

Annual Chair Report – PUK Oxford Branch AGM
Wednesday March 7th 2018

Is it our age that seems to make time fly by? Here we are another year on and no-one has offered to take on the position of Chair.

Early in the year Jenyth put on her 'Pity of War' which was a poignant event. The year was dominated by our conference held in Sept. To get the speakers, hall, volunteers and all the myriad things associated with delivering a conference with renowned speakers who charged nothing has been mammoth task,

With an audience of approaching 250 from places as far away as Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Southampton gives you some idea of the lengths we went to to ensure we had Oxford Branch 'on the map'.

To then be offered the institutions of the Bodleian Library and the Natural History Museum to use their lecture theatres for nothing was amazing and the audience of 50 and 85 boosted our total audience to commemorate the publication of the Essay had us reach nearly 400.

Our membership has increased steadily through the year and mainly as a result of people participating in the First Steps Programme. Ashley Lisle and Laura Tilt were two new members who have now taken on the challenge of leading the OxWAGs – Oxford Work Age Group. To date they have held social meetings though they have plans to offer a range of activities.

Using some legacy funding we have been able to offer free or subsidised exercise classes and these have been set up in a variety of locations. Classes are well attended by anyone with Parkinson's but most people are now members. With classes taking place in tem time only the BBB groups requested a DVD of the exercises so they could continue with their exercise routine when classes were not running. These DVDs are free for Oxfordshire residents. An interesting point to note is that the production of the DVD was a collaboration between Age UK Oxfordshire, NHS physio service and Oxford branch.

I must mention the popularity of the Finding Your Voice class. This runs on Fri Mornings and is the only one in Oxon. It is helping a regular group of 25+ and

Emily, who leads it, has plans for getting us involved with other singing groups. She'll make a choir of us yet!

We have been treated to some interesting speakers for our meetings and we have Nigel to thank for putting our programme together. Next month we will have our branch leaflet ready but if you'd like to, you can download it from our website and it should be up to date with final details before the weekend. At several of our meetings we had researchers keen to get volunteers for their research studies. I am pleased so many of our members are involved.

Carys will inform us of the state of our finances. Our fundraiser Kit has been active and imaginative in gaining funds in the time he has been our fundraiser. I thank him for giving so much of his time.

Paul created a sequel to his documentary – Parkinson's The Funny Side and we are fortunate to have his original humour and passion to inform a wide TV audience of the reality of living with Parkinson's. He is embarking on a new career as a stand up comedian.

Jonathan built a website for the conference and has now produced a fine website for the branch. Please use it as we put information on it regularly.

Nigel and Debbie Hamilton cycled their 'Go North' Ride from Oxford to Durham, all 350 miles. PUK produced a new event – BOXCAM – this is the 200 mile cycle ride from Bristol to Oxford and Oxford to Bristol. Nigel Paul and I represented the branch to welcome the riders as they arrived, It will run again this year with riders arriving Sat Sept 22nd. The following day is OxWalk and though we made a sizeable sum last time, over £20k was from one person being sponsored. So let's get fit and see if more of us can be sponsored by family and friends. We appreciate the work Malcolm Benson put in to make it a success. Other members have held various stalls, birthday gifts, teas, coffee mornings and other activities and we thank them for informing more people of living with PD.

This has also been the year of the cake. People have generously donated cakes for the Walk, Conference, Cream teas and probably more.

New legislation is coming in at end May to ensure any records we keep are safe and secure. General Data Protection Regulations or GDPR is potentially very complicated and we will need considerable time to be trained. PUK have

unfortunately left it very late to inform us and though this branch has been pushing hard to get the tools and the guidance it will not begin just yet.

Looking ahead we have a fine programme of speakers for our mtgs and we are in the process of booking other events for us each to enjoy.. As some of you know I am exercised about the lack of links between head office and branches. I am in the process of contacting neighbouring branches to see if this year we could each put some focus on building bridges so we can share ideas and possibly mtgs.

This branch works well because of the generosity of it's members. Our secretary, Pen greets you all at every meeting and also at the entrance to the hall you meet Helen and Wendy. The raffle is a feature and your giving prizes makes a goodly sum each month and this fiancés taxis for this who might otherwise be unable to attend. Helen and Roy organise the rota so we have refreshments for each mtg. Diane and Diana keep the Oxford BBB exercise classes running like clockwork. Taxis are organised by Lin, who incidentally cannot be here tonight. She has additionally been the administrator for our respite care package. Unfortunately her term has come to an end and we seek someone to keep this relief for carers in motion.

I thank everyone on the cmt for the support they give to me and most importantly to the branch. If you'd like to get involved more, do speak to one of us.

But now we have to say goodbye to three members of the cmt. Each of these people have contributed over many years. Their families have also played a big part in the events we hold. I am of course talking about Jem, Martin and Kit.

Jem had been a cmt member then took on Chair after Campbell. He brought a fresh lightness to meetings and occasionally he told a joke and some were funny! Martin took on the position of research officer doing such a good job, that anyone, who took over from him was anxious he'd not reach Martin's high standards. Kit with no family connection with PD has been a great fundraiser and introduced new activities to raise funds and also to inform many others about this condition.

I ask them to come forward to receive a little something for their devotion and hard work.

Notices

Brain Week – March 12-17 Details on Website

March 16th Presentation at London Conference – info on website

Sailing – the meal on 23rd begins at 7.30pm – info on website

March 24th from 10am – Rotary Club have a Rowathon for charity and will be visited by Billy and his fellow rowers who have a planned row across the Indian Ocean in aid of Parkinson's charities - info coming up on website

Fri April 6 7.30 Donkey House Band in Concert. St Laurence Church South Hinksey – info on website

World Parkinson's Day April 11th

Lab visit - April 11 2 pm to Prof Frances Platt lab

April 16 – Sally rec honorary degree

April 26 Branch Lunch at Doghouse – website

Cream Teas June 24 at Ros and Paul Swadling

BBQ at Wytham – Aug 16th

Needed –

Respite Care Co-ordinator

Fundraiser