

# **An ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**of the CCHC will be held at the David Rayner Building  
on Tuesday, 22 March 2011 at 12 noon**

All who are interested may attend, but only paid-up members  
will be entitled to vote.

Subscribing members include both those who make monthly payments  
and those who make a single annual donation

## **AGENDA**

To receive apologies for absence

To approve the minutes of the AGM held on 23 March 2010

To receive the Annual Report

To receive the Centre Co-ordinator's report

To receive the Honorary Treasurer's report

To approve the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 Oct 2010

To appoint the Independent Examiner of Accounts for 2010-11

To elect members of the Committee of Management

*The members of the Committee standing for re-election are as follows:*

Stuart Bartram, Wendy Brown, Fran Dawson, Wendy Green,  
Bob Jackson, Penny Olesen, Ted Sage, Tricia Smith

*New nomination:* Janet Hickman

To elect the Centre's Officers *The following nominations have been received:*

Chair: Ted Sage

Hon. Secretary: None

Hon. Treasurer: Bob Jackson

Any other business

Ted Sage *Hon Secretary*

## Some of the Christmas messages ~ written in cards sent to us at the Centre:

Dear all, it's getting towards that time of year again, Christmas, and everyone is busy getting ready and buying presents for their loved ones. It is easy for people to forget that there will be many who suffer the pain of being alone or without their loved ones at this special time due to this illness. Please find enclosed a small donation to help with all the fantastic support you provide for people throughout the year. Anon

We would like to say a big thank you to you all within our wonderful community, for all your friendship and warmth. We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and hopefully a good, good New Year. David and Irene

Everyone at the Centre ~ you've looked after us for another wonderful year and long may it continue! Lynn & Noel

Thank you for all your kindness and support Jean D

To Ann and her happy band and 'family' members. With love and best wishes. May 2011 be a good year for all. Jan H

Ann and your team ~ wishing you all a Very Happy Christmas and thanks also for the party and dinner, both thoroughly enjoyed ~ Margaret A

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all the support team that give tea and comfort to the troops. Thank you. Denis D

Happy Christmas and a good New Year and a big "thank you" for all the hard work you all do for the Centre. Brenda M

Keep going throughout the year ~ much love to you all ~ Margot

To Ann and all helpers and supporters of the CCHC. We can't get down to see you very often but keep up the good work. The support that I and Miriam received in my time of need [that would have been around the time when Marilyn first started our Centre in 1986] is never forgotten. Roy and Miriam.

**Christmas Party ~** We had people doing their best all over the place, with the bar, the food, the raffle, the tombola and with the pantomime. 'Cambridge Harmony' sang to us and we joined in with three carols. Time to go home and we had plenty of help with clearing up and the vacuuming ~ thank you so much.



Liz wrote this about  
our glorious pantomime  
**ALBERT LADDIN 2010**

With only 5 weeks rehearsal we were ready to astound our audience. Geoff took the role of director in a very professional manner (he who must be obeyed) and set about perfecting the performance.

Many thanks to Judith Bowen for supplying the brilliant costumes. We had underestimated our sizes ~ we really thought we were 10/12: in reality 14/16 was what we needed. Widow Twanky said she made her own bloomers (think they really came from her knicker drawer!)

Rehearsals all took place during the run up to Christmas. A short time before the actual night a couple of swift role changes took place, due to unforeseen circumstances. Thank you Valerie and Geoff for playing Ladies-in-Waiting. Well done both of you.

Big thanks to Ken our stage hand/scene shifter.

Amazing results were achieved in such a short time.

The whole evening was enjoyed by performers and audience alike.

*The Party last night was fantastic, best ever! The play was brilliant! Anne F*

*You have an excellent team of volunteers. They worked so hard last night. Angela*

*Both of us say thank you for the lovely evening at the centre. The panto stars were great fun and the visiting singers delightful. Our best wishes to you and all my friends at the Centre for a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year. Carole M*

## Ayako

Do you remember, when we were at Stockwell Street some years ago, in walked a beautiful young Japanese girl ~ Ayako. She spoke to us in faltering English but we didn't really understand why she was there. We didn't think she had got cancer (and we were right about that) and it transpired that her interest was to meet people who had got cancer and see how the complementary therapies helped them. While Ayako was still in Cambridge we met her quite a lot and a memorable occasion was at one of Ros's bring and share lunches in Ros's lovely garden.

Now Ayako is back in Japan. This is what she wrote recently and enclosed her letter with boxes of chocolates for us to enjoy.

*Dear Ann and members of Cambridge Cancer Help Centre. Thank you for sending me 'Lifeline' and it was interesting to know what's going on at the Centre. You all look really happy and the smiles from the photos remind me of my life in Cambridge. I'm really looking forward to reading Lifeline and thank you all for your kindness. I am fine and working for a cancer hospital. It's been three years since I came back to Japan. Now I am a qualified aromatherapy adviser. I wish I could offer aromatherapy at your Centre. Many people are interested in aromatherapy and other therapies at the hospital now. I hope there will be more help centres like the CCHC near my home. Someone in my family was diagnosed with cancer. It was a real shock. And a different feeling for me to have a cancer patient in my family. After this experience I feel mental care of patients and families is necessary. It is important and useful to talk to a person who has experience of cancer. Because at that time we need a reliable information from such a person. It is helpful that there are places to relax and feel comfortable. I strongly feel Cambridge Cancer Help Centre is perfect!! I see many cancer patients every day. I wish I could visit your Centre again. That is all for now. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year. Love, Ayako*

From Tricia ~ I spotted this in a Christmas card sent to Ann ~

To Ann (the listening Lady) .....

# Christmas Lunch

Our Christmas lunch for 100 people was a brilliant occasion. Thank you to all those who provided 150 Christmas crackers and specially to 'Point Contact Hygienesis' who gave us several boxes of crackers. Also many thanks to those who cooked jacket potatoes and made the coleslaw.

I don't quite know how we manage it but our team always seems to pull off anything they set their minds to. Angela led the catering team, helped by the small team (Margaret Speed and Ilza Kadils) that she likes to accompany her in the kitchen. Our waiters were PSgt Gordon Murray, whom we have known well for several years when he was in Traffic and then the Helicopter team, PSgt Sandra Davidson, PC Tanya Mutch, PC Ian Perry, PCSO Gary Kendall and PCSO Chris Wiseman. They served our lunches and then manfully did masses of washing up for us.

We were entertained again this year by the children of Great & Little Shelford Primary School. They were very entertaining and a Big Hit. We have photographs of them taken by Ted ~ do look in the lunch photograph album.

Incidentally, the night before, we had read in the Cambridge News that MAGPAS were in severe financial trouble. So we asked everyone at the lunch if they could make a contribution to Magpas ~ which they did, and we were able to send them £108, but an extra £3 which appeared for them came in too late so I put that into one of their collecting tins at my doctors' surgery. MAGPAS sent us a 'thank you' and told us that they provide lifesaving teams of doctors and paramedics, that deliver critical A & E level treatment at the scene of medical emergencies, and were mobilised to over 950 serious incidents in 2009. Over the past 10 years MAGPAS set up over 40 Community First Responder Groups across Cambridgeshire, attending more than 15,000 patients since 2001.

The Tombola raised £197

The Christmas Raffle raised £272

Thank you to everyone who bought tickets and provided the prizes

## Reflections the day after our Christmas Lunch

After our successful Party with panto and our Lunch for 100 people, I sat the following morning, when I arrived at the Centre, to reflect. So with mug of tea and almost in darkness ~ but lit by the Christmas Tree which Brenda D traditionally decorates, I looked around. Over to my left is where the Art group flourishes ~ led by Pat who always flourishes and encourages everyone else to flourish, as does Mike who supports Pat. Where I was sitting at that moment was on the sofas in the corner where the people on the Macmillan New Perspective course gather together, guided by Janet and Judy. Their friendliness and skill in running that course has made them many friends at our Centre.

And also I could see ‘Sid’s chair’. He came to the Centre after his wife, Olga, was encouraged by one of the Breast Care Nurses at Addenbrooke’s to get in touch with our Centre or, threatened the nurse, she would ask me to get in touch with Olga! So Olga, with trepidation, came to our Centre but knocked timidly on the wrong door and was utterly relieved that no one appeared to be in, so she set off at no uncertain rate to get out of sight before we found her. But find her we did, and encouraged her to come in. She liked it so much she came back the same evening and every week following.

I also reflected that one of our Centre’s biggest strengths is its independence. We do what we want to do and we do it in our own way. We have strong, reliable trustees who seriously take into account what is the right way for our Centre to proceed, but our Centre has fuzzy edges ~ we tend to do what seems to be right without having hard and fast rules which could get in the way of letting us offer what we offer. Another strength comes from the people who use the Centre. Someone who comes to our Centre said “it’s an extension of our families”.

A couple of people at the Centre have recently remarked that we are like a family ~ an extended family. And I think we all do our best to look after each other. A friend ~ Johannah ~sent me the following poem over Christmas...

### The Mower

Philip Larkin (1922-1985)

The Mower stalled, twice; kneeling, I found  
A hedgehog jammed up against the blades,  
Killed. It had been in the long grass.

I had seen it before, even fed it, once.  
Now I had mauled its unobtrusive world  
Unmendably. Burial was no help:  
next morning I got up and it did not.  
The first day after a death, the new absence  
Is always the same; we should be careful

of each other, we should be kind  
While there is still time.

Someone recently said to me: When I walk into the Centre there is so much warmth. I talk with my newly-found friends and we talk together but everyone helps each other. And I find I can “feel” for those who have problems.

### Thank you Robert

At the party Robert Murray said,  
“Here is £5 from when I sold some of my Hornby”  
(Robert’s sister Eleanor is going to do a parachute jump  
for us at the end of the year when she becomes 16!)

**Jean C** commented, “It was a lovely lunch on Tuesday. I thought the choir was superb!”

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## Very many thanks to Robin Newall

Every year at Christmas time Robin transforms his garden into a fairyland of lights and snow (plenty of real stuff this year) ~ and Father Christmas visits during the weekends. Robin asks people to donate to a worthy cause. He chose our Centre as the beneficiary last Christmas

and raised £228.70 for us,

which was pretty good when you consider how bad the weather was. I know that a few of us from the Centre were going along one Sunday evening to admire it all, but the very cold weather and icy roads prevented us doing that.

For all Robin's very hard work, we are exceedingly grateful.

## Christmas time ~ Dennis S

The teacher is given presents by the children.

One child comes with box ~ Dad has a gardening centre ~ this is a present for you Miss ~ the box contained garden bulbs.

Another child handed the teacher a box. The little lad said, "this is from my mummy and daddy". His Mum and Dad were confectioners and inside the box were some super scrumptious chocolates.

A third child arrived at school with quite a large box. His Dad is a licensed victualler. However, the box was leaking a little bit so the teacher put her finger in to the leaky bit, licked it, looked puzzled and asked "is it wine?" "No" said the child.

The teacher put her finger into the leaking liquid on the outside of the box and asked "oh it must be champagne"?

"Oh no" said the child. "It isn't champagne."

"Well, whatever can it be" asked the smiling teacher.

"Ah", said the child excitedly ~ "It's a puppy".



Very many thanks to the residents of Lode  
who so generously donated **£270** to our  
Centre in lieu of sending Christmas cards,  
and to **Anne Vickery**  
who organised the collection

We were delighted to learn that the  
**Christmas Committee of**  
**St Catharine's College**  
had chosen us for their charity this year.  
They raised a spectacular **£803** for us  
from their Christmas Raffle.

Very many thanks to all their college suppliers  
who donated the Raffle prizes  
and to all who bought tickets

# Treatment for cancer ~ Peter Durrant

Treatment for cancer is, hopefully, these days beginning to lose its inbuilt fear. One in three people can expect to encounter cancer during their life-times and the ways in which we perceive this disease may well be on the route to a less-fearsome appraisal. Provided that is, of course, if we act early, follow our own intuition about what our bodies are telling us are not afraid of challenging public and (over)-powerful systems. My own experience in growing self-awareness when the specialist thought that I should return in six months, following my PSA readings, seemed to me to be wrong. In the event I went back after three months emphasising that early cancer treatment can work and the more challenging times when it cannot.

Maybe we should all read Solzhenitsyn's 'Cancer Ward' and enjoy the individual searching for an Apricot tree re-connecting with the world again. Perhaps we should all learn from Mukherjee's recently published 'A Biography of Cancer' where she argues that we need to rethink cancer as a long term condition which, as one's age advances, can be stretched out longer and longer. "Given what we know about cancer, even this would represent a technological victory unlike any other in our history." The message here may be, and this is where the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre (our own Maggie Centre) embodies the theme that if we include our own stories and long-term hopes into the public debate then we may have redefined 'the outer limit of our survival'.

Which, in many ways, the cancer wards at the hospital, *informally*, succeed in doing. In terms of treatment for prostate cancer the medical and social balance around how we help each other, essentially through the use of a public service, is much better balanced these days. Good body-scan systems, supportive nurses and skilled radiation workers complement diagnostic knowledge around your own view of where you are at. Perhaps we need to learn to communicate how we feel about our illnesses, and paradoxically, waiting rooms are not bad places to begin.

Especially as the waiting times, due to emergencies and other reasons, can be considerable. Although not everyone wants to share personal pain, it's probably

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true that we can all benefit from cautiously exploring our fears and showing that we can make new, if temporary, friends when we meet regularly during our long treatments. Now living on my own the kindness of regular banter, exchanging recipes, newspapers and warm welcomes and good-byes were really reassuring.

Along with helpful comparisons between coping with quite demanding dietary standards, where and how you travel, and contacts with the voluntary drivers who quickly become part of the 'gang'. Or negotiating with the introductory team, and again here the experience of working most of the time with people other than doctors was extremely reassuring, around whether or not you can still have a couple of pints at weekends.

It was no surprise, and I found that Google and other people's knowledge used sensibly and well was a great help, that at the end of the thirty-seven radiation sessions all was well. My PSA score had returned to normal, the more worrying Gleason measurements also, presumably, were no longer threatening and the future looks promising. Although in the first phase, where there was the possibility that the cancer had spread to the bones, it was sobering to learn to live with the inevitability of life and death. But isn't life after all a matter of luck and, for my money, very much concerned with the concept of determination ~ which is probably better, philosophically, discussed after leaving the friendly cancer ward.....

PS And many congratulations again, to our own Centre for such a tremendous contribution to all of our wellbeing.

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*The views expressed in articles in our newsletters,  
and the products that are referred to, are not necessarily endorsed by the  
Cambridge Cancer Help Centre.*

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# Outings ~ Penny

## Mystery Tour

It was cold, it was very cold but we intrepid explorers set off on what was billed as a Mystery Tour at the end of November. Once we were safely en route with the co-operative driver going twice round the roundabout at the M11 junction I explained that we were off down the motorway to Ikea as it is Ann's favourite shop and she had insisted she needed to do her Christmas shopping there. That was greeted by a certain amount of groans as well as the odd, slightly surprised cheer. Some were heard to say 'Stop the bus' like we could on a motorway, where were they going to go?

At Duxford the driver took a left turn, after all it was a Mystery Tour. We found ourselves eventually on the A14 and I had to confess we were not going to Ikea. We reached our destination in Bury St Edmunds for their Christmas Market. We spread out through the town centre, some visited the Cathedral or the museum, some wandered through the stalls spaced throughout the town, some did serious 'shop till you drop' present purchasing.

At 4 o'clock everyone gathered, as requested, by the main Post Office, and processed down the street to Harriet's Café, where tea was partaken along with very large scones with cream and jam, served by nice waitresses and waiters in traditional black and white uniforms.

Our ever obliging bus driver got as close to us as possible as one of the buggies had run out of umph and Stuart and others with bad backs all helped push. So, full and content we wended our way home.

# Welney

It is January, I am worried it will be grey, cold, snow and ice, all the fun of the festive season is behind us and it is known to be the most depressing week of the year, why did I chose now to go to Welney and to cap it all the Washes are flooded.

As the Australians say 'No worries Mate'. The sun shone, the hide was warm, we saw lots of swans and ducks, the Warden fed them, they were happy, so were we. The Warden explained that there were some 11,000 swans on the Washes but with the floods they had lots of choice of places to roost or water to float round on for the night without foxes getting them, so they did not need to come to the Wetlands and Wildfowl Lagoon at present. We liked the Pochard ducks and the Tufted and Mallards, but of course the swans were the stars, lots of Whoopers and some Mutes, and even a Native of Australia, a black swan. The Whoopers are larger than the Bewicks and inclined to be bullies so the Warden said Bewicks were keeping their distance the other end of the Washes,

After very good tea and cake, well maybe not quite as good as the CCHC homemade, we watched the swans returning from the surrounding fields where they had been feeding during the day, they fly very fast and still manage to land gracefully. As dusk turned into darkness the floodlight came on. It was quite magical watching the birds, till the Warden returned for the last feed and then it was more like a rugby scrum, every swan and duck for himself. Despite the avian squabbling we had a peaceful day out.

What did we do before Penny took charge of the coach trips I ask myself. Meticulously planned to limit the time of travel to absolute maximum of 2 hours, 1 hour preferred, bags of sweets which are passed around at meticulous intervals to combat any boredom, of which there isn't any, meticulous information about the place we are heading for, and always three cheers for Penny, from her passengers when we disembark. Perfick!

# Good Idea!

## Exercise ~ Referral Schemes for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire

If you ask your GP if he/she will give you a prescription to participate in exercise schemes e.g. 'Start Up' if you live in the City, or 'Fitness for Health' if you live in Cambridgeshire, hopefully he/she will say "yes". You then get in touch with one on a list of places in your area where you can have 24 sessions of supervised exercise at a very reasonable cost.

It is enjoyable ~ there are four of us from our Centre at the gym I attend. Last week three of us were next to each other on the cross-trainer. My favourite is the walking thingy and I imagine I am walking to Waitrose during my ten minutes. The whole session lasts for one hour. Before your first session you have an 'Assessment' ~ painless but worrying when they tell you your weight and BMI, the measurement of which I have forgotten. Simon Davies also tells you how much fat is in your body ~ another measurement I have temporarily forgotten due to shock setting in. I always look forward to going to the gym ~ it is small, not threatening and there are lots of people like me. In other words, at the time of our session it is not full of skinny young things in lycra. There may be people who have had hip operations, heart surgery or who just have fat tummies. Going twice a week is better than once a week.

We have all the details at the Centre. A couple of people I know at the gym have finished their 'prescription' courses and have signed up to continue the sessions. Once you start I find you do not want to stop.

## Unwanted Phone Calls

An organisation to stop unwanted phone calls is:  
[stayprivate.org](http://stayprivate.org) and [mpsonline.org.uk](http://mpsonline.org.uk)

## Brian Diggins

Very big shock to all of us,  
and of course to Annie,  
Brian's wife, that he died very  
suddenly in December.



I shall always remember that whenever we needed help at the Centre putting together wardrobes and cupboards, Brian would join Terry and Joe and spend the day or days helping us in that way. He was a very accomplished car mechanic ~ nothing in a malfunctioning car could beat him so we always knew he would solve any problem we had at our Centre.

Brian's funeral was in the beautiful Hildersham church. I do not normally count how many Centre people attend our very few funerals, but the fact that there was a shortage of seating for so many people led me to establish that there were 25 of our Centre people there on that very cold day.

Annie decided that instead of having floral donations in memory of Brian, she would raise money for the new Hildersham Village Hall because Brian had lived in Hildersham all his life. And I can add something very positive about Brian ~ knowing our barely controlled yearnings he even offered a couple of times to drive us to Ikea! Bless his heart.

## Many thanks to Richard & Bernard

who work hard to maintain the garden at the side and back of the Centre. They also plant up the wheelbarrow, and Bernard has just brought in two bowls of hyacinths to sweetly perfume the entrance.

## Zen Teachings ~ from Carole P

Always remember you are unique. Just like everyone else.

If you think nobody cares whether you're alive or dead, try missing a couple of mortgage payments.

Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

Some days you are the dog, some days you are the tree.

Good judgment comes from bad experience...and most of that comes from bad judgment.

There are two excellent theories for arguing with women. Neither one works.

Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.



## Craft Group ~ Pam

May I through our newsletter thank all the many donations of craft materials we have received over the past year. These have been very acceptable and we have put them to good use at our recent Craft Fairs.

I would also like to thank all my ladies who have made really exceptionally crafted and inspired goods to sell which has involved many dedicated hours of work which can sometimes go unnoticed. Margaret has quietly stitched together nine blankets so far from the many squares generously knitted by other members of the Centre. They will be given to the Chernobyl children in the summer. Our group consists of Lisa and her mum in law Margaret, Bren, Maggie, Margaret, Pina, Carol, Doreen and many others unknown who have kindly donated crafts.

Finally thanks to you all for making our Craft Fairs such a success.

## Knitting Squares!

Well, I never thought I would spend time knitting 6inch squares! But, to keep Pam and Margaret happy that is what I do. My output is quite meagre, not as prolific a square knitter as many others. The idea here is to make lots of squares which Margaret then makes into warm blankets, which we plan to give to the Chernobyl children to take back to their parents after their visit to Cambridgeshire during the summer of 2011. Just in case you would like to join in ~ and Pam and Margaret will be delighted if you do so, please use number 8 needles, cast on 35 stitches and produce a 6inch square in Plain knitting using double knitting wool. I suspect we need 18 blankets, and each blanket requires numerous squares in different colours. We do have some wool at the Centre if you would like to use it. Talk to Pam and her Craft Group and they will keep you well supplied with wool. They would also like contributions of wool if you have any to spare. AND they plan to have an Exhibition at the beginning of April. I have seen some amazing knitted mice and other toys and dolls' clothes. Please do not miss the exhibition. Money raised will be given to our Centre. They raised well over £500 last time.

# A Year of Fear and Tears ~ Maggie S

February 2010: Friday morning sees me excitedly undertaking last minute preparations for our upcoming holiday to Africa.

3.30pm doctor appointment later that day and I'm staring in disbelief searching the doctor's face for any sign of doubt. "But I don't even have a lump, you must have made a mistake?"

That word still echoing in my head as I walk back into the house, David still sitting where I left him 50 minutes previously. The colour drained from his face as I related the conversation with the GP. Later that evening the children sobbed uncontrollably despite my reassurance "I'm going to be fine". It was just as though I'd thrown a large pebble into a calm pond and stood back to watch the ripples spread out engulfing the surrounding water, only this was my family.

The next few months swept me along. Surgery, Chemo, Radiotherapy.

Daytime I was upbeat and positive for my crumbling friends. But by 3am I would lay in my darkened bedroom as sleep evaded me, watching my exhausted husband sleeping, my mind doing somersaults. I switch the kettle on and sit listening to my old Labrador snoring on her bed and then they came, the flood gates opened. Why me?

On the good days I went out with David, trying to show some enthusiasm for the food that was making me retch.

It's a baking hot afternoon in August. Too exhausted to walk I doze in the stuffy car while David shopped. I looked up as a man taps on my car window peering in hopefully, rosary beads in his hand. "For you, for you". Panicked, I shout at him to go away, shifting uncomfortably in my seat, anxious to see David rounding the corner. The man who I thought was trying to sell me something gets back into his car dejectedly and carefully wraps the beads back round his driving mirror. Watching him I

catch sight of my reflection. I'm wearing my headscarf in this heat and it

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is becoming harder to disguise what remains of my eyebrows.

My 'chemo'brain' clicks into place and I stagger out of the car towards him, looking ashamed and desperate to apologise. "Take care" he said, and drove off. I stood there knowing I'd always remember this moment.

The same week I felt suffocated by all the kindness surrounding me and decided to drive to the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre for some relief. Looking at the closed door and empty rooms for some explanation the gardener approaches me. "Holiday time" he says cheerfully "but come back in September!"

And I did.

Walking through the doors, head hung and tears flowing, I found myself in a place that radiates an aura of calm and warmth. A friend looked horrified when I told her I attended the Centre and was about to start on Macmillan's course 'New Perspectives'. "Oh, how depressing" she said.

How wrong can someone be?

I have met some of the most inspiring people, laughed for the first time in months and been so relaxed I feel I am floating. The course helped me change my outlook on life and made me take pleasure in the little things in life we take for granted.

I still have tea at 3am sometimes but instead of tears my mind is racing with plans for the future. It's not how much time you have ~ it's what you do with it.

February 2011:

I'm so glad the gardener said "come back in September".

# Cancer Research UK

Thank you to all those who bake cakes for the last Wednesday of every month, when we raise money for Cancer Research UK. The money will go direct to their Cambridge Cancer Centre. And thank you to all of you who buy the home-made cakes. We will save up the money for the year and then hand it over to them.



## Library Books ~

Many are missing. Please check your bookshelves.

We have a Books Amnesty Box!

Also fairly new books are missing, including the 'Rainbow Diet'



## A very useful tip ~

*In a magazine I found the following suggestion:*

Looking up from your keyboard to discover you've written a whole passage IN CAPITAL LETTERS is one of the more irritating experiences of using Microsoft Word. But if you highlight the words and press shift/F3 they will instantly change into lower case. If you do the same again, the first letter of each word will be capitalised.

I read this somewhere about computer emails ... please ensure, before forwarding any message, that you remove all previous addressees in order to prevent the increased possibility of junktracking cookies, reduce spam and safeguard other genuine users and yourself.



## Alan Bailey

Sadly Alan died early in December  
after living with cancer for 14 years.



The service at the crematorium was for Alan by Alan. He was not a man who left things to chance: he liked to be prepared. He had written his own 'Brief history of mine', which he had insisted should be read out in full. Listening to the decades unfold it became apparent that Alan had forged his own individual and deeply-felt path ~ following what made his heart sing (perhaps that was why he was always smiling!) His history was not merely a catalogue of events ~ it carried us along through his diverse interests ~ his love of Chess, his involvement with the Cambridge Folk Club and his deep love of music, his extensive travel (including visits to his guru in India), his interest in cowboy films ~ all pursued with a joyous enthusiasm and underpinned by a firm faith and a life-long quest to find answers to the big questions about 'Life, Death, the Universe & Everything'.

Jim Schwabe from the Cambridge Folk Club commented on Alan's contribution to the Club with his very individual interpretations, and how he always introduced himself in a humorous way even though he was very serious about the music.

The floral tribute on top of the coffin was a beautifully-crafted 'guitar', created by the florist in Hardwick. And accompanying it was Alan's much-loved cowboy hat. The service was infused with a lightness of touch and the quiet humour familiar to those who met Alan. We were left with the uplifting feeling of a life well lived.

We send Michelle our love ~  
and hope to see her at the Centre when she feels ready to visit us.

Tricia

# The Benefits Nightmare after Diagnosis ~

## Derek C

Most of us don't even think of ever needing to claim benefits and rely on others. But for those of us who suddenly find ourselves in this terrible position after being fit and healthy, it is a shattering experience.

When, all of a sudden you realise that something is wrong, and you go to your GP, thinking, "oh well, just a twinge, nothing to worry about", but after being referred to hospital for further examination, blood tests, biopsies, scans ~ in fact the whole works, and then you are told, "I'm afraid your tumour is malignant! Advanced and aggressive" ~ well, nothing can prepare you for that.

Like most people, when you hear the words malignant, advanced and aggressive you do not hear any more ~ the consultant's words disappear into a foreign language. The list of questions you prepared all melt into insignificance as your mind races to catch up. You are numb, helpless ~ your body is in shock.

Later, when you catch your thoughts, the enormity of what you and your family and friends will have to face, hits home. And also you wonder if you will have to leave work. Up until this point I think we all have a feeling of immortality, so to find out you are mortal, and are dealing with a life threatening illness and all that goes with it, is daunting.

Without my wife Rosemary and my young son ~ my Towers of strength ~ life would indeed be grim.

I was diagnosed in July 2009 with prostate cancer. I carried on working until the October when my health took a sharp downturn. This was due in some part to the Zoladex implant attacking my joints and reducing my mobility dramatically. I also suffered from acute fatigue and sickness.

In March 2010 I underwent radical radiotherapy, nearly eight weeks, 5 days a week, which you all know takes its toll.

My employer, the National Blood Service, on the advice of occupational health (ATOS) advised that I should be retired on the grounds of ill health, and not fit to work, with the likelihood I would never work again.

I then applied for DLA and was examined by another ATOS doctor at home, on a Sunday morning in March 2010. The result was that I was awarded the higher rate, of both mobility and care for which I am grateful.

The problems started when it was time to claim ESA (employment support allowance) which replaces incapacity allowance, as I am not yet retired. You cannot claim for the first 13 weeks, when you can then submit the form ESA 50, which I foolishly filled out myself! The DWP start you on the lower benefit ~ you then have to attend a medical again, with ATOS after a few weeks (can you see a pattern developing?) with someone who has had only six weeks training to make informed decisions regarding what you can or cannot do. This medical examination is so focussed and set to such high standards that to obtain a pass you would need to be confined to your bed. The descriptors are such that all who passed the medical previously for DLA and other benefits will now fail, as you will never be able to score enough points. People receiving DLA at this time are in serious danger of losing their benefits, no question about it.

I appealed against my failing the medical as I thought with claiming DLA I had an exemption, this is no longer the case. To say I was livid is an understatement. I appealed for help from the Citizens Advice Bureau and was awaiting a verdict when after a conversation with Ann Dingley I decided to take direct action.

I sent Ann a draft of my problems and she kindly forwarded them to BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, to Mark Williamson producer of the Andie Harper show. The response was immediate, with Andie, the presenter, coming to the Centre on a Wednesday and interviewing me. The recording went out on the next morning's show, and the response it generated was incredible, so much so that 'Look East' contacted me that afternoon asking to put my story on 'Look East' on the Friday.

Inbetween times 'Look East' contacted the DWP to ask for their response to the story. The DWP phoned me Thursday afternoon, advising me that my back benefits would be paid, my appeal would not go ahead. I was over the moon until I asked if this meant that I was now in the Support Group. No, they replied, you are in the Work Group. To which I replied "NO! This is not right. I am not fit for work. My GP has signed me not fit for work. Are you overruling my GP? They replied that they did not have enough evidence stating otherwise! But I have poor mobility, advanced cancer, and associated health problems. I then asked if they had asked for a report from my consultant. "No", was their reply. But my consultant is the expert here I stated.

The DWP person then went on to say "as you are not six months terminal, nor on chemo" and (the one that really pushed my buttons) "there would

be no harm to your health from working”. Wow, what a sweeping statement that was.

The situation now is I have to see my consultant to ask if he will write to the DWP stating my case which is that he deems me not fit for work.

My story has also featured in the Haverhill weekly news, which has also created a lot of interest so hopefully, that has, not just for me, but for the thousands who have failed medicals, stirred everyone into action, to make a fuss and stir things up.

The unjust treatment of the chronically sick and disabled will not be tolerated. We have enough to deal with fighting our cancer, and can do without the added stress of a benefits system which in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has regressed 100 years. It now appears the sick and disabled are a burden and inconvenient to society, when we have fought so hard to be treated with dignity and respect, and to have our rightful place in society. None of us wish to be in the position we find ourselves, nor are we scroungers, so we do not want to be tarred with the same brush. I even suspect our human rights are being violated.

This story hasn't got a happy ending ~ yet ~ but I live in Hope

Derek showed me information headed

**Even HARSHER new ESA medical approved – Benefits and Work – 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010.**

**'Points' make Benefits**

If you score fewer than 15 points you are declared not worthy of that particular benefit and need to look for work.

We have an exhaustive list of the 'descriptors' at the Centre if you would like to read them. Here are some snippets:

*...plans to make the employment and support allowance (ESA) medical much harder.*

*.. and will include docking 'points' from amputees who can lift and carry with their stumps. Meanwhile for 'health and safety reasons' all points scored for problems with bending and kneeling are to be abolished and claimants who have difficulty walking can be assessed using imaginary wheelchairs.*

*Claimants who have difficulty standing for any length of time will, under the plans, also have to show they have equal difficulty sitting, and vice versa, in*

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*order to score any points. And no matter how bad their problems with standing and sitting, they will not score enough points to be awarded ESA.*

*In addition, almost half of the 41 mental health descriptors for which points can be scored are being removed from the new 'simpler' test, greatly reducing the chances of being found incapable of work due to such things as poor memory, confusion, depression and anxiety.*

We arranged for David Winterton, Partnership Manager of the Local Pensions Service, to come to the Centre to meet Derek and others who had queries about their benefits. The day after the talk from David Winterton a few of us talked some of it through. They were hopeful we could ask him to return to talk again and Derek wrote the following:

“We arrived at the meeting with a bit of trepidation and latent anger as well but through the course of the meeting he was so amiable and was fighting our corner – he was empathising with our feelings which from someone from a Government department which so many people have problems with, was refreshing for us to see. He didn’t come across as an official but as a friend. It is difficult to say how grateful everyone was and we would like to see another meeting happen again at some stage.”

When that takes place please come along, but make a few notes first of all and prepare your questions. Preparation is important if you wish to get the maximum help from the Questions & Answers session.

*(If you would like to attend the next meeting, please let me know.)*

## Don't talk to my parrot from Ros

Wanda's dishwasher stopped working so she called in a repairman. Since she had to go to work the next day, she told the repairman, "I'll leave the key under the mat. Fix the dishwasher, leave the bill on the counter and I'll send you a cheque. Oh, by the way, don't worry about my dog 'Spike' ~ he won't bother you. But whatever you do, do NOT, under ANY circumstances, talk to my parrot! I must stress to you, do not talk to my parrot."

When the repairman arrived at Wanda's apartment the following day, he discovered the biggest, meanest looking dog he had ever seen. But, just as she had said, the dog just lay there on the carpet watching the repairman go about his work.

The parrot, however, drove him nuts the whole time with his incessant yelling, cursing and name calling.

Finally the repairman couldn't contain himself any longer and yelled, "Shut up, you stupid, ugly bird!"

To which the parrot replied, "Get him Spike!"

Paddy is walking down the road eating a bag of doughnuts. Seamus meets him

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When asked by a young patrol officer

"Do you know you were speeding?"

the 83-year-old woman gave the young officer an ear to ear  
smile and responded:

"Yes, but ... I had to get there before I forgot where I was going."

The officer put his ticket book away and bid her good day.

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and says "if I can guess how many doughnuts you have in the bag can I have one?" Paddy said "if you can guess how many doughnuts are in there you can have both of them!" Seamus says "Four!"

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# New Perspectives ~13 Sept–18 Oct 2010

## ~ David D

On the 13<sup>th</sup> September a group of us from our Centre started a six morning course from 10am to 12.30pm. This was the New Perspectives course, run by Macmillan Cancer Support and led by our super tutors, Janet Hickman and Judy York.

Can I say, on behalf of all of us, that the course was fantastic, involving all sorts of remedial and soul-searching subjects involving cancer. A lot of hearts were opened during those six sessions ~ we all came away on the last day feeling reassured and very different people.

## Healthy Chocolate Brownies ~ from Anne V

8oz/250g dates  
4 oz olive oil – or 2 oz olive oil and  
2oz orange juice  
1 beaten egg  
1 mashed banana  
Two and a half ounces/60g  
wholemeal flour  
2tsp baking powder  
4 tbsp cocoa powder  
3oz/110g walnuts (or pecan)  
1 tsp vanilla essence

1. Grease cake tin 7" x 7"  
Heat oven to 180 degrees
  2. Put dates in saucepan, cover with water. Heat gently for 5-10 mins to soften. Allow to cool and puree
  3. Cream dates with oil
  4. Add egg, mashed banana and vanilla essence – mix well
  5. Sieve flour, baking powder and cocoa powder and add to mix
  6. Fold in walnuts and put in greased tin
  7. Bake for 30-35 mins
- For children, substitute the nuts for choc chips mini marshmallows.

## Penny Brohn Cancer Care ~ Elaine

A year ago I was recommended to go to Penny Brohn Cancer Care Centre. At the time I didn't feel well enough but this year Ann, who had recently been, encouraged me to go. I wish I had gone earlier.

The whole atmosphere is calm and hopeful and the Centre is set in beautiful grounds. I was shown to my room which is like a first class hotel with bathroom en suite and organic shampoo and shower. We met at 6pm that evening and sipped various herbal teas as we got to know one another. There were 12 of us but some had brought their partners who incidentally could also have their own rooms if they wished. Our first supper was nettle spaghetti with tomato sauce (yes it was lovely) served with various salads and delicious dressings. I had been told at the beginning of my cancer that I should avoid acidic food but we were given orange dressings and lots of tomatoes. Apparently they turn to alkaline in the body.

The next day was quite full. We were introduced to meditation which I have always found difficult but I was beginning to master by the time we left. We were also told how we could help to turn our cancer around.

The following day we had one to one appointments with a nutritionist, healer, doctor and a psychotherapist, each appointment lasting 45 minutes. We also had a talk from one of the co-founders of Penny Brohn Cancer Care - Pat Pilkington ~ she is such an inspiration.

We all enjoyed the meals and looked forward to them. We were given recipe cards for some of the dishes so we could try them at home. The only problem being the effect on our bowels (We all agreed it was good we had our own bedrooms!)

On the day we were due to go home we all felt reluctant to leave the calm, hopeful atmosphere, but we felt renewed and determined to put into practice the healthy eating programme.

# Lymphoma matters ~

some interesting stuff ~ look at the magazines in our library and read how to look after yourself during chemotherapy. There is clinical trials news from the senior trial coordinator at Cancer Research UK and UCL Cancer Trials Centre. Steroids may give you an increased appetite and quite often weight gain. Sometimes steroids can make it more difficult to sleep and you may experience changes in mood.

We have a large supply of informative booklets on all cancers ~ they came from Macmillan.

## Information Provision for Cancer Patients

**Dawn Barrick-Cook, Macmillan Information Nurse Project Manager**

I have worked as a nurse in Oncology for more than 18 years, and currently work for the Cancer Network. This role works closely with the Network Nurse Director in co-ordinating the implementation of nationally agreed patient information pathways, piloting a national cancer information delivery system in the form of 'information prescriptions'. I am responsible for networking and building key relationships with the Department of Health, National Cancer Action Team, Trust Lead Cancer Nurses, Clinical Nurse Specialists and various other Allied Health Care Professionals in all acute hospital trusts as well as local information and support services including information leads and Macmillan regional teams. Key responsibilities include the provision of training on the electronic patient information delivery system, as well as raising awareness of the national cancer patient information pathways and working closely with key individuals to promote the delivery system and to ensure its take-up across the network.

Being aware of Cancer Information and Support Centres/Services is really important as in my Network role it's useful to be able to signpost individuals affected by Cancer to these extremely valuable resources, and to be able to support the Service/Centre staff in any way I can.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Anglia Cancer Network, please do not hesitate to make contact.

[www.angliacancernetwork.nhs.uk](http://www.angliacancernetwork.nhs.uk) [dawn.barrick-cook@suffolkpct.nhs.uk](mailto:dawn.barrick-cook@suffolkpct.nhs.uk)

Very many thanks  
to the following for their collections ~

The Pear Tree, Hildersham

Live & Let Live

The Dobblers

The White Swan

Free Press

Tram Depot

Foxton Post Office

Our thanks also for donations from ~

Lillian & John ~from the sale of home-grown fruit

Christine ~ from the sale of allotment produce

Dorothy & Joe ~ for their home collecting tin

Margot ~ for her home collecting tin

Hildersham Whist Club

Maggie S

R Gray

And many thanks to all who have returned their **Subscription Forms** since October 2010, the total this year being greatly enhanced by the generosity of one member who donated **£500**. Thanks also to our **Covenanters** for their regular donations

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We'd like to thank the  
**Chesterton Bowls Club**  
for their generous donation of **£1,700**  
which was raised through a variety of  
events held throughout the year.



***Presentation of the cheque ~ photographed by the 'Cambridge Evening News'***  
*John How, Ted Sage, Tricia Smith, Ann Dingley, Ann How, Doreen Smith, Penny Olesen*

Hiltrude ~

has temporarily stopped offering Reflexology at the Centre. However, she plans to return to us as soon as she is able to do so.

## Mechanic Versus Cardiologist

A mechanic was removing a cylinder-head from the motor of a Harley Motorcycle when he spotted a well-known cardiologist in his shop.

The cardiologist was there waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his bike when the mechanic shouted across the garage, “Hey Doc, want to take a look at this?”

The cardiologist, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working on the motorcycle. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, “So Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take out the valves, repair any damage, and then put them back in, and when I'm finished, it works just like new. So how come I make peanuts a year and you get the really big bucks when you and I are doing basically the same work?”

The cardiologist paused, smiled, leaned over, and whispered to the mechanic, “Try doing it with the engine running”.



**Emmaus** ~ a reminder that their phone number is 01223 863657

They offer recycled furniture and household bargains. Their warehouse is just off the A10 at Landbeach and if you visit there you will see their extensive range of second-hand and new furniture, electrical goods, bric-a-brac, books, music, collectables, pictures and garden tools. And their coffee shop is marvellous. Discounts are offered to people who are on certain benefits or who have a referral letter. Their shop is open Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and on Saturdays from 9am–5pm. Emmaus Cambridge is a charity which provides home and occupation for previously homeless people by collecting peoples' surplus items and selling them at their warehouse. Any surplus funds generated are used to try and improve the lives of homeless and marginalized people, particularly in the Cambridge area but also further afield through the Emmaus Movement.

Our Centre has known Emmaus for many years. When we moved out of our last premises they collected a mountain of stuff which we did not want to bring with us. They also helped us in other ways for which we were very grateful. Do support Emmaus.

Emailinfo@emmauscambbridge.org [www.emmauscambbridge.org](http://www.emmauscambbridge.org).

Very many thanks to  
Province of Cambridgeshire  
Masonic Bowls Association  
for their generous donation of £250

## Some Tommy Cooper Jokes from Stuart

- Two blondes walk into a building .....you would have thought at least one of them would have seen it.
- Phone answering machine message....If you want to buy marijuana then press the hash key.
- I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I couldn't find any.
- My friend drowned in a bowl of muesli. A strong currant pulled him in.
- I went to a seafood disco last week and pulled a muscle.
- Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly so they lit a fire in the craft. It sank, proving once and for all that you can't have your kayak and heat it.
- Our ice cream man was found lying on the floor of his van covered with hundreds and thousands. Police say that he topped himself.
- A man goes to the doctor with a strawberry growing out of his head. The doctor says "I'll give you some cream to put on it".
- "Doctor I can't stop singing 'The Green, Green Grass of Home'." "That sounds as though you have Tom Jones Syndrome." "Is that common?" "It's not unusual."
- Apparently 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. There are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum, my dad, my older brother Colin, or my younger brother Ho -Cha-Chu. But I think it's Colin.
- Police arrested two kids yesterday. One was drinking battery acid and the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off.
- You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a note on the windscreen. It said 'Parking Fine'. So that was nice.

Very many thanks to Brenda Douglas  
for her donation of  
**£250**  
given to her in lieu of Birthday presents

**A very big thank you**  
to everyone who has contributed  
to this issue of 'Lifeline'.  
As usual we've really enjoyed working  
with your material to produce a booklet  
that we hope you will all enjoy.

**Ann & Tricia**

*Overheard at the Centre:*

I like coming here ..... and ..... you laugh

Some of you will know that we have had to call it a day on selling clothes at the Centre. Not a popular decision for some of us but we do not have another option. Penny was overwhelmed with clothes, all of which had to be sorted and, if they did not sell, moved on to charity shops. We are still very happy to sell bric-a-brac, books and jewellery.

A 'friend' emailed the following to me ~ Urgent Warning for Monday. ALIENS ARE COMING TO EARTH ON TUESDAY and their mission is to abduct all good looking and sexy 'old' people. **You will be safe.** I'm just emailing you to say goodbye.

Of course I shall never speak to her (Carole P) again

### *Love from Ann*

PS: AGM

A long time ago, in the olden days, our AGMs used to take place in the evening, with a cup of tea and a biscuit. But now that we link the AGM into lunch it seems to be a more successful occasion! Wonder why? Could it be because you provide plates of scrumptious sweet and savoury finger food, for all of us to share and enjoy. So you do have quite a renowned reputation to uphold and.....it may be Liz will bring a Gypsy Tart (Liz doesn't know that yet!) well known, I am told from our school dinners. See you there.

As usual we shall be closed on Easter Monday,  
which falls on 25 April this year.