



215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ, Tel: 020 7931 8080
Helpline: 0808 800 0303, Fax: 020 7233 9908, www.parkinsons.org.uk

UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP
NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION SHEET, October–November 2018
www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk

MORE ON EXERCISE

The Uttlesford group's most recent Saffron Walden meeting (12th September) was extremely well received. Paul Goddard's demonstration of his exercises for people with Parkinson's (including seated T'ai Chi) impressed many of those present. The discussion time was also appreciated. 'Just what we should be doing', said one member.

The previous issue of this newsletter also highlighted the benefits of exercise and there always seems to be some new research study (see page 2) that finds benefits in keeping fit. This is all very well in theory, but in practice it is still difficult for people with Parkinson's to get access to appropriate exercise classes. The Uttlesford group's committee is speaking to Paul Goddard about the possibility of his running regular classes for our members – probably in the Garden Centre, Saffron Walden. We would of course need a reasonable number of people (10 perhaps) to express an interest first. If you are interested please get in touch with Sheila Bricknell or any other committee member (addresses at the end of this newsletter).

However, one comment I received after the previous newsletter was that once someone with Parkinson's moves to a care home, no effort seems to be made to help them to exercise. Any exercise they were previously managing to get just stops. We need to get access to exercise for everyone – not just people still living in their own homes.

People with early-stage Parkinson's have often used physical challenges to motivate them *and* to raise funds through sponsored events. One of the most remarkable examples of this concerns Robin Buttery (47) from Leicester who, on 18th September, completed 68 days of rowing across the Indian Ocean from Australia to Mauritius, as part of a team of four. [[Click here for more details.](#)]

FUTURE MEETINGS

Saffron Walden (second Wednesday every month, Jubilee Gardens, 2–4pm)

- 10th October: Reverend Chris Bishop will be singing a few seasonal songs.
- 7th November: Paul Chinnock (your newsletter editor) will perform a selection of songs he heard in the folk clubs of the 1960s.
- **December 12th: The Christmas Lunch will be on at the Saffron Walden Golf Club, 12.30 for 1.00pm. £15 per head for members/carers; £20 for non-members. Please contact Judy Millward to book your place.**
- 9th January 2019 will be a discussion meeting.
- 13th February: Nicola McQueen, specialist Parkinson's disease nurse at Addenbrookes, will speak to the group.

Great Dunmow (third Wednesday every month, Banks Court, 12am–2pm.)

- Lunch meetings.

If you have suggestions for meetings or outings please do contact the committee with your ideas.

OTHER LOCAL NEWS

Members of the group will be sorry to learn that Michael Swan died in August; he was a long-standing and highly regarded member of the group. We are also sad to report that another popular member, David Westcott, died in September.

RESEARCH ROUND-UP

Since the last issue of this newsletter was published two months ago, there have been over 600 new studies on Parkinson's (according to the PubMed database where most of the world's medical research is catalogued). They focus on a range of topics relevant to the disease but – since we have been talking about exercise – let us just look at some on this issue.

- A Canadian research team gave 19 patients an aerobic programme, lasting three months, using exercise bikes. Tests showed that at the end of this time the *function of their arms* had improved.
- In Brazil 'resistance training' was given for 24 weeks to a group of 18 patients. It was found to reduce their *anxiety* levels and improve their *quality of life*, compared with a group of similar patients who were not given the training.
- In Italy a new combined technique – 'multidisciplinary, aerobic, motor-cognitive and intensive rehabilitation treatment' (MIRT) – was given to nearly 200 patients for just four weeks. Based on the patients' answers in a questionnaire (and comparing them to 50 similar patients who were not given MIRT) it was considered that their *quality of life* had shown improvement.
- In Hong Kong 'balance training' was given to 41 people for two months and it seems to have reduced their *risk of falling*. A comparison group of 43 were given upper-arm strength training instead; this also had some benefit but it was less than with the balance training.
- In the USA a questionnaire was given to 60 people with Parkinson's. Those who had exercised regularly before diagnosis were found to be less likely to be *depressed*. Patients who were still exercising scored more highly in terms of their *quality of life*. The researchers concluded that, since the effects of depression and exercise on quality of life seem to interact, care for people with Parkinson's should try to address both physical and mental issues.
- Another paper, by a group of German specialists, also caught my eye. They looked at what evidence there might be as to what sorts of food might have an impact on the speed of progression of Parkinson's. *But diet and Parkinson's has not been adequately researched!* To quote from the paper, based on the little we know: 'only general recommendations can be given ... an emphasis on vegetables, fruits, nuts, fish, low amount of red meat, and non-processed foods with a low level of simple carbohydrates may be helpful ... a low-protein diet should be avoided ... the supply of vitamins B12 and D3 must be ensured [but] the non-critical use of dietary supplements ... should be discouraged'.

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!

As Editor, I'm always happy to hear from members with ideas, news items or suggestions for ways in which this newsletter might be improved. In particular, it would really help to have your views on the following points.

- Would you like the newsletter to be longer or to be published monthly? (It is bimonthly at present.)
- Can you read it clearly? Do you think we could improve the layout?
- Would you rather not be sent this newsletter at all? Please let us know if you want to come off the circulation list.
- If you are happy to continue to get the newsletter but are *not yet a member* of our local group, then please do contact us in order to join.

Paul Chinnock

Parkinson's UK membership: if you are not already a member, we do encourage you to join. Please ask for a form. The fee to join is £4 a year, with an extra £6 a year to join the Uttlesford Support Group.

TRANSPORT: *If you wish to attend a meeting but can't do so because of transport problems – please contact a member of the committee; we will do all we can to find a way to get you there.*

PARKINSON'S NURSE COVERING UTTLESFORD: *Vivienne Kavanagh 01279 621924 or 07778 934669. Unfortunately due to temporary disablement, Viv Kavanagh is currently unable to offer her clinic sessions, but she is still available to give advice over the phone.*

LOCAL ADVISER (formerly Information and Support Worker): *Carol Jacobs 08442 253778.*

Uttlesford Committee: Secretary, Judy Millward (01763 838742); Treasurer (Donations), Tony Leek, Richmond House, Mount Pleasant, Hundon, CO10 8DW (01440 786599); Joint Outings Coordinators, Sheila Bricknell (01799 219078) and Mary Woolhouse (01799 530155); Representing Dunmow members, Val McGregor (01371 870296); Membership & Welfare Officer, Janet Crofts (01223 893619); Fundraising Officer, Kate Riley (01799 530350); Speaker organiser: Pat Lodge (01799 500255); Newsletter editor, Paul Chinnock (01799 522570).