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# The Stammerer Trust

Charity Commission No. 265938

NEWSLETTER



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## EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to our Autumn newsletter.

I enjoy listening to an eclectic mix of music but when younger felt disconcerted when musicians used stuttering for effect, expression or to fit the melody. Or perhaps embarrassed that people might refer to my stammer on hearing songs that contained repetitive, plosive and fricative lyrics. Nobody, of course, paid any attention and was happy, like me, to belt them out on the dance floor or in the car!

One of the most famous songs using stuttering lyrics is 'My Generation' by The Who. Lead singer, Roger Daltrey, who it is thought had a stammer, said his manager suggested he stammered on the lyrics to give the effect of someone high on drugs! The BBC initially refused to play the song on release in 1965 because of not wishing to offend people who stutter. An avid David Bowie fan, one of my favourite songs is 'Changes'. Released in 1971 with his hypnotic saxophone and Rick Wakeman on keyboards he stutters the lyrics "Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes".

There are numerous 'stuttering' songs, many written in the sixties and seventies such as 'Jive Talkin' by the Bee Gees, 'My Sharona' by The Knack, 'Bennie And The Jets' by Elton John, 'Barbara Ann' by The Beach Boys, and more recently with more repetition than stuttering like 'Boom! Shake the Room' by DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince, 'Womanizer' by Britney Spears, 'See You Again' by Miley Cyrus and 'Umbrella' by Rihanna. It seems songs with stuttering lyrics will always be en vogue.

If you have any comments, contributions or articles you would like to see published please send them to me by email to [newsletter@stammertrust.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@stammertrust.co.uk) before 21st March 2018.

Happy reading.

**Andrew Barnes**

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## **FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR**



I like the transition from summer to autumn. The rush of spring and summer has gone. I see lots of colourful leaves on my drive to work. I no longer feel the urge to slap on sun tan lotion. The local pub prepares the log fire in the Inglenook fireplace ... and most importantly, we all imitate nature and start to SLOW DOWN. Try and make time to sit and talk to each other, with your preference of a mug of hot chocolate or something stronger. Calm, relaxed conversation is so much easier than shouting to each other without even stopping to make eye contact. I think all of us reading this newsletter can make good interesting conversation, given the time to relax, control our breathing and arrange our thoughts.

Looking back, our annual fun afternoon and rounders match took place in June, and was rather more colourful than usual. The Border Morris group, Armaleggan, danced, involved us all in join-in dances, then enthusiastically joined in the rounders match - some for the first time since their school days!

The respected Oxford Dysfluency Conference was held in September, with the attendance of several therapists supported by the Stammer Trust. Their attendance publicised research arising out of the work at the Apple House, also allowing the therapists to learn new ideas to benefit future patients.

Our AGM will take place on Saturday 11th November at 12 noon in the Apple House. We will start with a light lunch, progress with the business of the Trust (not too prolonged) then finish with a seminar and discussion based on the most relevant presentations from the Oxford Dysfluency Conference.

You are all welcome to attend.

***Andy McCabe***

# THERAPISTS REPORT

Clemmie started coming for sessions at the Apple House in January this year. She is a very ambitious, creative, and academic girl, but was finding it increasingly difficult to be confident and do all that she wanted, because of her stammer. Typical of many bright girls, Clemmie was adept at switching words and finding ways to avoid talking, but knew this wasn't right or how she wanted to be.

Over the following months, she has grown in confidence. It's not always easy for her, but she is doing less avoiding, and trying to be more open about her stammer. She comes to Apple House appointments with her Mother, but felt that her Father wasn't really involved, and so wanted to talk with him about the stammer; she just wasn't sure how or when to broach it. Clemmie's solution was to put her thoughts in writing and share them with him, and it led to more open and helpful conversations. This is what she wrote.

**Emma Gough**, SLT at the Apple House

## Drowning

I'm drowning in unspoken words,  
Answers that are never said,  
Ideas that are never expressed,  
Emotions that are never discussed,  
Feelings that are never shared,

I'm drowning from fear of speaking,  
Fear of expressing my opinion,  
Fear of being targeted for a question,  
Fear of being teased,  
Fear of what the future means for me,

I'm drowning from overthinking,  
Having to consider every word I say,  
Having to change the words I use,  
Having to be my own thesaurus,  
Always finding synonyms for the words I want to speak,

All these fears grasp my ankles,  
Tugging me into the dark abyss beneath me,  
Deeper and deeper,  
Vision obscured by darkness,  
My head is throbbing,  
Every part of me screaming for oxygen,  
Exhaustion spreads to every muscle,  
Then I breathe and the word is released,  
The shimmering sea surface is penetrated,  
I am no longer sinking,  
I broke through.

By Clemmie, 14 years

## APPLE HOUSE FUN DAY

I arrived at the Apple House Fun Day with my son, Adam, to an array of colour and pageantry display. We thought we might be in the wrong place but were soon welcomed by Armaleggan, the Oxfordshire Border Morris group, who named The Stammer Trust as their charity for the 2016/17 season. They performed several show dances and soon had everyone involved. I passed up the first dance preferring to take photos but when offered a 'knobbly stick' to dance a 'Smithy' and 'Rose of the Warren' I couldn't resist. Out of breath with laughter still in the air we had tea and cake before heading off to get competitive for on the rounder pitch with the Armaleggan dancers joining us.



We mixed everyone up (those Armaleggan folk seemed confident using sticks!) and formed two teams led by Geoff (Team A) and myself (Team B). Team A were first up to bat. Geoff, known for his trickery and cheating, started the antics after the first bowl by kicking the ball out of reach from the fielders. Mark of Armaleggan was spectacularly caught out by fellow dancer by Chris (ex-army and

very competitive). Team B batted second. Joanne struck a lovely ball only to be caught out but brother David came to the rescue when hitting out beyond the fielders giving the team a full rounder. Geoff tried to slow the game down, used the 'old' two ball tactic to fool the opposition. This time caught on camera!

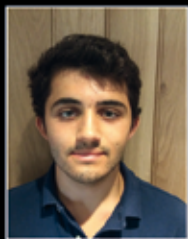


The result:

Team A (Geoff) = 18

Team B (Andrew) = 22

# Stammer Trust



ROWAN ELLETT

Rowan has stammered since he was four and for many years received therapy, mostly Lidcombe, at the Apple House. This helped him immensely. He currently lives in West Oxfordshire with his family and is studying at College. He is hoping to go to University to study journalism.



BEN THATCHER

Membership Secretary

A stammerer since early childhood, Ben sought help with his speech in adult life, being referred to the Apple House for a series of sessions with David Ward. He has enjoyed significantly improved communication ever since.



LISA ELLETT

Secretary

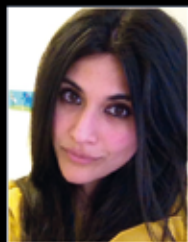
Lisa Ellett lives with her husband and four children in the Oxfordshire countryside. She has been involved with the Apple House since 2000 when her eldest son was referred there because of his stammer. She and her family will be forever grateful for the support from the Apple House.



ANDY M.

Ch

Communication in all areas of life can result in an inability to fulfill their potential. Attending a course in 1999 as an employer followed by customer research and developed, supported existing techniques. Result: Married with three children, a club member in and out of work. Treasurer of the



LAILA TYRRELL

Laila is a Speech & Language Therapist working with children from pre-school to primary. She has a specific interest in fluency and fluency research. Laila initially helped run fluency groups at The Apple House as a student in 2010. She later joined and became involved with the Trust in 2011 after presenting her Masters Thesis from the University of Reading. Laila lives in North Oxfordshire with her husband and children.



ANDREW BARNES

Newsletter Editor

After attending an intensive course in the early nineties became a committee member. Served as Chairman for seven years. He is married with three children and is a company director for a printing firm in Oxfordshire.



POLLY MITCHELL

Polly was Clinical Lead in Paediatric Dysfluency based at the Apple House until 2009 working with Chris and later with Rachel. With David she researched the effectiveness of Intensive Fluency Therapy for children. She is now practising as an Independent Specialist working with children with stammers.



GEOFF F.

Custodia

Married to Susan in the south coast. Labradors. In 2000 an Apple House member and served for 10 years. In 2006 became a Trustee. His mother lives locally.

# st Committee



MCCABE

Chair

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DHANUSHKA TENNAKOON

Treasurer

Dhanushka joined the stammer trust in 2011 after attending a series of adult therapy sessions. Engineer and an energy professional, Dhanushka believes fluency enables one to achieve his or her true potential. He is glad he was able to get much needed support from Apple House/Stammer Trust and keen on enabling other to do the same. Dhanushka lives in South Oxfordshire with his wife and two young children.



CHRISTINE CHARLES

Custodian Trustee

Chris Charles has been involved with The Apple House and The Stammer Trust since 1983 and is a Trustee. She worked alongside Gerda Wilson with adults as a clinician; then with Polly Mitchell developing the service for children. She relocated to Derbyshire due to her husband's job, working in Staffordshire. She and her husband returned to live in Oxfordshire where she continues to work as an Independent Speech and Language Therapist.



RAY WILLIAMS

Custodian Trustee

He has been a committee member for 20 years and has served as Chairman. He attended two courses at the Apple House in the late 1980's and has achieved a high level of fluency as a result. Living in Worcestershire with his wife and three sons, Ray runs his own consultancy company specialising in advising on agriculturally based investments and alternative enterprises.



FORWARD

in Trustee

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se course, not  
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EMMA GOUGH

Speech Therapist

Emma works with children with all speech, language, and communication difficulties in mainstream schools in North Oxfordshire. She became a Specialist SLT working alongside Rachel at The Apple House with children with dysfluency, in 2012. She also has a special interest in voice disorders. Before training as a Therapist, Emma worked as a writer for Oxfam, and is a keen amateur singer.



DAVID WARD

Speech Therapist

A Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, joined the Oxford Stammer Programme at The Apple House in 1999, having previously worked in Canada as a specialist fluency clinician and in England as as both specialist fluency clinician and lecturer/researcher.



RACHEL KENNEL

Speech Therapist

Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist and Clinical Lead for Paediatric Dysfluency in Oxfordshire, Rachel first came to the Apple House in 2001. Before training as a speech and language therapist she previously worked for fifteen years as a curator and art historian.

# TERENCE BARRY GRANT AWARD SCHEME

At our AGM last November applications were reviewed and discussed for the Terence Barry Grant Award Scheme after being advertised in the RCSCCT 'Bulletin' and the BSA website. Six applications were awarded up to the maximum of £250

The successful applicants were:-

**Pip Steers** a Speech and Language Therapist from East Surrey Hospital - £149 towards a training course and purchase of books.

**Mahmoud ElSherif** a Psychology researcher studying at the University of Bath looking into links between stammering and dyslexia awarded £250 to assist in completion of work.

**Mary Smith** a Speech and Language Therapy, Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust awarded £240 to purchase eight books on childhood stammering.

**Anna Prince** a Speech and Language Therapist at East Trees Health Centre, Bath awarded £200 to attend courses: Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Solution Focused Brief Therapy

**Jennifer Short** a Speech and Language Therapist (Community Adult Service) awarded £250 to attend Acceptance & Commitment Therapy course.

**Jordi Fernandez** awarded £250 to help in the development of the product - Respira

We continue with reports from **Mahmoud Elsherif, Jennifer Short, Anna Prince** and **Pip Steers**

## Comparing people who stammer with people with dyslexia

I would first like to give profound thanks to the Stammer Trust, whose grant enabled my supervisors (i.e. Dr Linda Wheeldon and Dr Steven Frisson) and me to recruit people who stammer. Secondly, I thought it would be beneficial to talk about the project and the experiences of people who stammer. The aim of the project is to compare the underlying similarities and differences between people who stammer and those with dyslexia. Recent research has highlighted possible similarities between these difficulties and we are exploring what gives them their unique profile. The grant enabled us to start recruiting a larger population of participants with both conditions, allowing us to see where the difficulties may originate. Recruitment is currently ongoing though it is proving challenging to recruit people who stammer and we are now exploring additional avenues (e.g. NHS).

In addition to 25 participants with dyslexia, we obtained data from two people who stammer. These participants participated in several sessions over multiple days and were compensated both for their time and travel expenses. These participants found the sessions interesting and exciting, whilst thought-provoking. They learnt more about their difficulties along with the similarities between people who stammer and people with dyslexia. They have asked other individuals within the British Stammering Association and people who participated in interventions (e.g. Starfish project) to participate, as they felt that this research would benefit not only people who stammer but also people with dyslexia. The verbal feedback included:

***"The process was painless...I was very interested to hear what he was looking into...the similarities between people with dyslexia and people who stammer is more profound than***



*I expected. It could help improve the quality of life for both groups and raise interesting future avenues to look at."*

*"The study made me consider possible links between stammering and dyslexia. This was not a connection I'd considered before...it was interesting to consider whether there may be a link, instead of being told stammering was a learned habit."*

I hope my research raises further awareness of these two difficulties (dyslexia and stammering). Once again, I want to thank the Stammer Trust for the money they have provided and for their support in advertising my research on their website for the recruitment of people who stammer. We hope to publish this research in well-respected journals to help us understand more about these difficulties and advance the research into stammering and dyslexia.

Thank you for reading this.

**Mahmoud Elsherif**

## ***Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Course for speech and language therapists, at City Lit, London, Spring 2017***

My heartfelt thanks goes to The Stammer Trust for helping to fund my attendance at this course earlier this year. I know this therapy approach has been covered in your newsletter quite a lot recently, and I can only add my appreciation for being enabled to have this extra 'string to my bow' as a therapist, working in the regional service for adults who stammer in Bristol, Bath, South Glos and North Somerset.

I was able to use ideas and approaches immediately upon returning to my clinic, encouraging and enabling clients to be more able to 'defuse' from negative thoughts and experience; to drop the struggle of elements of living with a stammer, and to allow themselves a freedom to take effective, value-led action towards what is important to them.

Clients who I have used this approach with have said that they feel much more positive about their journey living with stammering. Key helpful elements were 'dropping the struggle' of hiding or controlling the stammer, and reducing the power and impact of fearful thoughts about speaking or stammering. Ability to be open about and more accepting of stammering was also highlighted as a positive change, and there was notable reduction in the frequency and impact of actual stammering occurring.

Defusion from unhelpful and overwhelming thoughts about speaking has helped my clients feel more free from the shackles they had previously experienced. One client reported feeling more at peace; with stammering less at the fore front of his interactions. Less energy spent on anger and frustration is allowing him to pursue the things that matter most to him with greater commitment and focus.

Thank you again for helping me to access important training, enabling me to enable others to live their best life possible!

**Jennifer Short SLT North Bristol NHS Trust**

## ***Solution Focused Brief Therapy with Children and Young People who Stammer and their Parents***

I was lucky enough to be awarded a grant by the Stammer Trust to attend a 2 day course. The course took place at the Michael Palin Centre and was called: Solution Focused Brief Therapy with Children and Young People who Stammer and their Parents.

What a wonderfully refreshing approach. I work as a Speech and Language Therapist and the course has significantly influenced my practice when working with young people who stammer.

### **Key elements of the therapy:**

- 1) Having a conversation with the client to find out about them e.g. their interests, hobbies, family. This 'problem-free' talk allows the therapist to see the person as a whole – it helps to shift attention from the problem that brought them to therapy and towards solutions and positivity. It allows the therapist to understand what strengths and skills the client is already using, and to consider how they can use these to move towards their preferred future.
- 2) Identifying a 'preferred future' – the therapist can ask the client e.g. "What are your best hopes from today / from our talking together?" We can then guide clients to describe their preferred future or best hopes. We can support clients to make a very detailed description of what this preferred future will look like using concrete and observable examples - the client describes what they will be doing, what others will notice about them, how others will respond to them.
- 3) Seeking instances of times when the preferred future is already happening. We can use a rating scale activity from 0-10 (where 10 = best hopes realised and 0 = the opposite) which helps explore where the client is on the scale in relation to their preferred future. We can ask clients about what they are already doing that helps e.g. "how come you are at a 4 and not at a 1? What are you doing?" We can then explore the next small signs of change that will mean they have moved up one point on the scale – "What will you be doing differently? What will you notice about yourself? What will others notice about you?"
- 4) Summarising the session including: what the client is already doing, actions they have taken, strengths they have identified. We can then suggest the client looks out for the signs of change that will tell them they're moving towards their preferred future. There is no expectation upon the client to take specific actions / we are not asking the client to do anything other than suggesting they 'look out for' or 'notice' when these changes are happening.

### **Key influences upon my practice as a Speech and Language Therapist:**

I am listening to my clients with a more 'constructive ear' – I am listening out for strengths, skills and resources that they have. I make a mental note of these and explore them further in the session. The approach assumes that all clients have the strengths, skills and resources within them to move towards their preferred future, and it is my role to help to bring these to the

forefront of the client's mind.

I am using questioning to elicit a high level of detail from clients. Building a picture/ describing their preferred future helps them to bring that future to life, and talking is a valuable way to help people move towards their best hopes.

I have realised the importance of using the client's own words when asking questions and then summarising what they have said. I am careful not to impose my own interpretation upon what they have said, ensuring that the therapy is meaningful and relevant to them.

I am ensuring that the client is 'in the driving seat' of the therapy and I am there to help as a guide. I have found the approach is empowering for clients.

I have found that I can use elements of the approach in a wide range of scenarios e.g. when interacting with colleagues and teachers. The approach has been successfully implemented in clinical supervision sessions for healthcare professionals too, which is something I would like to explore.

### **Summary:**

This approach has been a refreshing way to work with young people who stammer and their families. The focus on solutions, rather than problems, helps to shift the perspective of therapists and clients towards a positive future. I have seen positive and observable changes in young people with whom I've adopted this approach, and look forward to using the approach with many more clients to come. I would like to thank the Stammer Trust for the opportunity to attend this course, and staff at the Michael Palin Centre who ran such an inspiring and practical course.

By **Anna Prince** - *Speech and Language Therapist for Bristol Community Health Paediatric Stammering Service.*

## ***How the Stammer Trust grant has helped develop our service for people who stammer***

In 2016 I applied for a grant from the Stammer Trust through the Terence Barry Grant Award Scheme to assist in further developing our speech and language therapy service for adults who stammer in the community across East Surrey. I was successful with my application and was able to pursue the proposed areas of service development.

We are the only speech and language therapy service which currently treats adults who stammer in the rural Surrey area, and are hopeful that in the future we can provide an outreach service that can include patients from beyond East Surrey. Being the only therapist able to provide the service it is vital that I maintain and update my skills, supported by evidence based assessment to offer the best possible care to our service users. This includes being able to access relevant training and the ability to use suitable materials for assessment and therapy. With limited funds for development of continuing professional development through attendance of courses and access to resources, I was pleased to hear that the Stammering Trust was able to support speech

and language therapy services in the UK.

I successfully applied for a grant from the Stammer Trust through the Terence Barry Award Scheme last year to support development of my service. This allowed me to attend a course at the City Lit in London named 'Advanced working with adults who stammer' where I had the opportunity to meet a wide range of therapists working with stuttering with whom I could share experiences of what is working in this specific area of therapy.

The course allowed us to review therapy techniques such as avoidance reduction therapy, block modification therapy and stammering openly. As a group we could share ideas about how these techniques were delivered, what resources assisted effective therapy and any challenges around treatment. We heard about a counselling approach named Focusing-Oriented Approach which provided ideas about the use of counselling in therapy, then had presentations on working with cluttering and neurogenic stammering, stammers that occur following brain damage. I found these discussions useful, and have applied this learning into therapy with one long-standing client who I believe has a clutter. We used a metronome app to support his rate, which he was able to download on his phone and use independently. I have also recently had numerous referrals for clients who now stammer after experiencing a stroke. My approach to assessment, then therapy has become more definite with the use of speech shaping techniques, such as smooth speech to assist fluency.

The grant also gave me the opportunity to purchase the Overall Assessment of the Experience of Stammering OASES, which is an evidence based American assessment tool involving a questionnaire about the person's experience of stuttering. This is a welcome addition of tools to investigate the person's wellbeing related to stammering to help guide goal planning for effective therapy.

We are very grateful to the Stammer Trust for their support of our service development which has already made changes in the way we care for adults who stammer in East Surrey.

**Pip Steers, *Speech and Language Therapist, East Surrey Hospital, Redhill, Surrey***