

Parkinson's UK Edinburgh Branch

Newsletter November 2014

*Our aim is to inform members about forthcoming events, foster a sense of community, encourage participation in regular activities, and feature your efforts. We welcome suggestions – please get in touch with Helen Harris, Helen@edinburghparkinsons.org. We also remind you of the **wealth of information on the Parkinson's UK and Branch websites.***

Lothian Delivering Excellence Project Needs Your Help!

At the October Branch Meeting **Diane Wilsdon** talked about her Parkinson's UK role as *Influence and Development Officer* for this project. Last year, Parkinson's UK carried out a survey seeking views on the 3 things that would change the life of those with PD. As a result, Parkinson's UK has developed the *Delivering Excellence Strategy* which proposes the creation of a UK-wide Parkinson's network, taking inspiration from the Netherlands *ParkinsonsNet* initiative (covered in our February seminar, reported in March Newsletter).

As part of the Strategy a pilot project has been set up in Lothian involving people living with Parkinson's, clinicians, and managers in health/social care, with the aim of developing the best possible services for those with PD. The work is focussing on ensuring everyone has access to the support they need, regardless of where they live. It includes working to improve the knowledge of GP's in relation to Parkinson's and further training and support for physiotherapists. For the project to succeed, Diane needs to gather information from people with Parkinson's and others affected, with particular focus on the services provided and *not* provided. You can become involved in various ways – see the Branch website *News* page, *Oct 1st* and *16th* entries. You can also get in touch with Diane on *0844 225 9867* or at dwilsdon@parkinsons.org.uk. **We encourage you to get involved – your experiences, observations, thoughts and opinions are key to helping improve services in Lothian and beyond.** Diane can also point people in the direction of other ways of making your voice heard, all with the same end in mind – improvement of health-care services for those with PD.

Benefits of Herbalism



Also at the October Branch Meeting, **Fiona Morris**, Medical Herbalist spoke about gentle and effective natural health care using herbalism. Fiona assured us that training as a Medical Herbalist involves a high level of herbal knowledge, clinical medicine and diagnostics (4-year B.Sc.). She then covered some of the herbs relevant to commonly experienced Parkinson's symptoms. Examples include *arnica* as an anti-inflammatory topical application for bruises, aches and pains, *skullcap* as a good anti-spasmodic because of its high magnesium content, *lemon balm* as a mood enhancer, *cinnamon* for balancing blood sugar and its warming properties, *ginger* for digestive issues, its warming properties and as an anti-inflammatory. A pdf file of Fiona's talk can be accessed via the Branch website *News* page, *1st Oct* entry (*Branch Meeting 8th October*). You can also consult Fiona's website, www.fionamorrisherbalist.co.uk or contact her at *Nourish and Flourish* on 07906 518715.

Importance of Exercise – Hydrotherapy

For some time now the Branch has subsidised Hydrotherapy courses of six one-hour sessions led by Katie Wilkie, Specialist Physiotherapist at the Astley Ainslie Hospital. (The location was temporarily moved for a few months to the Western General). Since their introduction, these sessions have proved extremely popular. Participants enjoy the opportunity for exercise, the relaxation section at the finish, the pain relief effects of the warm water and the camaraderie. An initial one-to-one assessment is carried out on “dry land” to determine suitability for hydrotherapy treatment and to allow planning and adaptation of the programme content for each group (4 to 6 participants).



Exercises focus on mobility, resistance work, posture, stretching, upper and lower body work and balance, with a different focus each week, using floats and a variety of other aids as appropriate. The warm water and the effects of the buoyancy can make exercises easier and more comfortable for those with compromised mobility. The final session is a revision one with guidance for individual needs and preferences. The ideal is for participants to carry on with exercises at other pools in the community. To this end a laminated summary of exercises is provided and a list of other suitable pools in the area. For further information

contact Katie Wilkie, Katie.Wilkie@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk, 0131 537 9164 or our Branch website under *Training & Care Programs*.

Importance of Exercise – Swimming/Aerobics

One of the Branch aims is to provide a range of Member activities that will contribute to improving quality of life, with group exercise featuring strongly. For those who like to swim and/or exercise in warm water, we run a Monday evening session at the Hydrotherapy Pool, Braidburn School, EH14 1ED during school term-time. The session also provides an opportunity for those who've attended a physiotherapist-led hydrotherapy course to carry on with



their exercises. Towards the end of the session, the fitness trainer in attendance suggests her own set of exercises and finally some participants enjoy a laughter-filled ten minute ball game. Others choose to happily do their own thing throughout. For more information, please contact Liz McBain at Liz@edinburghparkinsons.org or on 0131 315 2493.

Monthly Drop In

The monthly Drop In for People with Parkinson's has been one of the longer-established activities run by the Branch. In the early days there was a South Edinburgh meeting as well as one for North Edinburgh. The former closed in 2009 due to dwindling numbers and the North Edinburgh one has reached a similar position despite enticements with informal speakers. The Drop In's were introduced to provide an opportunity for PwP's and anyone they wished to bring along, to socialise and share experiences. However, the Branch now has many more activities available for Members to meet, interact and share that we feel the Drop In concept has run its course for the moment. We are certain that those who benefitted from the sessions will share in the Committee's extended thanks to *all* the volunteers involved in running the Drop In's over a considerable number of years.

Branch Connection to HQ Major Fund-raising



Branch Member, Liz McBain's brother is **Davey Johnstone**, renowned guitarist, song-writer and musical director and probably best known for his long-standing work with **Elton John**. Over the years Davey has done much to support Parkinson's UK. Davey and his wife Kay have donated an acoustic guitar signed by Davey, Elton, and two other members of Elton's band, Nigel Olsson and Ray Cooper. Paul Jackson-Clark, P-UK Director of Fundraising, rose to the challenge and pledged to find a way to make the very best of the opportunity. Paul had a possible late-autumn event in his sights to auction the guitar, with a reserve of £5000, but in the build up to finalising details of the event the guitar has found a home on the back of a **£16,000** gift.

Paul said: *"It's been amazing, outstanding, in fact. Liz and her husband Bill have been so incredibly helpful and enthusiastic, making the link between Davey, Sir Elton and his band and the charity. The financial outcome has far exceeded everyone's ambition. I can't thank Liz, Bill, Davey and Sir Elton more."* Davey has also donated a ukelele which has been signed by his friend from way back, **Billy Connolly**. Paul said: *"The guitar was an incredible, unique opportunity and now we have the signed uke. We're very excited about what that might raise for us in the coming months."*



Branch Fund-raising & Donations



Stenhouse Community Bowling Club raised just over **£435** for the Branch at their Ladies Charity Day. Two of the current members have Parkinson's. Liz McBain gave a much inspired talk to members about PD and the problems it creates for those with the condition as well as those close to them.

Scotmid raised **£600** for us with carrier bag sales at 2p each from outlets in Edinburgh, Mid, West and East Lothian. The Branch was one of 6 local charities to share the money collected in this way. If each charity received £600 that's a deal of carrier bags!

We're highly relieved to report that **Carol Mott** from the Singing4Fun Tuesday group arrived home safely after her Annapura Circuit Trek. Carol's group was just one day behind the tragedy on the Thorong Pass in mid-October. With no knowledge of what was happening further up the climb, their reliable guides made the decision to retreat and re-route due to the exceptionally heavy snowfall. Although the group had to give the Pass a miss, they reached over 4,200 metres and took in the majestic sunrise at Poon Hill. If you would like to recognise Carol's efforts in raising money for the Branch and in memory of her beloved Aunt Jeanie, please donate via www.justgiving.com.

Christmas cards are now available and can be purchased at regular meetings.

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.

Forthcoming Events – busy days ahead!

Quiz Night: Friday 28th November, 7-10pm, Liberton Kirk Halls, EH16 6RY, £8. We encourage you to come along and test your knowledge while enjoying the team spirit and laughter that this night consistently generates. There will be snacks to keep the brain cells in gear but *Please Bring Your Own Bottle* (alcohol permitted). See the enclosed flyer for more information and booking details.

Festive Concert – Edinburgh: The date for this wonderfully uplifting event kicking-off the festive season is **Friday 5th December**, 7pm, Greyfriars Kirk, £8, children free. As always our Singing4Fun group will be performing an eclectic mix along with the Edinburgh Police Choir, Marie-Claire Jones, and Sangstream. Ken MacDonald will be your host. The flyer/booking form were placed inside *The Parkinson* magazine recently mailed to Members. Details are also available at www.parkinsons.org.uk/festiveconcert where you can book online or download a booking form, or see the Branch website *News* page, *27th Oct* entry for the link. Cathie Quinn at Singing4Fun also has tickets.

The Swingettes: Saturday 6th December, 7.30pm-9pm. This award-winning *a cappella* quartet renowned for their swinging rhythms and unique close harmony will feature a programme of seasonal and popular songs at the Scottish Storytelling Centre with all profits being donated to Parkinson's UK – Scotland. Some surprise guests will help put the audience in the Christmas spirit as well as a complementary drink after the performance. Tickets can be booked via www.tracscotland.org/scottish-storytelling-centre or on 0131 556 9579 or see the Branch website *News* page, *27th Oct* entry for the link.

Christmas Lunch: Wednesday 10th December, 12.30 for 1pm, Boroughmuir Rugby Club. See enclosed flyer with booking form for this seasonal event to round off 2014.

Annual Coffee Morning: There will be a change of location this year. It is being held at Marchmont St. Giles, in the Grange, a venue well known to our Tuesday afternoon Singing4Fun group. Because of the alteration, the date has also been changed from that listed in the recently published Branch Calendar. It will now be Saturday, **18th April, 2015**.

2015 Annual Lecture: Professor Patrik Brundin, inaugural holder of the **Jay Van Andel Endowed Chair in Parkinson Research** at the Van Andel Institute, Michigan, USA will deliver the 2015 Parkinson's Lecture on the evening of **22 April 2015** at the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. Further details will be posted. To cater for those who can't make the date or find the venue difficult, we plan to **video the event** and show this at a later Branch Meeting as well as make it available on the Branch website.

Addendum: The **West Lothian Support Group** meets at Uphall, last Wednesday of the month (except July/August), 1-3pm with a guest speaker (medical and general topics), Christmas lunch in December, and an outing in May. The Group has a quarterly newsletter and other sources of helpful information. If relevant to you, please get in touch with *John Ormerod*, 01501 762510 or *Agnes Gray*, 01501 752428 or via wlsupportgroup@aol.com.

The Parkinson's UK Helpline offers a 'listening ear' to anyone with Parkinson's or their families who need to talk to someone, safe in the knowledge that their call is confidential and the person listening understands Parkinson's. It is available Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9.00am – 8.00pm, Tuesday & Thursday 9am – 7pm, Saturday 10.00am – 2.00pm, FREEPHONE 0808 800 0303 (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks), helo@parkinsons.org.uk.