

The Park Bench

The Monthly Newsletter of the
Guildford and South Surrey Branch of Parkinson's UK

Happy October,

I hope everyone has had an excellent Summer and are prepared for the change to Autumn. Just as the seasons change with predictable regularity so too must the Branch's processes if we are to remain relevant.

As documented in the September edition of *The Park* we aim to increase our support for those who find technology challenging. Accordingly, those of you that have requested *The Park* in paper format will now receive the monthly newsletter printed and distributed in the same way. As this represents a doubling of the readership, I feel the Newsletter needs a Public Relations ('PR') overhaul. After much debate (5 minutes on my own) and limited (no) budget I have decided to call it *The Park Bench*. This pays homage to the main magazine and also reflects that if you are unlucky, you sit on your local bench only to be joined by some mad-man who rambles on about random topics.

Before moving on to diary dates a couple of clarifications:

- The new paper-based distribution of the monthly newsletter impacts only those who receive a paper copy of *The Park*. *The Park* and the Newsletter processes do not change for those who receive it electronically.
- Printing will continue with Oakleaf Enterprises, a mental health charity in Guildford.
- We must confess that due to Human error the monthly newsletter prepared for distribution on 1st September was not released. Luckily, you have not missed out as I will re-spin the content in this newsletter 😊

I hope that many of you receiving this in Paper will take advantage by pinning it up after reading it. Even better would be if you could contribute to:

- Tuesday 8 October- Join our local Recently Diagnosed social meetings held on the second Tuesday of the month. These are held at The Grantley Arms, Wonerish, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 0PE from 7.00 pm. Please note that you are asked to submit your menu choice in advance.
- Monday 14 October- Carers Group meets once a month on the second Monday afternoon at the Inn on the Lake, Godalming. If you would like to join the meetings, please contact Myra Newnes-Smith - details on our website.
- Tuesday 29 October – The last Tuesday of each month, 2.00 - 4.00 pm - Social Afternoon Meeting at Shalford Village Hall. In a last minute change to the schedule published in *The Park*, Drum Heads will be postponed into next year. The meeting will still go ahead and I'm confident we will find an excellent speaker to entertain and educate 😊

Please do not forget to buy your spaces at the Christmas Lunch.

- Those who have received this Newsletter in paper format should have previously received (around 1 September) *The Park* and reply slip that provides full instructions of how to apply via Royal Mail
 - For those who prefer electronic communications please follow the instructions on the website and send the requested details to sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk
-

As has become tradition the next section covers the ramblings of a mad-man. This month's topic is '**Luck**'

Luck is a concept that has fascinated and perplexed humanity for centuries. It is often perceived as a mysterious force, an unpredictable variable that can change the course of our lives. Here are some of the ways it has influenced me....

100 Club – Double down or call it a day

The reason I thought of Luck as a topic was because I needed to decide what to do about renewing my 100 Club numbers. I have been an active supporter since its early days but have never won a single prize. I have even done the maths and the probability of me having not won is around 4% and falling fast with every draw. The conundrum before me is:

- Do I consider Lady Luck is against me and I should cut my losses.
- OR
- Do I assume Lady Luck is waiting in the wings, aware that my chance of not winning is becoming infeasibly low, and ready to give me a big win.

My heart is solidly backing option '2' - surely, with single-digit probabilities of not having won then it's going to happen and soon.

My head rejects the above sentimentality, remembering probability theory, recalling that each event is independent meaning the outcome of one draw has no influence on the outcomes of subsequent draws.

My conclusion was simple. I am fascinated to see how unlucky I can be that I've pushed forward with my existing numbers. Let's see what happens in the August draw – wish me luck :-)

"guess what? After my article bemoaning my lack of 100 Club winnings, I actually got 3rd prize , a magnificent lucky £10!"

A Clinical Perspective

As you all know by now, I am taking part in a clinical trial involving significant periods of time in a PT or MRI scanner (the Polo mint machines as I call them). Before I enter the PT scanner, the doctor would wish me luck. This simple act raises an intriguing question: What role does luck play in a controlled environment like a scanning session as part of a clinical trial?

My conclusion is that Luck doesn't come into it. All the variables are defined and the degree of flexibility negligible. I therefore conclude the translation of 'Good Luck' is really 'You are the main variable in the success/failure of this scanning session so don't mess it up'. In other words, the doctor is really wishing himself good luck that I do a good job!

Idiopathic Parkinson's: A Twist of Fate

When it comes to idiopathic Parkinson's disease, the role of luck becomes even more poignant. The term 'idiopathic' itself means that the condition has no known cause, no identifiable origin. So, is my idiopathic Parkinson's a stroke of bad luck?

My initial response is a resounding 'yes', as it appears to be an arbitrary twist of fate that has altered the course of my life. However, with time and contemplation, it is clear that my experience with Parkinson's has led me to discover a new sense of purpose. As Chair of the Branch, I have had the privilege of meeting a remarkable group of members who share this journey with me. These relationships, the support, and the sense of community that has emerged has been a blessing.

So if Parkinson's is a product of luck, albeit luck that I wouldn't have chosen then perhaps the answer is clear: I should stop worrying about what is good or bad and simply embrace life in the moment.

Be lucky in whatever you do...

David