

Parkinson's UK Edinburgh Branch Research Interest Group

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Newsletter March 2017 Issue No. 15

View from the Chair

We are delighted to announce that Professor **Andrew Lees MD FRCP**, Director of the Sarah Koe PSP Research Centre at the Institute for Neurology, London, and Professor of Neurology at University College, London, has agreed to give the sixth Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecture at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh on the evening of 20th September 2017. As usual, admission is free but by ticket only. Details will be available in due course via our web page. The lecture is entitled **The quest to find a cure for Parkinson's disease** with an intriguing subtitle: *Mentored by a Madman: The William Burroughs experiment*. Come to the lecture and all will be explained!

The Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecturer 2017

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Edinburgh Parkinson's
Lecture 2017



Talk by Alison Green

ERIG: Esther Sammler

Contact details

OUR LECTURER: Born on Merseyside Andrew Lees qualified in medicine at the Royal London Hospital Medical College in 1970. His postgraduate clinical training in neurology was undertaken at l'Hôpital de la Salpêtrière, Paris, University College London Hospital and the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. At the age of thirty two he was appointed to the staff at the National, Middlesex, and Whittington Hospitals. He was appointed Professor of Neurology at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Queen Square and succeeded Professor Michael Harrison as Director of the Reta Lila Weston Institute for Neurological Studies at UCL from 1998 till 2012 and was succeeded by Professor Tom Warner. He was Director of the Queen Square Brain Bank for Neurological Disorders and Sara Koe PSP Research Centres.

ERIG Talk by Dr Alison Green

In her talk to an appreciative audience at ERIG on 14 January, 2017, Dr Alison Green revealed that her work on Parkinson's developed out of a longstanding research interest in the development of diagnostic tests for dementia and her internationally acclaimed work on a protein aggregation test for Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (CJD) called Real-Time Quaking Induced Conversion (RT-QuIC). These techniques have now been adapted to investigate the aggregation of the protein alpha-synuclein in the cerebrospinal fluid, the results of which could aid diagnosis of Parkinson's which hitherto has been so difficult to diagnose in the early stages. Alison also noted that the use of cerebro-spinal fluid, acquired through a lumbar puncture, is not without risk, and the use of other tissues, such as olfactory mucosa and blood, is being explored

Alison's slides are available to read or download on our website

As usual, we are grateful to Dr Tilo Kunath for his hospitality at SCRM.

ERIG Talk by Dr Esther Sammler

Time and date: 10.30 – 13.30, Saturday 22 April 2017

Venue: Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine, 5 Little France Drive
Edinburgh EH16 4UU

There are many proteins and pathways that play a role in the cascade of events that eventually result in a person developing Parkinson's disease. The development of new treatments and ultimately a cure of Parkinson's disease will depend on a much deeper understanding of these events. The MRC Protein Phosphorylation and Ubiquitylation Unit (MRC PPU) devotes significant efforts into dissecting the signalling cascades involved in Parkinson's disease and is thereby focusing on genes that have been associated with familial forms of the disease. Changes in the LRRK2 gene are the greatest known genetic contributor to Parkinson's disease, accounting for 1-2 % of all cases and even more so (up to 40%) in people with certain ethnic backgrounds. Professor Alessi's team together with international collaborators has recently identified a new link between LRRK2 and members of the Rab protein family, other crucial players in the Parkinson's field. Esther is focusing on translating these new discoveries from 'bench to bedside' by establishing a test by which she can explore this new signalling pathway in human blood samples. Such a test would provide the Parkinson's community with a tool to measure the impact of novel drugs in testing – in particular LRRK2 inhibitors -, point to potential new drug targets and allow monitoring LRRK2 pathway activity in patients with genetic, but also sporadic Parkinson's

A sandwich lunch will be provided after the talk for those attendees who so indicate when registering for the event.

Register using Eventbrite via our website.

Edinburgh Research Interest Group is extremely grateful to Dr Tilo Kunath for his hospitality in hosting the meeting at SCRM

Web site

The Edinburgh Branch web site is at www.edinburghparkinsons.org and the Research Interest Group page is www.edinburghparkinsons.org/research-interest-group/

Any queries should be directed to the Editor and Chair of the Research Interest Group, [Ken Bowler](mailto:ken@edinburghparkinsons.org) by email to ken@edinburghparkinsons.org

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).