



RESEARCH NEWS FROM THE

On Monday 20th March the 4th Oxford Parkinson's Disease Research Day took place in the heart of the University's Science area in Parks Road. As members of the Oxford Parkinson's UK Branch we were pleased to be invited to attend.

In a packed lecture theatre with over 170 participants we listened to 18 research presentations. These introduced us to the wide range of scientific approaches being used to improve our understanding of what leads to the breakdown of normal dopaminergic functions in Parkinson's Disease and the identification of potential mechanisms for modifying or reversing this process. What struck me (and I am not a scientist) was the range of academic disciplines represented. The four sessions of the day (Clinical Research, Protein Mechanisms of Disease, Cellular & Molecular Biology and Models of Parkinson's) covered all the different aspects of the OPDC research programme, which aims to find ways of predicting the onset of Parkinson's, establish how to measure the progression of the disease, find better treatments to alleviate the symptoms and ultimately realise a cure.

Although I had to admit defeat in my attempts to follow the twists and turns of scientific language and floundered in my attempts to unlock acronyms and terms such as LAARK₂, CDNF & Complex C_a²⁺, there were Keynote Lectures to keep everyone engaged. I particularly enjoyed the lecture on "Memory and Motivation in Parkinson's disease". There were plenty of opportunities to ask questions and talk to speakers over lunch or during the coffee and tea breaks. A further stimulus was the exhibition space featuring almost 40 poster presentations.

You can find out about research in much more detail by going to the website www.opdc.ox.ac.uk. Altogether I came away with a definite sense that the day had been a great opportunity to hear about the progress being made here in Oxford in getting to the bottom of the condition that Dr James Parkinson identified 200 years ago. There was a real emphasis that people with Parkinson's have an important part to play in the ongoing research.

Nigel Hamilton