

Guildford and South Surrey Branch

Happy September!

Those of you who enjoy my style of writing will be pleased to know that you are getting a double whammy this month. You will receive my pearls of wisdom, in stereo; firstly in this newsletter and then days later in the September edition of *The Park*.

You may wonder what keeps me awake at night. The principal answer is the stiffness associated with Parkinson's and in a distant second place, a concern that my communications are getting through to this audience. It is vital that this newsletter is read as it aims to provide you with all the relevant information necessary to maximise your usage of the Branch's activities and also update you on some of the key messages from the broader Parkinson's community.

One of the big advantages of being part of a community, like the Branch, is that you get the opportunity to talk to people to seek out their views. I obviously did the above with my concern and one explanation that was given, that sounded plausible, was that people in general are bored of reading about Parkinson's. As it was put to me "It's difficult enough to live with the damn awful condition let alone want to read more about it".

While it will be difficult to avoid talking about Parkinson's, this is after all a Parkinson's Newsletter, but I can dilute it by jointly focusing on **Cats**.

More explanation of cats follows but before I lose you completely, here are the key messages for this month:

- **Christmas Lunch...reserve your place now!**

This year's subsidised Christmas Lunch for members and their guests will be held at the Broadwater Pavilion, Guildford Road, Godalming GU7 3DH, on Tuesday 5th December. Doors open at 12.00 noon for a 1.00 lunch. The price will be £25.00 per person for the member and their first guest. Additional guests are welcome, however, the price for them will be £45.00 per person.

If you would like to reserve a place and receive a copy of the menu please email our Treasurer, sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk or express your interest using the Reply Slip contained in the printed versions of *The Park*.

- **Parkinson Voice classes to change venue and day.**

Parkinson is moving to a new venue this September, **Busbridge Village Hall, Brighton Rd, Godalming GU7 1XA**. The classes also move to **Tuesdays**, instead of Fridays. They will start at the new venue on Tuesday 12 September, from 11:45 am to 12:45 pm. The classes will also be available to attendees on Zoom.

- **New Traditional Chinese exercise class.**

Starting 6 September – Health Qigong (HQG) Ba Duan Jin (BDJ) sessions will be available on Zoom - BDJ is a Traditional Chinese exercise with a long history and is well known for its gentle, slow movements and associated health benefits. Ruby Ho, a retired Occupational Therapist and qualified BDJ Instructor is offering free weekly Zoom sessions on BDJ for branch members. The weekly sessions will be run in English on Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 10:15 am.

Anyone who is interested should email Ruby at hqgruby@hotmail.co.uk as soon as they can.

- **Foundations Physio exercise classes – temporary change of venue.**

Whilst The Chichester Hall undergoes remedial works following the flood last Winter, the new venue will be the conference room in the **Milford Golf Club, Station Lane, Milford, Godalming GU8 5HS**. There is plenty of parking available and the golf club is a 6-minute drive from The Chichester Hall so if you want to check out the venue before the start date, then we recommend you do so.

The change of venue will be from **w/c 11 September to w/c 18 December**, before FP's usual two-week break for Christmas. The return to The Chichester Hall is obviously subject to the remedial works going to plan. We will update you closer to the time whether the classes will resume in the Milford Golf Club or back in The Chichester Hall, Petworth Rd, Witley, Godalming GU8 5PL.

- **Occam Singers Autumn and Christmas concerts**

The Occam Singers will perform *Bach: Motets* on 21 October at Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Guildford and we will be providing the bar. The performance starts at 7.30 pm.

Their Christmas Concert will be on 16 December 2023 at St Nicholas' Church, Bury Street, Guildford and we will be providing the bar. The performance starts at 2.15 pm.

- **Speech Therapy**

We have spaces available on our monthly 'online' speech therapy classes, 'Loud and Clear'. Anyone interested please contact our Treasurer.

So back to the focus of this month's ramblings....Why cats you may ask? Well, it seems that there is research to indicate that adding cats to your marketing campaign significantly increases the uptake of the message by up to 300%. Additionally, it seems your 'snuggle pal' has some important advice on how to deal with Parkinson's that could easily be missed. Here are life lessons from the cat's viewpoint (highly summarised for brevity) and my cat->Human translation (for those who do not speak Cat!)

- **Lesson one** – Cats allow you to form a relationship with them but you have to give them time and space. Entering a cat's space takes considerable empathy and patience from both cat and human. Cats will allow humans in when they are ready, and not before. [*Translation - There are synergies here about what environment is needed for an individual to feel comfortable engaging with others post diagnosis.*]
- **Lesson Two** – Cats are creatures of habit. Cat habit involves eating at the same time every day, sleeping during the day and then spells of exercise [*Translation – does this remind you of the need to synchronise eating with your Sinemet/Levodopa drugs or the need to have time every day to Exercise*]
- **Lesson three** - Perfectly predictable. Without fail, your cat greets each day with enthusiasm and bounding excitement. He doesn't sulk in the corner, looking miserable. He isn't concerned about whether he has any aches or pains or restrictions on moving about. He is simply happy to explore the day. [*Translation – Life is fun, go live it!*]
- **Lesson four** - Being available to relax. After running about chasing the errant squirrel population or stalking birds, your cat likes another snack and then a nap. But he doesn't nap until he's had his morning full-body massage. [*Translation - Exercise is vital as is rest. Listen to your body and be kind to yourself*]

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The final lesson may not be suitable for all but I think being open and honest makes it easier to navigate life with Parkinson's. Practicing what I preach, I'll let you into my bedtime secrets ☺.

It seems that I often go to sleep with my 'stiff arm' stuck in a rigid cobra-like position. This is not a useful trait from a human perspective but for Bella (our Cat) it makes an ideal arm against which to rub her chin ☺

Regards, David