

Cambridge Branch Newsletter: September-November 2025

Serenata Christmas Concert



Kick off Christmas in the most magical way! The wonderful Serenata Female Voices are giving a performance in aid of Parkinson's at the stunning Trinity College Chapel on **Sunday 21 December, 6pm**, and tickets are on sale now. Expect a beautiful evening of sparkling choral gems, modern and traditional Christmas classics, and much-loved carols, with music by John Rutter, Bob Chilcott, Eric Whitacre, Andrew Parnell, Praetorius and more. A family-friendly concert and the perfect start to the festive season.

Ticket prices:

£15 General Admission £5 Under 18s £32 Family Ticket

Buy your tickets here: <https://wegottickets.com/event/679274>

Do We Need North Cambridge Exercise Groups?

We're exploring the idea of launching **new Parkinson's-friendly exercise sessions in North Cambridge** but we need your help to decide what's needed. At the moment, most activities take place in the south of the city, and we want to know whether a regular programme in the north would make a difference to you. If you'd like to see more classes closer to home, please take a moment to tell us at the link Here:

[Link To the Online Form](#) (More Details on Page 6)

BRANCH MEETINGS

September Branch Meeting: Clotilde Tournerie

At our September meeting we were delighted to welcome Clotilde Tournerie, a third-year PhD student at the University of Cambridge and a valued committee member of our branch. Earlier this year, the branch was proud to support Clotilde's attendance at the ADPD 2025 Conference in Vienna, one of the world's largest gatherings for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's research. In September she returned to tell us all about her experience, her research, and why it matters for people living with Parkinson's.



Clotilde began by sharing a little about her work. Although her wider lab is involved in clinical trials, her own research focuses on the innate immune system in Parkinson's disease, the fast-acting, front-line component of our immunity. Increasing evidence suggests that inflammation and immune dysfunction may play an important role in Parkinson's, and Clotilde's project aims to understand exactly how immune cells behave in different stages of the condition.

Before diving into the science, she treated us to snapshots of Vienna: The Schönbrunn

Palace, the Easter markets, and most memorably, the rain, which was relentless throughout the conference! The event itself was enormous, spread across multiple auditoriums with parallel talks, poster rooms, and breakout spaces to meet researchers. It was Clotilde's first major international conference, and she described the experience as inspiring, exciting, and occasionally overwhelming especially after long days absorbing highly technical talks.

Her poster focused on analysing blood, saliva, and nasal swab samples from five groups: healthy individuals, people at risk of Parkinson's, early-stage Parkinson's, late-stage Parkinson's, and a comparison cohort. These samples allow her to study a range of innate immune cells to understand their potential roles in disease progression.



Nasal and salivary areas are now thought to be early areas of Parkinson's development, making these samples especially informative. Participants undergo an hour-long visit involving questionnaires, smell testing, and sample collection. Finding people at risk of Parkinson's, however, is extremely challenging: in the past year, only 3 out of the target 20 have been identified.

Clotilde explained how she processes samples using flow cytometry, a technique that identifies and counts specific immune cell types using fluorescent markers. Her

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recent work also includes examining post-mortem brain tissue, where she has already found evidence that certain immune cells infiltrate the brain in Parkinson's.

In reflecting on the ADPD conference, Clotilde spoke about major global themes:

- The race to find biomarkers for early diagnosis
- The importance of worldwide access to clinical trials.
- The growing role of exercise and lifestyle in Parkinson's.
- Environmental factors such as air pollution.
- The move toward personalised therapies informed.



Her talk sparked excellent questions amongst the local branch, from the recent Huntington's trial news to the future of biomarker-guided treatments and provided

a fascinating look at the research our branch helps support.

October Branch Meeting: Visit from Parkinson's Nurses

Our October meeting took a more practical and care-focused tone as we welcomed our local Parkinson's Nurse team: Preethi, Claire, and Helen, accompanied by Becky, our Local Advisor. The session began with one of Steph Baudino's gentle warm-up routines, which once again helped ease us into the afternoon with movement, stretching, and plenty of smiles.



Instead of a single formal talk, the nurses spent time circulating among members, speaking one-to-one and answering individual questions. This format worked incredibly well, allowing people to raise issues they might not share in a larger group: medication timings, symptom changes, sleep difficulties, and the challenges facing carers. Preethi then gathered us together for an overview of what Parkinson's Nurses do, a role that many members said they had heard of but didn't fully understand. The team's mission, she explained, is to provide holistic, person-

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centred support for people with Parkinson's and their families. Holistic care doesn't just mean dealing with tremor or medication adjustments; it also includes mental health, lifestyle advice, carer wellbeing, and help navigating other health conditions that often overlap with Parkinson's.



The nurses' work covers a broad range of support, including:

- Symptom management and advice, both Parkinson's-related and non-Parkinson's.
- Regular consultations, offered by phone, in clinics, or occasionally through home visits for those unable to travel.
- Proactive group sessions promoting healthy living, exercise, and self-management.
- Coordination with other services, ensuring joined-up care across

physiotherapy, speech therapy, GP services, and hospitals.

- Guidance for other healthcare professionals, helping to ensure that everyone involved in a person's care understands best practice for Parkinson's.

Members were particularly interested in how the nurses help streamline communication between services, which is an area many people find challenging. Preethi acknowledged the well-known pressures facing the NHS, including staff shortages and long waits, but emphasised that the Parkinson's Nurse team works continually to improve access to support and information.

The atmosphere during the meeting was warm and lively, with many new faces joining us.

By the end, members commented on how valuable it was to have time with the nurses, and how reassuring it felt to speak to professionals who deeply understand the complexities of Parkinson's. The session served as a powerful reminder that expert, holistic care can make a tremendous difference to quality of life and that our local nurses are a cornerstone of that support.

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LOCAL NEWS

Museum Encounters: Parkinson's Dance Course (Spring 2026):

This course is designed for people with Parkinson's and is led by Filipa Pereira-Stubbs who is a dance-for-health artist. This comprises of dance-like movement inspired by objects, artefacts and artworks from across the University of Cambridge Museums collections!

06/02/2026 - 20/03/2026 - Free

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM



Sessions start with an exploration of museum objects. The stories of these objects inspire the dance session. We end with refreshments and a chance to look again at the objects. The dance is both chair-based and standing, and we invite participants to work at the level that suits them best. Companions are welcome!

Activities take place on selected Fridays from 10.30am to 12pm at [Cambridge Junction](#):

- Friday 6 February
- Friday 13 February
- Friday 20 February

- Friday 6 March
- Friday 13 March
- Friday 20 March

To find out if this is something for you and book onto the programme, please contact us by email: info@museums.cam.ac.uk We will then ask you to complete an online booking form.

New Memoir: *When Your Neurons Dance*

We are pleased to share news of a new memoir that may resonate deeply with many in our community. *When Your Neurons Dance: A Story of a Doctor with Parkinson's* is written by Dr Jonny Acheson, an Emergency Medicine Consultant and Director of the Parkinson's UK Excellence Network. In this moving and honest account, Jonny reflects on life as both a doctor and a person living with Parkinson's, exploring the challenges, uncertainties, and moments of resilience that shape his journey. His story offers insight, comfort, and inspiration, highlighting the strength found in community and the importance of understanding the lived experience of Parkinson's. The book is now available from major booksellers, including [via this link to Amazon](#).



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A Heartfelt Thank You to Pam Holt

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Pam Holt, whose extraordinary commitment has supported both Parkinson's research and our Cambridge Branch for many years. Since her husband Chris's diagnosis in 2004, Pam has organised her much-loved Orchard Cream Tea at their home in Haslingfield, an annual tradition she has maintained since 2007.

Each year, Pam prepares fresh scones, arranges flowers from her garden, and transforms the orchard into a welcoming space for friends and locals, all while battling the uncertainty of British weather. Her dedication is unmatched, and this year's event raised over £800, shared between our Branch and a local playgroup.

Thank you, Pam, for your unwavering generosity and for bringing the community together year after year.

BeechBand Update

Parkinson's UK does not currently endorse this product, however if you have found prototype 1 beneficial, you should know that prototype 2 is now available for you to buy.

A quick update for those who've been trying out the BeechBand prototypes over the past few months. The BeechBand team has now released their new model the BeechBand 100D with a quieter motor, charging lights, a redesigned strap, and a longer 100-day return period.

Exploring a New North Cambridge Parkinson's Exercise Group

Many of you will know the fantastic work of Active with Parkinson's Cambs, which runs a wide range of Parkinson's-friendly exercise classes across the south of the city. These sessions have made a real difference to lots of people, but we're aware that getting to the south of Cambridge isn't easy for everyone.

For some time, the Branch Committee has hoped to develop a similar programme in North Cambridge, or at least a small number of regular activities, to support those who would find it easier to attend something closer to home. At the moment, the only Parkinson's-specific activity in the north is Walking Football, and we would love to understand whether there is enough interest to build on that.

To help us work out what might be possible, we're asking members to answer a few short questions about the types of classes you would find useful and whether you'd be likely to attend.

You can send your responses by email to annaparkinsonsuk@gmail.com or pick up a paper copy of the questionnaire at the Branch Lunch on the 12th December if you plan to be there. If not, you can email Caroline (carolinebent@me.com) and she will mail you a copy if you give her your address.

Your feedback will really help us shape something that works for our community thank you!

[Link To the Online Form](#)

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SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

ALBORADA Drug Discovery Institute – University of Cambridge



The ALBORADA Drug Discovery Institute

This section is from Dr William Kuan, who is the head of Biology at the ALBORADA, this is what he had to say about the work they conduct!



At the ALBORADA Drug Discovery Institute (ADDI), supported by Alzheimer's Research UK, our mission is to turn the latest discoveries in biology into new treatments for dementia-related conditions, including Parkinson's disease.

We're a team of around 30 scientists, with a mix of biologists and chemists working together to bridge the gap between academic research and the pharmaceutical industry. Unlike traditional university labs, our focus is on translational science: taking promising scientific findings and developing them into practical starting points for drug discovery. Our goal is to create lead chemical compounds, in particular small molecules that can be tested in experimental models to show whether targeting a particular biological

pathway could slow or stop disease progression. These lead compounds both help to demonstrate the value in targeting new pathways but also serve as starting points for the discovery of drugs.

We also differ from industry in that we can take on higher-risk, high-reward projects. By developing high-quality lead compounds and demonstrating their potential to improve disease-related biology, we aim to "de-risk" new targets, making them attractive for further investment by pharmaceutical and biotech companies.



Much of our research focuses on helping nerve cells survive and function better by restoring cellular balance (homeostasis) — the internal systems that keep cells healthy. We are also very interested in understanding and controlling neuroinflammation, which is increasingly recognised as a key driver of neurodegenerative diseases. Insights from human genetics play a big role in guiding us towards the most promising biological targets.

Our approach is grounded in rigorous science. We prioritise targets with strong evidence from human genetics, especially genes that appear protective or to cause or increase the risk of disease. We then

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carefully test whether these targets are active in the right cell types in the brain and whether they can realistically be influenced by a small-molecule drug.

Once a target is chosen, we validate it using a range of cutting-edge tools, including human-derived neurons and glial cells, to ensure our findings are relevant to patients. We also work with human samples which are analysed in a wide variety of ways - so called "omics" data to make sure our models accurately reflect the biology of real disease.

By combining the flexibility of academic science with the discipline of drug development, the ADDI aims to accelerate the discovery of new therapies, bringing us closer to treatments that can truly change the lives of people living with Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases.

UPCOMING BRANCH EVENTS

Red: External Events *Please note that this service or activity is not organised nor endorsed by Parkinson's UK (company number 00948776). Parkinson's UK is not responsible for the activity and is not liable for any advice or treatment received, or for any loss or damage incurred because of attending the activity or accessing the service.*

2025 Dates

5 December: 10:30-12:00. Museum Encounters Autumn Term, session 5. Dance for people living with or affected by Parkinson's. Inspired by stories from the University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Garden. FREE. 10.30-12:00. Cambridge Junction, Clifton Way, Cambridge CB1 7GX.

11 December: 10:30, Carers Meeting by Zoom ([Click Here](#)) Meeting ID: 854 7158 6856 Passcode: 232571

12 December: Branch Christmas Lunch – At the David Rayner Building, Friday 12 December, 12:30 for 13:00. Tickets: Branch members £10; guests £15. Order your ticket(s) from Caroline at carolinebent@me.com or in person.

18 December: ParkinsSing. See 20 November above.

19 December: 10:30-12:00. Museum Encounters Autumn Term, session 6. Dance for people living with or affected by Parkinson's. Inspired by stories from the University of Cambridge Museums and Botanic Garden. FREE. 10.30-12:00. Cambridge Junction, Clifton Way, Cambridge CB1 7GX.

21 December: CHRISTMAS CONCERT IN TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL in aid of Parkinson's (by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of the College) [Tickets now available by clicking here](#)

A PEACEFUL CHRISTMASTIDE TO ALL

2026 Dates (Subject to Change)

23 January: 10:30 – 12:30, Branch meeting. Speaker Marta Camacho, researcher at the Brain Repair Centre: "The Role of the Gut in Parkinson's"

6 February: Museum Encounters Spring Term begins, details later.

27 February: 10:30 – 12:30, Branch meeting. TBC: John Skidmore "Drug Discovery in Neurodegenerative Diseases"

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27 March: 10:30 – 12:30, Branch meeting.
Annual General Meeting, plus a visit from our
Parkinson's Specialist Nurses.

11 April: WORLD PARKINSON'S DAY

12 April: The **Tulip Fun Run** returns to its
preferred Springtime slot – Date and Route
TBC, but save the day and plan to join in in
2026.

24 April: 10:30 – 12:30, Branch meeting,
presentations by recipients of the Branch
conference travel awards, including visual
tours of the conference locations!

22 May: 10:30 – 12:30, Branch meeting, TBC

26 June: 10:30 – 12:30, TBC: Branch meeting
dedicated to 2nd year medical student
attendees.

24 July: 10:30 – 12:30, Branch meeting,
Speaker Roger Barker, Professor in Clinical
Neurosciences at the University of
Cambridge, neurologist, stem cell researcher,
and Branch Honorary President!

NETWORK NEWS FROM PARKINSON'S UK HQ

Helpline at Christmas

During the Christmas period our helpline will
be open -

Christmas Eve: **9am to 12pm**
Christmas Day and Boxing Day: **Closed**
Saturday 27 December: **10am to 1pm**
Sunday 28 December: **Closed**
Monday 29, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31
December: **10am to 1pm**
Thursday New Years Day: **Closed**
Friday 02 January: **Normal opening hours**



Let's Dance! Day is back for 2026

It's nearly time for everyone to get their
dancing shoes on and enjoy a boogie for
Let's Dance Day on Sunday March 8, 2026.

Following the success of the very first Let's
Dance Day in 2025, we are supporting the
event once again in 2026 and we need your
help to make it even bigger and better next
year.

If you are working with the Parkinson's
community or know someone with a
connection to the condition who has a
passion for dance or movement, then we
want to hear from them. Better yet why not
invite your groups and dance instructors to
register their event on the Let's Dance
website?

Find out how you can get started - <https://lets-dance.org.uk/members-of-the-public/>

Know a Parkinson's dance storyteller? - [We want to hear from them](#)

For more information about Let's Dance Day
and how Parkinson's UK is supporting the
awareness campaign, contact Philip Lindley
on plindley@parkinsons.org.uk.

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12 days of winter activities campaign launches

We have created a new resource to help more people get active for winter. Called the 12 days of winter activities, the new guide features a range of activities that anyone with Parkinson's can try, all from the comfort of their own home.

We are asking everyone to share the new resource amongst your networks and with anyone who wants to be more active with Parkinson's – [The Resource Can be Found Here](#)

We are excited to announce that Parkinson's UK has been awarded [a garden at the world-famous RHS Chelsea Flower Show](#), May 2026!

It's a unique chance to deepen understanding of Parkinson's, and inspire the whole Parkinson's community to feel the benefits of gardening.

Our garden is designed by award winning gardener and BBC presenter Arit Anderson. It symbolises the journey of living with Parkinson's: the moments of adaptation, challenge, hope and connection.

After the show, the garden will live on at Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital, cared for by volunteers including the Parkinson's community.

The aim of the project is to engage the Parkinson's community with the benefits of gardening and staying active as well as maximising the opportunity to raise awareness around the condition and Parkinson's UK.

The project team is busy organising activities relating to Chelsea and we look forward to sharing more updates on how you can get involved via network news and on [our webpage](#) in the lead up to the show. If you have a question in the meantime, please contact twollard@parkinsons.org.uk who is managing the project.

Celebrating Parkinson's UK Trustees

We were delighted to welcome three new trustees at the Annual General Meeting, which was part of Par-Con last month. Our members elected Janet Shipton and Peter Miller in England, and Graham Pierpoint in Northern Ireland. We now have 13 trustees in total – seven elected by our members and six appointed by the Board itself, including our Chair of Trustees, Gary Shaughnessy. Five of our trustees are people with Parkinson's. You can find out more about Gary and all our trustees on our website [HERE](#).

New Online Military Support Group

We are working with a new volunteer who is a serving member of the RAF and would like to set up an online Military Support group.

The aim of the group is to provide a place of support to discuss the unique challenges of being a service person, family member of a service person or a veteran with Parkinson's. We want to create a safe environment where people can discuss their concerns and challenges, also signposting them to military support services where available.

If you know anyone who would be interested please share our [flyer here](#) - which includes a link to [this google form](#).

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Largest ever Parkinson's research trial is starting now

A new research trial will start by testing 2 potential treatments that could slow or even stop Parkinson's getting worse.

We're proud to be supporting and co-funding the largest ever Parkinson's research trial, which has now started recruiting participants in London and Newcastle, with more than 40 research trial sites due to open across the UK over the next year.

The Edmond J Safra Accelerating Clinical Trials in Parkinson's (EJS ACT-PD) aims to save time and money when testing treatments that have the potential to stop or slow Parkinson's progression. It will do this by testing multiple treatments at once, in a trial format known as a multi-arm, multi-stage, or MAMS.

The EJS ACT-PD trial will need 1,600 people with Parkinson's to take part. Trial sites are currently recruiting in London and Newcastle, and more are planned to open before the end of the year and into 2026. You can register your interest now, and you will be contacted when your chosen trial site is open.

[Learn more about the trial and register your interest on our Take Part Hub page.](#)

[You can also see answers to frequently asked questions about the trial, eligibility criteria, and what the trial will involve in our FAQ document.](#)

[Read about the EJS ACT-PD news on our website.](#)

Help researchers find a better treatment for Hallucinations

Current medications for Parkinson's hallucinations are not ideal, often causing unwanted side effects, and are not equally available to everyone across the UK.

Parkinson's UK is funding research teams across the UK to study whether ondansetron can effectively treat hallucinations in Parkinson's and Lewy Body dementia. If successful, this affordable, already-licensed drug could become available to patients within just a few years.

Maria and Desmond, who took part in the trial, said:

"I'd really encourage anyone thinking about it to take part. It was so easy, just one more pill. And the research visits are just the same as the routine appointments. It was like having extra consultations, we felt like VIPs!"

More people are urgently needed to progress this vital research. Can you help raise awareness of the trial?

Online talk for your group

The study's lead researcher, Professor Suzanne Reeves, is also offering to give free online talks to local support groups and branches in 2025 and 2026. Professor Reeves may also be able to give in person talks to groups in London. It's a great chance to ask questions and learn more about hallucinations and the Top Hat study.

Find out more at www.parkinsons.org.uk/top-hat or email o.zubko@ucl.ac.uk.

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Trainline Badges

Back in September, we told you about an initiative being launched by Trainline in partnership with Parkinson's UK to make rail travel more inclusive.



We asked for your input and thoughts on the wording for a new badge that has been designed to improve understanding of conditions including Parkinson's and to encourage greater patience among passengers.

We can now reveal that the wording with the most votes was 'Patience Please, travel is challenging for me' which will encourage understanding from fellow travellers by reminding people that kindness and patience can make a big difference.

The badges are now available for [free](#) in the Parkinson's UK shop while stocks last. Alongside the free badges, Trainline is offering £10 off train travel to 500 people living with Parkinson's, helping them to stay connected with support groups, attend appointments, or visit specialist nurses, also available in the shop.

Parkinson's Away-From-Home Kit



If you have Parkinson's, it's important to take your Parkinson's medication within 30 minutes of the prescribed time. Even short delays can worsen your symptoms and put you at risk. Yet over half of people with Parkinson's don't get their medications on time, every time, in hospital.

In partnership with people with Parkinson's and carers, we've created the Parkinson's Away-From-Home Kit. It's a range of tools to help people with Parkinson's, and those who love and care for them, advocate for their Parkinson's medications on time, every time. You never know when you might need to go into hospital, so it's a good idea to prepare in case of an emergency stay.

From medical alert cards and wristbands to checklists and in-depth guidance, you can create a kit that works for you. Some of the tools can be downloaded and printed from home, while others can be ordered from our [online shop](#).

For more information, visit <https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/information-and-support/parkinsons-away-home-kit>

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Flu and vaccinations

An especially difficult flu season is predicted this year, and people with Parkinson's can be more susceptible to chest infections. This is especially true for those with advanced Parkinson's. That's why we'd encourage anyone with Parkinson's to take up any vaccines that they are offered. Those who have been newly diagnosed with the condition, or who are under 65 may not realise that they are eligible for free vaccinations. If someone cares for you, and your welfare may be at risk if they fall ill, then they are eligible too. Giving yourself and your loved ones added protection from flu will allow you to continue to live well with Parkinson's.

For more information about eligibility visit: [Flu vaccine eligibility and information](#) and [COVID-19 vaccine eligibility and information](#).

How to book your vaccination:

You can book a vaccination appointment through:

- **The NHS App**
- [The NHS website](#)
- **Your local GP practice**
- [Your nearest walk-in service](#)

Interested in finding out more about research?

[Sign up to our Research Support network!](#)

Interested in finding out more about campaigning?

[Sign up to our Campaigns network!](#)

All Branch Enquiries: pukcambridge@gmail.com

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair: Mark Goodridge markgoodridge@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Stephen Naylor

stephennparkinsons@gmail.com

Treasurer: David Allars djaParkinsons@outlook.com

Secretary: Caroline Bent 07922-479289

carolinebent@me.com

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USEFUL CONTACTS

Branch Website: <https://www.parkinsonscambridge.org>

Parkinson's UK: www.parkinsons.org.uk 020-7931-8080
enquiries@parkinsons.org.uk

Helpline: A free, confidential helpline is available from Mon-Fri: 9am-7pm and Saturday 10am-2pm. Call 0808-800-0303, or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/parkinsonsukcambridge/

Parkinson's Nurses locally; for help and information:

- Parkinson's Nurse Team 0330-726-0077

- Addenbrooke's Hospital Parkinson's Nurses 01223-349814

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).

Thank you for reading this issue of the Cambridge Branch newsletter and for supporting Parkinson's UK