

Our News

Huntingdonshire Branch

April 2025

www.huntspds.org.uk



Thoughts of Chairman Malcolm

Well, Spring is well and truly with us, both metaphorically and astronomically with the clocks going forward imminently. Regrettably, with it also comes the yearly glut of things which need to be achieved in the garden to get it ready for the coming summer, I hope the bones do not ache too much after the exertion.

We have, as requested by Parkinson's UK, consolidated our bank account (cash pooling) into one for the 420 + groups in the UK. Our original account with Lloyds is now closed.

As a Branch, we are always pleased to receive donations, whether they are from individuals, companies or other organisations. This enables us to continue and improve the support and help that we can offer on a local basis.

If you would like to donate to us, or know anyone else that would like to support us at the Branch, please contact me, my details are on Page 8 of the newsletter.



Dates for your Diary...

Huntingdon Café

1st April, 6th May

St Neots Winers and Diners

15th April, 20th May

Inside this Issue

Chairman's Chat	Page 1
Activity Dates	
Nurse News	Page 2
Cream Tea	
Winers and Diners	
Additional Events	Page 3
Stephanie's Recipe	
Poem	
Wordwheel	Page 4
Focus on Occupational Therapy	
Register of Trainers	Page 5
San Francisco/ David Rudd	Page 6
Carers Update	
Carers Card	
CEA Cinema Card	Page 7
Research News	
Exenatide Update	
The Gut and Parkinson's	
Walk for Parkinson's	
Wordwheel Answers	
Useful Contacts	Page 8

World Parkinson's Day Branch Activities



With World Parkinson's Day nearly here, time for some awareness raising. On Thursday 10th April we will be in St Neots in the Market Square between 10 am and 2 pm, and we will be at Hinchingsbrooke on the 11th with the Nurses (see page 2). Please contact Malcolm (see page 8) if you would like to help, or pop over and see us on the day.



Parkinson's UK Activity Dates

(Please check with organiser if any changes)

Face to Face Activities

Date	Activities	Contact
15 th April 20 th May 1.00 – 3.00 pm Lunch and Chat 3rd Tuesday of the month	St Neots Winers and Diners Buffalo Restaurant 22 Huntingdon Street St Neots PE19 1BB	Marianne Fountain Tel: 0790 226 5615 malfountain@hotmail.com
1 st April 6 th May Coffee and Chat 10.30 am – 12.30 pm 1 st Tuesday of the month	Huntingdon Café The Chase, Medway Road, Huntingdon PE29 1SF	Suzanne Ford Tel: 07592 639374 Email: suzanneford346@gmail.com
April and May 11.00 am – 12.00 pm Every Friday	St Ives Exercise Group with Becky Meets at the Crossways Church	Email beckyadamsrehab@gmail.com
April and May 11.00 am – 12.00 pm Every Thursday	St Neots Exercise Group with Daniel United Reformed Church, High Street, St Neots, PE19 1BN.	Email danielgodward14@gmail.com
April and May 1.30 – 2.30 pm Every Tuesday (except Third Tuesday 11.30 – 12.30pm) Every Thursday	Huntingdon Exercise Group MS Therapy Centre, Bradbury House, Huntingdon PE29 1UL	Email sj-performing-arts@hotmail.co.uk Mob: 0771 265 8001 0330 7260077 Monday to Friday
April and May Last Saturday in the month Various Venues	Young and Active Parkinson's Group (YAPA)	Julie Wilson Email jmwilson@parkinsons.org.uk Tel: 0300 123 3675
April and May Speakers and Refreshments 3 rd Wednesday of the month 2.00 - 4.00 pm	Biggleswade Café St Andrews Masonic Centre, St. Andrews Street, Biggleswade	Julie Wilson Email jmwilson@parkinsons.org.uk Tel: 0300 123 3675
April and May Weekly every Tuesday 2.00 – 4.00 pm	Bedford Support Group Ping Pong Church Lane Community Centre Bedford MK41 0PW	Play or observe, £3 to play or £1 to watch. Tel: Sue Kiddy 07944 695917 Email: bedfordparkinsons@gmail.com

Parkinson's Nurse News



For World Parkinson's Day on Friday 11th April, one of the nurse team will be covering stands at Peterborough City Hospital and at the main reception at Hinchbrooke between 10am and 1 pm. Grace will be attending Hinchbrooke.

Please come along to give your support and say hello and have a chat if you are in the area.

Becky Slimmon
Specialist Parkinson's Nurse

Waresley Cream Tea

Our Cream Tea at Waresley Park Garden Centre on 27th March was another success, a good opportunity to meet up, have a chat and afternoon tea. This has been a yearly free event for our Branch, and is open to all our members, so has always been popular.

Future events will be arranged for later in the year, and as always, we will keep you posted in the newsletter. If you have not been along to one before, please join us, you will be welcome and you can make new friends.



Winers and Diners St Neots Group

Here we are again at Buffalo Restaurant in St Neots, and our numbers are increasing! The Mediterranean food there is always good, and the company is even better. We meet there the 3rd Tuesday of the month, between 1.00 – 3.00 pm. You are welcome to join us, we are a friendly group and like a good chat.

If you would like to know more, would like to book your place or have a copy of the menu sent to you, please contact Marianne on 07902 265615 or email malfountain@hotmail.com.

Hope to see you there in April and May.



Additional Events and Meetings for your Diary

Free Parkinson's Carer's Event

Please come along to a Carer's Event being held at Loves Farm Community Room, Loves Farm, St Neots on Monday 30th June from 10.30 am – 1.00 pm. There will be taster sessions of yoga and mindfulness, art therapy, and lots of information and support on a range of issues. There will be pastries, cakes and light refreshments. People living with Parkinson's welcome to come with their carer/supporter.

Biggleswade Café

You are welcome to attend Biggleswade Café, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 2 – 4pm at the St Andrews Masonic Centre, St Andrews Street, Biggleswade – come and meet others and listen to key speakers. Cost is £1 for refreshments, and parking is available in adjacent car parks for 2 hours free (but please log your registration in the machines).

YAPA (Young and/or active Parkinson's Group)

The next meeting is Saturday 26th April 10.30 am – 2.30 pm, at Swavesey Memorial Hall, off the A14 with good parking. Food is a bring and share lunch, but other refreshments will be provided. This meeting there will be a chance to take part in a Speech and Language Workshop to help you keep your speech and swallow strong, and an opportunity to update on Parkinson's UK new activities and services.

The meeting is a great opportunity to network with up to 40 other people that attend and want to live well and stay active with Parkinson's.

For more information, to register your interest and book a place on any of the above, please contact Julie Wilson on 07500 097222 or email jmwilson@parkinson.org.uk.

Recipe from Stephanie - Mincemeat Bakewell Squares



Ingredients

500g sweet dessert pastry
8oz Mincemeat
6oz butter
6oz Caster Sugar
3 Medium Eggs
3oz Self Raising Flour
3oz Ground Almonds
Half teaspoon Almond Extract
Icing Sugar to dust

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 180C gas mark 4. Line base and sides of 10 x 15-inch baking tray with baking paper, leaving about 2 inches above the tray.

Roll out the pastry a bit larger than the tray, lift in and push pastry onto sides, corners and edges. Bake for 8-10 minutes until light gold in colour.

Spoon mincemeat onto warm pastry, spread thinly. Using an electric mixer, beat together butter and caster sugar until pale and creamy. Beat in eggs, one at a time, adding a tablespoon of flour to prevent the mixture from curdling. Fold in almonds, flour and almond extract. Spoon over mincemeat and spread evenly.

Bake for 30-40 minutes until golden and firm to the touch. Leave to cool. Remove from tray, peel away paper, cut into 24 squares. Dust lightly with icing sugar just before serving.

This is a useful recipe if you have any mincemeat left over.

I made the giant quiche from last month, containing bacon. I realised we have two vegetarians in the family so I marked the outside of the dish with masking tape, leaving the quarter without bacon. We all really enjoyed it with salads.

Bon Appetite!

Stephanie

Thought for Today

Maybe some things don't get better,
but we do. We get stronger.

We learn to live with our
situations, as messy and ugly as they are.

We fix what we can and adapt
to what we can't.

Maybe some of us will never be fully OK,
but at least we are here, we are still trying.

We're doing the best we can.

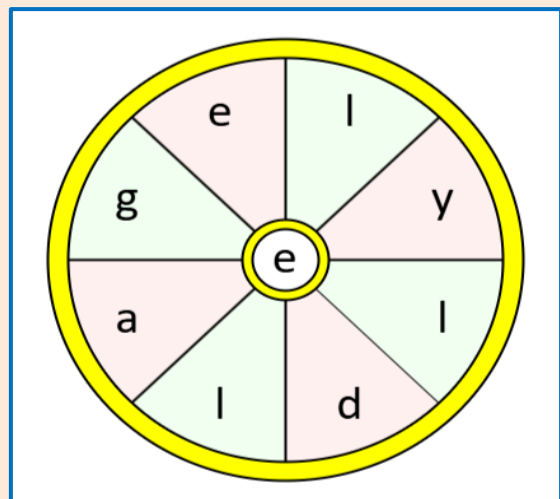
That's worth celebrating too.

If you're reading this, congratulations,
you made it today...you made it.

Rajneesh Mishra



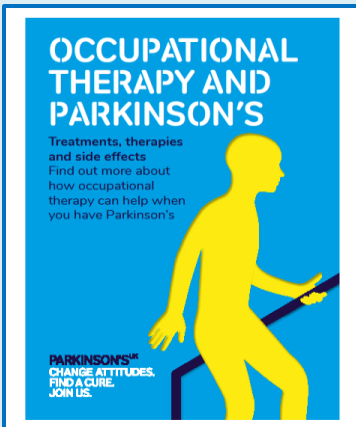
Wordwheel (Answers Page 8)



Create as many words of four letters or over as possible with the letters in the Wordwheel. You can only use each letter once, and every word must contain the letter in the centre of the wheel.

There 28 words at least – how many can you find?

Focus on Occupational Therapy



Quality of life is important for everyone, and we all benefit from doing the things that make life meaningful and keep us independent. But with Parkinson's it may become more difficult to do everyday tasks and the activities important to you. A good resource available to you is Occupational Therapy support, as they can help you improve your abilities to continue the activities you value.

Guidelines suggest that ideally you should see an Occupational Therapist soon after diagnosis, and they can support you as needed thereafter. You can get a referral to see an Occupational Therapist through your GP, your Specialist Nurse or your Consultant, who will then be able to support you in many aspects of your daily life, depending on your personal goals, to improve your wellbeing.

How can Occupational Therapists Help?

- They can give advice about how to tackle a difficult task in an easier way, by discussing options and strategies, techniques or equipment that will make the task easier.
- They can advise of possible practical changes to your environment, to make achieving your goal more accessible.
- They may be able to suggest a technique or cue, that will act as a prompt to help in completion of tasks.
- They can help look at strategies for future needs so that you can plan ahead.
- They can advise you of resources available to help you maintain your quality of life, and enable you to make informed choices.
- They can make referrals to other organisations and services, and give advice on issues such as driving, accessing transport, Blue Badges and help to continue work, social and family commitments.
- A Health and Social Care Team Occupational Therapist can advise and potentially help with funding in certain situations on minor and major home adaptations.

If you would like to know more about Occupational Therapy and how it may be able to help you, Parkinson's UK has a booklet that you can [download here](#), or you can contact the Helpline on 0808 800 0303 and they will send a copy to you in the post.

New Register of Personal Trainers Supported by Parkinson's UK

Exercise can be an important part of managing your Parkinson's, and can help with co-ordination, strength, balance, anxiety, freezing and falls. More people are turning to personal trainers and exercise coaches to help with these goals. Parkinson's UK are supporting the launch of a leading exercise and wellbeing register by 4D Life that was created in February this year, to help you find approved exercise professionals, personal trainers and coaches in your area.



The National Register of Parkinson's Specialist Personal Trainers promotes accredited exercise coaches across the UK who have the knowledge and skills to work with people with Parkinson's, and is supported by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA).

The new register will help you be confident that any of the exercise professionals you work with have a good understanding of Parkinson's, and will provide appropriate exercises to help you manage your condition.

Nick Berners-Price, 4D Life founder, has a neurological condition himself, and his aim is to help people live well with their Parkinson's and other health conditions.

To find out more about the register and local trainers, please click on [this link](#).

San Francisco

Four thousand eight hundred and forty paces (the pedometer assures me), from the armchair in the window overlooking the Bay to the Golden Gate Bridge. There is a chilly wind on our faces which wraps our clothes against our bodies and the sun is not yet high enough to share its warmth.

The track is not a short-cut to anywhere, not a route to any shop, takes no discernible part in the busy economy of this city: its justification is its availability. On our right there is the sea, a beach, then this track, and on the left scrubland: four diverse parallels.

Birds own the air. Gulls whirl and glide and scream. Geese fly in, alight on the shallows and chatter to their fellows already there. Brown pelicans in matronly procession pass overhead.

People own the road. People walking, people running. People cycling, pushing pushchairs, ambling, stopping to gaze. People in couples and groups, mostly young; people alone, mostly old. No purpose in their journey but the journey itself. Most wear the uniform 'casual' topped by the ubiquitous zipper jacket.

(I imagine for a moment the comment my grandmother would have made about the tight trouser called leggings favoured by young women which shows so precisely the shape and dimensions of the backside). A young woman films her well-wrapped children as they play in the sand. A group of adolescents chatter noisily. But voices do not dominate here; the overriding sound is the aggressive growl of sea hurling itself against the shore in its determination to destroy it.

We keep our usual walking pace, heading into the wind. I comment that the pace is a little slower now than when I was younger. We talk sometimes but do not need to: the walk is the purpose. My daughter points out things I had not seen such as the sea-lion lurking close to a fisherman, no doubt hoping to steal his catch. We walk out onto the pier to watch but the sea-lion hides underneath, popping its head out occasionally to bark hoarsely. A large unidentified bird overhead casually defies the wind. Here is history: the pier was built during the wartime for the navy to load torpedoes onto its Pacific fleet.

A half-kilometre from the Bridge the sound of traffic swamps the sounds of nature and a continuous line of vehicles can be seen on the viaduct leading up to the Bridge. The viaduct is only five – or maybe ten – years old, but the Golden Gate Bridge is nearly as old as me, perhaps a year or so younger. It is the noisiest bridge. It is designed to move, bend, sway to resist anything the weather can test it with, and the roadway is not fixed; it is made of metal plates that appear to be loose-laid there and they move and clatter loudly as vehicles pass over. We had once attempted to walk over the bridge. Just once. We soon turned back. We were too faint-hearted faced with the noise and the movement of the footway so high above the ocean.

The scale of the bridge is disguised in its many photographs. On this shore it strides over a four-storey Civil War fort and there is enough space for another four storeys to the roadway above. My daughter comments that my trousers are the same colour as the bridge and takes a photograph to prove it.

Turning back, the wind is on our backs and the sun – ahead and to our right – is beginning to share its warmth. The bird population has changed. Gulls are there, but now red-wing blackbirds cluster and small unidentified brown birds, which prefer to run rather than fly, swirl together. We meet people identical in appearance to the ones seen before. (Silly thought: are they the same ones condemned for ever to pass forth and back, haunting this coast path?) Their activity and ours is its own purpose and reward. Our 10,000 steps in one session, and still three hours to lunch.

Leaving the house again and walking with our backs to G.G. Bridge, we soon reach Mason: formerly a Navy base and now used for a market, an art shop, restaurants. The attraction for me, if you know where to look (hidden, accessed through a café) is the Friends of San Francisco City Library book shop where there are second-hand books and some new at low prices.

I go straight to the far corner on the left where publishers' preview copies are shelved. These of course cannot be sold, so you can pick them up for a donation of \$1.00. Irresistible. This time I got two new novels and a new collection of poetry – 'Trouble the Water' by Derrick Austen.

David Rudd

Carers Update from Caring Together

Huntingdon Carers Hub

8th April, 13th May 10.30am – 12.30pm

Coneygear Centre, Buttsgrove Way, Huntingdon PE29 1PE

2nd Tuesday of the month



Please join the Huntingdon Carers Hubs they are a really good way to meet other people also caring for others, meet one of the Caring Together Advisors, join in relaxing activities and get information and advice. They are friendly groups, and it can help to take some time out for yourself, meet new friends and share your experiences and learn from others.

If you would like more details on how to join these sessions, or would like to know more about carer support locally, please contact one of Caring Together's care advisers for help and advice, by emailing them at hello@caringtogether.org, or by phone on 0345 241 0954.

They can give information on a range of useful topics, including Carers rights, Carers Assessments, Carers Allowance, financial support and benefits, information on managing energy costs, hospital admissions and discharge planning and the Care Act. They can also help with a "What If" plan, so that you and your loved one can get support in an emergency. Please consider making use of their support, to ensure that you and the person you care for are getting the help you need.

Carers Card – Support and Rewards for UK Carers



In your newsletter we like to let you know what may be helpful to you, and Carers Card UK is an independent organisation separate from Parkinson's UK, that you may be interested in.

If you support and care for someone - whether you get Carers Allowance, or are paid or unpaid, you can potentially get a Carers Card UK. The card and the digital card they offer provides you proof that you are a carer, that can be helpful when you are out and about, or in an emergency. Membership also helps you save with discounts, gives you access to treats, gifts and giveaways, and offers access to their Wellbeing Hub as well as free events and other support through their app.

They advise members on average save £20 a month with their card discounts, with participating stores such as Asda, M & S, Tesco, Iceland, Dorothy Perkins, B & Q and others. There is an option to set up a Carers Emergency Plan, and their app includes a range of support information, guides and best practices. You also have the option to set up a 'Carers Circle', that enables you to organise your tasks, appointments and medication lists, and monitor the wellbeing of the person you support. You can also invite friends and family to join the circle, so that information is shared.

Their Wellbeing Hub is a resource to get expert advice, see videos, attend free events and get audiobooks, with the aim to improve and support your wellbeing.

The card costs £8 for two years to register, and this includes access to their free app.

If you would like to know more about what they offer and how to register, please [click here](#) or go to www.carerscarduk.co.uk.

CEA Cinema Card

If you enjoy going to the cinema, but need some support when there, the CEA card provided by another independent organisation, may be helpful to you. It enables a carer to accompany a Cardholder who buys a full price ticket for free, so you have the support you need. It is accepted at 90% of UK cinemas including Cineworld, Odeon and Vue. The card costs £6 and is valid for a year. For eligibility details and further information contact CEA on 01244 526 016, info@ceacard.co.uk or see their website [here](#).



Research News

Exenatide Trial Published

The third stage of the Exenatide-PD3 trial, a diabetes drug, thought to slow the progression of Parkinson's was published in February. Unfortunately, the results show that exenatide did not stop movement symptoms getting worse, there appeared to be no other benefits in non-motor symptoms, and brain imaging to show dopamine activity showed no changes compared to the placebo group.

194 people with Parkinson's took part in the 96-week trial. You can read the full details of the research in the Lancet [here](#).



The Gut and Parkinson's

Following a study by the research charity Cure Parkinson's, there is increasing evidence that the gut may play a role in the onset or development of Parkinson's. The research is being led by Assistant Professor Sandra Morais Cardoso at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, and has focussed on the gut microbiome. The microbiome lives in our intestines, and research suggests that the microbiome and brain communicate between each other via a gut-brain axis pathway, that can affect health and wellbeing.

The findings provide support for the hypothesis that Parkinson's may originate in the gut, and link inflammation markers that appear in the gut and brain, and this implication may help our knowledge and research in the future to help with early detection and potentially the diagnosis of Parkinson's. More about this research you will find on Cure Parkinson's website [here](#), and you may want to watch their hour webinar on The Gut and Parkinson's by [clicking here](#).

Wordwheel Solution

4 letter words

Aged, Dale, Deal, Dell, Edge, Edgy, Eyed, Gale, Glee, Lead, Yell

5 letter words

Alley, Delay, Eagle, Elegy, Glade, Ladle, Ledge, Legal

6 letter words

Allege, Galled, Galley, Gelled, Yelled

7 Letter words

Alleged, Allele, Legally

9 letter word

Allegedly

Did you find any more?

100 Mile Walk for Parkinson's



Up for a challenge? Raise money for Parkinson's UK by walking up to 100 miles in May, anywhere and anytime! Set a goal and increase your fitness with whatever distance you can manage.

It is free to sign up, and your fundraising page will be automatically set up. Share with friends, join the Facebook page, start your walks on 1st May and upload your walking distances. You can also join a team! Find out more at walk@parkinsons.org.uk, call 0800 138 6593, or see the [webpage here](#).

Useful Contact Numbers

BRANCH CHAIR

Malcolm Ryman

07720080749

malcolm.ryman1@btinternet.com

VICE CHAIR

Vacant

PARKINSON'S UK CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE

(Also access to Parkinson's Local Adviser)

0808 800 0303

Email: enquiries@parkinsons.org.uk

PARKINSON'S DISEASE SPECIALIST NURSES

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This Newsletter is compiled to the best of our knowledge from information available at the time of publication