicity.

Find out more and watch Ronald’s film at www.tinyurl.com/My-Dementia-Life-Matters

New year, new calendars



Our online shop offers the latest Memory Calendar, designed to support people with dementia, along with a beautiful range of wall calendars for 2022.

The Memory Calendar has a page per day, each with space for reminders and notes beneath today’s date. It was inspired by Keith Horncastle’s late wife Val, who

died in 2015 with Alzheimer’s. She suggested making a calendar from a spiral notebook to help her keep track of events, something that many more people benefitted from since Keith partnered with Oxford publisher Chris Andrews.

Wall calendars are also available. Choose from those featuring large type, delightful illustrations from Trevor Mitchell or Matthew Rice, designs from Emma Bridgewater or photos of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

Get your calendars at shop.alzheimers.org.uk or call 0300 124 0900, and see p39 for a chance to win a calendar.

Consumer panel

Our panel looks at a specially developed comforter that's been designed to make you feel like you're being hugged.

A HUG for everyone

We visited a group of people affected by dementia in Newport, south Wales, to show them a product from HUG by LAUGH, a company founded by researchers from Cardiff Metropolitan University.

The Dementia Voice local group had just begun meeting in person again, sharing their views to influence our and others' work.

We wanted to know what they thought about HUG – a soft comforter that research shows can reduce a person's anxiety and promote social interaction. A partnership with the Society's Accelerator Programme is making HUG available to more people, including through our online shop.

Immediate response

HUG is designed to be cuddled, with weighted limbs and a soft body containing a device that plays a heartbeat and your own music.

Everyone at the group got to try a HUG, and their responses were immediate.

'It's like holding a baby,' said Mike, who had automatically started patting his HUG on its back.

'It's instinct,' said Linda, who had done the same with hers.

'It's so comfortable, really comfortable,' she added. 'I like the way you can let go and it just cuddles you.'

Despite the weighted arms, Ian was surprised by how light his HUG felt, 'It's not very heavy, is it?'

Mike could immediately see how calming it could feel to hold HUG, especially with the heartbeat and your favourite tunes playing.

'If you were stressed out, you can listen to the music,' he said.

You use a USB connection to load your own music onto the HUG's player, and you can adjust the intensity of the heartbeat and volume of the music so that it's

just right for the person using it. HUG also comes with details about Playlist for Life, who can help you create a personalised playlist for free (see www.playlistforlife.org.uk or call **0141 404 0683**).

Thinking of someone who hadn't been able to see visitors because of COVID, Shirley said, 'You could have a message sent from their grandchildren and play that.'

Group members suggested many other people who might benefit from a HUG, including children who are autistic.

A 'cwtch'

Adele thought she'd prefer it if her HUG's arms connected behind her neck, using the evocative Welsh word for an especially warm snuggle to express what she meant.

'I'd like velcro to keep its hands together – that's comfortable, that's a "cwtch".'



Although its designers had decided against connecting the hands of the HUG so it wouldn't be restrictive, they said they'd look at how they could be attached but still safely and easily pulled apart.

HUG is a warm off-white colour with a fluffier feel to its head, and group members had many ideas for other colours and textures.

Adele said, 'I'd like it to be orange, because orange is my happy colour!'

'Different textures would be nice,' said Linda, and Ian suggested washable leather.

Adele added, 'I would like what's on its head to be here too,' pointing to where her hand lay on its back.

Shirley thought a pocket with different textures inside would be interesting for the person holding a HUG to feel.

'Like in a twiddle muff,' she explained, 'with ribbons, pompoms, toggles and buttons.'

So simple

Looking at the instruction leaflet that comes with HUG, Adele and Ian said the text should be larger. The group liked the idea of reading

the instructions online, where you can adjust text size, including using a QR code to access them. They also thought an online video could be helpful.

Ian thought the charger looked like one you'd get with a cordless drill. It takes four hours for a full charge, which lasts about two days.

HUG comes with a mesh bag to wash it in a washing machine, after removing the electronic device and an inner cushion, and it can then be air dried.

Group members welcomed the idea that you can sponsor a HUG for someone else (find out more at www.hug.world), since some people wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise.

All in all, our panel loved their HUGs.

'I really don't want to let it go!' said Adele.

'It's brought my heartrate down,' added Linda.

'It's brilliant,' agreed Ian. 'Something so simple, but they say it's simple things that make the difference, don't they?'

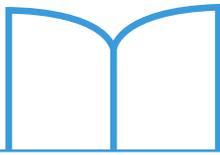
HUG is £125 plus VAT from our online shop. As with some other specially designed products, you don't have to pay VAT if they're for use by a person with dementia or other condition – tick the box stating that you're eligible for VAT relief at checkout.

Visit shop.alzheimers.org.uk or call **0300 124 0900** for a range of products to help people affected by dementia to live well at home.



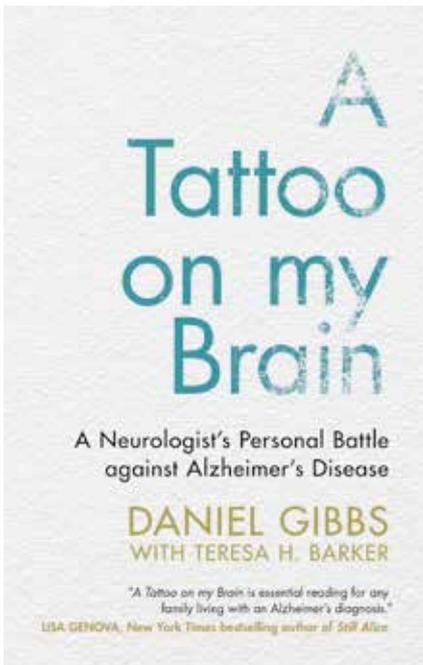
Win a HUG

See p39 for a chance to win your very own HUG.



We read a book by US neurologist Daniel Gibbs, who was diagnosed with young-onset Alzheimer's after years of supporting people with dementia.

A Tattoo on my Brain



A Tattoo on my Brain is the sort of book you immediately want to share and take action on after reading,' says Addy Olutunmogun, in our Publishing team. 'Part memoir, part science book and part practical guide, it is a moving, motivating and informative read.

'Having spent 25 years treating people with dementia as a neurologist, Daniel Gibbs finds himself "on the patient's side of the experience" as he comes to discover he has young-onset Alzheimer's.'

Keith Oliver, a Society Ambassador in Kent who is living with Alzheimer's, says, 'Whilst the author's professional background is different to mine, I recognise so much of our shared experience, especially around the onset of our dementias. I am sure there are

others who will take a lot from this part of the book, and I know how helpful I would have found it if I had read it 10 years ago.'

Rachel Bate in Bristol, whose close family members have been diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia, agrees, 'This is an incredibly unique text, given the author's background and current condition, which makes it more insightful and engaging.'

Dunroamin, on Talking Point, says, 'This book has had a great effect on me. I am also a retired health professional (although not a neurologist) and like the author my knowledge and experience led me to being assessed very early despite the dismissive attitude of others.

'But here is the rub. My insight and experiences are personal to me and no one else can "see" into my world. Added to this is the variation of the road travelled with Alzheimer's.

'Indeed, the emphasis the author puts on an early diagnosis brings various dilemmas. Not all individuals can be honest either with self or others, and therefore issues may be glossed over or missed. I am surrounded by what I call the "nonbelievers" who say my difficulties are just a reflection of getting older etc.'

Like a friend

Daniel uses his combined professional and personal insight to explain how people can act now to reduce their risk of Alzheimer's or slow down its progression.

Addy says, 'From first noticing a loss of his sense of smell, to seeing images of his brain that confirmed his dementia diagnosis, Daniel takes you with him every step of the way. Rather than lecturing you about Alzheimer's, he speaks to you like a friend.'

A reader in Leicestershire says, 'This is a fantastic book for anybody hoping to understand a bit more about how to delay the degenerative onset of Alzheimer's and any other condition that heavily impacts the cognitive functions.

'I was impressed with the author's determination to not let his condition control him. His proactive approach in challenging his brain each day with things like crosswords to build up his cognitive reserve, as well as his seeking out research trials to participate in, was a breath of fresh air.'

Dunroamin says, 'The book is easy to read, shows the author's sense of humour (as opposed to resignation), is meticulously referenced and will be of great interest to future researchers, families of those with dementia and anyone else who happens to come across a copy.'

Worth reading

Keith says, 'Gibbs addresses the real fears, despair and stigma that the disease-focused model engenders and generally tries to de-medicalise it, although understandably at times he slips into his medical comfort zone.'

Rachel agrees, 'The book was mostly clear in its presentation,

and the chronology made it easy to understand. However, I did have to reread some of the more technical chapters, such as Gibbs' reaction to aducanumab.'

Caroline Scott-Gall in West Sussex, whose husband has Alzheimer's, goes further, 'I think this book falls between two stools. It has a lot of medical and scientific information, too much for a lay person, but it also has some really useful factual information for people living with dementia, Alzheimer's in particular.'

She adds, 'I have learned many valuable facts from it about Alzheimer's, which inform me about my husband's situation. It has given me much needed information about, and subsequent understanding of, what is happening to my husband's brain and his consequent behaviour.'

'I was able to give my husband edited versions of some of these facts, which in turn reassured him that what is happening is "normal" in the context of Alzheimer's. It was definitely worth reading but it needs a determined reader.'

Life lessons

Addy says, 'Some of Daniel's most powerful guidance is his emotional and wellbeing advice. From appreciating friends and family to tackling apathy and managing fear, his book is filled with as many significant life lessons as it is practical tips.'

Rachel says, 'This book made me feel sad at times, but hopeful for the future. Due to my own

connections with dementia, it did worry me at times about the genes I carry, however I became considerably more aware of preventative lifestyle measures.'

Keith says, 'I would recommend the book to everyone affected by dementia or professionals seeking greater insight into the life of one person with Alzheimer's.'

Dunroamin adds, 'Read – and do not be afraid!'

A Tattoo on my Brain, by Daniel Gibbs (Cambridge 2021), 254 pages, £18.99, ISBN: 9781108838931.

Also available as an ebook or audiobook.

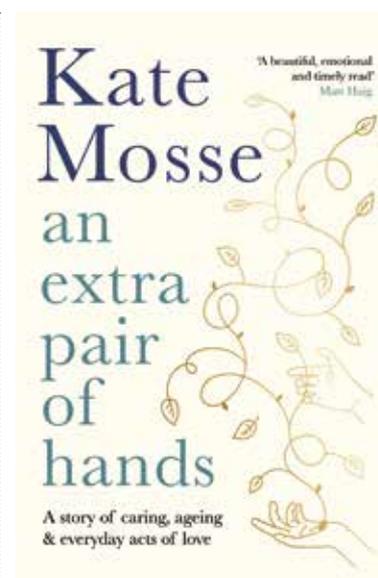


Your turn

For the next issue, we invite you to read *An Extra Pair of Hands*, by Kate Mosse (Profile 2021), 208 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 9781788162616.

Also available as an ebook or audiobook.

Tell us what you think about this memoir by a best-selling novelist who found herself a carer three times in middle age. Email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk by the end of 4 January so we can share it in our next issue.



Book giveaway

We have five copies of *An Extra Pair of Hands* to give away – email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk by the end of 14 December quoting 'Hands' for a chance to win one (see p39 for terms and conditions).

‘My aunt has dementia and, given how pandemic restrictions can change, I’m worried whether we’ll be together on Christmas Day. If we aren’t, how could we help her feel connected?’

Festive together

Given last year’s changes to lockdown restrictions – and the ongoing occasional need for people to self-isolate – some uncertainty about the festive season is understandable. Hopefully we’ll be able to share Christmas and other special days in person with those we want to be with.

If that’s not possible, there are things that might help a relative or friend with dementia to feel part of festivities even though you’re not in the same place.

Sights and sounds

In addition to planning presents and food, making sure your aunt’s home is decorated for Christmas may help her to enjoy the season. This could include photos of family members and friends from past Christmases. Consider which photos carefully, as some might bring up difficult or painful memories.

Radio, television and online media can also create a festive

atmosphere. To avoid your aunt having to find them at the time, you could preset a radio to her favourite station that plays Christmas music or send her links to TV programmes or videos she can watch online.

Keeping in touch

Video calls could be a great way for your aunt to stay connected in the run up to Christmas as well as on the day itself. Depending on what she’s comfortable using, this may be over a smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer.

Arrange to share important moments – for example, the Queen’s speech, Mass or a TV special – by calling or messaging each other and experiencing them together. This could be between the two of you, or among a group using an app like WhatsApp or Signal.

And don’t forget the power of speaking on the telephone. This is still a great way to stay in touch and share events together.

Preparation

Some preparation may help a person who isn’t used to a particular device or app. You could show your aunt exactly how to answer or make video calls in advance, or leave simple instructions next to her phone or computer. There are many online guides that show how to use specific apps – would she find one of these useful?

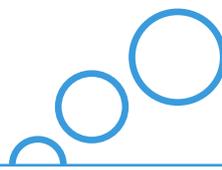
Setting things up ahead of time can make a difference. For example, you could create a new account for one of the video calling apps and give her the login details. Your aunt might still need reminders about actually using the app, but this may be easier to do over the phone when needed.

With a bit of planning, your aunt should be able to join in the festivities at Christmas even if pandemic restrictions change or one of you has to self-isolate.

For our **Using technology to help with everyday life (437)** factsheet, see [alzheimers.org.uk/publications](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/publications) or call **0300 303 5933**.



Photograph: iStock.com/kevejefimija



Keeping current

Keeping up with the news can help us feel connected to what's happening in the world. How a person with dementia stays up to date may need to change over time.

Photograph: Freeimages.com/Kay Pat



Read, watch, listen

For someone finding it difficult to read newspapers or magazines, an RNIB Newsagent subscription could provide audio versions by post or online – visit www.rnib.org.uk/newsagent or call 0303 123 9999.

Find your nearest local talking newspaper at www.tnf.org.uk or call 01793 497555, or listen using the free Talking Newspaper app.

On news websites, use your device or app to make text easier to read or to read articles aloud – see mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk or call 0800 048 7642 to find out more. Sites also often include video and

audio alongside written articles.

Having a friend or family member read articles out to you may be enjoyable. Smart devices and virtual assistants, such as Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant or Apple Siri, can also respond to someone asking them to read or stream the news.

If a regular television or radio update is missed, catch up with news segments or full programmes through on-demand services.

News and views

Part of the pleasure of following the news can be discussing it with others.

Be mindful of sensitive topics – news can be distressing or upsetting, especially if it recalls painful memories or broader anxieties. If strong feelings are involved, conversations may become heated. Being prepared to let points go or move onto another subject could help discussions feel safe and comfortable.

A person who finds it difficult to keep up with current affairs might prefer reminiscing. The BBC Reminiscence Archive at remarc.bbcrewind.co.uk offers images, audio and video by theme or decade. Younger family members may also enjoy helping to find old news stories and photos online.

Visit alzheimers.org.uk/publications or call **0300 303 5933** for The activities handbook: Supporting someone with dementia to stay active and involved (77AC).

Over to you

Do you have any tips about keeping up with news that we could share next issue? Email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk by 4 January.

Music and memories: What you said

bigmo, on Talking Point, says, 'My husband formerly sang for many years in a cathedral choir. It's wonderful how putting on an LP immediately calms his periods of anxiety and frustration. LPs also have the advantage of his being able to play them on the turntable by himself: he is dependent on others to play the digital varieties!'



Harry052 says, 'I arranged for the pipe band I play for to go to my wife's care home (pictured). I watched as we played, the residents' hands clapping and feet tapping, seeing that was priceless. As for my wife's reaction, she was laughing and the years just seemed to disappear.'

Reader **June Holland** says, 'We attended a musical group one day a week, but my husband was more interested in serving the cups of tea. Then I discovered YouTube, with all his favourite golden oldies – Andy Williams, Peggy Lee, Al Johnson – so much to choose from, well worth a try! Four difficult years, but the happy times keep me smiling.'



Talking Point members' advice for someone who fears they're one of the 'invisibles' – not around enough to help support a relative with dementia.

The 'invisibles'

'Don't criticise what the primary carer is doing (they will be trying their best).

'Make concrete offers of help rather than vague promises (and make sure that the offers suit the primary carer rather than just you).

'Don't swoop in and put a lot of things in place that can't be maintained by the primary carer once you've gone again (eg a regular class or trip out).

'Don't minimise the person's problems, eg "Oh, it's just old age", "It's just Mum's funny little ways", "Mum was always a bit forgetful and disorganised" (the primary carer wouldn't be doing what they're doing if it wasn't necessary).' **Violet Jane**

"Do what you promise to do" is very good advice. When I found myself by default responsible for my sister-in-law, I hoped that her blood relatives would step up to the mark. Full of generalised offers and goodwill but nothing I could pin them down on. In fact, two relatives who stepped up and did some visiting had never made any promises. I was very grateful for their help.' **marionq**

'You may not be able to help as much as you like, due to work or family commitments. Don't feel guilty about that, rather make the most of the times you can be there.

'Offer the main carer time off and be sure to stick to the arrangement you have made with them. Be sensitive about the different relationships. The person with dementia may value you more because they rarely see you. This can be very hurtful for the main carer.' **Prof's wife**

'There is a lot with easy electronic comms and systems that can be done remotely to help a main carer. For example, handling finances, handling the Department for Work and Pensions, checking in by email or phone with the home or carers and sharing the results, helping make decisions about aspects of her ongoing care as her health changes, keeping in touch with Mum's friends and family for her, and so on. Keeping in touch with the person with dementia. And chasing things up (goodness knows there is an endless amount of that!)' **olddog**

'Don't hang the carer out to dry. Even if you feel there is very little you can do to support on a practical level, keep in contact with the carer (and also with the person with dementia, where possible) just to ask how things are going. Offer what support you can, even if it's just a friendly ear.' **Scarlet Lady**

'I think if you are worried you are an invisible, you are halfway to helping. We were very aware that we didn't do as much as the other children for my mother-in-law, but we lived furthest away and my husband was still working full-time. We did do a few remote things and tried to make sure we were available when needed to cover holidays etc.'

Sarasa

'Don't tell the carer what to do. Listen to them telling you what is being done.' **nae sporrán**

Visit alzheimers.org.uk/talkingpoint to read more and join our online community.

 **Next issue: 'Love lies'**

What would you say to someone who feels bad about telling 'love lies' to a person with dementia – bending the truth to avoid causing them unnecessary distress? Email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk

HUG competition

We have a HUG (see p32) for one lucky winner drawn from correct entries received by 12 January.

Q: HUG is a sensory product designed to be:

- A. Cuddled, snuggled and enjoyed.
- B. Muddled, befuddled and annoyed.
- C. Bewitched, bothered and bewildered.

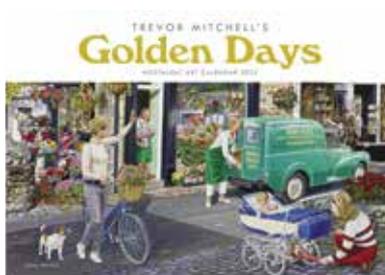


Calendars competition

We have a Memory Calendar (see p31) for five winners drawn from correct entries received by 5 January, with a Golden Days calendar, illustrated by Yorkshire artist Trevor Mitchell, for five runners-up.

Q: Each page of the Memory Calendar has space beneath today's date to:

- A. Stretch your legs.
- B. Swing a cat.
- C. Add your own reminders and notes.

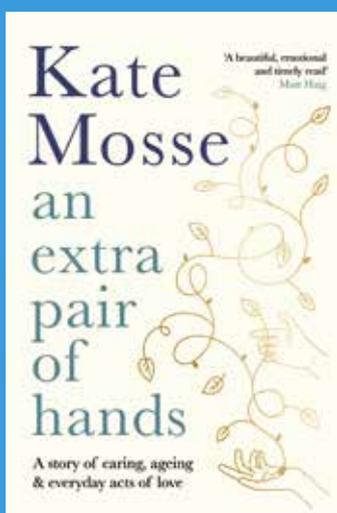


Send us your answers with your name and address – email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk

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.

Book giveaway

See p35 for a chance to win a copy of *An Extra Pair of Hands*, by Kate Mosse.



Radio and music player competition

M Appadoo in Greater London won a Relish Radio and Music Player. Answer: The first radio stations to broadcast regularly in the UK were 2MT (known as 'Two Emma Toc') and 2LO.

Farmhouse jug competition

J Nicholls in Wiltshire won a Forget-me-not farmhouse jug and two mugs, while J Lyon in Merseyside won a Forget-me-not mug and bauble. Answer: Another name for forget-me-nots is scorpion grass.

Book giveaway

The five readers who each won a copy of *A Tattoo on my Brain*, by Daniel Gibbs, were J Taylor in South Yorkshire, S Jackson in Hampshire, C Nott in Hertfordshire and anonymous readers in Leicestershire and Worcestershire.



Events are back



**Get that finish line feeling.
Whether it's a trek, cycle, swim,
run or skydive, we've got a
challenge with your name on.**

Scan the QR code to find out more and
sign up, or visit alzheimers.org.uk/events



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