

Happy Easter!

Thank you to all members who attended the AGM in Shalford or took part in the repeat summary at the Recently Diagnosed group or other social gatherings. Full details will be documented in the May edition of *The Park*, but in essence, it was a very interactive event where I had the audience write my speech.

In terms of 'ramblings of a madman', there is no one specific focus for this month. Instead, as April Fools Day falls within the month I suggest you take care to identify which elements are true, partially true or completely made up 😊

Before we all get into that, the following events are all fully verified as true.

World Parkinson's Day

11th April—Why not mark the day and host a fundraising coffee morning or afternoon tea for your friends to raise awareness? Send any funds raised to our Treasurer, sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk

Shalford Village Hall social meeting speakers:

29th April— "Three Peaks Challenge" —Peter Clutterbuck

27th May— "A is for Arsenic", The Poisons of Agatha Christie — Dr Kathryn Harkup

My Ramblings:

As you know, the Branch Committee fully endorses exercise as a key element in keeping Parkinson's in check. Physical activity has a positive impact both physically and mentally. It can be as important as getting the right dose of medication.

Being active is important for everyone. It can make you feel good inside and out. It can maintain your health, lift your mood, and if you have Parkinson's, it can help manage your symptoms. The more physically active you are, the easier it is to live well with Parkinson's.

Just like Parkinson's, the right physical activity is different for everyone. Being active is always most effective when you push yourself, whether that's playing golf, gardening, or walking the dog.

The current recommendation from Parkinson's UK is 2.5 hours of exercise a week (ideally 5 sessions of 30 minutes).

Practising what I preach, I've taken up boxing as it is increasingly being recognised as an effective way of mitigating many of the symptoms of Parkinson's, improving coordination, balance, and posture. To be accurate, I do Boxfit, which is a combination of boxing and cardio-based training – for example, skipping, “planking”, or press-ups.

I am, however, not in the same league as Richard Longthorpe, 71, a pig farmer from East Yorkshire who did 1,000 press-ups a day for a month. He was diagnosed in 2017. Asked how he felt about it, he said: *“As a tuff Northerner, ah got used t’ bench pressin’ pigs wha’le at werk, an’ thought it much easier t’ turn over an’ do press-ups face down. An’ n’all, ya don’ need a pig this way round!”*

Asked for comment, a Parkinson's UK spokesperson said: *“Richard is simply an inspiration, though I must confess, I haven't the faintest idea what he's on about.”*

I don't wish to boast, but it seems that word of the “ramblings of a madman” has spread internationally and beyond the world of Parkinson's. Richard Lee sent me an email stating: “We've long been following Guildford Parkinson's for a considerable period, and we are constantly in awe of your compelling and insightful content.”

Who is Richard Lee, I hear you say? He is, of course, the CEO of Sakuto Knives, a company focused on crafting high-quality Damascus kitchen knives. Members, as this is a collective effort, pat yourselves on the back and walk tall knowing that chefs across the globe are benefitting from our insight.



Always wishing to keep you fully educated on current trends you may have noticed a buzz around open water swimming – also known as lake swimming. I have considered raising this with Steve, our Treasurer, as an activity we could subsidise but I've found this is probably unnecessary. Every day Martin Lynch will have his morning coffee in freezing cold water inside a bin. The 44-year-old believes icy temperatures have had a profound effect on his life. "Strangely, when I get in, it doesn't feel cold," says Martin. Without fail for the past six months, he has enjoyed a daily dip. He says he has now reached 192 days in succession and that he has seen the benefits.

Finally, a story brought to my attention by Margaret Westwood – like many, I am diagnosed with idiopathic Parkinson's. Idiopathic means that the cause is unknown. There is great excitement in the Parkinson's research community that a case has been diagnosed on the small island of San Serriffe, a semicolon-shaped paradise near the Seychelles (identified 1977). With such a small island and a minimal population, it is hoped that the cause can be found. As stated by a leading neurologist from UCL “there aren't that many places to look.”

Happy April – watch out for scammers and charlatans.

David Lowther