

Forthcoming Events

Accompanying the Newsletter is the Calendar for the coming Branch year. We encourage you to put dates in your diary for the monthly meetings on topics that interest you or you may just want to pitch up for the company and the opportunity to catch up with fellow members. The first is on **9th September** with *Norman Yarrow* reporting on his tremendous effort walking the Southern Upland Way. As always, the calendar includes a wide variety of regular classes (some featured in this issue), our aim being to provide a diverse range of activities to help improve quality of life for those with PD. If there's an activity you've been thinking of trying but not quite got there, we encourage you to take the plunge and try it out. There is no onus on committing to regular attendance if it doesn't suit.

Dance (and Movement) for People with Parkinson's



Since the beginning of the year this activity has been led by Jen Farmer. For some time Jen supported Mo Morgan who established the group in 2010. Jen was expertly trained by Mo before Mo's relocation south of the border. The classes use the well tried and tested principles and techniques of the *Dance for Parkinsons®* concept established by the New York based *Mark Morris Dance Group* and the *Brooklyn Parkinsons Group*. Thanks to funding by Dance Base, where our fortnightly classes are held, Jen has added to her knowledge and skills at a recent intensive and inspirational two-day course. Jen is ready to begin the Autumn sessions fired up with enthusiasm and new ideas about getting people moving in a safe, supported and light-hearted environment. Jen plans to extend the benefits by including voice work to help with speech and strengthen facial muscles as well as body percussion to aid rhythm and co-ordination. A hard core of regulars attend because they find the activity so beneficial. We hope others will give it a try. A loved one or carer can also join in. Please check the Branch Calendar for details.

Quality of Life Group

This newly established group provides space for people with Parkinson's to talk, laugh, share experiences, express feelings and frustrations, and exchange information about what works for an individual, whether it be a mundane item of equipment, a useful source of information, a beneficial therapy, a new resource – whatever has improved the quality of life for someone and therefore potentially for others. The group is not facilitated but self-led. Each meeting brings out more useful gems of wisdom and experience which the group plans to collate in a manner that can be made available to others. The mutual support element also features strongly, with spontaneous comments including "It's so good to be able to talk about Parkinson's without boring anyone!" and "The feeling of understanding and companionship was heart-warming."

If you would like to give the group a try and perhaps contribute to the way it evolves, please contact **Alison Williams** at Alison@edinburghparkinsons.org or on 0131 557 5979. The next two dates for getting together are Thursdays **20th August** and **24th September** at the home of Branch Member Bill Wright in Roseburn Place, EH12, from 2 to 3.30 pm, with the option to linger for another half-hour to socialise further over tea and biscuits. The location is on the 12, 26 and 31 bus routes and car parking facilities are available. Bill is the contact for the **PwP Living Alone: Self-Carers Group** if that group also interests you (Bill@edinburghparkinsons.org, 07981 948402, 0131 281 6880).

Artistic Creativity and the Mervyn Peake Awards

Our **fortnightly Art group** provides a venue for those who like to paint, draw or sketch as a means of expression. Two professional artists guide, give advice, suggest a theme or help start someone new to the activity. Some members displayed works at the successful *Art Exhibition by People Living with Parkinson's* in St. Mary's Cathedral. Talents and experience vary – there's no judgment – the venue is a safe space for people to express themselves through their art. The end product may be important to some, for others the activity provides a form of relaxation. The group had a recent inspirational outing to *The Amazing World of M C Escher* at the Modern Two gallery, guided by Lindsay McDermid.

Parkinson's UK has just announced the **Mervyn Peake Awards for 2015**. These were established in 2002 supported by the Peake family and offered as a celebration of the artistic talents of people with PD. Peake was a much admired artist, poet, illustrator and writer who developed Parkinson's in the latter years of his life. He died in 1968. Some of our own group have been successful in the past with these awards. We encourage you to look at the current winning and shortlisted entries. There are 5 categories – art, poetry, photography, multimedia and books. For a light-hearted approach to getting up in the mornings do have a look at the multimedia winning entry. To watch this and see the Flickr feed display of the art and photography or to read the poems and book excerpt, search under *Peake 2015* at www.parkinsons.org.uk. You might consider purchasing the 2016 calendar which features entries from the award.

To find out more about our Art Group, check the Branch Calendar for details. And if you have thoughts on starting up a group under the other categories included in the Mervyn Peake Awards do let the newsletter editor know via Helen@edinburghparkinsons.org.

Successful Events

Forty-five people attended our **Summer Lunch**, for the first time at the *King's Manor Hotel* in Portobello. The general consensus was that the food was of a high standard and that attendees were well looked after by the staff. Significant thanks are due to *Louise Ogilvy and her team* for organising the highly successful **Branch Ceilidh** raising over £1300.

Other Branch Fund-raising and Donations

Recent **in memorium** and similar donations totalled well over £1000 for which we record our thanks. £77 was raised with a can collection at the BrewDog craft beer pub in the Cowgate in memory of Yorkshireman **Michael Jackson**, who travelled the world in search of exceptional beer and is best known for his documentary TV series *The Beer Hunter* aired at the end of the 1980's. MJ died in 2007 and had Parkinson's for at least ten years prior.



The enthusiasm and commitment was of a high standard at this year's annual **Water of Leith Pram Race** on 5th June with some inspired fancy dress outfits adding to the jollity of the event. Just over £360 was raised for the Branch and we received further exposure with the publication of our Hon. Secretary's letter of thanks in the *Currie & Balerno News* July/August issue.

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.