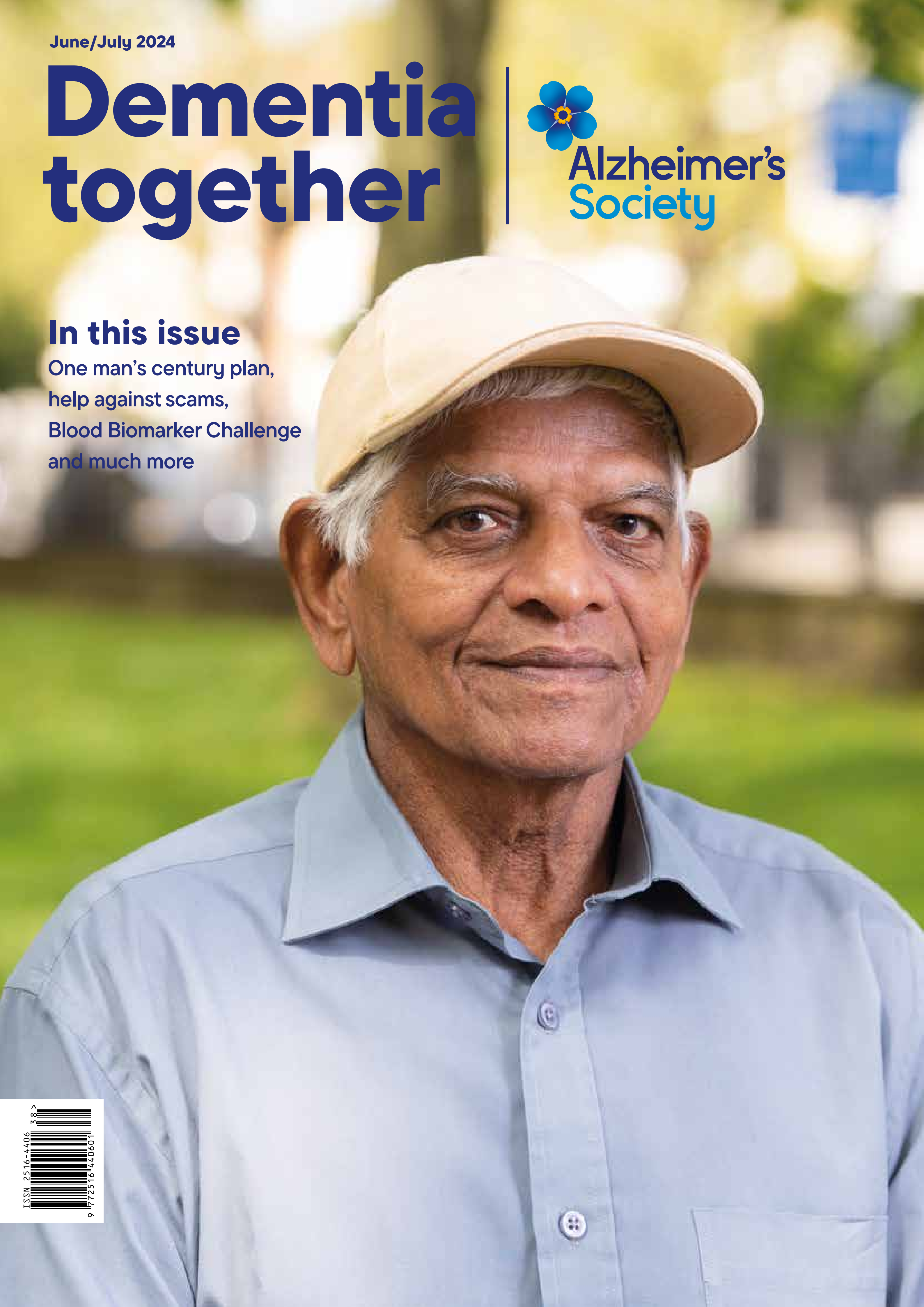
June/July 2024

Dementia together

Alzheimer's Society



In this issue

One man's century plan, help against scams, Blood Biomarker Challenge and much more

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Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of Dementia together magazine! I hope you find the ideas and stories within as inspiring and helpful as we did when they were shared with us.

I'm especially pleased to include an interview of leading Blood Biomarker Challenge researchers by Anita, who has dementia, and Research Network volunteer Tom (see p20). This research is set to have a massive impact on how dementia is diagnosed, and it's fantastic to have people put their questions directly to those at its heart – thank you to everyone involved.

Apart from that, we have everything from being scam smart (p14) and influencing your local NHS (p17), to lifelike pet companions (p24) and cutting work to care (p34).

As ever, we're keen to hear your feedback and ideas, so please use the magazine contacts below to tell us what you think.

Danny Ratnaike, Magazine Editor

Need support? Call 0333 150 3456 or visit alzheimers.org.uk/getsupport

Dementia together is the magazine for all Alzheimer's Society supporters and anyone affected by dementia. Contact us on **magazine@alzheimers.org.uk**, **020 7264 2667** or **020 7423 3676**, or write to us at Magazine Editor, Alzheimer's Society, Suite 2, 1st Floor East Wing, Plumer House, Tailyour Road, Plymouth PL6 5FS.

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Alzheimer's Society operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Registered charity no. 296645.

Contents

Directions

We had a fantastic Dementia Action Week this May, and we're keeping its energy going throughout 2024.

Over 180 events during the week got more people than ever thinking about dementia and how they can help, as did a high-profile media campaign. Our annual conference highlighted how vital a dementia diagnosis is, and how outrageous it is that so many people don't get one. And a heartfelt thanks to all of you who supported our Forget Me Not Appeal!

The Jennings v Alzheimer's, an incredible documentary, screened during Dementia Action Week. It's about our late Vice-President Carol Jennings and her family, and if you didn't see it, you can catch it on BBC iPlayer.

Back in the 1980s, Carol responded to an ad in our newsletter (a predecessor of this very magazine) for people to take part in research. Not only did this research help us understand rarer inherited types of Alzheimer's, it also led to decades of further groundbreaking studies. Carol went on to be a phenomenal campaigner, and our Carol Jennings Research Fellowship continues her legacy.

This all underlines the difference one person can make, but also the profound impact we have when we come together. We're here for everyone affected by dementia – thank you for being here for us.

Kate Lee
Chief Executive Officer
@KateLeeCEO

News

New dementia research nurses

In a revolutionary new three-year programme, we're placing 10 dementia research nurses in NHS settings to help people living with dementia to take part in clinical trials.

Clinical trials are vital to developing potential new treatments for dementia. But recruitment to dementia trials in the UK is slow, with not enough diversity among those who take part. Researchers need more participants to be able find out which treatments could make a difference to people's lives.

The new £3 million programme will make it easier for more people with dementia to take part in clinical trials for longer, with support throughout the process.

More details about the pilot – including where the nurses will be based – will be confirmed later this year.

Make 2025 extraordinary

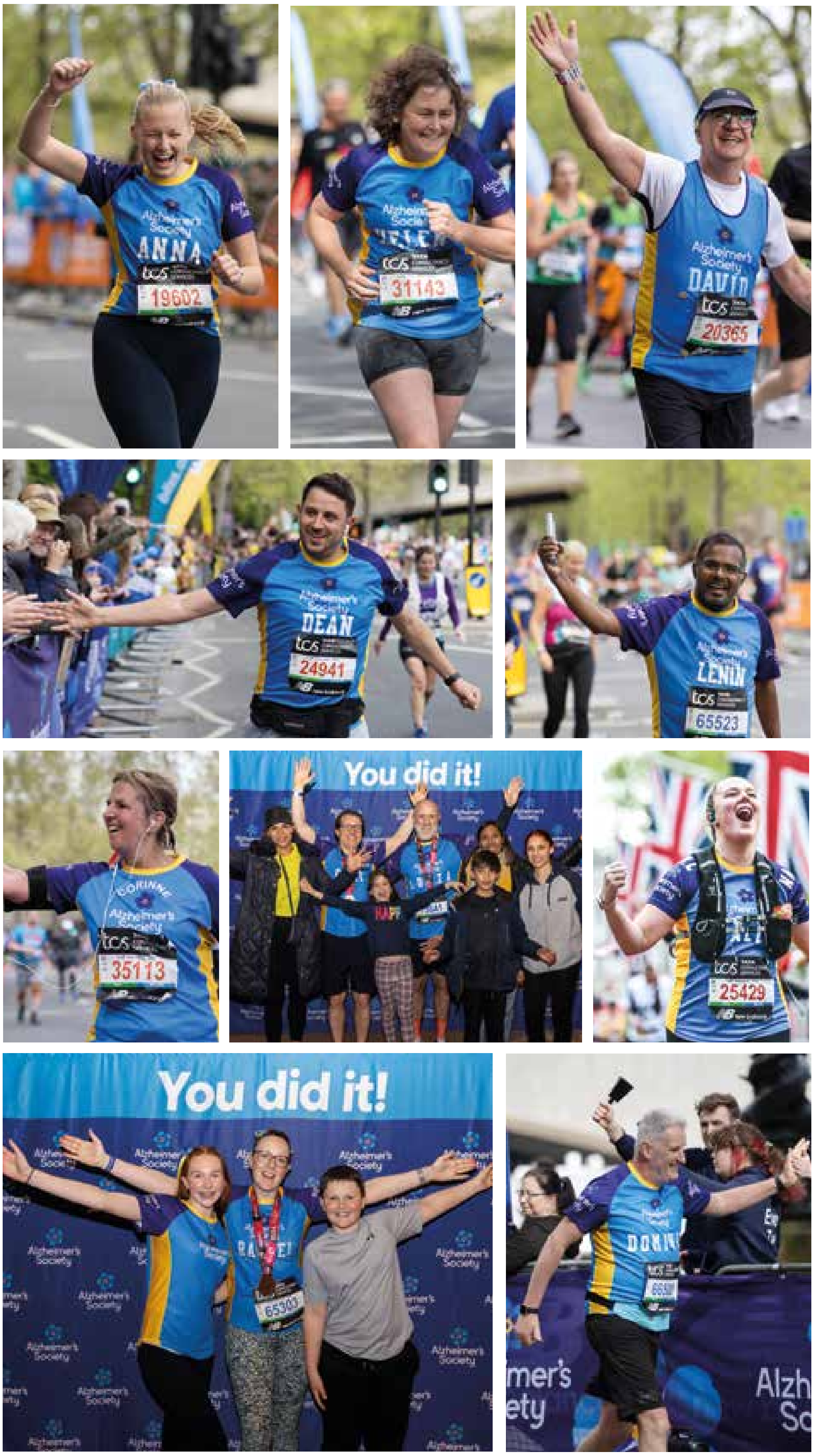
Take on an overseas trek and know that every pound you raise will provide vital support for people living with dementia.

Choose from one of three remarkable locations – the golden dunes of the Sahara, accompanied by Berber guides and a caravan of camels, the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's tallest freestanding mountain, or through scenic valleys and glacial rivers to Everest Base Camp.

Start your journey today – visit alzheimers.org.uk/trekking or call 0300 222 5808.

Running champions

A big thank you to everyone taking part in a running event for Alzheimer's Society this year. This includes over 500 of you who ran the London Marathon, raising more than £975,000 that will give help and hope to people living with dementia, now and in the future. Inspired to join our team? We have guaranteed places in the UK's best races – visit **alzheimers.org.uk/running** or call **0300 222 5808** and we'll see you at the starting line!



Talking reality

People with experience of dementia were at the heart of events engaging with politicians during Dementia Action Week, 13–19 May.

At Westminster, members of our Parliamentary Steering Group organised an event to speak to MPs about the difference securing a diagnosis had made to their lives.

The steering group is made up of people affected by dementia – we thank group members Christine, Jane, Michelle and Kiran for sharing their experiences!

NI health minister

Society representatives met Northern Ireland's health minister Robin Swann and officials to discuss plans for a new project board to make the Regional Dementia Care Pathway a reality.

The pathway sets out the support a person with dementia should receive, from initial symptoms to the end of life.

The minister pledged his support and attended a Dementia Action Week event for MLAs at Stormont, where we screened a film sharing people's real-life experiences of dementia.

Wales letter

Thanks to everyone in Wales who signed our open letter to the First Minister, Vaughan Gething. Signed by almost 500 of you, the letter was delivered to the Welsh Parliament during Dementia Action Week.

Members of the Senedd also heard from Geoff Mock and others about how they benefitted from receiving a dementia diagnosis (see p15).

We're calling for a new Dementia Action Plan and a National Care and Support Service to meet the needs of people in Wales.

Happiness Programme

We've launched a partnership to develop new activities for people with dementia.

The Happiness Programme aims to spark laughter and happiness, while also encouraging movement, using an interactive light projector. This allows people to engage with a range of activities, on their own or in a group. These include popping bubbles, colouring pictures and even playing the piano. Projections can be onto a floor, table, wall or even a bed.

We're working with Social-Ability – the people behind the technology – to develop and try out new activities in 10 care homes from Brighton to Newcastle, with support from Sport England.

On your bikes!

Take part in the ultimate cycle challenge this September and Ride Across Britain in nine days. Ride through 23 counties, bringing help and hope to people affected by dementia with each mile you complete.

To sign up, visit alzheimers.org.uk/ride-across-britain or call 0300 222 5808.

Alzheimer's genetic risk

Recent research in Spain has shown how the strongest risk gene for Alzheimer's (called APOE e4) may lead to a faster developing form of the disease.

Also in this study, almost all people who inherited the two copies of the risk gene – one from each parent – had raised levels of proteins related to Alzheimer's disease.

Richard Oakley, our Associate Director of Research and Innovation, said, 'The insights from the study suggest that, in the future, it could be important to take into account a person's genetics when planning how to reduce their risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, or when considering their treatment if they already have the disease.'

For our Risk factors for dementia (450) factsheet, visit alzheimers.org.uk/publications or please call 0300 303 5933.

Birthday fundraisers

Have you thought about creating a Facebook fundraiser for your birthday this year? It's really simple to set up and gives friends and family a way to support a cause close to your heart.

A Facebook fundraiser posted to your timeline invites people to donate to your chosen charity. It doesn't have to be instead of cake and cards – you can have those too!

We'd love to share your special day with you, and thank you to everyone who has done this so far for thinking of us.

Visit facebook.com/fundraisers to find out more.

Our 2024 annual conference

The Alzheimer's Society Annual Conference took place in London and online on 14 May, during Dementia Action Week.

Hosted by Angela Rippon CBE and carer Bill Wilson, people living with dementia came together with decision-makers and influencers to show how diagnosis, care and research can change lives, today and in the future.

Between breakout sessions, the conference heard from our CEO Kate Lee and the Chief Medical Officer for England, social care minister and shadow social care minister, as well as researchers from the Blood Biomarker Challenge.

Four years of Companion Calls

What started as a response to Covid in 2020 has blossomed into four incredible years of providing companionship to people affected by dementia.

We've seen 4,000 referrals for Companion Calls, where nearly 2,000 volunteers have made over 180,000 phone calls to people benefitting from regular contact. That's over 4 million precious minutes of connection, and each conversation has made an impact on someone's day.

We're endlessly grateful to our Companion Call volunteers for their warmth, empathy and unwavering support – see p28 for more about one volunteer's experiences.

Find out more about receiving Companion Calls or becoming a volunteer at alzheimers.org.uk/companion-calls or call 0330 333 0804.

Awaiting lecanemab news

At the time we went to press, we were awaiting news about lecanemab's approval for use in the UK. It would be the first treatment approved in the UK that appears to slow down Alzheimer's disease.

Approval from the MHRA would mean the drug is safe and effective. Of course, lecanemab is not without a risk of side effects, and would only be available to people in the early stages of Alzheimer's.

To become available on the NHS, lecanemab also needs approval by NICE, which also considers the cost-effectiveness of a drug. Its decision is expected later in the year.

If lecanemab isn't approved, this would not be the end of the story. It's only the first drug of its kind to be evaluated by the MHRA, and it will not be the last.

In the meantime, we must press ahead with plans to prepare the NHS, which is not yet ready to deliver groundbreaking new treatments like this at scale.

Overpayments of Carer's allowance

Carer's allowance made the news recently when some carers had to pay back allowance that they'd received.

Carers are only eligible for Carer's allowance if their weekly earnings are £151 or less after tax, national insurance and expenses. A number of carers who'd had changes in circumstances – like a new job, or new earnings, bonuses or extra shifts – continued to be paid an amount they'd previously been entitled to get.

Don't be discouraged from claiming support that you're entitled to receive, but do inform the Department for Work and Pensions of any changes in your circumstances straight away.

Get a benefits check to see what you should be able to claim – see p34 for contacts.

The Alzheimer's & Dementia Show

This year's Alzheimer's & Dementia Show is taking place from 14–15 June at ExCeL London.

The event, in partnership with Alzheimer's Society, features exhibits, talks, face-to-face support and advice, and training for unpaid carers as well as professionals. It's a great opportunity to learn, find solutions and meet others.

Visit www.alzheimersshow.co.uk or call 020 8126 4712 for more information and to buy tickets.

Helpful everyday products

Our online shop's latest Helpful Everyday Products catalogue includes a range of ideas to help people living with dementia to be more comfortable at home, while supporting independence and safety.

Our products are tested and reviewed by people with dementia and their carers, and many of them are eligible for VAT relief.

If you didn't receive the catalogue with your magazine, visit shop.alzheimers.org.uk or call 0333 366 0035.

One Stop: Share the love

Convenience retailer One Stop has teamed up with Swizzels to create six Love Hearts pin badges to raise money for Alzheimer's Society. The badges are £1 each and 25% of the price of each sold will be donated to the Society. Badges will be available until the end of June, so don't forget to share the love and pick one up at the till!

Don't miss...

What it felt like to be a person with dementia targeted by scammers. **See p14.**

Advice about planning a holiday when you have a dementia diagnosis. **See p16.**

Research into all types of dementia relies on people volunteering to take part. **See p18.**

People tell us what they think after trying out some lifelike pet companions. **See p24.**

Readers share advice about dealing with disagreements over a person's finances. **See p35.**

Century plan

Lal Kissoon has always aimed high, and his dementia diagnosis hasn't changed his plan to reach 100. Margaret Rooke meets a man determined to remain independent.

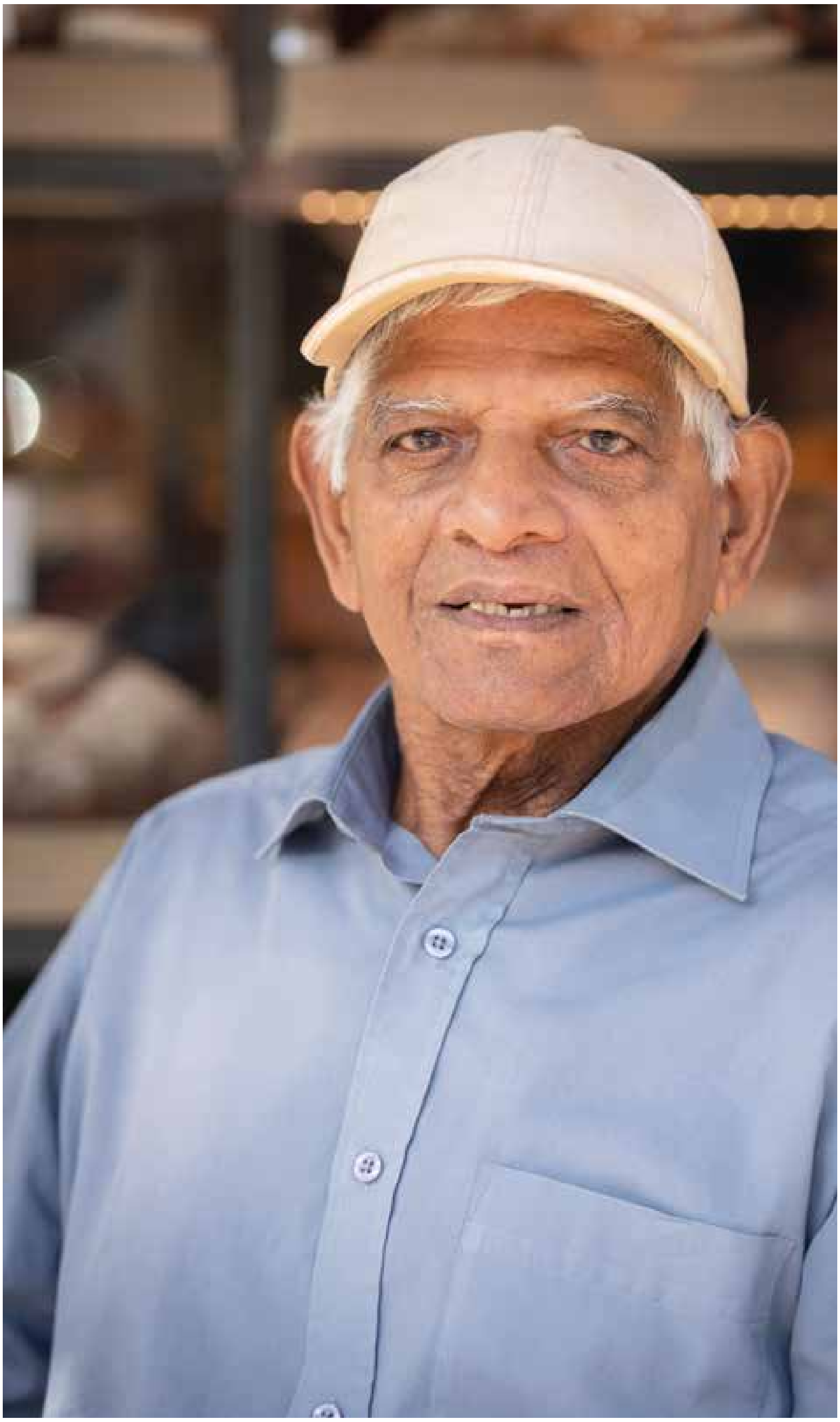
Quick read

Lal Kissoon, in London, is determined to stay as independent as he can despite his dementia diagnosis.

Lal left Trinidad to build a new life in the UK, and he's proud of educating himself and succeeding in his career.

Lal, who lives alone, finds his own ways to keep on top of things and to enjoy nature.

Resonate Arts, a local charity, has helped Lal to continue drawing on his experience and knowledge.



Photographs: Nathan Clarke

> **My target is to live to 100. I'm living my own life. Every day I write a list so I know to go to the bank, go shopping, meet a friend.**

When Lal Kissoon was a 15-year-old in Trinidad, he knew his father had planned out his future. Lal was to leave school, roll up his sleeves and get to work on the family farm, tending to the sugarcane, cocoa, coffee and rice.

The reason for this was clear, remembers Lal.

'If I worked for him, he wouldn't have to employ an outsider and pay them $2 a day.'

Lal, born Laltchan, had his own ideas. He did leave school and worked on the farm, but he saved his wages, bought a bicycle and rode to evening classes to improve his education.

'I wanted to find a job outside of the farm, but I couldn't find one where we lived,' Lal explains.

He applied for a passport, and by the time he was 21 he'd earned enough to pay the 300 Trinidad dollar fare for the ship to bring him to London – over £1,000 in today's money.

Now 83, he shows the same drive and determination in dealing with a dementia diagnosis as he did as a young man leaving his family, travelling across the world to build a new life.

'Dementia doesn't frighten me,' he explains. 'I plan to live until I'm 100.'

Busy life

When young Lal first arrived in London, he met with friends who gave him somewhere to stay until he could find work, plus thick clothes. Lal had never heard of cold weather until his journey to the UK.

He found work in a garage, cleaning and painting cars, then decided he wanted to work inside, not in the cold open air, and successfully applied for a job at a book publisher, parceling up orders.

After this he went to work for the post office in the very centre of London, first as a postman, then behind a counter in one of the capital's grandest roads, Wimpole Street.

'Whenever I went for a job, they gave it to me,' says Lal looking back.

He remembers how busy life was in the central post offices he was billeted to, in Marble Arch, Baker Street, Oxford Circus and other famous locations.

'You had a lot of money in your till, and at the end of the day you had to balance your account.

'It was a tough job dealing with savings accounts and people posting all over the world. I met people I'd seen on television and it was such a pleasure to serve them.

'These were the days before computers, and our bosses knew us and how well we worked. They trusted us. We were polite and we were honest. They knew if we made a mistake, it was a genuine error.'

Centre of the world

Lal carried on studying at evening classes to improve his qualifications, and he worked hard to fit in.

Despite living here in the 1960s, Lal says he never experienced racial prejudice to his face.

'I never tried to walk over people. I avoided bad conversations. If something difficult started to develop, I didn't let things escalate. No one saw me as their enemy.'

At one stage Lal decided to go back to Trinidad to farm sugarcane, but then realised London was where he wanted to be. It felt like the centre of the world.

He returned and applied to the library service in the City of Westminster. For the rest of his career he worked in London libraries, finishing as a manager.

He couldn't be more proud of the way he educated himself and succeeded in his career.

Independence

Lal had an arranged marriage, and he and his wife Jean had two children, now in their 40s, and they have two grandchildren. Although the marriage broke down a long time ago, Lal sees benefits in living on his own.

He has arthritis, and in his early 60s he was told to take early retirement.

'If I was still with Jean, I would be sitting back with arthritis and going, "Bring me a coffee," or, "Bring me lunch."

'I wouldn't be exercising, and I'd get worse. Because I live alone, I have to look after myself. I do my own cooking, shopping and washing.'

Several years ago, Lal was also diagnosed with dementia after some warning signs – he saw someone and couldn't remember their name, then forgot where he'd seen something.

Lal responded with independence and confidence.

'When I forget something, I think and think, and eventually the memory clicks. I tell myself I must do it. Your body reacts according to what you think and what you tell yourself. Otherwise you will sink.'

Close to nature

Lal is determined that dementia won't stop him living a full life.

'My target is to live to 100. I'm living my own life. Every day I write a list so I know to go to the bank, go shopping, meet a friend.

'I write everything in order and start my list. My day is a successful day. I never go to bed and think, "I forgot to do something."'

He lives by himself but doesn't feel alone. Lal spent his early life with plants and animals and feels close to nature.

'We all enjoy the same sunlight, the same energy, the same rain and darkness. We all have our own little way of living, but we live together. They are all our neighbours, and we should know them all.

'So many of the trees and plants produce things for us to eat. We should be friendly with them because they are the mother and father, providing food for us. Sometimes I look at a tree and, if just one branch is waving in the breeze, I think it is waving at me, welcoming me as a friend.

'I have worked out that a year in the life of a tree is equal to one of our days. We get up in the morning, get dressed, do our work, and get undressed in the evening. The trees grow their leaves in the spring, grow their flowers and fruit, then shed their leaves in the autumn and it is time to sleep again. That's how much we have in common.'

Special knowledge

Resonate Arts, which produces creative activities with and for people with dementia, works with Lal. He has a close bond with its Director, Sam, who provides a willing ear for details of his philosophy of life, and his positive approach to everyday living.

'Sam helps me as a friend. We talk and I like his opinion. It makes me feel good that I've thought about something in the right way,' says Lal.

'Sam encouraged me to attend meetings, speak publicly, and express myself. He sensed that I had some special kind of knowledge and wanted to help me express it.'

Through the charity, Lal was able to participate in its Cognitive

> **I've been offered to live in a home, my children offer to bring me food. I say no. I look after myself. Life is what you make it.**

Stimulation Therapy programme at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

He later reported back to the V&A as a 'mystery shopper', describing the difficulties of finding your way from exhibit to exhibit as someone with dementia, in a bid to make things easier for visitors.

Joy from remembering

Talking to Lal, dementia never seems foremost in his mind.

'Dementia doesn't upset me,' he explains. 'When you reach a certain age, your brain starts to develop in a different way. If you tell yourself, "I must remember things," you can use your force to bring your memories back.'

For Lal, independence is key.

'I've been offered to live in a home, my children offer to bring me food. I say no. I look after myself. Life is what you make it.'

This includes reminiscing about his life up to now.

'Sometimes I sit down and think about when I drove my car all over Europe, and taking the ship across the Atlantic.

'There is so much I have done that I get such joy from remembering. There are things I can't do again but I'm so happy I've done them before.

'I have no fears for the future,' he adds. 'I will do everything I can to carry on living. I want to live an active and helpful life.

'I come from a forest in South Trinidad, where my father and my brothers grew sugarcane. Look where I ended up – in a highly responsible job in London W1, the City in Westminster.

'I feel proud of what I've achieved and I have nothing to worry about,' he says.

'When we are positive and hopeful, the world is ours.'

For our Keeping active and involved (1506) booklet, see **alzheimers.org.uk/publications** or call **0300 303 5933**.

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

Donate

Your donation helps us to support people like Lal to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible. **Donate** online.

Share and inspire

Views, updates and ideas – for and by you.

Pop Up Pottery

A new Pop Up Pottery group of people with dementia and carers in Guisborough, North Yorkshire shared pictures from their first session. Kirsty Flynn, Dementia Adviser at the Society, said, 'The session was amazing, everyone loved being so hands-on and learning a new skill. Jason from Westgate Pottery was an excellent teacher and is looking forward to our other sessions.'

Training and partnerships: have your say

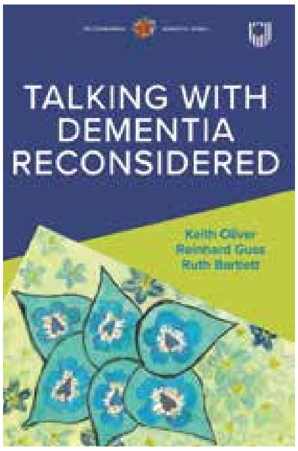
Are you interested in joining a panel of people to help Alzheimer's Society's work with partner organisations?

We work with a range of partners to improve the support that's available for people affected by dementia. This can include organisations helping us improve our services, people running their own Singing for the Brain groups and the training we provide others.

People with dementia and carers on our Training and Partnerships panel meet monthly online for one hour. They look at who we're partnering with, how they can involve people with lived experience, and the dementia training that we offer.

Email **partnerships.operations@alzheimers.org.uk** to find out more about joining this year's panel, or register your interest to take part in next year's.

Share your views, feedback and news – email **magazine@alzheimers.org.uk** or write to the address on p2. We can consider contributions received by 3 July for the August/September issue (wording may be edited).



Talking with Dementia Reconsidered

A new book shares insights from in-depth conversations with 15 people who have dementia, relating their real-life experiences to the latest research and academic thinking.

Keith Oliver, Society Ambassador and the book's lead author, said, 'While I have been fortunate to listen to and to read the wise and knowledgeable words of professionals and academics on the subject of dementia, there is no substitute for the authentic, honest words of lived experience.

'The conversations with "the Fifteen" (as our contributors became known collectively), while all unique and different, also revealed elements of common ground.'

Talking with Dementia Reconsidered is the sixth title in Open University Press's Reconsidering Dementia series, co-edited by Keith and Professor Dawn Brooker.

The series updates and expands on the late Tom Kitwood's landmark 1997 book about person-centred care, Dementia Reconsidered. Other books in the series look at dementia in areas ranging from psychotherapy to leisure.

See www.mheducation.co.uk/reconsidering-dementia-series for more about the series.

Let your voice soar!

You're invited to join Homechoir, the popular online choir, in its special Sing and Send project to raise funds for Alzheimer's Society.

In free online sessions on YouTube, Homechoir's conductor Ben England will teach you to sing and record Fly Me to the Moon, made famous by Frank Sinatra and Count Basie.

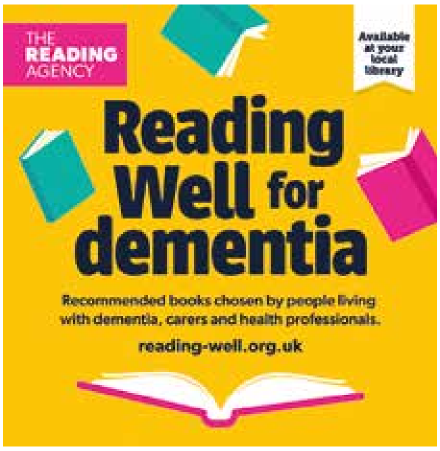
You don't need any singing experience – Ben will teach you the main tune note by note. If you've sung in choirs before, you can also sing and record the optional soprano, alto, tenor or bass harmony lines.

All you need is a pair of headphones to listen to the session and a voice-recording app on a smartphone to record yourself singing.

Ben will teach the song live online on 26 June at 2pm. Then on 10 July at 2pm, sing and record along with him. Don't worry if you can't make those times – the sessions are recorded so you can catch up and record any time before the end of July.

All recordings sent to Homechoir will be mixed by audio engineers for a final performance, which will premiere online on World Alzheimer's Day, 21 September.

It's free to take part, since it's been funded by a Homechoir member in memory of a loved one, though of course donations are very welcome. Find out more about taking part and donating at **www.homechoir.org/sing-and-send**



Reading Well booklist

The Reading Agency has launched a new booklist for people with dementia and their carers, family and friends called Reading Well for dementia.

The booklist is free to access and is expertly curated by people with real-life experience and others.

It includes 20 titles in England and 21 in Wales, with essential information, personal accounts and practical advice. It also includes books to help children make sense of it all.

You can access the collection through public libraries in England and Wales, and many titles are also available in ebook and audio formats – see **www.reading-well.org.uk**

Puzzle it out

See p38 for a new 'anagramword' from Pete Middleton, who has holidays on his mind.

Scam smart

Pete Middleton, in Northamptonshire, tells us how he was targeted by scammers to help stop it from happening to others.

For help in spotting a scam or to report a fraud, call Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** or visit **www.actionfraud.police.uk**

Earlier this year, scammers cleaned out my current account. They tried to clean out my savings account too.

I've been in IT for 40 years and also in the police force. So, I am pretty switched on when it comes to scams. But even I was conned.

Trust

I had a phone call from a gentleman who claimed to be from the Barclays Bank fraud department. He told me he was investigating fraud by members of the fraud team.

He said he needed my help to catch them, so immediately I wanted to help. But my suspicions were aroused.

I said to him, 'How do I know you are who you say you are?' He told me he knew that I'd received a new bank card a few days before.

I decided to hang up and ring the number on the back of my card, using my landline this time.

I was transferred to the same person, and I honestly believed I was talking to the real McCoy.

Sophisticated

He asked me to transfer £2,500. I said I didn't have that much, but I did have about £1,800.

He told me that if Barclays' fraud team rang me, I should tell them it was for my aunt. So that's what I did. I thought I was helping somebody catch a thief, but I was helping the thief.

They shouldn't have asked me to transfer money. But I wasn't thinking. I was only thinking, 'How can I help?'. They got me through my altruism.

Help

After about an hour, it occurred to me that there was something fishy.

I phoned Action Fraud and they urged me to phone the Barclays fraud line. The bank confirmed that I'd been the victim of a scam and put a block on it.

Action Fraud were great. They explained the next steps to me and how I might get my money back.

Barclays reimbursed me in full and as soon as I told them that I was living with dementia, they put a flag on my account and took extra care to look after me.

Vulnerable

I felt vulnerable again, especially with my dementia. Things were going well, and I was doing things independently. Then suddenly I had to tell my wife I had cleared out the bank account. It was an awful feeling.

My advice to people would be, you're only human. If you get scammed it's because the scammers are preying on your goodwill. Don't be ashamed – learn from it and pass the word around so that other people don't fall for it.

Just mentioning scams every now and then keeps it on people's minds. The next time they open an email or answer the phone, they'll be on their guard.

Voices of impact

Geoff Mock, a campaigner who lives with dementia, shares his experience influencing decision-makers in Cardiff.

During Dementia Action Week in May, I attended a Cardiff event and spoke to Members of the Senedd (elected representatives of the Welsh Parliament) about my experience with dementia.

We shared our hopes for the future of dementia care in Wales by adding our thoughts to a memory tree, so decision-makers could see and understand the hope that we all hold for a better future for people living with dementia.

I also had the chance to share my story with the people who have the power to change things.

Waning funds

For years, I dedicated myself to improving my and others' understanding of dementia, working as a conflict management training specialist in care homes.

Everyone should be supported to feel safe and secure in their home, but as funding waned in the social care system, so did the availability of essential training.

Delays and obstacles

In 2021, I started to experience symptoms which made me question my mental health. My brain was like a computer that kept shutting down.

I reached out for medical help but encountered delays and obstacles at every turn. The system I'd proudly been a part of had let me down.

Despite initial scans suggesting I'd unknowingly had a stroke, I was left waiting for five months with no answers or support. Eventually, I received a diagnosis of dementia.

For me, the diagnosis brought me clarity and understanding after being in the dark for so long.

Hitting home

Having the opportunity to talk to the people who make decisions about dementia diagnosis and care in Wales truly meant a lot to me.

When you share real stories of how the lack of funding and attention dementia gets impacts your life, it starts to hit home. I can see they are beginning to realise why we're calling for dementia to be made a priority.

No one should be left forgotten like I was, forced to chase tests and doctors at an already scary time.

Everyone deserves an early diagnosis and the support they need from day one.

Left: Jayne Bryant, Minister for Mental Health, talking to Mike Symmonds, who has dementia, at the Cardiff event. Above: Geoff relaxing with music.

Join our call

If more of us speak up we can make them listen, and they'll have to take action. Join our call by becoming a campaigner today – visit **alzheimers.org.uk/campaign**

Going on holiday

Tips about planning a vacation – from readers, Dementia Voice partners and Dementia Support Forum members.

Holiday planning involves many decisions – where to go, how long to stay, how to get there and what to do once you're there.

Dementia affects people in different ways, and we're all very different anyway in our preferences and how we deal with things.

Thinking ahead to each aspect of travelling, if there are things that would feel different now, what could help you to have a good holiday?

Plans and ideas

Would visiting a favourite place take some pressure off, perhaps revisiting good memories too? If a new destination calls, is there somewhere suitable nearby you'd like to use as a base? Or perhaps you'd prefer a totally new experience?

A shorter trip could be less tiring – physically and mentally. Day trips add variety without having to stay over somewhere unfamiliar.

What would help you prepare – plenty of time to plan, 'to do' lists, tasks in a calendar? Could you go over plans with someone else, perhaps reviewing them later?

There and back

How will the journey feel – would you want more things with you to keep occupied and comfortable? Could you give yourself more time or travel off-peak, so you feel less rushed?

For accommodation, a quieter room or location may give you a place to recharge between activities.

Whether you'd previously visit every sight within miles or spend days on the same beach, what would you actually enjoy doing now?

Your tips

'Have your destination and a phone contact written down to take with you. Also something that is familiar, like a bag, a favourite item of clothing or magazine.

'If travelling alone, make sure there are clear arrangements in advance about who and where someone is meeting you and how they will know who you are.' **Jennifer Bute**

'Forward planning! I'm off on a week's holiday in Wales next month. I'll be driving myself.

'I have done some serious study about what to expect on the route, the accommodation and the itinerary, and now I'm confident that I can relax and enjoy the adventure.' **Pete Middleton**

'We carried on going on cruises because that's what we'd done for years. Roy was used to going on the ship, going for meals etc.

'It's an easy holiday because you're in one room for however long you're there, and once you've unpacked everything is there.

'You can end up doing less than you would have done in the past, such as going on shore. But there's lots to see and do on the ship, and the staff are very patient, very helpful.

'I'm going on my own on the next one, but we've had lovely cruises together up to now, with lots of memories.' **Wendy Weeden**

People with first-hand experience help shape our work through Dementia Voice – visit **alzheimers.org.uk/involvement** to find out more.

Dementia Support Forum is free and open 24/7 – see **forum.alzheimers.org.uk**

Visit **alzheimers.org.uk/publications** or please call **0300 303 5933** for our Going on holiday when a person has dementia (474) factsheet.

More than politicians

Philip Angrave says writing to your MP isn't the only way to make dementia a priority in your local area.

One way to influence change is by speaking to MPs. But there are other ways to help make dementia a priority within the health system.

I've been contacting local decision-makers in Kent to help improve health care for people with dementia in my area.

New role

I worked in the NHS for over 40 years and was a lecturer for more than 20 years, teaching undergraduate nurses and doctors.

I had to step back from my role in education after being diagnosed with Lewy body dementia. I'm now part of several groups trying to make a difference for people with the condition.

I want to have clarity on the health and social care strategy for people with dementia in my area, and I want to know how they have their voice heard.

I also want to know how future professionals are educated about dementia, people like nurses but also the police.

Local decisions

I'm approaching my local integrated care board (ICB) to try and find answers to these questions, and I encourage others to do the same.

ICBs were set up in 2022 across England and are responsible for managing the local NHS budget and meeting local health needs. They're meant to make care more joined up by bringing services together.

After working in the health service for over 40 years, I believe we need to speak to those who control the finances and make decisions if we're going to see any change in dementia care.

Work together

Even though members of the public can't take part in ICB meetings, we can ask to attend as observers or see a record of a meeting.

We can ask board members about how local people with dementia are being cared for.

I think it's beneficial for people to engage with not just their MPs, but people on ICBs, governors of local health trusts and councillors. They actually decide where the money is going.

It's not about being aggressive or demanding, it's about working with these decision-makers.

You could also ask who the dementia champion is at your GP practice, council or NHS trust. That way, you will know who to speak to. If there isn't one, ask them why.

Don't give up

It can be disheartening if you don't hear back from local representatives, or if they don't give you the answer you expected.

Don't give up, just keep going. You are an expert by experience and should be listened to.

Have a strategy for what it is you want to achieve when you're asking questions.

The beauty of doing this online or via email is that it's free, so you can ask as many questions as you like!

Ask the question again or be more specific if you get fobbed off.

Hear more from Philip in our latest magazine podcast, out in early June. See alzheimers.org.uk/podcast or find Alzheimer's Society on your podcast app.

Be a campaigner

Visit alzheimers.org.uk/campaign to find out how you can make positive change for people affected by dementia and be the first to know about new campaigns.

Research: Combining forces

We need research into all types of dementia – including dementia with Lewy bodies and Parkinson's disease dementia.

John-Paul and Sarah at COBALT

About one in 10 people with dementia have dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB), where tiny clumps of proteins (known as Lewy bodies) build up in brain cells.

People with Parkinson's disease also have Lewy bodies, and around a third of them eventually develop Parkinson's disease dementia (PDD).

A new trial called COBALT is looking for people with DLB or PDD to see if using two drugs together could help improve their symptoms.

Professor John-Paul Taylor at Newcastle University, COBALT Chief Investigator, says, 'Despite being the second most common form of late life dementia, DLB and PDD are under-recognised and under-diagnosed, and there have been few largescale clinical trials to date.'

Related and complex

'DLB and PDD are related and complex illnesses,' says Sarah Dunn, COBALT Senior Trial Manager.

'Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (AChEIs) are a type of commonly used medication that can help people with DLB and PDD, by improving their ability to think and day-to-day functioning.

'Another drug that might help is memantine, which is used to treat moderate to severe confusion in Alzheimer's disease, and may help to improve memory, awareness and the ability to perform daily functions.

'The aim of the COBALT trial is to find out if adding memantine to their current AChEI treatment improves overall health and functioning for people with DLB or PDD.'

Two in one

Sarah notes how COBALT is essentially two separate trials in one.

'Previous research into memantine has looked at both DLB and PDD together,' she says, 'but as there can be differences between these two types of dementia, we think that it's important to look at them separately.

'Another unique element of the COBALT trial is that it is also being carried out in Australia. The information collected from Australian participants will be looked at together with the information we gather from participants in the UK.'

Like all research trials, COBALT relies on people volunteering to take part.

'We are currently in the recruitment phase of the COBALT trial,' says Sarah. 'To date we have recruited 77 participants with DLB and PDD, the aim being to recruit 300 overall.'

Participants take either the study drugs or a placebo (a 'dummy drug') for a year, with three visits during that time at a local research hospital or at home.

Vital involvement

'Conducting research – in particular clinical trials – in dementia is difficult,' says John-Paul. 'However the rewards are potentially enormous, given how few treatments there are at present.

'We are beginning to see a wave of clinical trial activity with new potentially exciting treatments being tested for dementia. Vital to this will be involving people living with dementia and their families so they can be fully part of this.'

Angela Holland, Senior Research Nurse at Devon Partnership NHS Trust, says, 'We want to ensure that we are offering our patients as many opportunities as possible to participate in dementia trials that will help to improve patient care and inform treatment guidelines.

'COBALT has the potential to help understand and improve the treatment pathway for people with DLB and PDD.'

Katy Seedhouse and Sarah Edgar at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust agree.

'It has felt really positive to be part of a research study,' says Katy, Clinical Research Co-ordinator.

'I have seen the impact that these types of dementia can have, adds Sarah, Clinical Research Nurse, 'and I'm delighted to work towards finding new treatments that can be offered to help people living with these conditions.'

Find out how you can get involved in all kinds of dementia research. Call 0333 150 3456 and ask for the Join Dementia Research helpdesk, or email joindementiaresearch@alzheimers.org.uk

Connection points

Finding changes that are common to different types of dementia could point to similar ways of treating them.

For Chris Henstridge at the University of Dundee, his interest in dementia began as purely academic – but that changed.

'I initially got involved in dementia research through my scientific fascination with the brain,' he says.

'As I gained more knowledge on the healthy workings of the brain, I became intrigued by the processes that go wrong in conditions such as Alzheimer's.

'However, as my research developed, several of my family members were diagnosed with different forms of dementia. This cemented my drive to understand the underlying brain changes that were causing their struggles.

'Support from Alzheimer's Society has enabled a gear change in my research.

'By awarding five years of funding, I can now implement more ambitious research plans and, importantly, hire new young researchers to help direct it.'

Treating all types

Ultimately, Chris and his team hope to discover a way to treat all types of dementia.

'We are looking at common features across dementias to see if there are opportunities to slow or stop their progression.

'We know that, in virtually every form of dementia, the connection points between brain cells (synapses) become damaged and this results in the loss of brain cells.

'However synapses can be repaired, so if we can find ways to do this in dementia, we may be able to stop the condition before it progresses to irreversible brain cell loss.'

Donated brain tissue

Chris's research relies on the brain tissue that people agree to donate to brain banks after their death (see **brainbanknetwork.ac.uk/public**).

'We are currently performing detailed analysis of donated human brains to reveal how the synapses have changed,' he says.

'We are then going to use several different model systems to understand why the synapses change and to uncover ways we might be able to prevent those changes.

'Everything we do in the model systems is supported by the human brain work. This ensures we are focused on experiments that are directly relevant to the human condition.'

Similar changes

Chris's team has already made important discoveries in Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia and motor neurone disease.

'Whilst these three conditions may at first glance seem very different, they share some common symptoms related to problems with movement and thinking skills. They also show some similar changes in the brain, including loss of synapses.

'We are currently investigating if those synapse changes are the same or different in each condition, in the hope we can find ways to treat all of them.'

Chris also hopes to identify changes in the blood that could lead to a quick and simple test, for faster and more accurate diagnosis of dementia.

Huge impact

Chris's message for Alzheimer's Society's supporters is clear.

'Research is our route to treatment, however funding for dementia research is not where it needs to be.

'Your donations have, and will continue to have, a huge impact on what we do and for that we, the researchers, are very grateful.'

Donate

Your donation helps us to fund research into all forms of dementia, from prevention to breakthrough drug treatments. Donate online.

Real world challenge

The Blood Biomarker Challenge aims to revolutionise dementia diagnosis on the NHS. Anita Goundry and Tom Lawless interview two of its lead researchers.

Quick read

Two people affected by dementia spoke to lead researchers from the Blood Biomarker Challenge.

Through the five-year challenge, two teams will see how the NHS can use blood tests to revolutionise dementia diagnosis.

They're looking at how tests for various 'biomarkers' can help in real-world situations like memory clinics.

The teams will find out what tests can be rolled out to make the biggest difference to people's lives.

Within five years, two research teams will see how the NHS can improve dementia diagnosis by using blood tests for various 'biomarkers'.

Anita Goundry, who lives in County Durham with young-onset Alzheimer's and vascular dementia, and Tom Lawless, a Research Network volunteer in Dorset, interviewed lead researchers from each Blood Biomarker Challenge team.

They spoke to Professor Vanessa Raymont from READ-OUT and Professor Jonathan Schott from ADAPT. READ-OUT includes Dementias Platform UK researchers at Oxford and Cambridge universities and is looking at tests for a range of types of dementia. ADAPT, at University College London, is focusing on the most promising biomarker for Alzheimer's.

The Blood Biomarker Challenge is a multimillion pound award from Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer's Research UK, the National Institute for Health and Research, and Gates Ventures, including £5 million raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Anita: During the next five years, who'll be prioritised to receive the blood tests you're investigating? Will people who have a family history of dementia be able to get tested?

Vanessa: One of the drivers is to get more data around blood biomarker levels in a real world population. That means we're primarily targeting people attending a memory clinic, so they will already have a level of suspected memory impairment. They may or may not have a family history.

We want to make sure that we gather information from as broad a population as possible. These biomarkers look like they're pretty good. What we lack is data about how well testing for them works in certain ethnic groups, the very elderly and people who have other medical problems, like kidney disease.

So we're going to be quite inclusive, but it will mostly be people who are attending memory clinics.

Anita: After you've established which tests will work, who will benefit from them – especially since we don't yet have treatments that can help everyone?

Jonathan: The idea is that they would be rolled out to anybody who might benefit. We know from research that there's enormous value in a diagnosis, even if there are no specific treatments.

People who are worried about objective problems want to know what the cause is. It's very different to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease than being told that you have memory problems, but that the cause is uncertain.

We want to allow people as much certainty as we can, so they can plan and get access to treatments, clinical trials and appropriate support.

We're all excited about new treatments coming down the block – we're making unbelievable progress. We need to prepare the NHS to be able to deliver these.

Clockwise from top-left: Anita, Tom, Jonathan and Vanessa.

Tom: How can you be sure what levels of biomarkers mean a person is likely to have dementia?

Vanessa: We are focused on people who have some level of objective impairment of their cognition and memory. We are not saying that these tests are at a point where we do them on their own, or use them to screen the general population.

Often you're detecting quite low levels, and you have to draw some type of line where you say this person likely has a disease or they don't. What these projects will do is help define where those lines are in different groups of people.

But to diagnose dementia, you have to have a whole load of other information. A brain scan and other tests to establish there's nothing else going on that could be causing some of those problems. And a proper assessment to establish how bad your memory is, how much of it is affecting your day-to-day life, and other things that could be affecting that, like anxiety or depression.

Jonathan: The blood tests are trying to rule in or rule out the presence of abnormal brain proteins which are associated with these illnesses. As Vanessa says, you don't make a diagnosis based on this alone, it's taken in the correct clinical context.

Tom: During these studies, how quickly will you share a person's blood test results?

Jonathan: People coming to a memory service who want to take part in the ADAPT study will give a sample of blood and do some questionnaires. They'll then return to see their memory clinic at three months and 12 months.

At three months, half of the people will be selected at random. Their doctor will get the blood test result, and we'll interpret it and feed it back to that patient as they see fit. The other half will receive it at 12 months.

So we will be able to do a completely fair comparison of whether giving the blood test result early increases the diagnosis rate early, and whether that impacts on what other tests are provided, as well as how it's viewed by patients and clinicians.

Vanessa: READ-OUT has a first stage where we're collecting lots of data on a range of biomarkers for not only Alzheimer's dementia but Lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia and so on.

For the last two years, we'll be doing a trial similar to the one ADAPT is doing. The difference is that we will be comparing people who get their biomarker status two weeks after the blood test and those who do not get it at all.

Both projects will also be gathering data about the health economic impact of getting your biomarker status. We're already working with commissioners of local services to work out what that needs to look like, so that hopefully these tests can be rolled out very quickly afterwards.

Find out more about Alzheimer's Society research into the cause, cure, care and prevention of dementia – see alzheimers.org.uk/research

Bringing music home

Music in Hospitals & Care shares the joy and benefits of live music with the places that need it most. Kim Jones finds out more.

Quick read

Music in Hospitals & Care shares live music with care homes, day centres, hospices and other settings.

At a care home in Abergavenny, a flautist and harpist had residents entranced with their exquisite performance.

They specially select music that will help engage people with dementia and unlock precious memories.

Care home staff can see the music's impact on residents, and also get valuable insights into their lives and interests.

The sweet and mellow sounds from a harp and flute fill the room with Mozart's 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik', and the audience is entranced.

While some sit motionless, eyes closed, others smile and tap their hands together in time to the music. Yet others raise and gently sway their arms, as if conducting an orchestra.

When the music changes, a few mouth the lyrics to ballads from their past like 'Danny Boy' and 'Scarborough Fair'. At one point, an audience member dances elegantly around the floor to a waltz.

Residents at Belmont Residential Care Home in Abergavenny, south-east Wales, are being treated to exquisite live music from flautist Catherine Handley and harpist Eleri Darkins.

The duo are just two of over 300 professional musicians, chosen for their musical talent, sensitivity and people skills, to work with the charity Music in Hospitals & Care.

Moments of connection

Music in Hospitals & Care celebrated its 75th anniversary last year. It brings interactive live music to people in hospitals, hospices, day centres, special schools and care homes all over the UK.

Its goal? Not only to share joy through live music, but also to enhance health and wellbeing, and to create moments of meaningful connection for people living with dementia.

Musicians select songs that are specifically designed to help engage people with dementia and unlock precious memories.

'We play a diverse range of music, so we can try to reach as many people as possible,' says harpist Eleri. 'So we'll typically choose a mix of classical pieces and traditional tunes, songs people might have sung as a child at school, or hymns from church or chapel, tunes from musicals and popular hits from the past by artists like Tom Jones, Elvis Presley and Petula Clarke.'

Research has shown how live music in care settings can help decrease levels of agitation and increase wellbeing for people living with dementia.

Impact and insights

Belmont Care Home manager Jo Griffiths and activity co-ordinator Sandie Newman have witnessed these impacts firsthand.

Photographs: Alistair Heap

‘Our residents to get real benefits from the sessions,’ says Jo.

‘They’re calm and engaged through an hourlong concert with no restlessness.

‘Even those who are usually asleep a lot or who don’t interact much can become alert and interested, showing expressions of happiness.

‘One lady who typically dislikes communal activities is always happy to sit and listen, and is the first to applaud after each piece. And another likes to dance.

‘It’s an emotional experience for us, as their caregivers, to witness different sides to our residents like this, to catch glimpses of and insights into their past lives. It all helps to strengthen the bond we have with them.’

Sandie agrees, ‘We learn a lot about the people we care for through the music sessions.

‘One lady surprised us all by singing the words to a John Denver song word-perfect, and we subsequently discovered from her family that she used to run a John Denver fan club as a younger woman.

‘Instances like these really help us establish a connection. I now know that whenever I bring up John Denver in conversation with her, she’ll be fully engaged.’

Individual engagement

Back at the live session, flautist Catherine moves around the residents as she plays, engaging with them individually.

Sandie goes from person to person, taking their hands and swaying them softly to ‘Amazing Grace’, singing along and encouraging anyone who wants to join in. A resident expresses interest in playing the harp, and Eleri gladly agrees.

Sandie says she’s often surprised at the incredible way in which music affects the residents.

‘It can calm them or energise them, and I’ve seen some cry with emotion too,’ she says.

What’s also remarkable is how it can elicit a reaction from someone who might have been unresponsive for days.

‘The music plays and it reaches them – it rekindles a spark in their eyes. That’s the power of it.’

For more about Music in Hospitals & Care, visit **www.mihc.org.uk** or call **01932 260810.**

Find a Singing for the Brain group near you or learn how to start your own – visit **alzheimers.org.uk/singingforthebrain**

For The activities handbook (77AC), see **alzheimers.org.uk/publications** or call **0300 303 5933**.

Consumer panel: Lifelike pets

People living with dementia tell us what they think of a range of products designed to be pet companions.

We visited a group of people living with dementia in Hereford to show them currently available lifelike pets, along with some new products that are still being developed by Ravencourt Living.

Precious Petzzz

There's a wide range of Precious Petzzz cats and dogs of various colours and breeds.

They all provide a lifelike pet that feels like it's breathing. Precious Petzzz don't move or make a noise, and their strokable fur and peaceful sleeping are designed to provide comfort and reassurance. Each comes with its own bed.

Mike and Sue liked how realistic the dog and cat that we brought to the group both were, giving them '10/10 for looks'.

Although Jane thought they looked good, she expected more from a pet herself.

'They're very cute but don't do much,' she said.

Brenda and Chris agreed they were realistic, but also weren't inspired to pick them up and engage with them.

This probably reflects that they might be more suitable for someone with more advanced dementia, who may get a lot more from simply stroking them.

The cost – £24.95 including VAT – went down well.

'That's a good price,' said Mike.

Robotic companions

The group also tried out two robotic companion pets – a black and white cat and a golden pup. These have built-in sensors that mean they respond to touch, sound and motion in realistic ways.

Jane liked how mobile, vocal and interactive the cat was.

'The purring gives life,' she said, 'and the meowing reminds you of its presence.'

She thought it would be good to have videos of the cat moving on the website so you can get a better idea of what it does.

The cat's appearance reminded Jane of a pet she used to have, and she could imagine this one sat on her settee at home.

Although Brenda and Chris were less convinced the pets were for them, they thought they could help a person at a later stage of dementia.

In development

We also showed the group two cats – one white and one ginger – and a breathing dog. These were all prototypes from Ravencourt, so it was an ideal opportunity to have an immediate impact on how they're developed.

The breathing dog has a heartbeat and gets warmer as you hold it.

While Mike and Sue noted that the dog didn't look so realistic, they could see its benefits.

'Perfect for when feeling anxious,' they said. 'The warmth of the dog can be soothing too, having a similar effect to a hot water bottle.'

Brenda and Chris agreed, 'It would be warm and calming. And it's a great idea the cover being washable.'

The cats, which move and purr, were also a hit with Sue.

'If my mum was still alive,' she said, 'I would have bought one. She always wanted a ginger cat.

'It would be nice to have eye lids to go to sleep. The occasional movement of the tail is really nice.'

Although he has hearing difficulties, Howard could still feel the cat purring.

However, Brenda and Chris thought the cats looked 'angry', and the group agreed their blue LED eyes were too bright. Ravencourt have confirmed they'll be making the cat's eyes yellow and less bright so they look more natural.

Howard liked that the prototypes were all rechargeable, and the expected prices – with VAT relief, £160 for Marmalade the cat and £40 for Berty the breathing dog – felt fair compared to the costs of a real pet.

'I had a vet bill that cost the same as this cat last week,' he said, 'and this is a one-off payment.'

'It would be interesting to see if they can have a physical effect on health, heartrates and blood pressure like real animals,' added Mike.

Win
See p39

From top: Precious Petzzz cat and dog, Robotic companion pet cat, Robotic companion pet pup and Berty the breathing dog.

Visit our online shop at shop.alzheimers.org.uk or call 0333 366 0035 for these and many other helpful products:

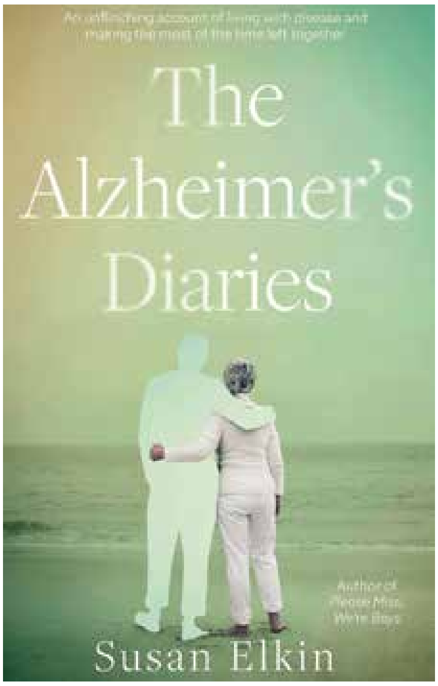
- Precious Petzzz in a range of colours and breeds – £24.95 each including VAT.
- Robotic companion pet cats in black and white, orange tabby or silver tabby – £124 each including VAT.
- Robotic companion pet pups, golden or freckled – £139 each including VAT.

These Precious Petzzz and robotic companion pets aren't eligible for VAT relief. However, Marmalade the cat and Berty the breathing dog from Ravencourt will be eligible for VAT relief and available soon.

People living with dementia, and anyone purchasing on their behalf, can buy many specially designed products VAT free, saving 20%. Tick the box stating that you're eligible for VAT relief at checkout.

Book group:
The Alzheimer's Diaries

We read an account by a journalist of her late husband's Alzheimer's, originally published as a blog.



The Alzheimer's Diaries, by Susan Elkin (Book Guild 2022), 368 pages, £9.99 (prices vary), ISBN 9781915352293. Also available as an ebook.

Susan Elkin has written over 50 books, but perhaps none more personal than The Alzheimer's Diaries.

Her husband Nicholas was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2017 and Susan's book charts the progression of the disease up until his death in 2019.

Susan describes how Alzheimer's – which she calls Ms Alzheimer's throughout the book – affected the man she loves.

Unflinching

Donna Stephens, in Hampshire, says the author doesn't shy away from describing the effects of Alzheimer's on her husband and their relationship – both the good moments and the bad.

'Susan personifies the disease as Ms Alzheimer's, "a hideous, be-fanged, brain-eating monster" and the third person in their relationship,' Donna says.

'Susan doesn't shy away from describing with searing honesty the terrible destruction of her once vibrant life partner, and writes with such poignancy of the small but desperately sad losses of her life with her husband of over 50 years.

'Susan has a sharp journalist's eye for detail.

'The minutiae of a diminishing life offers the reader the chance to share tiny drops of joy when they still connect with each other in a shared, witty family joke, or little drops of pure sadness when Nicholas, a lifelong "classical music geek" tells Susan, "I don't seem to be interested in anything like that anymore." Classical music was always part of the glue which bound their marriage.'

Lighter moments

Donna says, 'I found heart-rending parallels with current contributors to the Society's Dementia Support Forum, who describe similar losses, with partners (or parents) losing little bits of themselves.

'Another parallel to the forum is the dark humour that pervades the book, the balance of lighter moments amongst the darkest despair, that makes this a compelling read.

'An example of this for me is when one of her sons, on Dad-sitting exercises, offers Nick a ginger biscuit and he tries to put a battery in it.

'It's finding humour in tragedy that keeps many going.'

Sharon Haggerty agrees.

'I wasn't sure what to expect or how the book would make me feel,' she says, 'I was expecting it to be doom and gloom but how wrong I was.

'In a strange way, I was reading about an awful disease, yet at the end of the book my spirits were lifted, and I felt very positive for the first time in ages.'

Encouraging

Marion Chapman in Surrey says that, despite the serious subject matter, the book is easy to read.

'The author pulls no punches describing Ms A living with them,' Marion says, 'and it's aimed at the partner or carer rather than the person with Alzheimer's, who isn't likely to want to read about someone else's decline and difficulties.

> **“I found heart-rending parallels with current contributors to the Society’s Dementia Support Forum, who describe similar losses, with partners (or parents) losing little bits of themselves.”**

‘Having said that, it’s very much the personal diary of the carer, and I did feel at times it was all about how busy her life was.

‘I know you need to keep your own identity and life, and that is why I would recommend this book to someone who has a partner or parent with a diagnosis, to encourage them to keep their identity rather than become subsumed into the caring role at the expense of everything else.’

‘I felt encouraged rather than discouraged about how to live with Ms A.’

Honest

Sally from Leicestershire praised the honesty in the book.

‘Susan Elkin calls a spade a spade and describes her practical, no-nonsense approach to dealing with the arrival of Ms Alzheimer’s in her marriage,’ she says.

‘I think the honest, reflective style of this book, together with genuine laugh out loud moments, could appeal to both carers and to a broader audience.

‘My personal highlight listed a series of random comments made by the author’s husband in response to genuine questions or situations.

‘On one occasion, for instance, whilst being helped to dress, he enquires whether he is expected to bow to anyone!

‘This book could help others understand that there’s more to Alzheimer’s than a loss of memory, and that carers have to become experts in a whole range of subjects from behaviour management to mobility aids.’

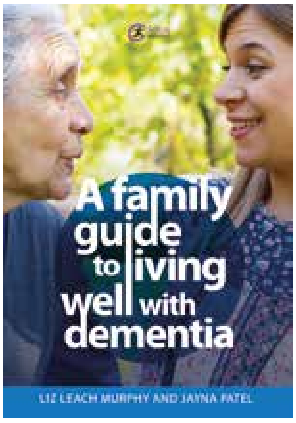
Identity

Sally thinks the book holds a valuable message for carers.

‘For us carers, an important lesson the author teaches us is to protect something of our own self-identity during our caring journey,’ she says.

‘The author manages to do this by preserving her ability to work to some degree throughout the whole experience using a creative and flexible approach to when, where and how work can be done, and bringing in as much help as possible.’

Your turn



For our next book group, we invite you to read A Family Guide to Living Well with Dementia, by Liz Leach Murphy and Jayna Patel (Critical 2023), 204 pages, £18.99 (prices vary), ISBN 9781915713063. Also available as an ebook.

Tell us what you think about this practical guide for families, co-authored by a care professional and a journalist.

Email **magazine@alzheimers.org.uk** or write to the address on p2 by the end of 5 July so we can share your comments in the August/September magazine.

Book giveaway

We have five copies of A Family Guide to Living Well with Dementia to give away – email **magazine@alzheimers.org.uk** or write to the address on p2 by the end of 16 June quoting ‘Family’ for a chance to win (see p39 for terms and conditions).

A friendly voice

Malwina Ghoorun, in London, shares why she became a Companion Call volunteer and why it's important to her.

I work for Santander, which partnered with Alzheimer's Society to become a dementia-friendly bank. I thought, 'What more can I do to be involved and to help?'

That's when I decided to start volunteering and I've been a companion caller for four years now.

Making a difference

I know Companion Calls make a difference to many people affected by dementia.

As volunteers, we play an important part in their life by listening to them and not judging them when they forget things or repeat themselves.

Thanks to regular calls, we ensure that they are well, that they have the care they need and that they don't feel lonely.

Companion Calls were particularly important during the pandemic when we couldn't see anyone. Even though I couldn't see someone smiling over the phone, I could hear it in their voice.

Every call is different

Every Companion Call is different. Some people talk about their hobbies, and others want to have a conversation with you about their day and how your week has been.

It feels like I've known some of them for years, even though we've only been talking for a few weeks!

If a person with dementia is struggling to have a conversation over the phone, I'll ask them simple questions instead. Or talk about their past.

They may have had a bad day, and it's good for them to have that space to speak to another person who isn't going to judge them and who can have a positive conversation.

Listening ear

I usually make two calls a week. It doesn't take up much of my time, but it makes a huge difference.

An hour a week is not a lot. I think more people should volunteer in this way. You don't need to travel – all you need is a phone and a listening ear.

Often it will be a carer who picks up the phone, so I get to know them too. They know they can have a break or do other things because the person they care for will be with me on the phone.

In some cases, when a person passes away, I'll try to continue talking to the carer over the phone because they need support too.

Being ourselves

Making a difference to others brings me joy.

When I've had a busy day at work and I give one of my 'companions' a call, it's like I'm in a different world. We can be ourselves and talk about anything.

I'm lucky that nobody in my family has been affected by dementia. But I have known people with dementia. Taking the time to have a conversation with a person with dementia can make a real difference.

Companion Calls are friendly, regular telephone calls for people affected by dementia. Visit **alzheimers.org.uk/companion-calls** or call **0330 333 0804** to refer yourself or someone you know.

Common goal

Caroline Nesbitt, in Grimsby, volunteered to help raise funds for the Society after caring for her mum.

Mum was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2014, just before her 80th birthday.

Everybody's dementia is different. Luckily for us, Mum still knew who we were, but she forgot what day it was and where she lived.

She thought she was living 25 or 30 years ago. So, even though she knew I was 'Caroline', she often thought I was her sister rather than her daughter.

I've got three siblings, and we were able to share the load and do just about everything Mum and Dad needed.

We would spend 40 minutes on hold to a GP only to be told we were in a queue. I don't know what people do if they don't have a family who can advocate for them. This is why support from the Society is so important.

Lifeline

Thankfully, I had my siblings to talk to when we were caring for Mum. But if I was caring alone, the calls I got from Alzheimer's Society would have been a lifeline I couldn't live without.

It was still nice to talk with someone who wasn't in the same situation as me, because I could be completely honest about things that were getting me down and get it off my chest.

I continued to get support even after Mum died. The first year of firsts without Mum was hard – the first Christmas, her birthday. So getting supportive messages really helped me.

Alzheimer's Society has become the charity that my husband and I support because of the way it supports carers. We know that by fundraising, we can help that support to continue.

Chalk and cheese

My husband and me are like chalk and cheese. I do enjoy a long walk but could happily spend the day reading a book, whereas he is very sporty and into walking and cycling.

When he decided to walk 26 miles at the North York Moors Trek26, I wanted to help in some way – even if I wasn't walking with him. So I volunteered to hand the trekkers lunch at their first checkpoint.

It was a brilliant day. Even though it was raining, everyone was all smiles. They were all there with a common goal.

The highlight for me was listening to everybody's stories and their reasons for walking such a long way. A few brought a tear to my eye.

Motivation

I fundraise because I want there to be support for carers, but also because I want dementia research to progress.

Trying to get the right balance of medication for Mum was a struggle. We tried one drug, but had to change her other medication and saw her quality of life decline rapidly – so we decided to take her off it.

I want there to be better treatment or a cure if I or anyone I know is diagnosed.

Win
See p39

Win Trek socks and a Trek26 tote bag.

Trek26 is taking place in breathtaking locations until mid-August. Take on an epic 26 or 13 mile trek, or volunteer like Caroline – see **alzheimers.org.uk/trek26** or call **0300 222 5808**.

Caring for both of us

Glenys Smith, near Bristol, tells Jessica Hubbard about some of the challenges of caring for her husband Ralph, and how she takes care of her own wellbeing.

Quick read

Glenys Smith, whose husband has Alzheimer's, knows how important it is for carers to look after themselves.

Glenys and Ralph have lived near Bristol for over 30 years, and it was hard to come to terms with his Alzheimer's diagnosis.

Glenys was Ralph's full-time carer until recently, when she reluctantly moved him to a local care home.

Glenys has found the Dementia Support Forum helpful, and shares how she made time for her own wellbeing as a carer.

Glenys Smith has lived just outside Bristol with her husband Ralph for more than 30 years.

'We intended to live here for five or six years but stayed for 36,' she says.

Ralph has family from a previous marriage and he and Glenys have two sons.

'We've got grandchildren and great-grandchildren,' Glenys says. 'The two families have stayed close, which has been really good.'

The couple met while studying in London. Ralph was completing a diploma in youth and community work having left school with no qualifications, training as a fireman on the railways and spending six years in the Royal Marines.

Glenys says, 'When he was training as a fireman, Ralph got into a fight in a dance hall and was given a choice of joining the services or "taking Her Majesty's pleasure"!

'He has always said joining was the best decision he ever made – there was an outlet for his skills in the Marines.'

Entrepreneur

Glenys and Ralph moved to Leeds where he was employed by the university and polytechnic to set up a housing programme at a time when the city was seeing a rapid increase in the number of students – but not places for them to live.

The programme provided purpose-built housing for the students.

'Ralph's an entrepreneur through and through – a man who needs to make things happen,' Glenys says.

Years later as a housing officer in Bristol, Ralph realised that because social housing always came unfurnished, new tenants with no money for furniture often left after a few weeks, leaving rent arrears. He believed that providing a furnished home would alleviate this.

'He got very frustrated because nobody would listen to him,' Glenys says, 'so he left the housing association and set up our family business providing a one-stop furnishing service to social landlords.

'The business, which started with four desks in our front room, is still going strong 25 years later.

'We've grown to three centres covering England, Wales and Scotland with over 50 staff.'

Changing pace

Without an outlet for his entrepreneurial skills, Ralph found it difficult to adjust to retirement.

'He spent a lot of his life absorbed in work – trying to also make time for his home and family,' Glenys says.

'But now he was a man without a project and although we travelled widely, his brain wasn't challenged.'

In 2018, Ralph noticed some problems with his memory and went to his GP. He was diagnosed with short-term cognitive impairment at first, but his symptoms worsened.

Ralph was told he had Alzheimer's disease in 2019, though he struggled to come to terms with his diagnosis.

'He had no scan,' Glenys recalls. 'He was always saying, "How can somebody tell me I've got this just by talking to me?"'

Ralph remained pretty independent for a couple of years following his diagnosis. But he gradually began to struggle with everyday tasks and needed more support as his condition progressed.

'It was a gradual decline and I accepted it one day at a time,' Glenys says. 'But after 18 months or so things became worse.'

Challenging

Alzheimer's can affect a person's behaviour and personality as well as their memory, and this was the case for Ralph.

'At times, he became verbally aggressive towards me through sheer frustration,' Glenys says.

'It is very upsetting when your partner of 50 years says hurtful things to you. I felt physically scared of him on a couple of occasions.'

Ralph also experiences 'sundowning'. This is when a person with dementia becomes distressed or agitated and can experience hallucinations or delusions, especially later in the afternoon or evening.

'It was so strange that Ralph enjoyed our lovely home and sunny conservatory during the mornings and then suddenly, with a flick of a switch, said he wanted to go "home",' Glenys says.

Trying to explain the same thing to Ralph every day when he was sundowning was emotionally draining.

'He'd say, "Let's get in the car and go." I'd ask him where and he'd say, "Home – back to Poole," or Portsmouth or sometimes Bournemouth.

'He actually had quite an unhappy childhood growing up in a pub near Poole's docks. But that's where he felt like he had a place in the community and people knew him.'

When caring for Ralph became overwhelming for Glenys, she sought respite care. Carers and professionals told her to 'go along' with Ralph whenever he was sundowning. She struggled with this, as it felt like lying.

'At first I thought this was wrong, but I now realise it's the kindest thing to do,' she says.

'You have to tell yourself it's not about you, it's about them.'

Community

When Ralph's behaviour started to change, Glenys turned to the Dementia Support Forum. This is the online community run by the Society for anyone affected by dementia to support each other.

'At first, I was dismayed by the depressing experiences people were sharing and it scared me off,' Glenys says. 'But as the verbal aggression and other difficulties emerged, I turned to the forum for help.

'I received empathy and concerned responses, often with useful suggestions.

'They really are the only people who absolutely know what you're going through.'

Right care

Trying to find the right care for Ralph has been a long journey for Glenys.

Ralph has limited mobility after damaging his knees and ankles when he was in the Marines, and he needs a lot of daily support.

'I could see Ralph diminishing as a person when he was in respite care, so I brought him home,' Glenys says.

'He has been fighting for his autonomy, but I had to weigh that against the toll his care was taking on me – even with paid carers coming in to give me a break.

Glenys employed a live-in carer. She hoped this would provide care for Ralph at home and give her the support she needed.

'Even though the carer was so compassionate and patient, Ralph got upset very easily and pushed her away,' Glenys says.

'He wasn't sleeping or eating much and refused personal care.'

After three months, Glenys realised it just wasn't working.

'What Ralph really wants is to live in our home with only me looking after him,' she says.

'It just wasn't fair on me or our lovely carer. I had to find the best possible care home and let him go.

'It's hard to let go of someone you love,' she says, 'someone who's given you support, who loves you and has been there for you for over 50 years.

'No care home, however good, is going to be as good as being at home. They do their best but it's just not the same.

'I'd advise anyone in a similar position to start visiting as many care homes as possible early on before making this decision.'

Savings

Ralph's care is being paid for with savings. Glenys believes more needs to be done to make paying for dementia care fairer.

'We are self-financing, and it was a struggle to pay for a live-in carer. If Ralph stayed at home, we would've needed someone to care for him 24/7 – but we can't afford that.

'We can manage the care home fees, but I feel for the families who are just above that minimum level and maybe all they have is their house.

'Dementia is an illness that gets worse, and more people are going to be affected by it.

'It's shortsighted for the government not to recognise this and provide proper help.'

Advice

Glenys has shared her advice for fellow carers. Making a lasting power of attorney – a legal document that allows someone to make decisions on your behalf – is at the top of the list.

'Getting this done early is important,' she says, 'but make sure you're not putting too many caveats in place.

'We set ours up before Ralph was diagnosed and it can sometimes be difficult to make a decision unless certain criteria are met.

'Also find out what support is available locally. Our carers' centre, dementia advisor and GP were all invaluable.'

Glenys adds that it's important for carers to take care of themselves.

'You can so easily lose your identity when caring for another person,' she says.

Glenys tried to make time for herself, even if she couldn't leave the house.

'I attend online meditation sessions for carers. It's just half an hour but it has been so helpful for me.

'I couldn't get out unless I had someone with Ralph, so Zoom was amazing.'

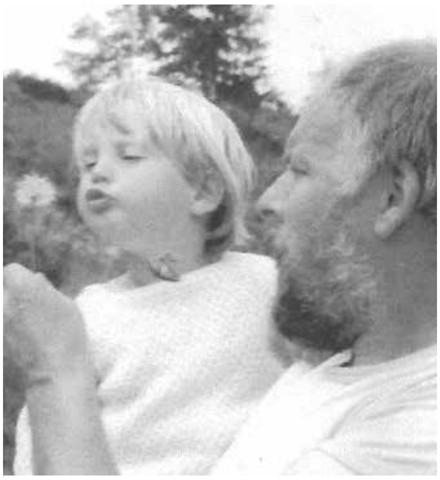
Glenys also keeps a diary, which helps her to express feelings that she finds difficult sharing with others.

'I add to it when something good has happened and when something difficult is going on,' she says.

'Sometimes you don't want people to know the negative things you're feeling.

'Having that option to express myself has helped me.'

> **He has always said joining was the best decision he ever made – there was an outlet for his skills in the Marines.**



For our booklet Care homes and other options: Making the decision (689) see **alzheimers.org.uk/publications** or call **0300 303 5933**.

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

Donate

Your donation helps fund the Dementia Support Forum so we can give vital support to more people like Glenys. **Donate** online.

'I'm under pension age, but I may need to reduce my hours or stop working to care for my mum. What should I think about when deciding?'

Cutting work to care

Whether you should continue to juggle work with caring depends very much on your personal situation.

Working differently

For some people, work's important for their physical and mental health. Your job might give you a sense of purpose and keep you connected with other people.

If working at different times or locations could make caring easier, ask your employer about flexible working. If you need to go along to appointments about your mum's care, check whether you're entitled to carer's leave.

Could working fewer hours help? Perhaps ask your employer about reducing hours, or see if there's a job with hours that would suit better.

Support while working

You could request an assessment for both you and your mother from adult social services. If eligible, they may put care in place to help you continue working. Make clear which aspects of care you're willing and able to do, and which you need to take a step back from.

If you earn less than £151 after expenses, you can claim Carer's allowance, which is currently £81.90 per week. If you pay someone who isn't a close relative to care for your mum while you work, this counts as an expense – up to a limit of half the value of your earnings.

For example, if you earn £100 a week (after tax, national insurance and other expenses) and spend £60 a week on care while you work, you can treat £50 of this cost as an expense.

Universal credit

If you've reduced your hours or stopped working and need more financial support, you could make a claim for Universal credit.

Because Universal credit is means-tested, income and savings belonging to you and your partner can affect how much you may receive.

Some people can claim a carer's premium of £45.60 per week that's added to their Universal credit. You might also be able to add premiums for having a disability, children and rental costs.

Other help if you stop

If you stop working and don't get other benefits, it's still worth finding out about Carer's credit. Although you won't get money for this, it pays your national insurance (NI) to prevent gaps in your record. Your state pension is based on your NI record, so it's important to consider.

Depending on your age, you might want to take a workplace or private pension early (you can't do this with your State pension). This could be as income or a lump sum, but you should get advice before deciding to do it. Speak to a specialist through MoneyHelper's Pension Wise service – see **www.pensionwise.gov.uk** or call **0800 138 3944**.

Benefits check

Benefits are complicated, but a benefits check will help you find out what you're entitled to.

Request a benefits check from Citizens Advice – visit **www.citizensadvice.org.uk** or call **0800 702 2020** in Wales, or in England call **0800 144 8848**.

In Northern Ireland, ask Make the Call – see **www.nidirect.gov.uk/makethecall** or call **0800 232 1271**.

The free benefits calculator at **www.entitledto.co.uk** allows you to save different calculations, to see which choices would leave you better off.

Your answers

Readers share advice about family disagreements over a person's finances when they have dementia.

Money conflicts

'I believe that the first thing to prioritise is communication: open and honest communication among family members is incredibly important.

'Attempting to understand each other's perspectives and concerns is crucial, especially for those who are unwell.

'Establishing clear channels of communication can help prevent misunderstandings and disagreements.' **jfhn05020**

'Power of attorney is essential in cases like this so one person has the legal responsibility over the person's finances. Saves all the arguments.' **NEIL123456789**

'First of all you should keep each family member updated about your loved one's condition as well as finances and inform them about the power of attorney. In our situation there were three of us and I lived with Dad, my brother lived locally and our other lived far away. To avoid the brother living far away feeling left out it was agreed that I would hold the power of attorney and that both of my brothers would be replacement attorneys. Once power of attorney is granted you still need to keep relatives informed of expenditure, finances, property and health to try to limit any disagreements.' **MaNaAk**

'Family disputes are unfortunately common but I think the best thing to do here is to try to get involved rather than "contest" things.

'Bear in mind that the type or standard of care is more important than whether somewhere "looks nice" or not, and the cost of a care home stay is not necessarily related to the standard of care received! (although none of them are cheap).' **Louise7**

'I've found that my relationship with my sibling has crashed due to misunderstandings or disagreements over Dad's care and finances – and I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

'Let off steam, then take a deep breath and please find a way to get through the situation.

'I wonder if I shouldn't have said sorry over things I'm not sorry about but maybe didn't matter THAT much – or just agreed when I stood my ground – simply to keep the peace and some tenuous relationship.' **Shedrech**

'Try to have regular meetings. Yes you will almost certainly have differences, but better to give yourselves time and space to air them than allow resentment to set in and fester.

'What I find useful is to set out any concerns in writing, ahead of meetings. I have created an issues log, which I update regularly and send out to the siblings. This also serves as a sort of agenda for the meetings.

'Perhaps the other thing you could do is agree some ground rules. For example, setting time limits for discussing certain topics, so as not to get bogged down and lose sight of other important issues.

'Also, don't try to solve every issue at once. Some things might be quite straightforward to agree on, such as the ongoing value of birthday gifts or whether to stop or continue with these. Some issues won't be solvable until you've got more information or advice.

'By talking things through, it will help you all identify what more you need to do, ask or find out. And do try to share out the workload.' **Anonymous**

Visit forum.alzheimers.org.uk to read more and join our Dementia Support Forum.

Next time: Hot weather

Do you have any tips about helping a person with dementia to be comfortable in hot weather? Email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk or write to the address on p2 by the end of 5 July.

Noticeboard

Your space for messages, posts, updates, opportunities, ideas and more.

Words of power

Please pass on my enormous thanks to Cordelia Galgut for her article in April/May's Dementia together magazine, 'Carers need more understanding'.

She has put into words some of the many thoughts that have been jumbled and tangled in my head since my partner of 42 years and my husband was diagnosed with dementia, and especially since he moved to full-time residential care seven months ago.

There are so many of these thoughts, not to mention all of the practical matters that have to be dealt with, I find that I just cannot think straight most days; there are so many loose ends in the tangle. Also, the slightest 'upset' will set me back for days. This is really frustrating for me and, at times, quite debilitating.

I have been thinking for a while that I probably need some help to try to sort my head out a little, and this article has prompted me to self-refer for some counselling.

Angela R, Nottinghamshire

Share

Share your views, feedback and news – please email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk or write to the address on p2. We can consider contributions received by 5 July for the August/September issue (wording may be edited).

Your recipes

Cheese omelette with tomatoes

Graybiker on the Dementia Support Forum, says, 'Sometimes the simplest things are the best. When I don't have much time or haven't got much in, one thing Dad really enjoys is just a cheese omelette with tinned tomatoes.

'He even asks for a spoon to finish the tomato juice! Like many elderly people he doesn't take as much fluid in as would be ideal, but he loves tinned tomatoes so it's a win-win.'

Potato, spinach and chickpea curry

We also have a tasty vegan recipe from V for Life, who featured in April/May's magazine – if you try it, let us know how it works out!
Visit www.vforlife.org.uk or call 0161 257 0887 to find out more about V for Life's resources for older vegetarians and vegans.

Ingredients
1 onion, chopped
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tablespoon mild curry powder
1 teaspoon cumin
½ teaspoon turmeric
250g carrots, finely chopped
350g potatoes, cubed
500ml vegetable stock
400g tin of chickpeas, drained
200g frozen spinach
100g frozen peas
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon fresh coriander, roughly chopped

- Gently fry the onion for 5 minutes then add the garlic and spices.
- Continue to cook for another 5 minutes. Stir to prevent sticking.
- Add the carrots, potatoes, stock and chickpeas. Simmer for 15 minutes.
- Add the spinach and peas. Cook for a further 10 minutes.
- Season as required and finally add the fresh coriander.
- Serve with rice and flatbread.

Seen elsewhere

On Facebook, when we posted about the brilliant first title from Cognitive Books, 'Looking Back at… The Beatles', Lyn Wild also shared about making memory books:

'I do a similar thing for my mother, but from a perspective more personal to her with photos. I use online sites to make "bite size" books of photos taken throughout her life, add names and dates, event details. They help me talk to her about memories of hers that she shared with me over my life that she can no longer recall, including the recent, "I can imagine me doing that". 💗'

Alzheimer's Society is @alzheimerssocietyuk on Facebook, and @alzheimerssoc on X/Twitter and Instagram.

On Instagram, Dementia Friends shared pictures showing how Dilys Williams in Tywyn, Gwynedd, has transformed a garden at Llys Cadfan Care Home:

'Dementia Friend Dilys has been managing a garden project, completely transforming a piece of land at a care home into a space for residents living with dementia to visit and tend to plants 🌿.

'The new garden has been seeing visitors from local communities to help contribute to the project and who will continue to visit, working alongside residents in the garden.'

Dementia Friends is @DementiaFriends on X/Twitter and Facebook, and @dementia_friends on Instagram.

Cancer and dementia forum

Did you know there's a specific area of our Dementia Support Forum for people who support a relative or friend with cancer as well as dementia?

As with other parts of the forum, people get invaluable support from others in similar situations. That can be practical advice, emotional support, links to information or simply knowing that someone understands what you're going through.

'Caring for a person with dementia and cancer' is a subforum within 'I care for a person with dementia', which is linked from the forum's home page.

Dementia Support Forum is free and open 24/7 – visit forum.alzheimers.org.uk

Replay sporting memories

Do you know someone who'd enjoy revisiting moments from their favourite sports? Replay Memories is a website and app with thousands of sporting memories that you can enjoy and add to.

The collection, from the charity Sporting Memories, includes written memories, radio recordings, videos and photographs from sports fans, family members, players and writers.

It's organised by sports and events, and it's also fully searchable. You can build your own collection of favourites, or even contribute your own.

Visit www.sportingmemories.uk/replay-memories or find Replay Sporting Memories in your device's app store.

Puzzles and competitions

Anagramword

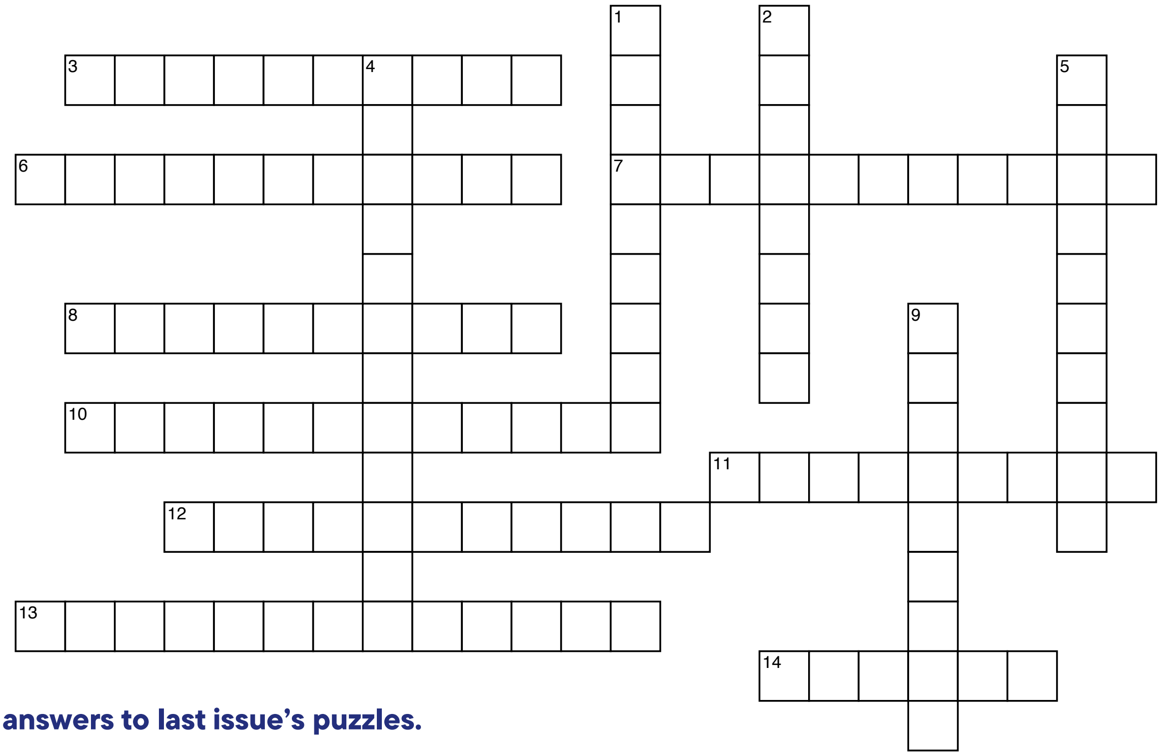
Whether you're planning a holiday or recalling trips of yesteryear, Pete Middleton brings a vacation theme to this issue's puzzle. Every clue contains the answer in an anagram – how many can you solve?

ACROSS

3 Outdid urge to follow an umbrella around a place of interest (6,4)
6 Hop short gap to capture holiday memories (11)
7 Nag alert vet to arrange your holiday (6,5)
8 Eh up! Crisis for a leisurely sea voyage (6,4)
10 Stones arrive when booking your seats (12)
11 Tiny rear I need to plan for my holiday (9)
12 Traitors put in a crowded area with high prices (7,4)
13 Upmarket names in a place that's fun for all the family (9,4)
14 Use mum to find an interesting place full of cultural treasures (6)

DOWN

1 Issue cats to pack your belongings in (9)
2 Nervous, I buy a keepsake of my holiday (8)
4 It is not an art to find somewhere to start a rail journey (5,7)
5 I burn coals using these to view far-off objects (10)
9 Infer ogre is someone you might meet on an overseas trip (9)



See p39 for answers to last issue's puzzles.

Send us your competition answers with your name and address by end of 3 July – email magazine@alzheimers.org.uk or write to the address on p2.

Lifelike pets

We have a Berty the breathing dog from Ravencourt for one lucky winner drawn from correct entries, plus a dog or cat Precious Petzzz for one runner-up.

Q: Berty the breathing dog:

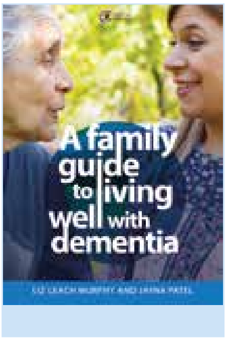
- **A. Fetches a stick if you throw it.**
- **B. Barks when someone comes to your door.**
- **C. Has a heartbeat and gets warmer as you hold it.**

Trek26 goodies

We have a pair of Trek socks and a Trek26 tote bag for one lucky winner drawn from correct entries, plus a Trek26 tote bag each for three runners-up.

Q: This year, Trek26 takes place:

- **A. Indoors.**
- **B. In 10 breath-taking locations across the UK.**
- **C. In this issue of the magazine.**



Book giveaway

See p27 for a chance to win a copy of A Family Guide to Living Well with Dementia, by Liz Leach Murphy and Jayna Patel.

April/May winners and answers

Day Hub

K Pocock in Hampshire won a Day Hub day clock from Relish, and A Hughes in Cheshire won a Day Connect day clock. Answer: The Day Hub day clock gives you alerts for tasks that you do every day, so you can tick them off as you do them.

Cognitive Books

L Hopkin in Nottinghamshire, B Long in North Yorkshire and C Sharland in Devon each won a copy of Looking Back at... The Beatles, the first title from Cognitive Books. Answer: The free audiobook that comes with this title is narrated by Bill Nighy.

Book giveaway

J Hillier in Berkshire, R Smith in Surrey, C Phillips in Hampshire and L Hopkin in Nottinghamshire each won a copy of The Alzheimer's Diaries, by Susan Elkin.

Anagramword

Across: spring cleaning, daffodils, grasshoppers, butterflies, bluebell woods, spring lambs. Down: rainbow, ducklings, dragonfly, April showers, caterpillar, umbrellas.

Six mix

1 Elapse, 2 Pamper, 3 Mature, 4 Cutlet, 5 Detect, 6 Settle. Mystery tree: Spruce.

Terms and conditions: Terms and conditions: 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.

Alzheimer's Society

Memory Walk

30,000 people
26 locations
1 unifying purpose

Together, let's walk to stop dementia from devasting lives.

Sign up to your local walk at memorywalk.org.uk or search "Memory Walk".

Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR