

OUR NEWS

Huntingdonshire Branch

February, 2024

www.huntspds.org.uk



Thoughts of Chairman Malcolm

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2024, just where did January disappear to? I hope you all had a splendid time over Christmas and New Year and are looking forward to this year and all its possibilities. We are contemplating a trip along the Great Ouse, on the Ladybird boat at a date to be decided.

The wife of one of my neighbours does a lot with Alzheimer's, I am exploring the possibility of co-operating with them in extending the range of therapy classes we offer, and further activities to enable visits and talks to be given.

Malcolm



Submissions

We are always looking for items for our newsletter! Please share your experiences, information, stories, pictures, news or items of interest.

- Perhaps you have a hobby you would like write about, to inspire others to try?
- Is there anything that has helped your Parkinson's symptoms you would like to let others know about?
- Have you written a story or poem that other people would enjoy?
- Do you have any pictures you have taken, or artworks you have made you would like to share?

Our next edition is April, so if you do, please send them to – Huntsbranchnews@gmail.com, we are always pleased to hear from you!

This Month and Next

Dates for your Diary...

St Neots Café

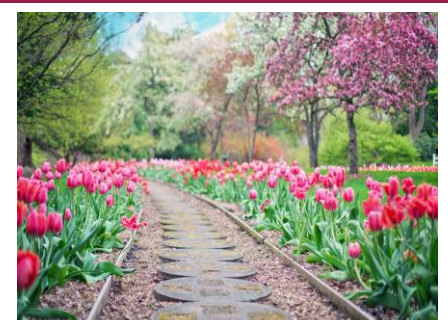
The Priory Centre PE19 2BH
20th February, 19th March

Huntingdon Café

The George PE29 3AB
5th February, 4th March

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Parkinson's UK Activity Dates

(Please check with organiser if any changes)

Online Activities

Dates	Activity	Contact
February and March 7.00 pm 3 rd Wednesday of each month	Young and Active Parkinson's Group (YAP) Zoom	Julie Wilson 0300 123 3675 Cambs YAP meeting Join the meeting click on this link Meeting ID 81318421457
February and March Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 11am Thursday 2.30pm Monday to Friday	Kim Hall's Love to Move Online Exercise (Parkinson's specific group Mondays 10 - 11.30am)	Telephone 07715081402 (Mon-Thurs) or email Kim.hall@britishgymnasticsfoundation.org

Face to Face Activities

20th February Wiltshire Farm Foods 19th March Coffee and Chat 2.00 – 4.00pm 3 rd Tuesday of the month	St Neots Café The Priory Centre Priory Lane PE19 2BH	Malcolm Ryman Tel: 07720 080749 Email: malcolm.ryman1@btinternet.com
5th February 4th March Coffee and Chat 2.00 – 4.00 pm 1 st Monday of the Month	Huntingdon Café Meets at The George, George St, Huntingdon PE29 3AB	Suzanne Ford Tel: 07592 639374 Email: suzanneford346@gmail.com Or Malcolm Ryman as above
February and March 11.00 am – 12.00 pm Every Friday	St Ives Exercise Group with Becky Meets at the Crossways Church	Email beckyadamsrehab@gmail.com
February and March 11am – 12 pm Every Thursday	St Neots Exercise Group with Daniel	Email danielgodward14@gmail.com United Reformed Church, High Street, St Neots, PE19 1BN.
February and March 1.30 – 3.30 pm Every Thursday	Huntingdon Exercise Group with Sarah Huntingdon Methodist Hall	Email sj-performing-arts@hotmail.co.uk

Parkinson's Nurse Tip



Brighter days are coming.

Spring bulbs are popping up in the garden, Spring is finally around the corner after these long dark days and nights.

Physical activity is important to maintain Parkinson's symptoms, take a walk or gentle exercise now that the weather is improving. Physical exercise helps improve your strength and balance and is essential for health and wellbeing.

Becky Slimmon
Specialist Parkinson's Nurse



Green Fingered Richard

A lot of you will know Richard Gregory – he has been a valuable Branch member for many years.

He has recently appeared in a BUPA publication, and as it was a positive and inspiring story, we wanted to share this with you!

Richard moved to Cottenham Court Care Home in Cambridge, and the staff quickly discovered that he loved gardening.

Richard had been an agricultural researcher for many years, and had both a degree in horticulture and a masters in applied genetics.

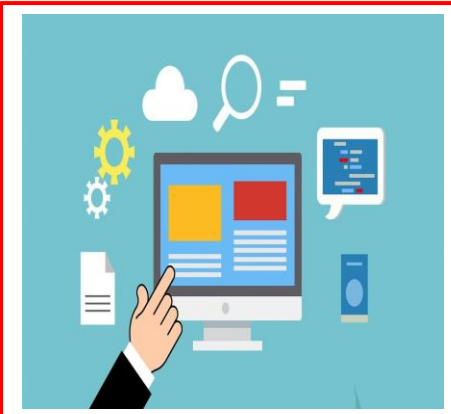
Cottenham Court wanted to help him to maintain his interests in gardening, as they appreciated being active and keeping up activities you enjoy can have a real impact on quality of life - both physically and mentally.

The outcome of this was, within three weeks of him moving in, they bought Richard a brand-new greenhouse. It came complete with a range of plants and vegetables, so now Richard has an ideal place to garden. He can now plant seeds, grow on his plants, grow tender plants and take cuttings, and he wants to encourage others there to enjoy the benefits too.

“I hope the greenhouse is an incentive for other residents to come and get involved with the joy of gardening” says Richard. And to help make this possible, he has set up gardening classes for the other residents too.

We wish Richard well with his classes, and hope that 2024 is a happy and productive gardening year for him!

Trusted Tech Panel



Parkinson's UK are in the process of developing a new system to review devices and apps, and a platform for publishing these reviews. This will enable you to get the information and tools you need to make decisions about technology and how it can impact and improve your quality of life.

They are assembling a review panel of people from a wide spectrum of the Parkinson's Community, and some will be chosen to try out the technology and give valuable feedback. This will then be published to help others. There will be no need to purchase the devices, these will be provided.

For more information contact John Pettigrew on devicesandapps@parkinsons.org.uk.

Newly Diagnosed Information Pack

If you have been recently diagnosed, you may be interested in Parkinson's UK new pack of information. It contains -

Parkinson's and You – a guide if you are newly diagnosed

Being Active with Parkinson's – a guide to physical activity and exercise

Information and Support Leaflet – This shows the different ways you can access information, help and support

Get Involved with Research - How to find out more

Team Parkinson's Form – How to join Parkinson's UK

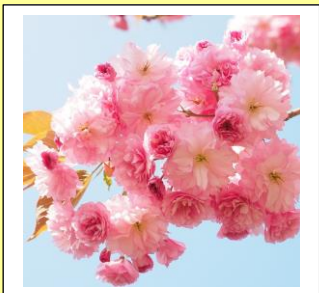
To get your pack, please click on the link [here](#) or ring the Helpline on 0808 800 0303.



Spring Flowers Quiz

Can you put a name to these colourful spring flowers? (Answers bottom of page)

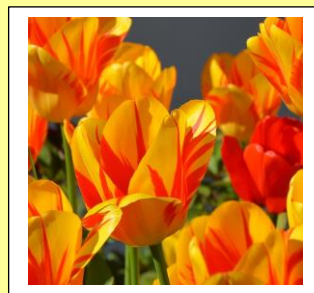
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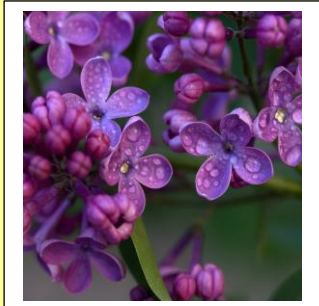
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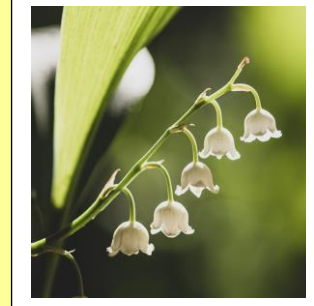
4.



5.



6.



Things I've Learned

I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow. I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life. I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life". I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back. I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them "feel".

Maya Angelou

Volunteer and Help us Grow!

We are still on the lookout for new volunteers, either to join us on our Huntingdonshire Branch Committee or to help with groups and events. Are you or anyone you know interested? Various roles are available including helping at St Neots Group, starting new activities, Membership Secretary, Vice Chair, or being an extra pair of hands at groups or events. With your help we can sustain what we currently do, add on more for our members and extend our reach. You can help with as much or as little as you can. You could make all the difference! contact Lisa Lowe on 0344 225 3614 or email llowe@parkinsons.org.uk, or contact our Chair Malcolm Ryman on 07720 080749 for an informal chat.

Flower Quiz Answers

1. Cherry Blossom (*Prunus Serrulata*)
2. Forget Me Not (*Myosotis Sylvatica*)
3. Tulip (*Tulipa*)
4. Lilac (*Syringa*)
5. Bleeding Heart (*Lamprocapnos* – was *Dicentra Spectabilis*)
6. Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria Majalis*)

A Story - By David Rudd

They had been married for forty years. Once they had been in love; that fragile and usually temporary state which had ripened into loyalty, respect, trust and each caring for the other. Friends said they were very close. In fact, though far from the emotional turmoil of youth, they were in love.

Perhaps they always had been. They sat together at primary school. They helped one another with their lessons. The teacher noted and didn't interfere. They were teaching one another, though that's not the way they saw it. Robert liked arithmetic: he liked that it was either right or wrong, you knew where you stood with arithmetic, and he usually got it right. Joy on the other hand preferred words: spelling, poetry, stories, her own stories. Robert, with his liking for tidiness and precision, Joy with her imagination often off in the clouds. Robert's pencil case was always tidy. His father said a good workman looked after his tools, so Robert did that. When he changed his shoes for games, they were placed tidily beneath the bench. Joy just kicked hers off and left them lying.

In secondary school they saw less of each other. Robert who liked practical stuff and precision, found he was good at woodwork, while Joy, revelling in the books offered by the English syllabus became a better writer and liked language. Their preferences, as you would expect, led them in different directions when they left school. Robert started an apprenticeship with a cabinet maker. He was quick to learn and got a lot of pleasure in seeing an item planned, made and admired. Soon he had a local reputation for the quality of his work. And he was happy. Joy had spent three years at a Midlands university and left with an average degree. She returned to her hometown to learn her trade as a teacher in the primary school which had nurtured her.

In their twenties they often met in leisure time because they shared similar interests. One of these was roller-skating, where they learned to skate – as a pair of course. That was a partnership that took them into regional then national competitions. A lot of practice, organisation and travelling was necessary. They were good.

One evening after a practice, they were walking to the carpark and Robert, joking, said "We spend so much time on this caper, it would be easier if we were married."

They walked on in silence, Robert found the idea appealing! He stopped. "Joy," he said, "Will you marry me?" (sounds trite but it's true!)

"Of course I will you big idiot. I thought you'd never ask."

She flung her arms around his neck, hitting him hard between the shoulder blades with her swinging skate boots. They hugged. The Friday night crowd walked round them. So, the decision was made. They walked on, Robert working out where best to take her tomorrow to choose a ring: he liked to get things right. Joy twittering like an excited bird.

They married four months later. Had a house with a mortgage and a cat. Three children were born, grew up, left home and provided grandchildren. Joy had a few stories published in magazines and was planning a novel. Robert developed his business. He had an employee who had been his apprentice, and a good craftsman who had come to him asking for work. His company had a reputation for quality work – nearly all of it for bespoke furniture for wealthy people. He still cycled between home and work when possible: he said it was better for him than driving, a sort of transition between his two environments. All was going well for them.

All was going well for them and they were content. Then Joy had indigestion. Her GP sent her for hospital assessment. An incurable glandular cancer the diagnosis. In three months, Joy died.

Many people in that situation put on a stoic face for the public while the grief silently, secretly, discolours their world. Sometimes, a word, a sight – something unpredictable, brings the grief to the surface in an irresistible surge. That's how it was for Robert. His friends said he was 'bearing up well.'

One evening, cycling home in the rush hour traffic, he was overcome by the thought of the emptiness of the house that had been home. He was for two seconds blinded with tears.

During these two seconds he had swerved, hit the side of a passing bus and sprawled half on the road, half on the pavement, still astride his bicycle. The following car stopped, its front wheel on the rear wheel of the bicycle, trapping Robert's left leg. In hospital X-rays showed that (to the doctors' amazement) no bones were broken. He was in hospital overnight, extensive bruising developing over his left side. Next day he was allowed home using an elbow crutch.

Moving was slow and extremely painful. Fran from next door brought in hot food. Robert was grateful but in too much pain to be sociable. After the nine o'clock news he took the last of the hospital's pain killers, grumbling to himself that they didn't do much good, turned off the radio and went to bed. Getting upstairs was more painful than he expected. Each slow step an agony. Halfway up, hanging on the banister, he stopped for a rest and bellowed "Oh God! I miss you Joy!" Surprised by his own outburst, he turned to make sure no-one had heard him. Of course, no-one was there. He finished the climb folded his clothes as usual and went to bed, aided by the pain killers, he slept.

He had no need to wake to know that his wife had slid into bed beside him. That she rolled against him, one arm across his chest. They had not always slept like that but had so often during their years together that it felt normal, ordinary, comfortable.

When he woke it was already light. He rolled onto his back and lay there, re-living the dream which had seemed so real and comfortable. He got out of bed. Stood testing that left leg, hardly daring to put weight on it. It was painfully stiff, but nowhere as bad as yesterday. Carefully he took a step, expecting a stab of pain. It didn't come. With the crutch, and slowly, he could walk without that excess of pain.

At the bathroom door, he stopped. He stared, then began to cry softly.

His slippers were beside the bath, one atop the other.

Carers Update from Caring Together

Huntingdon Carers Hub

13th February, 12th March 10.30am – 12.30pm

Coneygear Centre, Huntingdon PE29 1PE

2nd Tuesday of the month

Meet with other carers, have a chat, and get support from one of the Caring Together Advisors, join in relaxing activities or learn from local speakers. Please contact Caring Together on details below if you would like to join them, and you can find out more about the Carers Hubs [here](#).

Carers Leave Act Webinar Online

7th February, 1.00pm – 2.00 pm, 23rd February, 8.30 am – 9.30 pm, 5th March 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm

An online webinar for employers, to enable them to learn the impact of Carers Leave Act and impact on their staff and business and to ensure employees are valued and retained who are both working and caring. Please pass details on to your employer for these valuable sessions. More information on the different event dates, how to book and prices is here <https://www.caringtogether.org/events/>.



An opportunity to join Caring Together's Spring Spectacular – featuring The Chamber Orchestra of St Ives, and the Rotary Voices with special guest mezzo soprano Karen England. Proceeds will go to Caring Together to continue their work supporting carers.

There will be a raffle and the bar will be open. The event is available to everyone, and will have cabaret style seating with tables of up to 10 people.

Tickets are £20 per person.

For more information, please email

sallyheffer@btinternet.com or lain.martin269@btinternet.com, or phone on 07899 233342.

If you would like more details on carer support locally or their activities, please contact one of Caring Together's care advisers by emailing them at hello@caringtogether.org, or by phone on 0345 241 0954.

Research Opportunity

Exploring Opinions on Treatments for Advanced Parkinson's

Research by OPEN Health is looking for 100 people with Parkinson's diagnosed before 2018 with who experience more than 2 hours off each day also carers - to complete a 30-minute online survey. Deadline is 31st March 2024. To take part register your interest online [here](#)

For more information contact Veronica Urquiola by email at veronica.urquiolacarrera@iqvia.com or phone 01603 972592.

Useful Contact Numbers

BRANCH CHAIR

Malcolm Ryman

07720 080749

VICE CHAIR

Vacant

PARKINSON'S UK CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE

0808 800 0303

(Also access to Parkinson's Local Adviser)

Email: enquiries@parkinsons.org.uk

PARKINSON'S DISEASE SPECIALIST NURSES

0330 726 0077

BRANCH MOBILE

07724 400527

FACEBOOK PAGE

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