

# Dementia in Scotland



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

Summer 2023 – Issue 106



*One* thing,  
not *everything*



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

**DEMENTIA  
AWARENESS  
WEEK** 29 May  
– 4 June



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new volunteers to be  
part of our Dementia  
Helpline team**

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nobody faces dementia  
alone?

Our next Helpline Volunteer  
Preparation Programme is  
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and 23 June.

For further information and  
other training dates please  
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**24 HOUR**

**Dementia**



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

# Helpline

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Email **helpline@alzscot.org**



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### Welcome to the summer 2023 edition of Dementia in Scotland magazine.

As I write this welcome message, Dementia Awareness Week (29 May – 4 June) is fast approaching. This year, we will consider the stigma people with dementia continue to face, with a particular focus on those facing it earlier in life. You can read more about our 'One thing, not everything' campaign on page 8. We have also brought back our popular 'Tea & Blether' event. Find out how to sign up on page 13.

We were delighted to officially open our first Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre in Badaguish in April. There are proven, therapeutic benefits for people with dementia having access to nature and the outdoors – you can read more about this innovative new Centre on page 4.

Our 'Time for You' Carers Fund returned this year to help support unpaid carers of people with dementia living in Scotland. This year's Fund was financed through our fundraised income and was set up to support carers to take some time out to do something that helps them relax and recharge. The Fund proved very popular, and we received over 700 applications.

We are delighted to once again work with our Ambassador and former First Minister Henry McLeish, who is leading our Long Term Care Commission. Key stakeholders, including members from our Active Voice networks, met in early May to progress this work. Amongst the main issues the Commission will address is the implementation of fair dementia care, and we have an important update to share with you on this crucial campaign on page 7.

2023 brings three important 10-year milestones. In March, the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP) celebrated an amazing 10 years.

The Centre is a collaborative partnership between the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and Alzheimer Scotland and has made a remarkable contribution to dementia practice in our general healthcare system over the last decade. The Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC) also marks 10 years in 2023 and their two-day conference in April recognised just some of their wonderful achievements over the years. We firmly believe that research is hope, and the work of the Consortium in bringing together researchers, healthcare professionals and people with dementia is truly inspiring. Finally, this is the tenth year of the Dementia Dog project. The project, a collaboration between Alzheimer Scotland and Dogs for Good, has been truly life changing for the families they have helped – you can read more on page 10.

We are pleased to bring you an update on our Student Research Programme which was launched towards the end of last year. You can read more about this on page 15.

From marathons to skydives, Tea & Blethers to 'Tea in the Sahara', we are always amazed at the creative ways our fundraisers support us, and I would like to thank each and every one of them for their commitment, energy and enthusiasm.

Finally, I want to thank all our staff, volunteers and supporters who help Alzheimer Scotland make sure nobody faces dementia alone.

Best wishes

*Henry Simmons*

Henry Simmons, Chief Executive



**We would like to hear your thoughts on Dementia in Scotland magazine. We have inserted a survey into this issue and would be grateful for your feedback, or get in touch with the Editor, Caroline Russell, by email: [crussell@alzscot.org](mailto:crussell@alzscot.org)**

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# Nurtured by nature – the opening of our Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre

People living with dementia are amongst the population of those who are at risk of becoming socially isolated, lonely and depressed, and as a result often develop a more indoor focused lifestyle. Accessing and spending time outdoors is an important part of living well with dementia and has proven to enhance mental, physical and social wellbeing. Spending more time outdoors can provide instant benefits, including reducing stress and distress associated with dementia, increasing and improving physical activity, providing mentally engaging activities and providing opportunities to learn new skills and hobbies or rediscover old ones. Increased exposure to vitamin D and lots of fresh air can lift moods, and a calm and soothing environment can stimulate the senses.

***“It’s nice to be making things using my hands again. This brings back memories of being in the Guides.” – Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre user***

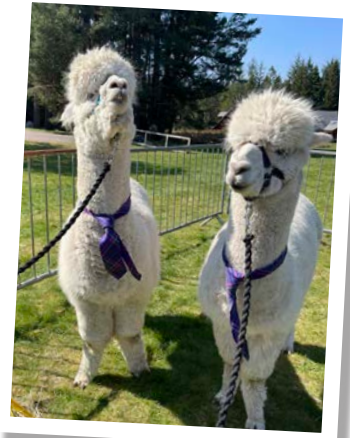
Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund Heritage Horizons Award from the Cairngorms Trust, Alzheimer Scotland opened the UK’s first Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre at Badaguish Outdoor Centre, Aviemore in July 2022. Like all of Alzheimer Scotland’s Dementia Resource Centres, the facility follows the principles of dementia friendly design and strives to create a sense of homeliness which we know is important in helping everyone to feel at ease.

This unique Centre enables people with dementia, their families and carers to experience the benefits of green health activities including woodlands walks, all-ability cycling, forest bathing, wildlife surveys, basket making, wood carving and bushcraft. Working with partner organisations like Wild Things, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Able2Adventure means there is a busy and varied programme with something for everyone.

On Friday 21 April 2023 the Centre celebrated its official launch. With speeches and the formal unveiling of the Centre’s sign, special activities such as a visit from the Cairngorm alpacas, the day was a huge success.

Gillian Council, Associate Executive Lead for Localities at Alzheimer Scotland said:

***“The launch event marks the official opening of Alzheimer Scotland’s first Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre, and it is a really special and exciting day for everyone who has been involved. This concept and project has been developing since 2017 so to be here today, launching the Centre, it’s a big milestone. Not only is this facility great for people in the local area, it will hopefully act as a blueprint for others to follow, as we try to reimagine the caring environment.”***



For further information on the Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre please contact Community Activities Organiser Andy Miller at [amiller@alzscot.org](mailto:amiller@alzscot.org)



# Intergenerational project joins young and old

An inspirational new project in Dumfries and Galloway has brought together different generations with the aim of raising awareness of dementia and tackling the issues of stereotypes and ageism.

The project gave a shared opportunity for primary school children and people with dementia to socialise together through various activities such as arts, baking and playing games.

Facilitated by Alzheimer Scotland Social Work student Janice Chombe, and supported by local Alzheimer Scotland staff, the project ran for four weeks with children attending a day care centre once a week, and people with dementia visiting the school.

The initiative was designed to help the children to understand some of the changes a person with dementia faces, such as memory loss that can cause difficulties with concentration, and losing the ability to say the right words or understand what is being said. It was important for the children to understand that these changes might leave people with dementia feeling frustrated or withdrawn, which could lead them to avoid situations where they have to communicate with people.

A key aim of the project was to boost the children's confidence when interacting with family members or people in the community living with dementia. During the school visits it was important to see the children display skills such as respecting people who may look and act differently from themselves and demonstrating empathy towards people with dementia. This 'perspective-taking' is a crucial social skill and self-awareness skill for children.

The project involved lots of intergenerational teamwork which encouraged better communication and relationship building. This helped establish confidence and informed the children, enabling them to challenge stereotypes and address any fears they may have had about dementia.

"We had fun meeting the ladies, making chocolate lollies, playing the beetle game and just having fun!"



The purpose of the cross-age activities was to encourage social interaction between the different generations, which increased a sense of belonging for people with dementia.

The program had great benefits for all participants. The children have learnt how to communicate with people with dementia, by speaking clearly and slowly, giving the person enough time to respond and finding the right words to express themselves. Everyone worked together, sharing and learning from each other's experiences, and all involved said that they had so much fun.

"Loved everything!  
I enjoyed their  
company so much."



# From Scotland to South America, why dementia didn't stop my adventure by Stuart Dougall



Monday 20 February 2023 was a day that I never thought would happen. It was the day my wife Lorraine and I set off for a cruise around South America. We have always enjoyed travelling, in particular cruising – the opportunity to sample many different places in one holiday without having to pack and repack the case. We booked in 2021, a long-awaited bucket list trip that had always been put off as other destinations took priority. We've been lucky, we both have had relatively good health and good jobs. Then, in January 2022, at the age of 58, I was diagnosed with dementia – a younger onset Alzheimer's subtype.

At this point, there is a moment where your world has collapsed – what's going to happen? how long have I got? no more work? how are we going to live? – these were just a few of my thoughts. Then I told myself to get a grip – my life has changed but it's not over. I had to get on and live my life. A turning point for me was getting in touch with Alzheimer Scotland and joining the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG), this gave me a real focus and a sense that my voice was valued and respected.

Whenever we travelled before my diagnosis, I'd research all the points of interest and produce an itinerary of how long we should spend at each place, the distance and route to the next landmark. However, last year prior to going on medication I was just producing two pieces of paper for our trips, thinking it was okay until my wife said it wasn't up to my normal standard (in a nice way). I had forgotten how to research properly. Never one to give up though, I started researching using sites that I previously used and Google maps, and it all clicked into place. I think it's important to highlight that just because a person has dementia life is not over, it has changed but we can still do a lot of things we used to.

I used to work at the airport and only officially retired in May 2022. As we approached, it felt like I had never been away. Checking in was smooth, then it was off to departures and through to security. In my last weeks of working, I felt the noise going through security was excruciating, and as if my head was going to explode. Now, there were no issues at all, what a difference. We boarded the plane, and we were off to Heathrow then on to Santiago (Chile). We were excited to arrive

and ready to start our adventure. We spent a few days exploring the wonderful sights before joining the cruise at Valparaiso – Chile's main port, well known for its bohemian, artistic vibe and lovely vistas. After the first week, Lorraine observed a small difference in me. She said that things were taking slightly longer to register with me. On previous cruises, I was able to navigate my way around without any issues, whereas I was now using markers to guide my route – but I still got there. The cruise was amazing. We saw some beautiful sights in Chile such as the statue of the Virgin Mary on San Cristobal Hill, the Osorno Volcano and the Chilean Fjords. We also visited Ushuaia – known as the city at the end of the world, the Falkland Islands, Uruguay, and finished in Buenos Aires (Argentina).

Back home and on dry land I reflected on our time away and the differences of travelling with dementia. I wanted to write about my experience to let people know that you can still live well after a diagnosis. The theme of this year's Dementia Awareness Week is around challenging the stigma associated with younger onset dementia. I want to let people know that I am still doing and enjoying the things that I did before my diagnosis and as I write this, I am planning my next adventure!

## Active Voice update

The collective voice of people with lived experience, as people with dementia or as carers, is at the heart of Alzheimer Scotland's work.

Our two national Active Voice groups, the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and the National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN) are made up of people with a diagnosis of dementia and carers or former carers of people with dementia. As part of their work to influence policy and practice, SDWG and NDCAN members recently met with 32 speech and language therapy students on placement with Alzheimer Scotland to share their lived experiences, providing insights that will help guide the students through their future career. Members also continue to participate in the Dementia in Hospitals Collaborative, to improve hospital care for people with dementia.

Another exciting new opportunity to help develop dementia friendly events has seen SDWG members work with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) to plan and deliver a relaxed and informal concert experience. The first of these took place in Edinburgh in February and SDWG members

continue to work with the SCO with further concerts planned.

A priority for both groups has always been to support research and a key partner in this field is the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP). Members were delighted to receive the 'Inspiring People' awards at the Centre's recent 10th anniversary celebration in recognition of their collaborative working over the last decade.

This partnership continues, with SDWG members currently supporting the Centre's 'Career Guidance & Dementia' research project which will explore an intervention to support people diagnosed with dementia with employment-related decisions. NDCAN members are currently supporting a study of everyday solutions used by family carers of those living at home with advanced dementia. Members took our awareness raising message to a recent conference of professionals working in health and social care when they spoke about 'what i wish you knew about dementia and me', offering personal perspectives from the point of view of someone living with dementia and of a carer of someone with dementia. Events like these are key to challenging stigma and changing the image of dementia.

[activevoice@alzscot.org](mailto:activevoice@alzscot.org)

## Fair Dementia Care update

Our Fair Dementia Care campaign seeks to end the inequalities faced by people living with advanced dementia who we believe are treated differently in our current system to those with other life limiting illnesses such as cancer. In June 2022, we wrote to Scottish Government Ministers clarifying our position and explaining that we believe that when a person with dementia progresses to the advanced dementia stage, they should be offered access to an appropriate assessment process that will determine if their needs are primarily health care needs – and if so, should be free. At present there is no mechanism for this, however we believe this is wrong and that there is a duty on the NHS to provide this assessment and if an individual's needs are deemed to be primarily health care, then the NHS should fund this – not the person. Government legal officials have recently agreed in principle to our requested meeting comprising both legal teams, Alzheimer Scotland and relevant government officials. We will keep you updated on the progress of this.

## Long Term Care Commission

Active Voice members joined a range of key stakeholders in Alzheimer Scotland's new commission on the future of long term care. Former First Minister Henry McLeish is leading this work, which will explore a range of key issues, including: how our current care home estate was developed and commissioned, how the range of care models and services meet the needs of the current and future generations, what role communities and individuals play in determining the models of care that are available, how care homes are funded and who pays for them, implementing fair dementia care for people with advanced

dementia, the growing disparity between the national care contract rates and self-funding rates, how the future of long term care models can be designed to be safer in any future pandemic, delivering on the expectations of Anne's Law and avoiding the horrific impact of lockdowns on individuals and families. By undertaking this work, we hope to provide a meaningful contribution which will inform the new National Care Service, one that will consider what new models of care and support should be commissioned, better methods of community involvement and indeed fairer ways of paying for such care. The commission will report on its findings in spring 2024.



# Dementia Awareness Week 2023

## *One* thing, not *everything*

Each year, Dementia Awareness Week (DAW) is held with the aim of raising awareness of dementia and helping improve the lives of people with dementia, their families and carers. This year, we will consider the stigma people with dementia continue to face, with a particular focus on those facing it earlier in life.

## Dementia doesn't discriminate, so why should we?

We want you to see the person behind the diagnosis. Dementia does not define someone. People with dementia can learn new things, continue with work and hobbies, and live a full, enjoyable life. Dementia is just one thing about a person – it's not everything.

We met people with dementia who were willing to share their lived experiences with us. We visited young onset cafes and groups and met with people who told us what it's really like to have a dementia diagnosis earlier in life. We heard from them about the challenges they have faced, including being misdiagnosed, receiving a diagnosis while still in employment, being diagnosed with a rarer type of dementia, and being diagnosed while still caring for a young family or elderly parents.

We talked to them about the stigma and preconceptions that they face on a daily basis. Being told that they are "too young to have dementia" and that "dementia is something that old people have". We asked them what they wanted people to know about having dementia.

We made a series of short films featuring people living with a diagnosis of dementia talking about themselves, their interests and hobbies and how dementia does not define them.

All of our films and stories will be available on our website throughout Dementia Awareness Week and beyond at

[www.alzscot.org/DAW23](http://www.alzscot.org/DAW23)



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**DEMENTIA  
AWARENESS  
WEEK** 29 May  
– 4 June



**Tea &  
Blether**

Find out  
more on p13



# Young onset dementia – what I'd like to share

Margaret McCallion is 58 years old, a member of the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and a passionate campaigner and awareness raiser. This year, the theme of Dementia Awareness Week is one that is close to her own heart as Margaret was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia at the age of 51. When a person under 65 is diagnosed with dementia, this is often referred to as 'young or younger onset dementia'. We asked Margaret what she would like to share with people about having a young onset dementia. This is her response:

**"I'd like to let people know that I'm so much more than just a person with dementia."**

"My experience of having young onset dementia went from the devastating shock of being told pre-diagnosis that I could no longer work, to the frustration of navigating the alien and impersonal DWP benefits system. Then from discovering the person-centred support of Alzheimer Scotland, to joining the Scottish Dementia Working Group and regaining my voice and sense of self-worth.

"This experience has taught me the importance, regardless of the diagnosis, of always seeing the person as a person. That's why I've become a champion for change, to help improve the rights and opportunities for others in situations similar to my own.

"As well as having become a campaigner for the rights of people with dementia, I have remained a person kept strong by my faith, a lover of music and an active member of the Scottish Opera community choir. I am also a family person, and continue to enjoy good times and fun experiences with my mum, sisters and wider family."



Picture courtesy of STV

## Young onset dementia – did you know?

Dementia is most common in older people, but it is estimated that

**3,000**

**people in Scotland under the age of 65 will have dementia, including people in their 40s and 50s, or even younger.**



People with learning disabilities such as Down syndrome **have an increased risk of developing dementia earlier in life**

Dementia in younger people is often not recognised and the needs of younger people with dementia can be very different from those of older people. Younger people and their families are more likely to:

- **be in work**, and therefore to need support to continue working or help when employment ends
- **have financial commitments** including supporting children or young adults
- **need emotional support** to cope with the diagnosis
- **have difficulties obtaining an accurate diagnosis**
- **have one of the rarer forms of dementia**



# Ten years of tail-wagging innovation



2023 marks a special 10-year milestone since the start of the Dementia Dog project, when the world's first ever dementia assistance dog was placed with a family in Arbroath. This is therefore an opportune time to reflect on how one inspirational idea has translated into a life changing service for families in Scotland living with dementia.

The concept of Dementia Dog was one of humble beginnings – a group of Glasgow School of Art students sat around a table, generating fresh ideas for service design that could help a person live well with dementia.

We know dogs are creatures of habit, so the idea of training one to support a structured daily routine was highly plausible. The fact this had never been done before immediately highlighted a gap in service provision that Alzheimer Scotland was well placed to address. With the help of funding from the Design Council, the concept was propelled into an exciting world first pilot, cementing a fantastic charity partnership with Dogs for Good to establish the thriving collaboration that continues to underpin the Dementia Dog project to this day.



As with all Alzheimer Scotland's areas of innovation, we seek to co-design pilot programmes collaboratively with families living with dementia, with their first-hand insights, feedback and experiences helping us shape meaningful and relevant services that are developed with, and not for families. The first 'pioneer' families to receive assistance dogs have been pivotal in helping us shape the Dementia Dog services we offer today. However, this project has been somewhat unique in its co-design journey, where it is not only the families who have helped shape our services – but also the dogs themselves.

We believe dogs are incredible creatures – intuitive, intelligent, loving and loyal. By tapping into these natural attributes and equipping the dog with added

taskwork skills – for instance, reminding someone to take their medication – we have seen the powerful partnership that evolves, in turn helping their human family feel more joyful, independent, socially connected and able to cope better.

What we didn't quite anticipate, however, is how much the dogs would teach us what they are capable of learning – in turn evolving the potential of what we can achieve through Dementia Dog. Examples range from practical help the dogs can provide – e.g., rolling out an exercise mat to motivate someone to do daily physio – to responding to verbal cues through a mobile phone screen, enabling us to open up a whole new world of online dog therapy support for people with dementia.

Over the past decade, the project has grown considerably, taking a person-centred approach to establish a range of dog support services that can flex to the changing needs of families we support. This includes our assistance dogs, community dogs, family dog workshops and online doggy bingo sessions where trained volunteers and their 'canine callers' bring fun and laughter into the homes of hundreds of people with dementia and their carers throughout Scotland.



As we celebrate this special ten year milestone, and begin training up the next generation of Dementia Dogs, we wonder what will they teach us next? To find out more about Dementia Dog and our services visit <https://dementiadog.org>

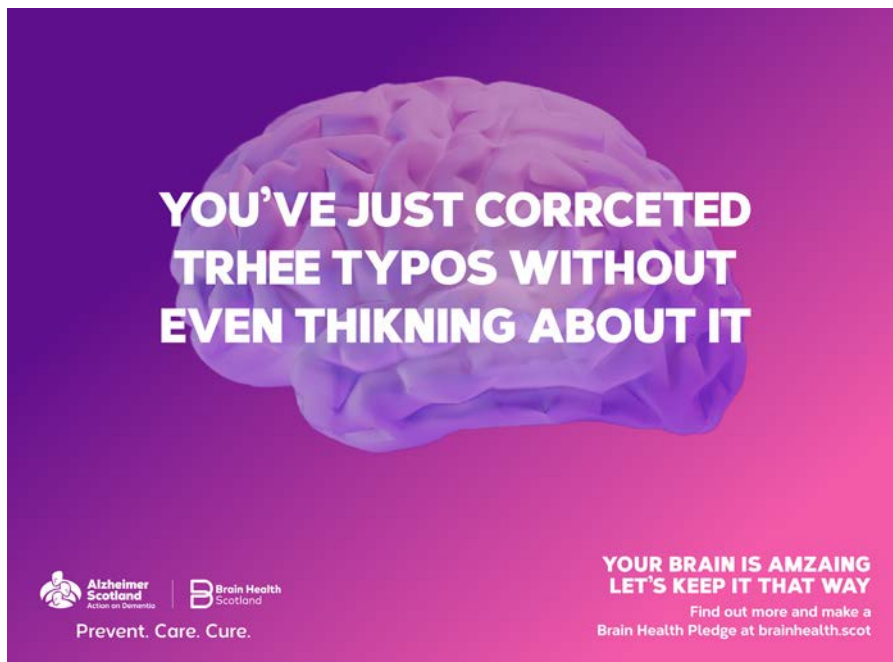


## Brain Awareness Week

Brain Awareness Week took place on 13-19 March. This is a global initiative to raise awareness and support for brain science. Our 'Your brain is amazing, let's keep it that way' campaign was featured on our social media channels as well as on digital screens at Braehead and Silverburn shopping centres. You can find out more about what you can do to look after your brain health on our Brain Health Scotland website


[www.brainhealth.scot](http://www.brainhealth.scot)


You can also read about Brain Health Scotland's 'Keep SPORT in mind' campaign on page 14.



**YOU'VE JUST CORRCETED TRHEE TYPOS WITHOUT EVEN THIKNING ABOUT IT**

**YOUR BRAIN IS AMAZING LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY**  
Find out more and make a Brain Health Pledge at [brainhealth.scot](http://brainhealth.scot)

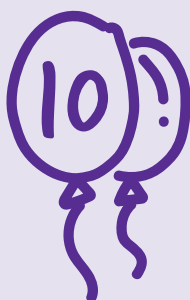
 **Alzheimer Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

 **Brain Health Scotland**

Prevent. Care. Cure.

## 10 years of the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC)

Congratulations to the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC) who recently celebrated an amazing 10-year milestone. The SDRC is a network of dementia researchers, policy makers and people living with dementia from across Scotland. They provide support for dementia research by celebrating and championing the work already ongoing as well as nurturing growth. The consortium also promotes collaboration by encouraging researchers within and across institutions and disciplines to work together, and to help them gain a better understanding of each other's work. [www.sdrc.scot](http://www.sdrc.scot)



## Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice celebrates 10-year milestone

The Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP) held a celebration event in March to mark an incredible 10 years. The Centre, a collaborative partnership between the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and Alzheimer Scotland has done some remarkable work over the last decade, including the Dementia Champions Programme, and transforming the number of nurses graduating at a higher skilled level of dementia practice. Well done to our colleagues at the Centre for their achievements.

## Save the date – Alzheimer Scotland's Annual Conference 2023

Our Annual Conference will take place this year on Friday 15 September at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC). Once again, the Conference will be held in person and tickets will be free for people with dementia and carers of people with dementia.

The programme for the day will include a range of presentations and speakers from across the dementia community as well as opportunities for networking, viewing poster displays and a range of information stalls. You can find out more about the Conference on our dedicated webpage

[www.alzscot.org/conference23](http://www.alzscot.org/conference23)



# Tea in the Sahara



Huge thanks  
to Ann for  
raising over  
**£3,300** for  
Alzheimer  
Scotland!



A sponsored challenge isn't just a great way to raise money – it can also be a life-changing experience. Ann's parents both died with dementia in 2001. Since then, Ann has been raising funds for Alzheimer Scotland and campaigning to improve understanding of dementia.

"I completed a Great Wall of China trek back in 2018 and really enjoyed it. During Covid, it felt even more important to do something big to support dementia. People with dementia and their families had such awful experiences, standards of care seemed to go backwards, and it felt like everything we'd campaigned for over so many years was being lost in a matter of months.

"I signed up for the four-day, 50km Sahara trek in 2021 with my friend Claire. From then until the challenge started in spring 2023, I raised funds towards it: selling on eBay and Vinted, holding bake sales, asking for donations rather than birthday or Christmas presents. I also got a lot of support from my local branch of the Scottish Women's Institute, who held a coffee morning with me to raise money for the trek.

"This was easily my toughest trek. It was mostly between 32° and 40° and I was covered in factor 50, drinking water all the time and draped in loose clothes – I looked like a walking tent! The trek was run by Global Challenge Adventures and they took really good care of us. We did the bulk of our walking in the morning, had a long (shady) lunch then walked a little further in the late afternoon.

"It's an incredible experience to go completely out of your comfort zone and to share that with a group of strangers. On the first day we had a mini sandstorm! We all wrapped ourselves up as much as we could, but the sand got into everything. It felt like I had sand in my eyes for days. At one point, a man with a train of camels stopped to have tea with us in the middle of the desert. We even saw donkeys wandering freely across the sands.

"When it got really hard, I had to remind myself why I was doing this. For my mum and dad, for everyone living with dementia, for Alzheimer Scotland. I couldn't give up.

Challenges like this can be extremely tough. You need to focus on what inspires you; who you are walking for and who you are walking with.

"The Sahara trek was an incredible experience; I'd heartily recommend it."



## Caught the challenge bug?

Visit [www.alzscot.org/support-us/fundraise-for-us](http://www.alzscot.org/support-us/fundraise-for-us) or contact us on [StakeholderEngagement@alzscot.org](mailto:StakeholderEngagement@alzscot.org)



# Tea & Blether

You don't have to be in the Sahara to take part in Tea & Blether! our tastiest campaign is back for 2023 and we're asking supporters to hold coffee mornings or afternoon teas at work, in school, with friends and family or wherever they want to.

It's easy to host your own Tea & Blether and we've got lots of online resources to support you, from handy recipes to show off those cake-making skills to fundraising hints and tips. Social engagement has a positive impact on our wellbeing and brain. Tea & Blether is a chance to enjoy each other's company while supporting our own health and people living with dementia. Host your Tea & Blether during Dementia Awareness Week (29 May – 04 June 2023) or anytime in June to take part in the campaign.

This year we're encouraging people to talk about seeing the person beyond the dementia and how we support them to keep doing all the things they love. You can read more about our 'One thing, not everything' campaign on page 8.

**To find out more or to hold your own Tea & Blether, visit [blether.alzscot.org](https://blether.alzscot.org)**



## Tea & Blether

Now you're talking

**29 May to 4 June**



Last year we had over **140** Tea & Blether events across Scotland – this year, we're aiming even higher. So, what are you waiting for?

## Coming soon – Superhero Summer

This July, become a family of fundraising heroes and take on our Superhero Summer challenge. Keep your eyes peeled on our social channels for more information or email [events@alzscot.org](mailto:events@alzscot.org) to find out more and register your interest.

# SUPERHERO SUMMER

# Brain Health Scotland update

## Boosting sports fans' brain health is star striker's goal

Footballing legend, and Alzheimer Scotland Ambassador, Mark Hateley is backing a new campaign that encourages sports fans to keep their brains healthy. The former England striker – whose father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's – is urging sports followers to take steps that can reduce their risk of developing dementia. Fans' favourite Hateley says his backing of the initiative is spurred by memories of supporting his dad as he lived with the condition. The ex-Rangers and AC Milan star – whose footballing dad, Tony, died in 2014 – is pleased there is growing awareness of what people can do to keep their brain in peak condition.

The Keep SPORT in Mind campaign offers simple tips to help sports enthusiasts achieve better brain health. The Scottish Football Association, Scottish Rugby Union and SportScotland are among its backers.

"We know a lot more now than we did when dad and I were playing about just how important it is to protect players from the harms of head injury," says Hateley, who retired from football in 1999.

"We need to continue to push for better support for all former, current and future players of contact sports in order to protect the health of the brain throughout life."

The SPORT acronym – which stands for Socialise, Protect, Optimise, Rest and Train – is a reminder of the need to build friendships, keep your brain injury-free, eat healthily, take time to relax and stay fit.

There are many factors that can affect our brain's health throughout life. Some of these we can't control, but many things we can look to influence by making positive choices. Research has shown that up to 40 per cent of dementia cases could potentially be prevented by tackling modifiable risk factors. The SPORT in Mind campaign resources stress that it is never too early, or too late to take positive action for better brain health.



Mark pictured with his dad and his son

***"My dad was a giant in an age of physical football when there was little awareness of what might be happening inside players' heads," says Mark Hateley, whose dad turned out for Aston Villa, Chelsea and Liverpool in the 1960s.***

***"He was robbed of that later stage of his life with very little support from his industry and government. We all work hard so we can enjoy life when the hard work is done – so we can watch our kids and grandkids grow. We need to live all our life fully – not just half of it."***

Want to know how to keep your brain healthy?  
**Keep #SPORTinMind**

**SOCIALISE  
PROTECT  
OPTIMISE  
REST  
TRAIN**

Your brain is amazing.  
Let's keep it that way.

**brainhealth.scot/sportinmind**

**B Brain Health Scotland**

Hosted & supported by  
**Alzheimer Scotland**

Scan for your  
brain health tips



To find out more about the campaign, go to:  
**www.brainhealth.scot/sportinmind**



## Alzheimer Scotland Student Research Program

Enabled through the generosity of our supporters, we recently launched a new research program which will fund a series of studentships in dementia and brain health.

Run in collaboration with the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC), the studentships will align with their 5 research themes: Diagnosis, Fundamental Science, Living with Dementia, Prevention, Informatics and Technology.

At the heart of influencing what is funded will be the voice of people with lived experience. An independent selection panel includes representatives from the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN). The panel play a lead role in selecting research themes and interviewing shortlisted candidates.

The selected theme for 2023 was 'Diagnosis', and the panel was delighted to recently award the program's first grant to the University of West of Scotland. This will enable an MRes 1 year studentship to begin in October, investigating the potential for a trauma-informed pathway through the diagnosis of dementia, for people under 65 years old.

This marks the start of an exciting program of studentships, where people with lived experience are not only in the driving seat of influencing its direction, but also directly supporting this next generation of early career researchers and their valuable contribution to Scotland's dementia research community.

# Keeping families at the heart of our digital revolution

Innovation weaves deeply through Alzheimer Scotland, allowing us as an organisation to continuously improve how we support people and deliver the very best services we believe people with dementia, their families and carers deserve. Any organisation can innovate, but it takes something extra to ensure the focus swivels in the right direction: addressing real need and delivering the right support at the right time. Our 'extra' is called Dementia Circle – an initiative where families with lived experience test, review and share honest feedback on everyday consumer products – ranging from socks to Alexa devices!

As the world around us becomes rapidly digitised, we are acutely aware of the risk of social exclusion. We also see first-hand the transformative and enabling benefits of technology, which is why we're so passionate about demystifying technology and providing families with safe, accessible, peer reviewed, digital support. Ten years on, Dementia Circle has become an internationally respected approach and forms the beating heart of how all Alzheimer Scotland's digital innovations are developed. One such example is ADAM – About Digital And Me – a website co-created with families living with dementia providing an online catalogue of everyday consumer products – all tried and tested by our Dementia Circle. The precious insights that families offer help us ensure the services we develop address real challenges faced by those we support. From ADAM ([www.meetadam.co.uk](http://www.meetadam.co.uk)) helping

reduce time and stress for carers in identifying technology support options – to the gravity of helping police find a person with dementia who has gone missing through our free app 'Purple Alert'. Developed in close partnership with Police Scotland, Purple Alert is the first of its kind in the UK and is driven by the concept of local communities collectively responding when an alert is raised on the app, to assist the police in safely enabling their swift return home.

[www.alzscot.org/purplealert](http://www.alzscot.org/purplealert)

Development never stands still. Over the coming year, Dementia Circle will expand to help us develop Virtual Reality as a therapeutic tool. Alzheimer Scotland will be embarking on a number of exciting collaborations that will keep us at the forefront of innovation and ultimately establish transformative therapeutic experiences for people living with dementia. So, watch this (virtual) space!

*"I spent hours going onto this website, that website, and I was exhausted by it. I worry have I chosen the best thing? What I like about ADAM is it gives you an idea of how easy it is to set up. If other people have gone through using these things, what you're doing is piggybacking on their experience – you can then make a decision as we did on what would best work for us."*

*– Kay whose husband Tony has dementia*



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

# DEMENTIA AWARENESS WEEK

29 May  
- 4 June

Show your support for people living  
with dementia now and in the future

**Get involved**

Find out more: [www.alzscot.org/DAW2023](http://www.alzscot.org/DAW2023)

**#DementiaAwareness**



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