



**PARKINSON'S<sup>UK</sup>**  
**CHANGE ATTITUDES.**  
**FIND A CURE.**  
**JOIN US.**

**July**  
**2019**

## **In this issue**

Welcome to new members.....	<b>1</b>	First Steps to Salisbury (and back).....	<b>9</b>
Park's Larks.....	<b>2</b>	Pub Quizzes – Cheating for Parkinson's	<b>10</b>
A Guide to Walking Well .....	<b>3</b>	Brain Awareness Week.....	<b>11</b>
Keep up to date with research .....	<b>4</b>	Picturing Parkinson's Art Workshop .....	<b>12</b>
Me and My Theracycle.....	<b>5</b>	Committee Profile: Kit Marriott.....	<b>13</b>
Falling and how to prevent it.....	<b>6</b>	The Great Gatsby Ball and London Marathon.....	<b>14</b>
My fall – could it be your fall? .....	<b>7</b>	Getting the most out of our website .....	<b>16</b>
Cream Tea .....	<b>7</b>	Farewell .....	<b>16</b>
Employment survey .....	<b>8</b>		
Recycling for Parkinson's .....	<b>8</b>		

## **Welcome to new members**

### *We welcome everyone who has joined us recently:*

Susan Bates	Rhonda Telford
Dean Stowell	Chris Chaundy & Jo Cavanagh
Roy Poyser	Tessa Sheaf
Alison Butt	Wendy Tyndale
John & Maureen Avery	Jocelyn Hartland-Swann
Anne Rea	Jill James
Gillian Washington & John Govans	Patrick Spiers
Mary & Yash Tandon	

### *Missed earlier instalments?*

*You can catch up with earlier and current episodes of Park's Larks on our website at [oxfordparkinsons.org.uk/parkslarks](http://oxfordparkinsons.org.uk/parkslarks) – and look out for more in future Newsletters!*

### Chapter 3

The Action Plan turned out a Godsend  
Giving focus for thinking and verve,  
And it's just as well that they had it,  
Or they might have been stripped of their  
nerve.

The twins thought a "Project" would sort it  
So they asked their teacher at school  
If the whole class could study this subject  
in depth  
And their classmates said that would be  
"Cool".

Mr Park, in the meantime was dreaming  
Of a specialized trip agency  
Taking him and his kin on each holiday  
booked  
And just running itself for a fee.

Mrs Park had a small group of close  
friends  
Who would gather each Monday for tea  
They all knew there was trouble  
when she came at the double  
and tearfully divulged her difficulty.

"There's no question that we'll see you  
through this"  
Her loyal friends rallied around  
At least one had experienced a similar trial  
And another was on the rebound.

"What you need is a very specific,  
And also an alternative plan,  
So if one doesn't work out the other will  
slide in  
And keep him oblivious while you rescan."

Plan A was a bit on the thin side,  
More ephemeral than sturdy and strong.  
It involved getting everyone from the  
whole street  
To ask Mr P for a beautiful song.

His voice was a great gift, he knew that,  
And it did give him pleasure to sing.  
So each day when a neighbour popped in  
for a chat  
He ended up tunefully exercising.

# A Guide to Walking Well

Pen Keyte

*On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, Dr Nancy May (McGill University, Montréal, Canada) and Professor Helen Dawes (Oxford Brookes University) held a Walk-Well workshop at Brookes. Our Secretary, Pen Keyte, attended the event on our behalf.*

This event was well attended by Oxford Branch members, and members from other local branches. I went along as an observer, and have written this guide to walking well, based on the exercises we were put through! It was very noticeable that at the end of two hours, everyone was walking more purposefully and with a more upright posture, and speedier gait. One participant commented that *“the assessment and practical sessions were very informative and have encouraged us to make changes in the way we walk and the care of our feet!”*

## Assessment

The workshop began with a 5-point assessment. We were assessed on:

1. **Walking speed:** what was the comfortable gait speed, and the maximum gait speed over 5 meters? Helen’s team timed us.
2. **Balance:** How long can you stand on one foot? Some people found this difficult, and some found that one foot was more reliable than the other.
3. **30 second sit-to-stand:** How many sit-to-stands can you do in 30 seconds? Sit on a firm chair without arms, cross your arms across your chest, and GO! Practising this exercise at home will result in an improvement, and make you less vulnerable to falls.
4. **Feet!** Shoes and socks off for a foot inspection (which reminded me of a similar situation in Dad’s Army...) However, this was no laughing matter as we stretched and spread toes, tried to lift them up and checked whether

each foot had the same flexibility, tried to make our feet ‘kiss’ (that is, placing sole-to-sole), and placed each foot on the opposite knee. Two things which Dr Nancy believes are very important are: pulling your toes up and down, and washing and drying toes with a cloth, rubbing and loosening the skin around the toenails.

5. **Posture:** We were asked to say whether we felt our posture was straight, slightly stooped, or stooped, and to stand against a wall with shoulders back, head up, trying to stand tall.

The rest of the workshop was devoted to learning how to walk well, and how to improve balance.

## Walking Well

We learned how to do this by making sure that:

- The heel was always the first bit of the foot to touch the ground, and we pushed off from the ball of the foot
- We swung arms backwards and forwards - the backwards movement is particularly challenging but also very important!
- We looked up and straight ahead, NOT DOWN!!

Practising these moves helps improve posture and reduces the risk of falls, since it encourages you to balance better, and to avoid the tendency to lean forward. Try for 3 minute bursts and keep it up! Dr Nancy recommends we walk for 150 minutes minimum every week, which will re-adapt our cardio-vascular clocks. We checked our ‘cadence’ - that is, the speed at which we walk. A rate of between 60 and 100 steps a minute seemed right for most people, though it varied.

### Improving balance

We did this by using a walking pole to stabilise us; I don't have poles, so I used a broom which, a friend remarked, made me look like Dick van Dyke's character in Mary Poppins, but never mind...

- With the pole (or broom) in front of you, take high walking steps on the spot.

- With the pole in front of you, take sideways steps. DO NOT CROSS ONE LEG OVER THE OTHER!
  - With the pole in front of you, take a step backwards.
- Walk well, everyone!

## Keep up to date with research

### Jonathan Bromley

For many people with Parkinson's and their supporters, one of the most rewarding things they can do is to participate in or follow the latest academic and clinical research into cures, therapies and basic science. In the Oxford Branch we're fortunate in having excellent links with local world-class researchers, and our own Research Officer Dr Kevin McFarthing does a superb job of helping us find our way through the often complex and specialized world of Parkinson's research.

### Make a difference by participating

Academic studies and clinical trials need research participants. You can help! Many of our members have been tracked as part of the huge Monument Discovery cohort for several years, but other projects need your support too. Take a look at the [research participation page of our website](#) to learn more about how to get involved.

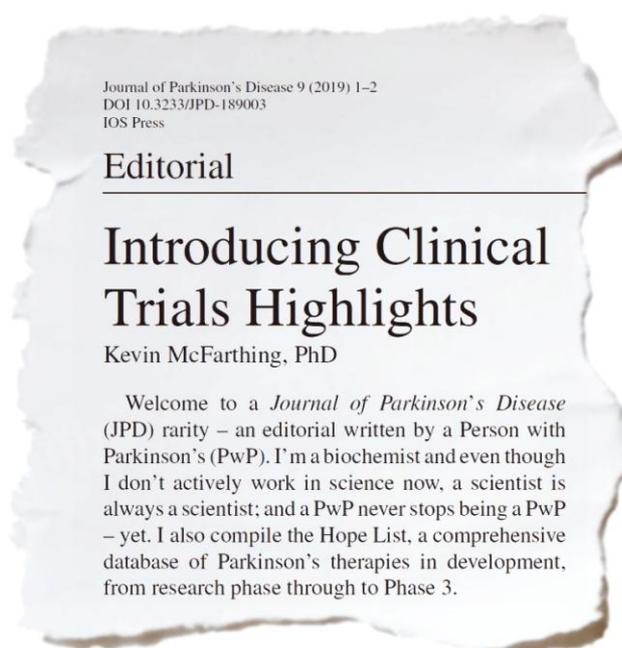
### Resources for you

Are you looking for a starting point for your own reading on Parkinson's research? Would you like to know more about clinical trials or new therapies? We can help! With Kevin's support we have a very accessible collection of online resources at [oxfordparkinsons.org.uk/research](http://oxfordparkinsons.org.uk/research) where you can find links to articles, blogs and websites from a variety of trustworthy

sources. You can also find there a link to the Parkinson's Research Support Network ("ParkyRSN") where you can get regular email updates from Parkinson's UK.

### An honour for our Research Officer

Kevin maintains a list of current clinical trials for Parkinson's treatments, and in recognition of his work he has recently been appointed to the editorial board of the prestigious Journal of Parkinson's Disease as an editor of its new section on Clinical Trials Highlights. You can read his introduction to the role [in the journal at this link](#).



# Me and My Theracycle

Diana Townsend

*Diana, our Membership Secretary, imported a Theracycle power-assisted exercise bike from the USA. She tells us of her experience of using it for the last 8 months or so.*

I don't think I'm imagining it, I do think I'm swinging my arms again when I walk. We all know how we were asked to walk along the hospital corridor for a few yards, turn around and walk back while the consultant watched and assessed whether we had the symptoms of Parkinson's disease: static arms and an uneven gait. Way back, before I was diagnosed in 2014, I wondered why I kept bumping into my handbag! So why have my arms started moving again? I'm putting it down to my exercise on a theracycle.

This is a special kind of exercise bike with a motor which enhances your pedalling speed beyond what you would do comfortably using your own power and energy. On a normal exercise bike I guess I would do possibly 8-10 mph but on the theracycle I pedal at 15 mph for 30 minutes. I've been doing this most mornings for about 6 months now and although it's difficult to quantify, I believe my balance is better and I rarely experience the "off" period in the morning that used to frustrate me before the 9.30 pills kicked in.

I'm fortunate in that the medication I take works well in controlling my Parkinson symptoms and I've been on the same dose for 20 months now. Has the pedalling helped? I cannot judge this, but I'm in contact with someone in America who has come off her medication through an



intensive exercise programme which includes work on her theracycle. I'm not being so ambitious: just keeping at the same level will make it seem worthwhile, both financially and physically.

There is some limited research on "forced exercise" but nothing substantial. Of those with Parkinson's who have a theracycle, 84% would recommend it to a fellow sufferer. I'm very happy to invite anyone to come and see my cycle. Just give me a call or email [membership@oxfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:membership@oxfordparkinsons.org.uk)

# Falling and how to prevent it

Pen Keyte

*Aimee Petrie, Falls Prevention Practice Educator with our local NHS Trust, gave a short talk at our Branch meeting in March about how to minimise the risk of falls at home and out and about.*

Having a wobble ... feeling giddy ... losing your balance ... tripping ... not being able to see very well ... these are all reasons that people give for ending up on the floor, and, frequently, finding it difficult to get up again. Sometimes falls mean that people have to go to hospital, which, we all agree, would be much better avoided!

Aimee gave us lots of reasons why we fall, and also lots of good advice about what to do to prevent falls. For example: that feeling of light-headedness when you get up suddenly from a chair has actually got a medical name – orthostatic hypotension – and you can help yourself feel less giddy, and then less likely to fall, by doing some simple moves. Aimee suggests that **before you stand up** you 'do a bit of a wriggle'. Stretch your fingers, arms and legs for a minute or two; practice jazz hands and hand jives!

**Getting out of bed** similarly - move your body about before you try to get up. And turn on the lights before you get up at night. Always have a torch nearby in case there's a power cut. Avoid tangly nightwear that might trip you up, or having books and magazines on the floor.

**On the stairs and in the hallway:** lighting is very important here. Use the handrail and make sure it's secure. Keep clutter off the stairs, and avoid carrying things on the stairs. I think that's a tricky one - if you live in a house with stairs, you have to take some things up and down! And if, like me, you've got a dog who likes to go everywhere you go, you

can soon end up in a tangle of legs. Not a good idea. Try not to rush if the doorbell or phone goes; if it's important, they'll call back.

**Bathrooms!** So slippery! Get non-slip mats, secure grab rails, and have the loo roll within easy reach - not fixed to the wall somewhere behind your left ear so you have to turn around.

**Ask for help!** I bet we can all think of someone we know and love who is still climbing steps to prune their apple tree, change a light bulb, paint the ceiling, dust the cobwebs ... and really, we feel they shouldn't! I'm gradually realising that, living on my own, wearing varifocal specs - and did I mention the dog? – I am simply not safe trying to change a light bulb at the top of a wobbly pair of steps. If I ever was.

**In the kitchen,** avoid over-stretching to those high shelves, or bending down too quickly. You'll only have to get up again and might feel giddy. So keep things within easy reach; and you wouldn't dream of climbing on chairs or steps, would you?

When you're **going outside**, try to have a light on if it's dark; look out for slippery things like wet leaves, and, if the weather's bad, ask yourself if you really have to go out at all! Aimee has some simple tips for staying safe outside: wear sensible footwear, make sure you've had enough to drink and taken any medication.

Other **general things which help:** making sure your diet contains calcium and oily fish; taking gentle exercise; and getting fresh air.

As you would expect, Aimee is very keen on the idea of a **Medical alert alarm** - so long as you wear it!

If you need help with **small repairs or adjustments in your home**, or think you might like to apply for a disabled

facilities grant, then help is available from local authorities. Check [our list of services in our area](#) for more information.

## My fall – could it be your fall?

**Sally Bromley**

Recently, I fell out of bed. Maybe I had a dream, maybe I just fell. As Aimee informed us (see above), “it was a fall”. Though I suffered a mighty coloured bruise on my upper arm, I put the event aside. Some days later other pains started and these were from inside. A visit to my GP resulted in an X-ray at the JR and I was immediately sent to A&E with a suspected vertebra fracture. We are all familiar with the long wait and it was long. But I was seen, questioned, prodded, poked and given a CT scan. Lucky for me, no bones were broken. In addition, I had a visit from OT – Occupational Therapy – at the request of the doctor in A&E. She has

promised me a visit to my home to discuss how I can be kept safe from further falls. Like many of you, I don’t want my home of over thirty years to look like a care home, but keeping me safe and well is preferable to being in hospital with injuries. Modifications to my home, whatever they may be, is a bitter pill to swallow, but one that could bring long term sweetness.

Was my fall preventable? Yes, with a simple gadget.

Please avoid my fall becoming your fall.  
**Contact OT!**

## Cream Tea

**Sally Bromley**

After sweltering heat the day before, the weather was gentle and kind for our fundraising Cream Tea on 30<sup>th</sup> June. With wonderful support from friends, neighbours, researchers and Branch members, the event was very enjoyable and sociable, helped along by music from our neighbourhood Djembe drummers.

Huge thanks are due to Rachel and Richard for supplying delicious home-made jam, and to everyone who attended, helped in so many ways, and gave so generously. The final total isn’t exactly known at the time of writing, but it looks as though we raised well over £800.



# Employment survey

Parkinson's UK

## *Share the impact that Parkinson's has had on your employment*

*Parkinson's UK has launched a survey to capture the experiences of people with Parkinson's who are working, or looking for work, and how your diagnosis has affected your employment.*

### **Purpose of this survey**

At Parkinson's UK we plan to use the results of this survey to inform our future work and help us develop our policy position. This could include:

- calling for companies to improve their knowledge of Parkinson's so their employees can stay in work for longer
- producing information resources and guidance for employers on reasonable adjustments that can be made to support you better in the workplace
- engaging with the government to ensure they take Parkinson's into account in any future legislative changes

## **Share your views**

If you'd like to share your experience or concerns about employment then please **complete the survey online** at [bit.ly/parkinsons-employment](http://bit.ly/parkinsons-employment).

Alternatively you can email Michael Griffin on [mgriffin@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:mgriffin@parkinsons.org.uk) or call on 020 7963 9349 for a paper copy.

The survey closes on **Sunday 15 September 2019**.

It's important we hear from as many people with Parkinson's who have experience around employment, so please **share the survey** with your Parkinson's networks to help us reach as many people as possible.

Unless permission is clearly given, all responses are confidential and will only be used anonymously by Parkinson's UK in our campaigning work.

# Recycling for Parkinson's

Pen Keyte



We are launching a recycling scheme to raise money for the Branch. It's so simple – all you need to do is to bring any unwanted jewelry, coins, currency, used or unwanted ink cartridges, stamps, and gadgets like

mobile phones, cameras, games accessories, laptops, tablets etc, that are no longer of use to you, to a Branch meeting or any Branch occasion. We'll collect, and send them to [Recycling for Good Causes](#), who will dispose of the items for as much as they can, and send us a cheque!

Thanks for your help, and look out for the recycling sack!

# First Steps to Salisbury (and back)

Ian Sargent

*Our friends in the Salisbury and District Branch held their annual Awareness Event on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> when Ian presented a talk about First Steps.*



The Salisbury and District Branch of Parkinson's UK held their annual Parkinson's Awareness Event on April 6<sup>th</sup>. They were keen to learn more about the activities of our branch, and in particular the First Steps programme for newly diagnosed people which is not yet



available in their area. Our Chairman Sally Bromley, who co-wrote the course, and I, as one of the hosts, were therefore invited to go along.

The meeting was held at Salisbury District Hospital and attended by about 80 people. I spoke about First Steps based on my personal experience, initially as a newly

diagnosed person attending the course and later in my role as one of the hosts. I explained how the First Steps had helped me come to terms with my diagnosis in 2015 and take control of the condition, enabling me to make some important life decisions. Four years down the line those messages are still important and as a host I have found helping others to be a very rewarding experience. The talk generated a lot of interest and led to many questions for Sally and me.

Rolling forward two months to June, Diana Townsend and I were hosting a First Steps session at Witney Lakes. We were asking the participants where they came from and I was surprised and delighted to hear that one couple had come all the way from Salisbury having heard my presentation. The good news about First Steps is certainly spreading!

## ***Could you help others as a First Steps facilitator?***

*Ian and Diana enjoy being First Steps facilitators, guiding newly diagnosed to understand you can have a good quality of life after diagnosis.*

*If you've experienced First Steps and would like to know more about becoming a facilitator, please contact Ian.*

# Pub Quizzes – Cheating for Parkinson’s

David Salisbury

*Since 2015 David has been running special Parkinson’s sections in pub quizzes. By encouraging participants to cheat, he has raised awareness of Parkinson’s as well as raising money for our Branch.*



public who are not aware of Parkinson’s. It gives them an opportunity to donate and understand about the illness as most pub goers are surprised to learn how debilitating the illness is and how it attacks all ages, not just the elderly. Of course

donations are welcome! There is also an opportunity to place a collection bottle on the bar.

Typically I have found that 10 questions is enough for the players to gain insight into Parkinson’s. Players can and must “cheat” to answer the Parkinson’s questions. Cheating will usually take the form of the use of a smart phone but they can phone a friend or even ask someone else. Asking players to research the answers is an effective way of increasing their awareness of Parkinson’s. Players find it’s a fun idea to raise awareness and encourages participation and team work.

To conclude I prepare a short talk about life with Parkinson’s followed by Q&A. This is optional – but I feel it is about letting people into your life and increasing their knowledge of Parkinson’s. After each quiz I’ve held someone has approached me to thank me for sharing my life since Parkinson’s.

In 2015 after my first quiz the local paper carried an article about Parkinson’s and the quiz, headlined ***Cheats welcome at pub quiz for charity*** with the picture of me that you can see above. Something perhaps to repeat! If you would like to run a quiz yourself I am here to help.

*CHEATING?!!* Surely that’s not allowed?! But I had the idea that allowing people to cheat when they were answering the questions about Parkinson’s would engage them in finding out more about the disease, and encourage them to think about its impact on people’s lives.

I approached my local, The Butchers Arms which runs a very popular quiz night on a Sunday. The landlords were aware of Parkinson’s, and were willing to incorporate the Parkinson’s questions during their quiz night and also very kindly agreed to have a collection pot on the bar, another way to raise money. Every pub I’ve approached since has also been willing to help incorporate my quiz questions into their quiz night.

Often I try to fit the quiz in with Parkinson’s awareness week or related events, BBC programmes, etc. If there isn’t a current event I just refer to an old event and blame it on my Parkinson’s.

The Parkinson’s quiz doesn’t generate any extra work for the landlord, as I provide the questions and answers. It also gives the pub and landlord an opportunity to support charities within the local community.

One of the reasons I thought of doing a pub quiz is to reach out to members of the

# Brain Awareness Week– Picturing Parkinson’s Jonathan Bromley

*The Ashmolean Museum and neuroscientists collaborated to present an exciting series of events in the Museum to mark this year’s Brain Awareness Week.*

Bodies, faces and limbs made from thin plastic wire... multi-coloured brain hats for all... cognitive testing in the Ashmolean... All this and more was part of the activities marking Brain Awareness Week on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Neuroscientists led by Dr Chrystalina Antoniadies, artists, students and youngsters participated in an open session in the Museum inviting us to think about perception and cognition, especially as related to Parkinson’s. Visiting artist **Yejeong Mutter** challenged our perceptions with her intriguing three-dimensional wireframe artwork. As well as being amazing feats of



craftsmanship, the faces surprised us by appearing strikingly different when lit from above or below. Some were made of black plastic wire and others were transparent, giving varied effects and shadows when lit. Yejeong had also created sculptures of isolated limbs to try to capture the challenges faced by people with Parkinson’s who may feel that some parts of their bodies aren’t really “theirs”.



Paper “brain caps” helped children (and our Chair!) understand the shape and function of various parts of the brain. If you would like to make your own, you can

find the printable templates [online at designer Ellen McHenry’s website](#).

The researchers had brought with them a series of cognitive challenges for us. There’s one at the bottom of this page. Read it out loud, but don’t say the words as they are written. Instead, say the name of the colour in which each word is printed. I don’t have Parkinson’s, but I was certainly shaking after I’d done that!



## Say out loud the colours, not the words!

How fast can you say them correctly?

black white yellow green red yellow red black green white  
 red white green red black yellow green black white yellow  
 green red blue white green red

# Picturing Parkinson's Art Workshop

Jenyth Worsley

Eight of us took part in this workshop on June 10th at the John Radcliffe Hospital organised by Professor Chrystalina Antoniadou and led by Jan Sargeant who herself has Parkinson's.

Jan opened the first session to explain that she had no formal training as an artist (unlike her husband Ted, an art teacher). She just took up a brush and started. She went on to talk about her relationship with Parkinson's as depicted in two of her paintings.



**Woman with Stick** showed Jan's suffering at its most intense (above), whereas the moving lines of **Dance with Me** were in flowing contrast:



*Dance the long slow dance, the Parkinson's shuffle.*

*Sweep your arms in an arc of trembling abandon.*

*Lift your hands in a plea for balance, denied now,*

*swallow the meds in rhythm with the orchestra*

*as it plays its tuneless chords against memories of how things once were.*

We discussed in small groups what Parkinson's meant to us before we were all handed paper, brushes and paints, and a glass of water to wash the brushes. Then we picked up our brushes and the imagination was let loose! Among the artistry was pointillism, modernism, cubism, wide stripes of colour and beautiful washes which I envied, having tried to dilute the blue paint sufficiently to do sky and foam for my waterfall.



Among the most outstanding was Sally's daemon which she says sits on her shoulder, with a soft pointed face and ears like a cat or fox.

Altogether it was an interesting and fruitful day and I came away wondering which daemon was sitting on my shoulder!



Was it the chap falling from the waterfall?

# Committee Profile: Kit Marriott

Pen Keyte

*Each Newsletter we're going to provide a brief portrait of one of the members of the Parkinson's UK Oxford Branch Committee. This time it's the turn of Kit Marriott.*

Kit has been associated with the Branch for many years as a result of his friendship with Jem Appleton, and their shared passion for golf – about which more later! He joined the Committee in 2011 and quickly made a huge impression as Fundraiser.



Fundraising is a crucial part of the Branch's activities. The money raised supports all sorts of provision for members, from taxis to respite care and exercise classes. In addition the Branch is able to make significant donations to Oxford research projects linked to Parkinson's. At the same time, through fundraising, people have fun, enjoy themselves, and spread the word about the lived experience of Parkinson's. As you will see, Kit is a fundraiser *par excellence*.

First of all, Kit gently took control of the Oxford Walk, informing Parkinson's UK that, as Oxonians, Branch members were better placed to plan routes, deploy marshals, and elicit refreshments than the London based officials. The Branch continues to work happily with the Parkinson's UK staff responsible for the Walk, and a tribute to the success of the whole venture is that Oxford raises the largest amount of funds for Parkinson's UK in the Walk for Parkinson's event. The money raised from the next Oxford Walk on 22 September 2019 is already pledged to support a research project in our local area.

You may remember I mentioned golf. Kit has run Charity Golf Days at his Club, raising funds for the Branch. This year he is Captain, and has chosen the Oxford Branch as the beneficiary of the proceeds from the Charity Golf Day which will take place on 17 September 2019.

In addition, Kit has organised or helped to organise many concerts, including the hugely successful concert in Christ Church Cathedral, which raised over £16,000 for the Branch. On a smaller scale are all the coffee mornings, plant sales, tango dancing (!) and quizzes which Kit has been involved in, as well as the promotion of Christmas cards and other merchandise connected with Parkinson's. His next undertaking will be taking over the Art Café at Whitchurch on Thames on 13 July – come along and enjoy a cup of coffee, or volunteer with the catering!

So huge thanks to Kit for all that he has done and continues to do for the Branch. We really appreciate it!

# The Great Gatsby Ball and London Marathon

David Casey

## Inspiration

My son Chris Casey is never afraid of a challenge and had been trying for several years to get a place on the London Marathon. He was delighted, when he phoned me back in December 2018, to tell me that he had indeed got a place for next year's event. He said he intended to run for Parkinson's UK and needed to raise £2,000 to meet the entry requirement. "Wouldn't it be a great idea to have some fun whilst raising the money?" Chris said, 'so I think we should organise a charity ball'. I agreed it was a great idea but was there a risk that the event could lose money? Various discussions took place between us and I said that I would contact my musician friend Chuck Lloyd, who had recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's, to see if he could help provide a band for the event. In the meantime the search for a venue was on!

## Preparation

In February Chris started a new job at Heathrow Airport and was also making arrangements for his wedding in June. So I was naturally concerned he was taking too much on, including finding time to do all that training for the Marathon. After many discussions Eynsham Hall was the chosen venue for the ball and Chuck was happy to for his Oxfordshire Youth Band to perform, together with blues singer Ma Bessie. The next step was for Chris to create a flyer for the ball with a Great Gatsby theme. Once this was done Chris, Chuck and I sent numerous emails and spoke to friends to publicise the event, including enlisting the support of the branch and in particular Sally Bromley who kindly agreed to come to the ball and give a speech. Chris decided he wanted to hold an auction and raffle to raise

additional funds. Chris and I worked hard to put ideas into action and call on friends, businesses and relatives who we thought might provide some of the prizes etc.

## The Ball

There were lots of preparations on the day of the ball. Chris did the seating plan, my daughter Helen decorated the tables with helium balloons and nameplates, and I was sent off to pick up lighting gear for the band.

All ninety-one guests gathered in the beautiful cocktail bar of Eynsham Hall, dressed up in our finest 1930s clothes, for a glass of Prosecco. We then moved into the dining room for a delicious meal. Ma Bessie sang and Chuck played the saxophone whilst we ate.



*Great speech Sally!*

After the meal Chairman Sally gave an amusing and heartfelt speech, giving an insight to living with Parkinson's, which was met with rapturous applause. Chris and his girlfriend Kelly then held the auction and raffled some excellent prizes. I think the crowd were overcome with auction fever as a surprising amount of £1,600 was raised. It was then time to dance the night away to the Oxfordshire Youth big band and their glamorous singers, conducted by Chuck. It rounded off a great evening and I enjoyed dancing with Sally who was literally having a ball!



*The Auction*



*Oxfordshire Youth Big Band*

### *The London Marathon*



*David Casey*

Two weeks later wife Mary and I travelled to London to watch Chris run the London

Marathon. At 7am Chris went off from his home in Richmond to the start at Blackheath in East London. We travelled across London and battled with crowds on the tube to Canada Wharf and then to Canary Wharf, to give him a cheer. At this point he was running at a three-hour thirty pace.

We dashed across to The Mall to the final straight to see him finish the race.

However, we were shocked to see him come past being supported by two other runners. He was obviously suffering from dehydration, which he said had affected him in the last two miles. After an hour in the First Aid tent to recover we were able to congratulate him. Well-done Chris! He had ultimately raised £4,000 for Parkinson's UK from receipts from ticket sales from the ball and the auction and donations from friend and others, including support from members of the branch. We are very proud of his achievement!

*We are immensely grateful to David and Chris for this wonderful and challenging effort to raise funds and raise awareness, achieved quite independently and without any significant help from the Branch Committee.*

*If you have an idea for a creative or spectacular new fundraiser, don't hesitate to talk it over with a Committee member or with any of your friends in the Branch.*

# Getting the most out of our website

Jonathan Bromley

## Looking for Parkinson's-related information?

Our website aims to be a useful starting point when you need information and support tailored to the needs of people with Parkinson's in the Oxford area. To give you a flavour of what you can find, we plan to highlight a few items on the site in this and future Newsletters. In this issue we take a closer look at how to find practical support for people with Parkinson's and their carers.

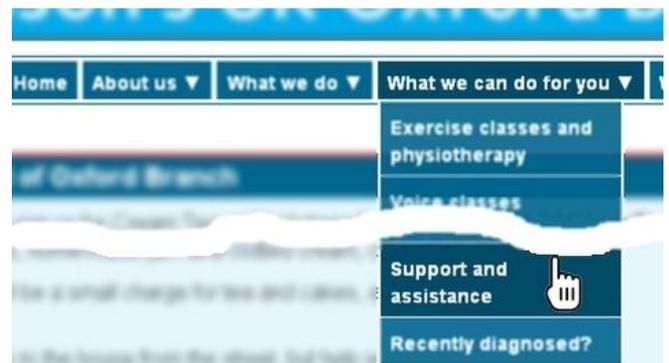
## Support information for you

Our website has a [support page](#) leading you to information on...

- getting access to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) services;
- the excellent *A Carer's Journey* courses provided free of charge by Abingdon and Witney College;
- financial support available from Parkinson's UK for certain specific needs;
- the Branch's own programme of subsidised respite care;

- how to tap into practical support and financial assistance available from our local authorities to help you continue to live in your own home.

It's easy to reach this information. From any page on our main website, use the menu to choose *What we can do for you* and then *Support and assistance*.



## Tell us what you would like to see!

If you know of other information that you think could make the website more useful, we would love to hear from you. Contact any committee member, or email [admin@oxfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:admin@oxfordparkinsons.org.uk) with your suggestions

**Happy browsing!**

## Farewell

*Our sympathy goes to the family and friends of members who have died recently:*

Pete Thomas