

## **History of the Edinburgh Young Parkinson's Support Group (EYPSG) as at May 2020 (launch of new Edinburgh Branch website)**

Before the launch of EYPSG in 2008 there was a Scotland Young Parkinson's Network of the Parkinson's Disease Society (PDS). This was for people of working age and their care-partners. Quarterly meetings were held in Stirling and organised by Gary Hattie of the PDS Borders Branch and Gerry McCann from the Lightburn Support Group. (PDS changed its name to Parkinson's UK in 2010.)

There were so many people of working age all over Scotland that a more local system of support was needed. This would have the added advantage of less travel for people, especially in the winter months.

In 2007, PDS Branch and Volunteer Support Worker, Gina Allen, met Joel Houck, a young outgoing PwP who was married with a three-year old son. Joel completely understood the needs of YPs i.e. people of working age, and was the perfect person to lead a new support group. But with no budget available to launch the group, Joel met with Branch Chair, Patrick Mark and his wife, Kate, a Branch member and PwP, to discuss his plans over lunch. There was a real need to have meetings in the evening as many people were working during the day. Despite the proposed EYPSG being independent of the Edinburgh Branch, the Branch Committee kindly agreed to provide initial funding as well as ongoing moral support.

The first monthly meeting took place in early 2008 in the Bisque Bar and Bistro at the Brunstfield Hotel. The aim of the Group was to provide peer support through friendship in a casual, social setting. In the coming months people travelled from Fife, Ayrshire, Glasgow and the Borders. On one occasion a mother and daughter travelled from Carlisle. Gary Hattie was soon able to focus on developing his own YP Group as a subgroup of the Borders Branch.

After a couple of years, Joel Houck moved to Fife and Scott Wilson who was already a Group Member took up the reins. In need of a new venue, Scott approached The Steading in Biggar Road, EH10 7DU. They were kind enough to offer free, exclusive use of a second conservatory. We were then able to hold talks and presentations in a more appropriate, private setting.

Scott has organised many memorable trips over the years, including to the Falkirk Wheel, the Kelpies, the theatre and Traquair House, while Group Member Lindsay McDermid has organised highly successful fundraising Burns' Suppers.

In 2018 EYPSG set up a closed Facebook Group with Lindsay designing the logo. In 2019 they helped pilot the launch of the Edinburgh Branch Adaptive Yoga class and enjoyed their first ever WalkFootball event on Bruntsfield Links. EYPSG continued to meet at The Steading on the first Thursday evening of the month until the outbreak of Covid19. In the meantime they have introduced regular Zoom meetings to stay in contact.

