



Alzheimer Scotland

Action on Dementia

Charity of the Year 2012

**Making sure no-one goes
through dementia on their own**

September 2013

Edinburgh Branch

Newsletter

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St LEONARD'S St NEWS

Welcome to the latest update from the Edinburgh Branch. I also hope you have enjoyed the summer. The Branch AGM was held in June with a good attendance. Dr Tom Russ gave a very interesting talk about his research into the geographical spread of dementia, the factors that might influence this and whether any are potentially modifiable. The Edinburgh Branch Bursary to the Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Research Centre at Edinburgh University had assisted him to travel to the University of Southern California to collaborate with colleagues there. We were very impressed – and not a little envious - not only by the wonderful March weather Tom described, but by the plethora of scanners and equipment readily available at the university!

The AGM confirmed the committee as Chairperson: Barbara Mitchelmore, Secretary: June Henderson, Treasurer: Grace Durham and members Katrina Balmer, Kathleen Birchall, Alison Glen, Janet Ingleby, Fiona Robertson and Joyce Shepherd. Joyce has resigned from the post of Hon. Secretary but I am delighted that she has agreed to remain on the committee. We thank Joyce for her support over the years.

Alzheimer Scotland has recently re-launched its website and it's well worth a look. The new design groups topics under 'drop down menus' on the home page and gives easier access to services and groups in *your* area. The address is <http://www.alzscot.org> then put in your postcode in 'Search in your area' to see groups and information cafés that are on offer locally. Within that list you will find details of the Edinburgh Branch or you can go directly by using the website address in the heading above.

The Branch has been in existence for over thirty years and many ideas and services pioneered by the early members are now accepted as mainstream. But the Branch is only one of three aspects of Alzheimer Scotland in Edinburgh – the other two being Edinburgh and West Lothian Services based in Granton and the charity's National Office in Drumsheugh Gardens. This arrangement has not always given a clear picture of the organisation to the general public. Preliminary discussions are underway exploring the possibility of a Dementia Resource Centre for Edinburgh. This really would give a visible and more cohesive identity to Alzheimer Scotland in Edinburgh. I foresee the branch being a very valuable partner in any such project, building for the future on its long and successful past. I hope to be able to bring you more news of this in future newsletters. If there is anything you would like to discuss with me, please contact the office with your telephone number and I will return your call.

Barbara Mitchelmore, Branch Chair

THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY

My husband Will decided to celebrate his 60th birthday by raising money for Alzheimer Scotland by walking the West Highland Way for the 21st time with 25 friends. To avoid the midges we set off in May and completed the 96 miles in 7 days.

Along the way we wore our Alzheimer T-shirts and people donated generously. Will also received personal gifts including three birthday cakes! The local ranger organised tea and coffee for our last bbq and we finished off magnificently by being piped to the finish. A wonderful end to a magical week!

Alison Hume

D CAFE

Thanks to all our regular attenders and the very valuable volunteers for their continuing support. Our thoughts and good wishes go to all those who, for whatever reason, are now no longer able to join us. Over the years the D Café has offered support and information for people with dementia, their family and carers. This has now been replicated in other areas – Holyrood Abbey Church, Ratho and Cramond. Please contact Teresa Straczynski (Dementia Advisor) on 0131 662 1204 for more information.

We welcome speakers to the D Café but always have time for a blether, sharing experiences and supporting each other all in a relaxed and safe place and over a cup of tea! On 26 September Wendy Carle Taylor, a great friend of D Café and fresh from a sell-out show on the Festival Fringe will be with us. On 31 October our speaker is from Ageing Well, a project that helps older people to stay active and well. Our St Andrew's Day party is on 28 November.

The D Café meets at the Quaker Meeting House at 7 Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street) Edinburgh at 1pm to 3pm on the last Thursday of each month. Anyone with limited mobility who needs to arrive by taxi can be dropped off at the lower end of Upper Bow, adjacent to the Quaker Meeting House. If you wish any further information, please contact the office on 667 6289.

HOLIDAYS in CALLANDER

The Edinburgh Branch has been arranging holidays for people with dementia and their carers for many years. The holidays are accompanied by volunteers who organise outings and excursions, and provide opportunities to chat and share experiences. This year our usual accommodation was not available so we booked three separate weeks at Auchenlaich Farmhouse Bed and Breakfast at Callander. The owners have been very obliging in meeting our requirements and our groups have had sole use of the house. The first two holidays enjoyed fabulous weather and the group going away in August hoped to be equally lucky.

Comments from the first holiday include: "accommodation was very comfortable", "food was

excellent", "we enjoyed all the care and attention" and "this was the only kind of holiday we could have had; the volunteers helped us in every way possible". After the third holiday we will review feedback from all the guests and volunteers, so that we can plan how best to continue this very valuable service.

Referrals are taken at any time, to be added to the waiting list for next year. Volunteers are also required in order to keep the holidays running. Guests and volunteers alike find the holidays a very enriching experience. For more information, to make a referral or if you might be interested in volunteering to help, please contact Fiona Ashton at the Edinburgh Branch Office (0131 667 6289) or email feef27@hotmail.com

JACK + JILL and the RED POST BOX

I attended this play beautifully performed on the Fringe by Skimstone Arts of Newcastle and written by a member, Claire Webster Saaremets. They are in partnership with dementia research teams in Newcastle and Edinburgh. The Post Box was where Jill regularly posted letters to her daughter Lucy until she had to be reminded of the address and could no longer find the post box. It was ironical and disappointing that the post office portrayed was so unhelpful when Jill attempted to collect her pension - a point for consideration here. The play explored the themes so many families living with dementia will be familiar with: the role of caring, additional and ill-prepared for responsibilities, relationships with neighbours and other contacts, the threat of isolation, the frightening loss of neighbourhood familiarity, increasing confusion and many more. And all in under an hour! It would have provided a splendid introduction to a themed discussion. For instance it did not appear this family had yet used any available support – possibly an intended omission and indeed reference was made to what might be considered. But as so often on the Fringe there was little time. This play certainly deserves a wider audience.

Joyce Shepherd

100 CLUB WINNERS

Jul	I Fraser	A Couper
Sep	A Anderson	M Jamieson

Alzheimer Scotland –
Action on Dementia
is a company limited by
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We rely on fund-raised income and donations to help us to campaign and to provide services for Scotland's 86,000 people with dementia and their carers

www.alzscot.org