

Chair's Chatter

I heard several remarks during our recent visit to Bradford that there had been lots of changes to what is now known as the Media museum, most of them it seems for the worse. You can't win 'em all and the venue was chosen on the strength of a survey of your preferences. We will continue to consult to ensure that the venues chosen are on this basis. Talking of venues, the programme of summer walks began with a visit to Locke Park followed by Elsecar Park and Heritage Centre. I will not dwell on how many showed up at the latter but maybe we will have second thoughts about it for next year. However, as I write I fully anticipate a full turnout tomorrow at Cannon Hall.

I attended a regional "Together" event at Doncaster two weeks ago at which the regional campaign organiser identified the "Get it on Time" efforts of yesteryear as the current priority. It was with very much a sense of "déjà vu" I pointed out that several years ago we commissioned our local "Health Watch" to look at the problems with medication that our members were experiencing at Barnsley Hospital. This led to the promulgation of a nursing intervention policy at the hospital for people with Parkinson's which seems to have solved the problem. However, one can become complacent over the passage of six years and if any of you do experience any problems during hospital stays with self-medication at the appropriate times we want to know about it.

Philip

Give as You Live

The branch has recently joined an online scheme to help raise money. Buying products via **Give as You Live** means that a small percentage of the purchase price is donated to the branch. There are a large number of stores taking part in the scheme and it is also possible to order a store card to use when buying groceries in some supermarkets. This takes the form of a card which has to be pre-loaded with funds and then used for payment instead of a debit or credit card. This would be suitable for anyone who always uses the same supermarket.

It is simple to sign up for the scheme and to choose which organisation you wish to support. You can also choose the stores you are most likely to use. The only problem can be remembering to always sign in to Give as you Live before making purchases from your chosen stores. To sign up, go to www.giveasyoulive.com and remember to choose Parkinson's UK, Barnsley Branch.

Digital Champions

Barnsley Council now funds Digital Champions who hold sessions with people who feel that they need to increase their online skills. So many services are now only available online that it makes sense to ensure that you have the necessary skills. Even if you don't own a computer, you can still access online services through your local library. The Digital Champions can also take on complete beginners. If you are interested in learning more, you can email digitalchampions@barnsley.gov.uk or ring 01226 773555. Alternatively, see a member of the committee who will point you in the right direction.

Lifewise Centre Visit

Many apologies to all the people who were looking forward to a visit to the Lifewise Centre in September.

Unfortunately, we were too late to book for this year but Andy Foster has agreed to put us to the top of the list to visit next year. The dates are not yet available but we have asked for the one later in the year, as more people chose the September date.

Better Barnsley Bond

Parkinson's UK, Barnsley and District branch were successful in their funding application to the Better Barnsley Bond for monies to enable a postural stability instructor to take 3 x 16 weekly exercise sessions for local people with Parkinson's. Carers are also encouraged to join in so that they can help keep up the good work at home.

Chairperson, Philip Thompson, explained that there is a wealth of research work which demonstrates that appropriate exercise slows the progress of the condition. This activity fills a gap in statutory provisions of health care by the local authority and clinical care by the NHS - in other words, it keeps people with Parkinson's out of hospital and less dependent on Barnsley Council.

The group invited us along to attend one of the sessions, hosted by Bronia, who put everyone through their paces. The session was great fun, using scarves and balls to assist with posture, stretching and balance. It was lovely to see everyone enjoying the class, singing along and listening to Bronia's instructions.

After all the hard work, the group enjoy refreshments and it's a great opportunity for everyone to make new friends, share experiences and have fun.

Catherine Spooner | Communications Officer | Henry Boot Construction Limited



Virtual Reality

As we all know, exercise is vital if people with Parkinson's are to get the most out of life and to delay the onset of more severe symptoms. A recent article in The Times reported on research in the USA which has been investigating the benefits of Virtual Reality exercises. A virtual training system was developed which allowed patients to walk on a treadmill while stepping over virtual objects which appear on screens in front of them. The patient was in a harness which meant there was no risk of falling. The result was that after several training sessions, patients showed better balance and a wider range of movement in the hip and ankle. Although this equipment is not currently available, researchers say that it is relatively affordable and hope that it will become available worldwide.

This is a further development of studies that have been done using Wii consoles which also confer significant improvements in mobility and balance.

Members are reminded that the branch has a WiFit machine available for loan to anyone interested.

Fundraising

25th May - a coffee morning at Staincross Methodist Church raised £252 for Parkinson's. Thank you to all the people who contributed by baking cakes, serving tea and coffee, washing up, running a raffle and finally, helping to put the chairs and tables away. Anne and John Birkinshaw and Sheila Butt, who are members of the church, kindly helped on the day.

9th June - The Day of the Triffids

Green Fingers - Barnsley and District branch - at fairly short notice, members provided plants for sale at the Locke Park Vintage Car Rally. The stall between the grandstand and the birds of prey was a great location and all the plants sold except for a few which will be donated to the park. *The only day of the week when it didn't rain!*

Thank you to all who gave plants and helped on the day, especially Melvin and Lynda, whose knowledge of plants was so helpful. Bedding, perennials, cuttings, vegetables, herbs and hanging baskets and recycled pots and containers raised a magnificent £253. Start taking your cuttings in the autumn for next year!



Bottle Lights - Ken and Pat Booth's daughter and grandson created these fantastic bottle lights and have made the magnificent sum of £340 for our branch. A great addition to an evening barbecue.



Volunteers Needed

to join a working party to create more bottle lights to sell at Locke Park Gala in August. We have the materials and it's a simple process. Please give your names to Doris if you would like to help.

BARNSELEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH

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Many thanks to the contributors to this issue. If you wish to contribute in future, please send items to **Sheila Ireland** at sheilaireland@hotmail.com

Parkinson's UK

WE'RE the Parkinson's support and research charity. Help us find a cure and improve life for everyone affected by Parkinson's.

Free confidential helpline:
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A charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).

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