

Autumn 24/Winter 25

NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events



Calling all relatives



The majority of Dyscover members live with one or more family members. Relatives, and those who support them, face the challenges of aphasia from a different perspective and support for them has always been an important part of Dyscover's service. Recently, we have hosted family support sessions each term for each group. This year we shall do things differently.



We shall be holding two **open meetings** and will welcome **anyone who is a friend or relative of a Dyscover member**. We hope these meetings will help people to **connect** with others and to **share experiences and strategies**.

Leatherhead meeting – Wednesday 26th February 2-3pm

Online Zoom meeting – Thursday 6th March 4-5pm

In the coming months we are keen to **work with our Dyscover community** to learn more about the needs and wishes of those close to our members. We want to **develop the support** we provide, making sure it is offered in a way that **feels accessible** to those of you who have busy lives with competing needs and demands.

We shall be gathering more information through questionnaires and a focus group. We are grateful to those who have already shown interest in joining the group. If you would like to be involved, please email: info@dyscover.org.uk

Rotary award




Roger, our Chairman, and Treasurer Stuart, accompanied Jackie Woollatt to the **Ashted Rotary Club's Annual Community Awards** evening to accept a posthumous Service Recognition Award on behalf of **John Woollatt, our late Chairman**, in acknowledgement of his special service to the community through his **leadership of Dyscover**. It was presented by local MP Helen Maguire.


To find out more about

Dyscover Please go to: dyscover.org.uk or contact us for details of our online visitor sessions on Zoom or to receive our regular newsletters.

Follow us on social media

 to find our page on Facebook search for Dyscover

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People

Spotlight on Chairman of Trustees

Roger Young

Roger joined Dyscover as a **Trustee early in 2023**, having been told about us by our then Chairman John Woollatt. They had been friends for over 30 years and John first broached the topic over golf.

Before his retirement four years ago, Roger **worked in the insurance industry for 40 years**. "I have an accountancy background," he says, "and have performed most roles in that area, from finance director, via audit to heading up a **major mergers and acquisitions deal** to buy a life company."

Following John's untimely death early in 2024, Roger took over as Chairman. As well as the financial side of operating a charity like Dyscover, Roger finds **leading our diverse and talented Board of Trustees is a huge motivator**.

What does he most enjoy about volunteering with us? "It may be a bit of a cliché, but quite simply, it is **putting something back**. There was a real attraction to joining Dyscover to support and work alongside a talented team **making a visible difference to people's lives**."

Roger has been married to Lucy for over 35 years and they have two adult children, Natalie, a personal trainer, and Cameron, a robotics programmer. Roger and Lucy both love to travel, **jetting off to explore new places**.

A **major leisure interest is golf**, which takes up a lot of time and includes playing in England competitions. Roger is also a keen photographer and took a professional course after he retired.



Welcome to new staff team members

JO MATTHEWS



Jo is our new **Head of Fundraising** and not only is she experienced in this field, she has **worked for a small aphasia charity** before. Says Jo, "My role brings an

increased focus on fundraising breadth and income. I aim to ensure the core income is delivered, as well as increasing our community fundraising."

MEGAN PARKER



Megan has taken on the role of **Volunteer and Community Fundraising Co-ordinator**. She has worked in the charity sector for many years. Megan will be

recruiting volunteers for both groups and events. "We have a varied programme of events in 2025," she says. "Turn to page 7 for details and **keep an eye on our website and social media** for more news."

Around Dyscover

BAS conference

In September the SLTs each attended part of the **British Aphasia Society Conference**.

In October they then met to discuss what they had learnt and ideas to **improve the support we offer members**. Barbara Greenwood (Speech and language therapist - external facilitator) joined in for these discussions which included:

- thinking about how we discuss **differences and similarities in people with aphasia**
- considering how we can address **difficulties with numbers** and calculations
- sharing ideas and experiences in **using group projects** to practise and improve communication.

Practice educators

Maggie and Emma attended the Practice Educators course hosted by City St George's University London, as Dyscover will be offering placements to their students of Speech and Language Therapy. Maggie found the section on giving feedback was particularly relevant to her role at Dyscover, supporting volunteers to reflect during group debriefings. We look forward to welcoming the students this term.



Service news update

This term we are looking forward to the following:

- Two Masters Speech and Language Therapy students from City St George's University London starting their **weekly placements** with Dyscover. They will be with us for the Spring and Summer terms.
- **Taking part in a podcast** run by two UCL Speech and Language Therapy students. They will be talking to Dyscover ambassadors, a volunteer and to Julie over three episodes during January and February.
- Julie and Emma are presenting a Zoom session on the Carers UK website, along with some relatives of our members. Go to: **Support and Information on Aphasia with Dyscover - Thursday 30 January, 3-4pm.**

Groups at Christmas



Our **Thursday morning group** ended the term in style, arriving in an assortment of Christmas jumpers and hats. **A Yuletide quiz** provided much discussion about family traditions; for example, do people still hide a silver coin in their Christmas pudding and what is a snowball cocktail made with?



Tuesday afternoon Zoom members entered into the festive spirit for their last session. Sarah attended in full elf costume and members **showed off their festive decorations**, including some wonderfully decorated trees and even one of Tim's special Lego creations – a revolving Christmas tree! Members all completed a Christmas quiz with much **jollity and sharing of stories**.

Groups in action

Raising aphasia awareness

To link in with World Stroke Day, our groups looked at ways of raising awareness of aphasia. An estimated 90% of people do not know what it is.

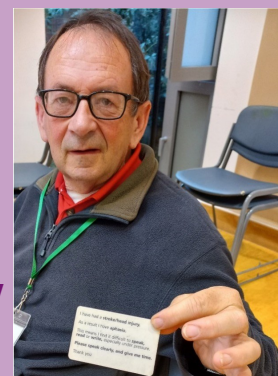
The Heart to Heart song/video by Mark Black made a significant impact on members who felt it expressed really well what it is like to have aphasia. Readers can find it on Youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9_dpe9Rbvw



The Tuesday afternoon Zoom group highlighted how aphasia is different for everyone and listed 'space to talk' and 'patience' as two key supportive strategies

The Kingston group talked about the value of an ID card, with information about aphasia to explain their difficulties to strangers.

Aphasia Awareness continued with the training of volunteers and new staff. One of the activities included communicating about an activity either without using verbs, using only drawing or using only gesture. They reported finding this frustrating and challenging, demonstrating some of the challenges people with aphasia regularly face.



Games are fun - and useful

Volunteer Ros introduced Thursday afternoon members to the **board game**



Blokus on the last day of term. The aim is to fit as many of your coloured pieces on the board, while strategically blocking opponents. Members enjoyed using **spatial reasoning, visualisation and problem solving skills.**

All groups enjoyed games during last term. In the Thursday

afternoon group, Ron demonstrated **his father's gambling game.** At Kingston, Sukhraj and Martin love **word search puzzles, which help with language.**



Sukhraj does an average of eight a day!

Kingston present a passion

Members all rose to the challenge of talking about a favourite topic. Nial shared stunning atmospheric photographs. Several members spoke about art and creativity, with Deena



emphasising their psychological benefits. David gave a fascinating talk about his love of athletics and travel while Alan brought in his vintage Yashika camera.

Lasting friendships

A spontaneous conversation at the Thursday morning group revealed just **how long some members had been coming** to Dyscover. Top of the list was Chris at an **incredible 27 years**, closely followed by Bee at 21 years and Claire at 18, Nick and David 17. Others were from 14 to 5, plus new member David at one year.

Groups in action

Zoom meet up.

In November we brought Zoom members together for a **coffee and chat** in a central location. They welcomed the opportunity to meet in person and **build on the long-term friendships** and connections they have made.



A lasso?

The Thursday afternoon group enjoyed a **Desert Island Survival Challenge**, cunningly devised by volunteer Steve. They had to choose five items and tell other members how they would use them. One of Cam's items was a magnifying glass. **Go to Dyscover on Facebook** to see Moira provoking gales of laughter with her gestures explaining how to trap a wild boar with a lasso!



A famous visitor

Special Guest **Nick Owen from BBC and ITN News** visited Wednesday afternoon members to share stories from his long career in the Media, working as a Royal Correspondent for 30 years. He now has a new hobby, Pickleball, which he plays with group volunteer Fiona.



Members were **supported to ask questions** to find out as much as possible about Nick's background. The biggest surprise was that **member Jim and Nick went to school together** and had much to catch up on.



Spotlight on Martin H



Kingston member Martin **lived in two different worlds** when he was growing up. He was born in the UK, but when he was just six his parents sent him back to Jamaica to live with his grandmother on the family fruit farm.

He returned to the UK at the age of 17 and attended a short multi-skills course in Birmingham. He **really enjoyed plastering** and completed an apprenticeship.

Martin's job took him to London, where he worked on a number of important buildings, including the House of Lords. Martin **set up his own company in 1997**, running it very successfully for over 20 years. His life changed

after a severe stroke in 2018.

Thankfully, he regained full movement, but his speech was badly affected. It has gradually come back and his group have noticed a **great improvement while he has been at Dyscover**. Martin really enjoys the group chats and being with people who understand about his aphasia. The friendships he has made are really important to him. "We have a laugh," he says.

He is able to read and write small amounts and **challenges himself to improve**. Martin loves his independence and regularly **uses the Tube, practising the names of all the stations** on his route. His ultimate aim is to improve so much that he can return to work.

Martin and his wife Maxine have two daughters, Stephanie and Leah. Another of Martin's **big loves is cricket**. He has played on overseas tours and has won lots of cups and medals. He is also a great fan of Reggae music.

Have you Heard

PPA - celebrating 10 years

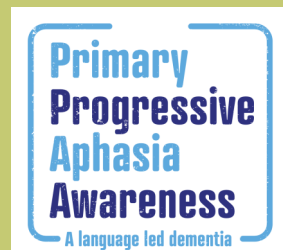
2025 marks ten years since we ran our first courses for people with Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) at Dyscover. PPA is a rare dementia in which communication difficulties are the first symptom. Since 2022, Rosemary has focussed on growing the service, receiving **over 120 referrals in the past two years.**

To our knowledge, Dyscover is still the only charity in the UK offering specialist speech and language therapy (SLT) for people with PPA and their families.

In November **local MP, Helen Maguire** (*right with Rosemary*), visited Dyscover and is supporting our campaign to improve access to SLT for people with a diagnosis of PPA.



Rosemary is working with Dr Anna Volkmer to launch the UK's **first PPA Awareness Day** on 4th April. Please help by sharing social media posts.



Our grateful thanks to the **Hospital Saturday Fund** for a grant of £3,000 towards our PPA service.

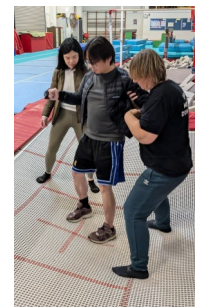


Challenge activities

We completed another four-week **horse riding course** at Bookham & Horsley RDA. Two members admitted they had never been on a horse before! We hope to return later this year.



Gymnastics and Zoom Pilates were very popular and will return in 2025.



Teddington Park social meetings will be held monthly in the Spring term.

Artists



Bee used cross stitch in a beautiful illustration of the Lord's Prayer. It will be hung in a local church.



Brian reproduced an Impressionist masterpiece by Renoir in meticulous detail, using painting by numbers.

We are very sad to report the passing of Dick and Tony



DICK had been a much-loved member since he **joined in 2005.** Friends appreciated his **wicked sense of humour** and interest in others. His life was celebrated at The Grange, his home for many years.



TONY joined **Dyscover in 2016** following his stroke in 2015. He was a popular member of the Thursday morning group. A talented artist, he was also a **keen photographer** and members loved his wildlife shots.

Fundraising



Santa Run

We supplied elves and Santa in return for receiving a donation from the Banstead Rotary Club. Thank you

to everyone for their **support on a wet evening**, collecting in the Nork area.



Christmas concert

This wonderful festive event by the **Mole Valley Silver Band** raised £780. Thank you, Ambassador Nick for speaking about Dyscover to the audience.

Afternoon tea



Twenty guests enjoyed tea at the **Ashted Park Garden Centre**. Extra donations and a raffle brought the total raised to £386.

2025 Diary dates

Saturday 25th January

WINTER WALK

Join The Dyscoverers team and walk 10 km along the Thames supporting Dyscover. Scan to sign up today!



Saturday 15th March

BIG SPRING QUIZ

Old Barn Hall, Bookham.
7 for 7.30PM
£15 per person, including lasagne supper.
Scan the code to sign up.



Good Luck to Joe Meese

who will be running the **London Marathon** for us on 27th April. Joe is the son of our Aphasias Ambassador Nick. You can donate to support him by using the QR code here.



Royal Parks Half Marathon

Sunday 12th October



£25 registration with a fundraising target for Dyscover of £300. To reserve a space scan the QR code



Thank you to the Coop Local Community Fund for supporting us in 2025



31-day Challenge, January 2025

Support **31 Years of Dyscover** by Challenging Yourself to do something **every day in January**. Get yourself sponsored. Join the Campaign here justgiving.com/campaign/dyscover31daychallenge or scan the QR code. It is **not too late to join** the Challenge!

Round Up

Christmas lunch

Members, volunteers, staff and trustees all came together to celebrate 2024 at our festive Christmas Lunch at Tyrrells Wood Golf Club. Thanks to Suzanne for organising it so well.

The afternoon also featured the presentation of long service awards to volunteers, our hamper raffle and the bumper Christmas Top Draw (more details on this below).

We are most grateful to everyone who donated goodies for the raffle and the team who assembled no fewer than 40 hampers. Over £1,700 was raised from the online and in person raffles.



Top Draw Club

Our Top Draw Club has **donated £1,200** so far this financial year, which means the same amount was distributed as prizes.

Annual shares in the Club start at just £10 and **enter you into five draws**, including the super bonus draw in December.

If you would like to purchase any shares then email dyscovertopdraw@gmail.com. Full rules are available on our website.



Mole Valley Lottery

Several of our members have already won prizes in this local lottery. It not only raises funds for local charities, but also **helps environmental causes**. Draws are held weekly and tickets start at £1 each week.

You can buy tickets to support Dyscover at: molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/dyscover

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