



Together We Will Defeat Dementia

Dear Supporters,

As the nights draw in and winter descends, there are real reasons to be hopeful and proud as a BRACE supporter.

Right now, thanks to you, **BRACE is funding £3 million of vital dementia research.** In laboratories and clinics, BRACE-funded scientists are working to unlock the mysteries of dementia. More importantly, they are succeeding.

The BRACE-funded *Fastball* diagnostic tool, which can detect dementia years earlier than current tests (and even identify mild cognitive impairment), gained international, mainstream attention this year and is now firmly on the NHS radar. Turn the page to read more.

Meanwhile, encouraging research shows that **younger generations may have a lower risk of developing dementia** than their grandparents.

Inside this magazine, some of our researchers share why your support is so influential and important. We recap some of our recent highlights, and invite you to join us in remembering those we are fighting dementia for.

You will also find a donation form on the back of the magazine. It is our hope that when you see the difference your donations and fundraising efforts make, you will decide to support us once again.

You have the power to turn a 'no' into a 'yes', when a researcher asks us for funding. With your support, we can fund even more promising dementia research.

Will you help BRACE to say yes to more researchers in 2026?

Together, we can keep turning today's science into tomorrow's hope.

Together, we will defeat dementia.



Liberty Harrison
Head of Fundraising

In 2025, the charity funded 10 PhD students, supporting the future of dementia research. Below you can find out more...

Cillian Power,
at the University
of Exeter

"I am incredibly grateful for the support of BRACE and its donors. Your contributions are advancing our understanding of these complex diseases and bringing us closer to developing much-needed therapies for those affected by dementia."



Lana Willoughby,
at the University
of Bristol

"My goal is to contribute to the global body of knowledge that is needed to develop more effective treatments for Alzheimer's Disease and, thanks to BRACE support, I am one step closer to doing so."

Amy Preston,
at the University
of Bristol

"BRACE funding has given me the opportunity to undertake a PhD and contribute to fundamental research into Alzheimer's disease. It has enabled me to develop as an independent researcher, to gain valuable scientific and transferable skills, and to play a role in advancing our understanding of Alzheimer's. Thank you BRACE and your supporters!"





Racing across the Lakes for dementia research

On a wet weekend in September, BRACE charity partners, Capital One, took on a 'Race Across the Lakes' challenge. They were joined by Lib, Head of Fundraising at BRACE who shares more about the event and the incredible impact Capital One are having on dementia research.

After a long coach journey from Capital One's Head Office in Nottingham, we stepped off a coach into pitch black and pouring rain. Ahead of us lay two days of scavenger hunts, canoeing across lakes, hiking over 20km through the Lake District's stunning but unforgiving terrain, crossing the Honister infinity bridge, and tackling mountain biking trails that would challenge even seasoned cyclists. The rain was relentless, even the event organisers said this was some of the most challenging conditions they'd ever seen.

During the calls leading up to the event, Dave, Head of Community Impact & Investment at Capital One UK, had mentioned a few times the 'Capital One' magic. After doing the challenge, I really understood what he meant. I'll never forget watching people who hadn't cycled in years tackle seriously tough mountain biking when the path had become a stream, seeing teams pull each other through the cold and wet, and witnessing everyone's camaraderie and resilience. By the time we finished the challenge and signed the book in Ambleside, I don't think there was a single person who wasn't soaked to the bone - but absolutely exhilarated.

Capital One has raised an incredible £44,000 for dementia research through this challenge and other fundraising events. This includes £5,500 from their brilliant Double Donations day, £12,210 from selling old computer monitors, and funds from samosa sales, pub quizzes, and an office raffle. This remarkable amount will fund over 2,700 hours of pioneering dementia research - that's one and a half years of a PhD research project, progressing our understanding of dementia, achieving earlier diagnosis, and finding better treatments.

Huge thanks to Dave and Shiva for dreaming up and organising this challenge, along with the team from Charity Challenge, and to every single person who took part. A big thank you, you've made a lasting impact to dementia research.

If you'd like to get involved and make a difference to dementia research, whether you're considering taking on your own challenge or nominating us as Charity of the Year at your workplace, we'd love to hear from you.

If your business would like to support BRACE please contact Liberty on: liberty@alzheimers-brace.org for an informal chat.

An early Alzheimer's test could be used at home

BRACE research has shown that an early Alzheimer's test, called Fastball, can be reliably used in a home setting for the first time.



Fastball was developed by Dr George Stothart and his team at the University of Bath, who have been supported by BRACE for several years.

The test uses a small EEG cap, which is placed on the participant's head, to measure the participant's brainwaves while they watch flashing images. It is quick to set up and takes just 3 minutes to complete the test.

Dr Stothart's research has shown the test can reliably identify memory problems in people with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), a condition that can lead to Alzheimer's.

Crucially, the research team has shown that for the first time the test can be administered in people's homes, outside of a medical setting. Researchers say this opens the door to wider screening and monitoring using this accessible, low-cost technology.

With the development of the breakthrough Alzheimer's drugs, donanemab and lecanemab, an early diagnosis is more important than ever before. The drugs are clinically proven to be the most effective in the early stages of Alzheimer's. Despite this, in England, it is estimated that as many as 1 in 3 people do not currently have a dementia diagnosis, delaying treatments, support and research opportunities to tackle the condition.

"Any research that can be done to identify dementia at an earlier age has got to be good. As research and treatments are developed more people can benefit from them. A fastball test could help anyone, of any age, at home."
Fastball volunteer, John Stennard.





The study was led by Dr George Stothart, pictured with the test. He is a BRACE funded researcher at the University of Bath. He said:

“We’re missing the first 10 to 20 years of Alzheimer’s with current diagnostic tools. Fastball offers a way to change that - detecting memory decline far earlier and more objectively, using a quick and passive test.”

“There’s an urgent need for accurate, practical tools to diagnose Alzheimer’s at scale. Fastball is cheap, portable, and works in real-world settings.”

Fastball is an incredible tool that could offer a dementia diagnosis to anyone who, for whatever reason, cannot access a clinical setting. BRACE has been supporting the development of Fastball for several years, and we are excited to see what Dr Stothart’s team will achieve over the next few years with ongoing support from the charity.

A huge thank you to BRACE supporters who have made this research possible.

Frequently Asked Questions about Fastball

When will the test be available on the NHS?

- The test is still in the research stages and while we are hopeful that it may one day be used by the NHS, it is not currently at that stage.

How can I be tested?

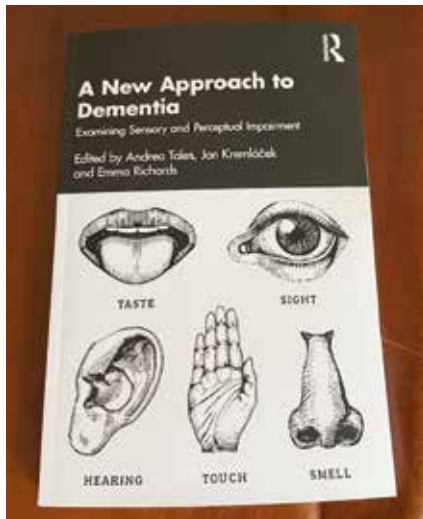
- It is only possible to be tested if you are volunteering in a Fastball research project, as it is still being developed.
- At the time of going to print, only people without a diagnosis or memory problems can volunteer for Fastball. All volunteer positions for people with dementia are filled.
- To volunteer as a healthy participant, please sign up online: www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk/
- By joining, you will be invited to take part in dementia research projects which may include Fastball. You can say no or withdraw from being a research volunteer at any time.

What types of dementia can Fastball diagnose?

- The Fastball test is still in the research stages, and while the research so far shows it can accurately detect memory changes, it is not currently being used to diagnose people with dementia.
- Dr Stothart’s research shows that it may be able to accurately detect early stage Alzheimer’s and also Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) a condition that can lead to Alzheimer’s and other types of dementia.
- The test is currently being developed to see if it is possible to detect other types of dementia by a BRACE-funded PhD student.

How does dementia affect

Professor Andrea Tales and Dr Emma Richards, who have both been supported by BRACE for several years, share their research, alongside other leading experts, in their new book: **‘A New Approach to Dementia: Examining Sensory and Perceptual Impairment.’**



There are almost one million people in the UK living with dementia. Some of the most well-known dementia symptoms are:

- Memory loss
- Decline in cognition/understanding
- Speech issues
- Difficulties with planning and organisational skills

Knowing these symptoms, you may be wondering how does dementia affect the senses?

Sensory changes are a part of healthy ageing. This could mean changes to your eyesight and needing to wear glasses or not being able to hear as well.



ct the senses?

Professor Tales and Dr Richards' work focuses on sensory changes in dementia which happens not through healthy ageing but because of brain changes caused by dementia.

There are many senses including vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch and more. Another important sense is a sense of space or perception. This means being aware of where you are in relation to the world around you. For example, being able to recognise how close or far away you are from furniture, other people or the end of the road.

Dementia-related sensory changes may look like:

- **Perceptual problems** - confusing objects for different things such as thinking a spoon is a pen, finding it hard to recognise shapes and faces.
- **Colour, shadow and depth** - finding it hard to distinguish between different things because of their colour or depth. An example of this could be finding it hard to see white rice on a white plate or not being able to see a step.
- **Motion processing changes** - being unable to see moving objects at all or clearly such as driving cars. This can also include moving images on screens such as TV, iPad etc.
- **Automatic change detection** - being able to recognise changes around you. This could be changes in weather, changes in room set up or changes in people around you.
- **Visual hallucinations** - seeing things that are not real or seeing still objects moving. The hallucinations can vary greatly from person to person.

Their research in this area and in attention has found that some people living with dementia may experience changes in their ability to pay attention to, and process, sensory information. Although such changes may contribute to a person's signs and symptoms they may go unnoticed or unexplained, but they can make some everyday activities and social interactions more difficult. As well as performing research in this area Andrea and Emma want to raise awareness of these potential changes for people living with dementia.



Bios

Professor Andrea Tales is a dementia researcher at Swansea University. Her research focusses on the non-memory aspects of brain function in ageing, cognitive decline, vascular cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease.

Prof. Tales is an elected Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales and of the British Psychological Society.

She has published extensively and co-ordinates an extensive ageing and dementia research network and has supervised many PhD students.



Dr Emma Richards, whose PhD was funded by BRACE at Swansea University, is a Chartered Member of the British Psychological Society.

She also holds an Honorary Clinical Research Fellow at Swansea University with a special interest in Vascular related dementia.

In Memory

Remembering Sylvia Perry

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of Sylvia Perry back in April 2025, one month before her 90th birthday.

Sylvia was a BRACE supporter for many years, and she also served as a board member from September 2009 until December 2021.

During her time on the board, she brought with her a wealth of business experience that was invaluable to the development of BRACE.

Later, she played a key role in organising the annual BRACE Carol service at Frenchay Parish Church, which she did right up until her retirement from the board. She continued to support BRACE with events such as the autumn concert in 2023 and was a member of the Friends of BRACE North Bristol group right up until her passing.

Her warmth, generosity and dedication is very much missed.



Remembering Dr Sian MacGowan

Dr Sian MacGowan sadly died in the spring of 2025 with Alzheimer's disease. Her career was dedicated to dementia research, and she has left behind a strong legacy.

Sian worked with Professor Gordon Wilcock, one of the founders of BRACE, in the early 1990s until 2002. She was initially involved in research with Dr Dave Dawbarn and Dr Shelley Allen, where they explored drug treatment targets for Alzheimer's disease.

Later she provided leadership to the South West Dementia Brain Bank at the former Frenchay Hospital. Here, thanks to a larger laboratory space, Sian developed more research based on the findings of the earliest reported genetic risk factors for Alzheimer's disease. With the availability of brain tissue in the Brain Bank and, in conjunction with work in local clinics led by Professor Wilcock, it allowed Sian to develop some of the first translational dementia research that Bristol is still known for.

In 2002, she left her role at Frenchay and the Brain Bank to become the Chief Executive of BRACE, where she grew the charity from strength to strength for the next 6-7 years.

Our thoughts are with Sian's loved ones.





You're Invited!

BRACE Christmas Carol Service

Join us on Sunday 7th December from 3.00 pm (doors open at 2.30 pm) for a traditional Christmas Carol Service, plus the reading of names from the BRACE Book of Remembrance.



The service is taking place at Trinity-Henleaze United Reform Church, Waterford Road, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4BT.

Write a tribute to a loved one to hang on our BRACE Christmas tree, grab your last minute Christmas cards and buy some raffle tickets to win a Christmas hamper.

Tickets are free.

Please come along, to celebrate and remember loved ones and enjoy a beautiful carol service.

To book your ticket please go to:

www.alzheimers-brace.org/events/christmas-service-25/
or call the office on **0117 414 4831**

We hope to see you there.

The Book of Remembrance:

We are here to support you in preserving the memory of your loved one

At BRACE, we offer a heartfelt tribute to those who have passed away from or with dementia through our Book of Remembrance. Each name is carefully inscribed by a skilled volunteer calligrapher, ensuring a personal and beautiful commemoration. It is completely free to have your loved one's details entered.



An entry in the BRACE Book of Remembrance

The book is displayed at our annual Christmas carol service, where new entries are read aloud. This moving ceremony provides solace to many.

If you would like to honour a loved one in our Book of Remembrance or learn more about other ways BRACE can support you in remembering someone special, please contact us by:

- Calling our office at 0117 414 4831
- Writing to BRACE Charity Office, The Brain Centre, Southmead Hospital, Bristol, BS10 5NB
- Emailing elise@alzheimers-brace.org
- Visiting www.alzheimers-brace.org/in-memory



BRACE Dementia

Your purchase could make a big difference to dementia research.

Thousands of pounds are raised each year through shop orders for the charity.

Together we will defeat dementia.

To order, please fill in the shop order form insert or go to www.alzheimers-brace.org/shop to order online and to see the full collection of items we have available.

Thanks so much for your support.



Twiddlemuffs

A twiddlemuff is a cozy knitted hand muff with various textures and objects inside. They are great for providing stimulation for people with dementia who have restless hands.

£10 each

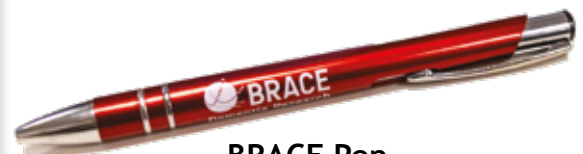
EXCLUSIVE

Any Occasion Card Packs by Artist Sarah Boden

Internationally renowned artist, Sarah Boden has designed three beautiful cards exclusively for BRACE, sold in packs of 6, with 2 of each design.

Each card is left blank inside to add your own personal message or greeting.

£4.95 per pack of 6 cards.



BRACE Pen

A BRACE branded black, ballpoint pen.

£2.00

The cards and envelopes are manufactured in the U.K. from materials carrying the FSC® (FSC-C003675) Chain of Custody certification. The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.



Research Shop



Any Occasion Cards

Be prepared for any occasion with these beautiful cards.

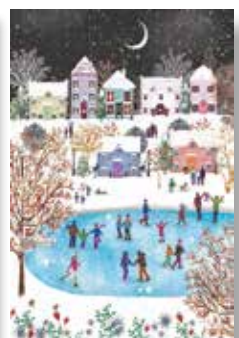
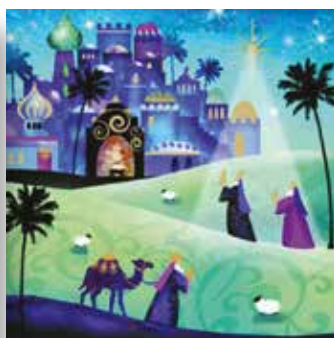
They are sold in packs of 10, each pack containing 2 each of the 5 designs shown.

Each card is blank inside to add your own personal message or greeting.

£5.25 per pack of 10 cards.



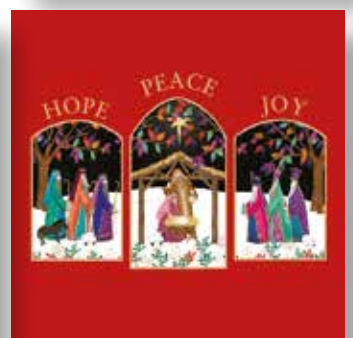
For a wider selection of cards please visit our online shop: www.alzheimers-brace.org/shop



Christmas Cards

There are different Christmas cards designs available and they come in packs of ten with envelopes.

The cards are priced between £3.95 and £4.50 per pack.



Donation form

☒ Yes, I will donate to defeat dementia!

I would like to give a donation of:

☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ My choice of £_____

I would like make this donation

☐ monthly ☐ annually ☐ once only

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

giftaid it

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

☐ Yes - I am a UK taxpayer and would like to Gift Aid my donations now and in future.

I understand I must pay enough income tax and/or capital gains tax each tax year to cover the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations, and I am responsible for paying any difference.

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE):

ADDRESS:

POST CODE:

I would like to donate by: (please tick)		CHEQUE/CASH ☐	
MASTERCARD ☐	VISA ☐	AMEX ☐	
CHARITY VOUCHER ☐	CAF CARD ☐	MAESTRO ☐	
NAME AS ON CARD			
CARD NUMBER		MAESTRO	
VALID FROM	EXPIRY DATE	ISSUE NO	CVC NO
SIGNATURE		DATE	
CVC number is required if donating by card			
Please send me an acknowledgement by email* ☐ in the post ☐ not at all ☐			
*EMAIL ADDRESS			

Please keep me informed with news, research updates, events and more via your

☐ E-newsletter (please supply email address)

☐ Bi-annual magazine

If your details are incorrect or have changed, please let us know by emailing fundraising@alzheimers-brace.org or calling 0117 414 4831.

Thank you so much for your support

www.alzheimers-brace.org/privacy-policy

Registered Charity 297965



Join us at Let's Talk Dementia 2026, a one-stop-shop on all things dementia!

Returning for a third year, the free event will take place on Saturday 23rd May 2026, 10.30 am - 4.30pm, in a new bigger venue at the Bristol Beacon, Trenchard St, Bristol BS1 5AR.

Meet dementia experts, attend short talks, join in dementia friendly activities and enjoy complimentary hot drinks. A chance to have your pressing questions answered in a friendly setting.

The event is fully accessible, which includes hearing loops for talks, BSL interpreters, lifts and accessible toilets.

For more information please visit:
www.alzheimers-brace.org/events/ltd-2026

If you receive this magazine by post or email, it is because we have you on record as having opted in to our mailing list. If you do not wish to receive our mailings in future, just send us an email or a letter and we will ensure that you do not receive further mailings.