Spring 2016
Keeping you up to date with news and events

Increasing our groups

Our Walton centre now offers groups every day of the week.

On Tuesday mornings a new group of members are following our Learning to Live with Aphasia course. At the end of term we asked what they felt they had gained.

‘Learning more about aphasia and how to cope’ was the main benefit, closely followed by ‘meeting people in the same boat’ and ‘having opportunities to communicate and be listened to’.

We celebrated these successes in traditional style at the Chequers.

We are always looking for new opportunities for members to use their communication skills, challenge themselves and engage in life.

Every day is Poppy Day

Kingston Morning Group tried their hands at making poppies when they visited the Poppy Factory in Richmond.

The morning began with a presentation on the history of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. They also learnt about the history of the factory before visiting the shop floor and seeing staff producing poppies and wreaths. All the workers are veterans or dependents of veterans.

Then it was Kingston’s turn to have a go. All the machinery can be operated with one hand.

We are looking for a new home

The lease on our centre at Walton runs out at the end of 2017. Dyscover has very special requirements, so we are already searching for a new base to rent within an 8-mile radius of Walton.

We need: somewhere that offers 1,500 sq ft, and is mostly on the ground floor with disabled access. Parking spaces and flexible room sizes are essential. If you know anyone who might help please contact Marilyn.

Our search

We are concentrating our search in the area bounded by Epsom, Reigate, Dorking and Leatherhead.

Diary dates

More details from Alice on these fundraising events

3 May Bridge Evening
7 May 10K Goodwood Walk
21 May Walton Pageant
11 June Ashtead Village Day
Open Gardens:
18, 19 June, Tadworth
26 June, Redhill
3 July, Reigate

Long-term support and opportunities for people with aphasia
People

Update from the Trustees

Treasurer David Smith reports on an encouraging year.

We have now come to the end of Dyscover’s financial year. I am very happy, and relieved, to say that we have held our own financially.

The Big Lottery Fund has again been our biggest source of income, although strong and steady income from local organisations and individuals has been really important in allowing Rosemary’s team and our wonderful volunteers to continue helping our members and developing new initiatives.

As the Treasurer, I am always thinking about what the future has in store for our finances. You will know that over the next 18 months we will need to move from Crown House Mews in Walton on the Hill into new premises. Moving house is always expensive and we will probably be paying a higher rent so we will be setting aside funds to cover this.

The Trustees will continue to work in the coming year to ensure that Dyscover continues to prosper and we are still looking to recruit new Trustees to support our efforts.

Spotlight on Volunteer and Service Manager

Marilyn George

Marilyn had always wanted a career linked to the medical world, and her father’s severe stammer prompted her to consider speech and language therapy. After four years of study at City University, she worked at Guy’s Hospital for 17 years. Here she used her skills to help people with conditions ranging from Parkinson’s to stroke.

While her family were quite young Marilyn changed jobs so that she could be at home during school holidays. She became a teaching assistant at a secondary school, giving one-to-one support to pupils. When Marilyn returned to speech and language therapy, she needed to complete a refresher period. This brought her to Dyscover, first as a volunteer and soon as a member of staff.

With her own volunteer experience, she successfully applied to become our Volunteer Coordinator when the post fell vacant in 2012.

In 2014 she took over responsibility for our Kingston Centre. When we needed new premises, Marilyn found the perfect place at the Kingston Quaker Centre. This led to her taking on the search for new premises in the Walton area, in collaboration with trustee George Thomopoulous. This is proving more of a challenge, see the ‘new home’ item on page 1.

Marilyn enjoys the variety of working at Dyscover. Because we are a small charity we can react to members’ needs and develop new services to meet them.
Aphasia Ambassadors

Adrian Caine is one of our newest Aphasia Ambassadors, joining the team of members who give presentations to publicise aphasia and Dyscover's work to the general public.

Gerri Joyce did a terrific job at her first awareness raising presentation to the Redhill Betafutures group.

Mandy Nickerson has taken up the role of Co-ordinator, arranging presentations and supporting members to tell their stories. Many thanks to her predecessor Jayne Guy who did so much to build up our Ambassadors.

We are delighted that public speaking coach Ges Ray has offered to pass on hints and tips to our Ambassadors at a workshop.

Suzie shows her moves

Dyscover members like to get involved in stroke research projects.

Suzie is participating in a study by University College London to look at recovery of arm movement after stroke.

She was delighted to show the benefits of three weeks' intensive treatment. Suzie can now use her affected hand to tie shoelaces, hold a knife and brush her hair.

Friends of Dyscover

We are planning to launch Friends of Dyscover to keep in touch with supporters, friends and former members, relatives and volunteers.

Alice is working to bring together the contact details we hold on several databases.

Keep an eye out for launch details in the next newsletter.

Video twins

Professional film maker Florentia Buckingham has produced another short video for us. It documents the impact of aphasia on Thursday member Claire and her twin sister Sandy.

Producing even a very short film takes many hours and we are grateful to Claire and Sandy for their patience and co-operation.

First Aid Training

A flurry of First Aid training last term. Relatives at Kingston have refreshed their knowledge, as well as our staff and volunteers at Walton, leaving everyone more confident should the worst happen.

Join us this term

SINGING

New members are very welcome at the informal sessions on Thursday afternoons.

Dates are: 28 April; 5, 12, 19 May; 2, 16, 23, 30 June.

SAILING

Sailability at Paper Court Ripley, welcomes members on Friday afternoons.

Dates: 29 April; 6, 20 May; 3, 17 June; 1, 15 July.
Patchworking garden

Some Walton Wednesday members enjoyed finding out about the Patchworking Garden project in Dorking.

The garden provides a haven for anyone with an interest in the outdoors. Many people help out with planting, building and giving taster sessions.

Staff gave expert guidance as members each planted a propagator with salad items. They are all flourishing, including our very own propagator at Walton.

Bowls and Boccia

Wednesday members enjoyed trying a new sport at the Mole Valley Indoor Bowls Centre. Bowls is an ideal activity where all members can participate on a level footing.

Staff and volunteers were on hand with coaching and encouragement. Everyone enjoyed a brilliant, energetic and, in some cases, very competitive morning. It is great news that some members are planning a return trip in their own time.

There were some new players at Kingston’s latest Boccia session (photo on the right). It was a close game between the reds and the blues. Lee won with her final ball.

Dishy

Members were absorbed in painting and decorating a range of ceramics at the first of our Easter holiday activities. Dish of Reigate provided the expertise. All the items were carefully taken away for firing and we look forward to seeing the results.

Who knew?

Beekeeping is a complex business, as we found out when John Chapman of Reigate Beekeepers came to give a talk and demonstration at Walton.

Members had the opportunity to taste different varieties of honey, take a close look at a live colony of bees and even model a ‘bee suit’. They also learnt some surprising facts and figures about these creatures which are so essential to humans.
Starting early

Reading practice is the order of the day for some members from both Kingston afternoon groups. They get together before their groups to improve their skills at reading aloud.

With a little help...

Kingston morning members were delighted with the paintings they produced using techniques learnt from professional artist Louise Wishart.

My life

Kingston afternoon member Tony Cummings took his turn in the Spotlight. He spoke about his career as a technical draughtsman and hobbies of cycling and rebuilding old cars.

Spotlight on Brian Spickett

Brian Spickett and his partner Gina have been together for 31 very busy years. Brian was a painter and decorator and Gina a florist. When they moved into a house that had not been touched since the 1950s it was a labour of love to transform it. Brian enjoyed gardening, too and was a good cook. Holidays with Brian’s children and grandchildren included trips to Florida.

Brian’s severe stroke came in January 2013, when he was just 58. He spent seven months in hospital before being allowed home. But, says Gina, there were lots of setbacks in the two years that followed.

Epileptic seizures led to Brian needing medication, but this had negative side-effects. It took some time before a change of prescription produced great improvements. Gina stopped work to look after him.

Now Brian is getting his strength back and is feeling much more positive. Daily living will soon be much easier as the local council is adapting their house to provide a wet room downstairs and ramps for his wheelchair.

Thanks to promotions in The Sun newspaper they enjoy good-value short breaks at holiday parks. Many parks offer specially adapted caravans.

Brian has been coming to Dyscover for 18 months and really looks forward to the Monday group meetings with their friendship and laughter.

Brian’s next challenge is to master an app on his iPad that allows him to choose words or phrases so that he can join in a conversation.
Have you heard?

Sharing expertise
Meeting with researchers and other professionals in the field of aphasia helps ensure that we provide an effective and high quality service at Dyscover. Inviting experts to visit also raises our profile and builds our reputation.

Last term we welcomed researchers and clinicians from both University College London and Kingston University to share experiences and insights.

Make-up master class
Trustees, members, staff volunteers and relatives came together for our first-ever make-up master class.

The joint social and fundraising event was a huge success. Everyone took away lots of tips, advice and new skills to enhance their beauty regimes.

We are most grateful to Sam, daughter of volunteer Adrian Caine, and Anita for their very professional practical workshop.

PPA course
Five couples participated in our second course for people affected by Primary Progressive Aphasia. They took away information, practical techniques for easier communication and coping strategies to help manage the challenges of living with this condition. We shall

Open more gardens
Three Dyscover supporters are already opening their beautiful gardens to benefit Dyscover, (see Diary Dates on page 1).

Would you, or anyone you know, consider hosting an event? Please contact Alice to find out more.

In print
The Bulletin is the official magazine of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.

We were delighted when Rosemary's article 'A long-term vision for people with aphasia' was published in January. This has generated interest and referrals to Dyscover.

You can read the article in the news section of our website, www.dyscover.org.uk

Old gold
A supporter raised £100 by selling three pieces of unwanted gold jewellery. We hope more people might raid their jewellery boxes.
Simon’s Marathon Run
Four months of training, cheers from his family and a pair of long legs were the ingredients for Simon’s success in the Brighton Marathon. Simon, who is married to Suzanne, our programme coordinator, completed the 26.2 mile course in an impressive 3 hours 49 minutes - a personal best for his third marathon. Although Simon described the first 20 miles as ‘quite fun’, he found the warm weather conditions a real challenge towards the end.

Rosemary was there to thank him at the finish on Brighton beach. Simon hopes to raise around £1,500 for Dyscover, a great achievement.

Generous grants
London Catalyst have awarded us £3,000, which will be used to support the running costs of our Kingston centre.

A grant of over £3,500 from the Community Foundation for Surrey will help fund our activities programme.

Santander Community Plus
We were delighted to be awarded a Santander Foundation Community Plus grant of £5,000.

This money will go a long way towards funding our activities programme for 2016.

Members will be giving us guidance on how they would like the money to be spent. Physical, creative and therapeutic activities will all be included.

Four more chances to win!
Top Draw organiser Nick Clark has presented a second cheque to Dyscover, bringing the total for the year to £2,300. An annual share in the Top Draw Club costs just £10, and there are four more chances to win in 2016. Full details on our website or from the office.

Budgens Bags
The Budgens store in Walton on the Hill will donate all the money raised through the 5p plastic bag charge during 2016.

Tea towels
Gerri Joyce (right) designed this beautiful tea towel in Dyscover colours. We still have some for sale; all proceeds to Dyscover.

Update from Alice
We welcomed some new fundraising volunteers who will be helping with this year’s events. Details of our summer programme are on page 1.

I have been working with Mike Herbert, our fundraiser to obtain more crucial funds from grant-making trusts. Some recent successes are reported on this page.

I have also been looking at other sources of income, including remembering Dyscover in a Will. I will be happy to provide further details about this.
Keeping up

iPad expertise...

Thanks to funding from Awards for All, we are offering one-to-one support for members in developing confidence and skills with the iPad.

iPads are widely recognised as more aphasia-friendly than standard computers. They offer a vast range of apps that have been developed as therapy tools, as well as aids to independent living.

Alena Jobson (centre) is the speech and language therapist leading our workshops. Together with Dyscover volunteers she helped ten members to develop their iPad skills last term.

We are reviewing the outcomes of the project so far and plan to offer more workshops in June.

and artists

Some of our regular groups have also been enjoying iPad technology.

They joined famous artists like David Hockney in exploring the possibilities of iPad art. Walton Friday members chose their own themes, while the Monday group produced a range of attractive greeting cards.

Virtual reality!

EVA Park is a virtual world created to stimulate and enable people with aphasia to have conversations with each other, via their home computers.

Dyscover had a chance to contribute to its development when four members and Rosemary went to Woburn to try out EVA Park for themselves. They gave feedback and made suggestions for improvements.

Group members at Dyscover with a background in IT have their own ideas on how technology can help. Nick Meese gave Rosemary another taste of virtual reality (right).