



Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecture 2015 – *The Battle to Beat Parkinson's: the End of the Beginning*: Professor Patrik Brundin delivered a highly informative and inspirational lecture expertly pitched for the mixed audience of PwPs, carers, clinicians and researchers. In recent years advances in related sciences have led to a far greater understanding of the underlying pathology and important disease mechanisms than previously.

Significant strides have been made in *stem cell* research with the possibility of now using skin cells to generate new dopaminergic cells rather than using embryonic stem cells. *Gene therapy* has also leapt forward with the possibility of using genes to create a virus that could be injected into the brain to prompt the making of dopamine. Yet another recent area of focus is *drug repurposing* – examining drugs already used for other conditions to see whether they might be effective in the treatment of PD. All three areas are generating significant hope for successful clinical therapies within the next decade or so and aimed at slowing progression of the condition and even repairing the brain. Research is indeed entering a new phase but the way forward does also require PwPs to come forward and get involved in clinical trials – to which end, please take note of the *SHARE* and the *April Branch Meeting* articles overleaf.

The Branch website has a fuller written report by the Research Interest Group but for the first time we have also made a video recording of the lecture. The video is being made available to Branch Members on request – please contact *Ken Bowler* via the Branch website. We have also organised a general viewing on **Wednesday 13th May, 2-4pm** at Bellevue Chapel, Rodney Street, EH7 4EL and even if you made the lecture you may want to hear it all again!

Branch Summer Lunch – Our annual wind-down event is being held on the **24th June** with a change of venue to the *Best Western Kings Manor Hotel* in leafy Portobello – might you want to leave time for a trip to the beach afterwards? More details and booking information are on the enclosed flyer. It's not far off; so we suggest reserving your place soon.



Successful Events

Our **Annual Coffee Morning** was held on 18th April at a new venue, Marchmont St.Giles, well known to our Tuesday afternoon Singing4Fun participants. The general consensus was that the venue proved a success. The sun streamed into the thronging coffee area which buzzed with conversations before the Singing4Fun group began their joyful renditions. Thank-you to the many who helped the event to run smoothly and particular thanks to Annette McLeod as organiser-in-chief. The morning raised over **£1000**.

Moveable Feast, Edinburgh: After the success of last year's event, the concept was repeated on 23rd April with over 50 participants dining on 3 courses, each in a different restaurant in Edinburgh city centre.



Art Exhibition by People Living with Parkinson's: held in St. Mary's Cathedral and organised by the Parkinson's Nurse Service in partnership with Art in Healthcare. Exhibitors from the Edinburgh Branch included *Christina Ellis, Leo Hislop, Liz McBain, Lyndsay McDermid, Ian Sneddon, Rachel Mylne, and Derick Steele*. With over 30 visitors each day it allowed the public to see just what can be achieved by the artists in spite of the restrictions that PD can create.

April Branch Meeting – *Dr. Conor Maguire* introduced us to **Dr. Gordon Duncan**, Consultant Physician in Medicine of the Elderly at the Western General Hospital. Dr. Duncan spoke about his research over the last few years at Newcastle University concerning how best to monitor PD progress in the brain. The research also considered the impact of non-motor symptoms, which evidence suggests are common across all stages of the condition. The meeting also offered the opportunity for the Branch to welcome him to the region, further strengthening the clinical and research team within NHS Lothian. Dr. Duncan spoke of his enthusiasm for now being based in the region and the opportunity for Edinburgh to become a hub for PD clinical trials in Scotland with link-ups to other centres and the beneficial sharing and exchange of information. Dr. Duncan's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed via the Branch website.

SHARE is a new NHS Research Scotland initiative created to establish a register of people interested in participating in health research and who agree to allow SHARE to use the coded data in their various NHS computer records to check whether they might be suitable for health research studies. To find out more, visit www.registerforshare.org.

Future Meetings – We are in the process of organising a varied and interesting line-up of speakers for next year's Branch Meetings. These will be published in the new Branch Calendar due out mid-August. We hope to have last month's speaker, Norman Yarrow, back to tell us about Norman's Conquest, his fund-raising walk of the Southern Upland Way which he will be completing by the time you receive this edition. You can check out his blog at normansconquestwalk.wordpress.com. In the meantime, please put the **9th September** in your diary for the first meeting of the new calendar – speaker to be advised.

Donations

In memorium and similar donations during the first three months of the year totalled just under **£4000** for which the Branch is most grateful. The **Annual Lecture donations** were **£790** – thank-you to those who helped fill the buckets.

Other Scheduled Events and Activities

Branch Ceilidh: Friday 29th May, Maitland Bowling Club, 96 Main Street, EH4 5AJ. Please see the enclosed flyer for details.

Belmont Northern Belle: There's still a chance to win a day-trip for two (to the value of £700). Raffle tickets are available at regular group meetings and at the ceilidh.

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. It is a charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554), *tel. 0808 800 0303*, www.parkinsons.org.uk. **Parkinson's UK Edinburgh Branch**, www.edinburghparkinsons.org, *Mrs. Pat Stewart, Hon. Sec., tel. 0131 449 2705, Honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org*.