

Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise

COPE

The voice of the County's over 50s

Reaching a readership of over 2500

Registered Charity No. 1110887

December 2025 - January 2026 Newsletter 185



INSIDE: pull-out guide to Home Care

Editorial

At last the Police clamped down on e-scooters and e-bikes in Cambridge. But it was only for one day at certain junction hotspots, even so they confiscated 35 illegal and uninsured e-scooters and e-bikes. The main culprits were those using private e-scooters - only rental ones licensed by the City Council are permitted - and uninsured delivery drivers. A one-day clamp down is not enough; there need to be many more checks to ensure that traffic regulations are properly adhered to, and the public can walk and travel in safety.

It is the same with South Cambs Council having a four day working week. Society's needs do not stop from Friday to Sunday or Saturday to Monday. Social services are needed throughout the week but recently when phoning Council Officers I am told that person is not available for three or four days or is working from home and doesn't have the necessary information. But we are still expected to pay the same Council rates. Similarly, to overcome this lack of staff availability, so much is digitalised. This digitalisation leads to policy decisions that unfairly exclude older people. This drive to digital by default is done in many instances without taking the trouble to understand the impact on older people who are not online.

A prime case of this is having ID cards only on smartphones. Admittedly this is to avoid illegal immigrants obtaining work, but we have already National Insurance numbers which employers have to be shown before accepting a person for work. We have so many numbers on driving licences, passports, bus passes, and for the NHS. This proposed ID card is another instance of a digital system which is completely flawed as it will exclude many and not succeed in its intended job.

Finally: in my youth the only rice we ate was in a rice pudding. Nowadays, rice appears in almost every other meal, with Indian and Chinese meals being so popular. It would be no surprise then if parts of the Fens were reflooded and rice grown; which has been successfully done on a farm near Ely. Throughout the centuries there have been changes to weather patterns; in Roman times for instance, vineyards were extensive throughout England and it's only recently that vineyards have been successfully developed in the north of England. But in the rush to become self sufficient in electricity, we must not lose so much prime agricultural land to solar farm that our food security is put at risk. Solar panels can be put over car parks, warehouses and houses; there is no need to cover prime agricultural land with them, which would prevent the Fens in becoming the rice basket of Britain, not the bread basket as it is now.

Please do not forget to write to COPE about your views or problems, especially access to social services with their four day working week.

Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

David Bailey, COPE President

Happy birthday to all members celebrating in December and January

In this Issue

- 1 Season's Greetings!
- 2 Editorial
- 3 Membership form
- 4 Advertisements
- 5 COPE Wellbeing Survey results
- 6 / 7 Readers' Letters
- 8 Obituary—Alice Zeitlyn
- 9 Getting a Carer's Assessment
- 10 How to Pay for care
- 11 Buying in care
- 12 Community Care Schemes
- 13 What was Whistling
- 14 Word Puzzle
- 15 COPE Valentines Day Lunch
- 16 What was the Star of Bethlehem?
- 17 Recipe
- 18 Trustees / Chair's Report
- 19 Activities
- 20 COPE Events

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COPE FORUM

Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise

New member application form

New Member

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 (To be allocated after joining)

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Name: _____

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Are you happy to receive Newsletter by email? Yes/ No

AGE RANGE
PLEASE CIRCLE RELEVANT GROUP
 Under 50 50-64 65-74 75-84 over 85

Disability - Yes / No

Ethnic Origin _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

How did you hear of COPE?

Special Interests:

Open to all residents of Cambridgeshire over 50, and to carers and "Friends of COPE" as Associate Members any person, whether or not he or she is aged 50 or over.

By completing and returning this form, you are giving COPE permission to hold your personal details on their database.

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 St Luke's Church Centre, Victoria Road
 Cambridge CB4 3DZ Phone: (01223) 364303
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COPE FORUM

Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise

Donation Form

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I DO NOT pay UK Income Tax

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Many thanks!

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COPE Wellbeing Questionnaire

THANK YOU FOR ALL OF YOUR RESPONSES to our questionnaire on well-being in our August Newsletter. We had 130 replies and have now had a chance to analyze them in detail. You told us about how you were managing, and how your circumstances affected your ability to be part of your local community.

The survey looked at general well-being, measuring life satisfaction in order to assess how individuals view their overall status. More than 50% of those responding described overall satisfaction with their lives and a positive outlook. Mobility was seen as a key factor in maintaining independence. When responding to more detailed questions in this area, some 73% reported they retain the ability to move about in their homes, get out when they wish and access public transport to join in community activities. For some, physical limitations (e.g. arthritis, poor balance, use of mobility aids) significantly affect their ability to get out and about. Lack of public transport, especially in rural areas, was also cited as a major barrier to participation in community activities.

In summary:

Emotional and Mental Well-being

Many respondents report enjoying life and looking forward to things, though some express feelings of depression, frustration, or isolation. Health issues, ageing, and loss of mobility or independence are common emotional stressors.

Mobility and Access

Physical limitations (e.g. arthritis, poor balance, use of mobility aids) significantly affect respondents' ability to get out and about. Lack of public transport, especially in rural areas, is a major barrier to participation in community activities.



Health and Social Services

Mixed experiences with accessing healthcare: some report good care, others face delays, impersonal treatment, or difficulty seeing GPs. Many are unaware of how to access social services or find them ineffective or confusing. Some suggest COPE could help by providing clearer information or advocacy.

Social Engagement and Isolation

Respondents value companionship and social contact, with many expressing a desire for more interaction. COPE lunches, outings, and newsletters are appreciated and help reduce isolation. Some are interested in volunteering or joining discussion groups, though barriers like transport or shyness exist.

Home and Community

Most feel safe in their communities and have access to shops and transport, though some struggle with online services or financial constraints. A few mention the importance of family support or living in assisted housing.

Newsletter and Activities

The COPE newsletter is widely read and appreciated, though some suggest it's too Cambridge-focused. Desired future topics include history, art, politics, transport updates, and more local photos. Several respondents express interest in more local clubs, outings, and accessibility.

COPE will continue to provide a range of programmes and services, including online and telephone services such as Talking Together, to meet the changing needs of Cambridgeshire's older adult population, and to do so with your input and suggestions. Thank you again for responding to our survey: please follow up by writing to us for our new Newsletter letters page.

Readers' Letters



Please send your letters to:

COPE Letters Page
St Luke's Church Centre
Victoria Road
Cambridge
CB4 3DZ

BIG CONGRATS TO COPE

Thank you to all the team who work to keep COPE running. I look forward to the magazine and read it cover to cover. I pass it on to friends who are interested.

Happily, my husband and I are in good health and able to get out when we want to. We have a car and Histon has a good bus service. It also has many clubs and societies which we can access easily. I volunteer cooking in the Day Centre which is well supported and enjoyed by many elderly residents in the village. They are transported by the village mini-bus. I would say that we are one of the best villages for looking after all ages.

However, I know circumstances can change and would be pleased to join in outings etc if I lived on my own.

Keep up the good work!

Elaine Ife

WHERE IS THE HELP?

I am writing to you with regard to MiPermits (parking permits)! With the County Council switching over to digital permits instead of paper parking permits, I imagine many of us in residents' parking zones have been affected.

After much struggling, I have the online system in place, though I had to phone the MiPermit HelpDesk twice, as they had registered the wrong email for me. The waiting time was not too long and the staff were courteous and sorted the problem.

This system is completely internet-based. I have managed to get 2 paper permits, but I will have to find out how to 'activate' my online permits when my 2 paper permits expire. I have a fear of engaging with some 'techie' things and have to force myself.

What we are missing is enough help. We must engage with the digital age, and have internet access, smartphones and iPads. We are very disadvantaged if we cannot do this.

And PS Can we run a campaign about the cost of the Visitors Parking Permits? Mine are £18 a permit – that's £3.60 per visit!

Judy Ord

... and more

TOO MUCH TECH!

I have been using dangerous tools all my working life, well into my eighties, but I am having big problems with touch screen technology.

I purchased a new TV at the beginning of the year and still cannot get the programmes I want.

This week has been the tour of Britain cycling event on ITV4. Having been a cyclist I'm interested. After having found the channel, I still can't get a picture. The screen suggests I press yellow button, then put in my Amazon account no. Have pressed the orange button, no luck. (there is no yellow).

The same goes for a tablet my son bought for me. It requires Amazon codes to make it work. I don't have an Amazon code.

I now have to go through lots of options on a screen in Tesco, to get a cup of tea.

I could go on, but as you can see my writing is very shaky.

Yours aggravated

Ray Dallow

BLESS THE BUS DRIVERS

As an 'older person' fortunate to have free bus travel, and an excellent local bus service, I make good use of this. I would like to raise a cheer for our unfailingly calm, polite and helpful bus drivers.

When passengers thank the driver as they alight, the driver almost always takes the trouble to respond with 'thank you', 'you're welcome', or 'have a nice day' etc., and this cheers me, at least, on my way. They are physically helpful to disabled people or people managing luggage or small children. They wait patiently till those newly boarded are safely seated, before driving off.

They all show incredible skill, in my view, in steering the bus through often narrow, crowded streets of Cambridge where pedestrians, cyclists and scooters may appear suddenly and dangerously.

Thank you for all the great work that COPE do.

Elizabeth Taylor

TALKING TOGETHER, a FREE programme of stimulating telephone-based discussions for older adults

We have been scheduling TALKING TOGETHER sessions for six years now. They cover a wide range of fascinating topics including science, history, our local museums, art galleries, short stories. Many sessions are accompanied by handouts and for those who can join us, some involve visits to sites related to the discussions.

Look out as well for our upcoming Zoom talks in the New Year which members can enjoy online - Scott Polar Institute (March 2026) and King's College Chapel (Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 3:00 pm).

**For more information, please phone the COPE office at 01223 364303
or email COPEtalkingtogether@hotmail.com**

Obituary—Alice Zeitlyn

My mother, Alice Zeitlyn, who has died aged 100, was a charity volunteer for a huge range of causes in **Cambridge**, and the founder of the BB Zeitlyn Trust and Psychotherapy Training Fund, which continues to support trainee psychotherapists.

Born in London to Josie (nee Davis), who had been a volunteer nurse during the first world war, and Frank Myers, who ran a building company, Alice went to South Hampstead high school in north London. After nursing training at University College hospital (1943-45), she worked at UCH, and also for a year in Quebec, in 1946.

In 1949 she married her childhood sweetheart, Bernard Zeitlyn, a psychiatrist and psychotherapist. They had a daughter, Judith, and two sons, Jonathan and me.

In 1957 the family moved to Cambridge for Bernard's work, and Alice spent the next 20 years running the family home. After Bernard died in a cycling accident in 1979, Alice created the BB Zeitlyn Trust. She also became a stalwart volunteer for and supporter of an huge range of charities and arts institutions, including the Museum of Cambridge, Kettle's Yard, and COPE.

Having completed her first degree as an adult, in English and history at Cambridgeshire College of Arts and

Technology (now Anglia Ruskin University), in 1982, Alice continued her studies in how the experiences of mature students differed from those of 18-year-old undergraduates, gaining an MPhil in 1988.

One of Alice's fellow students was blind and had problems getting the braille texts he needed for the course so, in order to help him, Alice learned to read and write braille. This was long before automatic braille conversion or speaking computers. Later, she taught braille to adults through CamSight, and also worked with Camtad (Campaign for Tackling Acquired Deafness).

Her volunteering included changing hearing aid batteries: hard for people with visual disabilities, but easy for Alice whose fingers were kept nimble by her lifelong love of knitting. She was involved with several knitting groups and was until recently a member of the "Knits of the Round Table", who support the Arthur Rank hospice.

Both reading and music were important in her life. She played the cello and piano, and delivered library books to those unable to visit a library. She, in turn, greatly appreciated this service during her final years. Jonathan died in 1995. Alice is survived by Judith and me, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

David Zeitlyn



Looking for sheltered housing in Cambridge?

We are a Cambridge charity providing sheltered accommodation for people in need, aged over 60, who live in Cambridgeshire or who have a professional connection to the Church of England.

Our properties on Mount Pleasant, Cambridge and in Vicarage Close, Melbourn are for women only and our flats in Church Street, Chesterton are mixed.

For further information please visit our website: www.edwardstorey.org.uk, call: 01223 364405 or email: info@edwardstorey.org.uk

Getting a Carer's Assessment

A Carer's Assessment is available from the local authority for anyone caring for an elderly parent or relative, who may need support themselves

A CARER'S ASSESSMENT will focus entirely on the person caring and the impact of that work on their physical and mental health, their ability to work and, crucially, their day-to-day life including hobbies, friends and relationships, because it is easy to underestimate the impact of caring for someone. Anyone who provides care and feels they might benefit from some support will be entitled to an assessment if they are caring for another adult.

Contact details for the Cambridgeshire Adult Social Care Team can be found on their website:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk 'Looking After Someone, Support for Carers'

Or phone them for more information on 0345 045 5202 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

A Carer's Assessment will include the following:

- Whether the carer's physical or mental health is at risk of deteriorating, or is already declining, and so preventing them from both doing the care and living their own life.
- Whether they are having problems maintaining family relationships or engaging in hobbies, sport or other activities due to their caring role, resulting in a significant impact on their wellbeing.

The focus is on the carer's ability to continue to provide care for someone else. It can be arranged on its own, or in conjunction with a **Care Needs Assessment** for the person being cared for.

How do you know if you're a carer?

You're a carer if you're looking after someone regularly because they're ill, they're an older person or they're disabled – and that includes family members. Carers help with:

- Washing, dressing or taking medicines.
- Getting out and about and travelling to GP appointments.
- Shopping, cleaning and laundry.
- Paying bills and organising finances.

They may also give emotional support by:

- Sitting with someone to keep them company
 - Watching over someone if they can't be left alone
- All of the above counts as important elements of the role of carer, for the purposes of a carer's assessment.

Who is eligible for a carer's assessment?

You will be eligible if the care is regular and substantial

and you feel that your caring role affects your wellbeing or ability to lead a "normal" life. You do not need to live with the person you care for, or be related to them.

What does the assessment include?

A social worker or someone from the local authority will undertake the assessment. It will cover:

- Your caring role – the type of tasks you carry out, and how often.
- Your health – how your caring duties affect your health and wellbeing.
- Daily activities – do your caring duties prevent you from working, studying, spending time with family and friends, organising your own life?
- Your mental health – how you feel as a carer and how this work may or may not be impacting your mental health.
- Financial health – is your caring negatively impacting your personal finances?

You can have a friend, relative or advocate to support you while you have the assessment.

What support might be available?

Tips for a Carer's Assessment

- Contact your local council's Adult Social Care Team.
- Don't wait until you are struggling – it's best to ask for help early.
- Prepare for the assessment by writing down how caring affects your daily life.
- Be honest – it's not about coping or managing – it's about your real needs.

The support that might be available will depend upon the outcome of the assessment, but it could include:

- Practical help at home, such as respite care for the carer.
- More help at home providing services or support for the person cared for.
- Signposting to financial support, such as Attendance or Carer's Allowance, that might be available.
- Counselling or other suggestions to support mental and general wellbeing such as exercise classes, or support groups.

The local authority should provide a plan for the support that has been identified, how it will be given, and when it will be reviewed.

Annabel James

From: <https://www.agespace.org/finance/funding-elderly-care/care-assessments/carers-assessments>

How to Pay for Care

What Benefits are Available?

It can be time-consuming and complicated looking into government funding, but it is worth being persistent. Every year, billions of pounds of benefits go unclaimed and this financial help could make life a bit easier and more enjoyable for all

FUNDING ELDERLY CARE can be complex, expensive and unpredictable, particularly as needs change. Attendance allowance is a benefit available to people over State Pension age who need more help. It is for anyone aged over 65 who needs help with social care – washing, dressing or eating – due to an illness or disability. It is available for those who need to be looked after by day, and/or overnight in case help is needed.

The Attendance Allowance (2025/26) is paid at the lower rate of £73.90 per week for only/either day or night care and at the higher rate of £110.40 a week if the care is needed both day and night.

It is available to anyone who fulfils the following criteria: a physical disability such as blindness, a mental disability including dementia and learning difficulties, or both; people with a disability severe enough to need help caring for themselves, or need someone to supervise them, for their own or someone else's safety.

How to apply: call the Attendance Allowance Helpline 0800 731 0122

Attendance Allowance is an award based on needs, not just a medical condition. Age UK says that many applications are turned down *because people don't mention or aren't clear about how their illness or disability affects their lives*. Don't underestimate your needs when filling in the form. Consider the following:

- Describe any accidents/falls;
- Explain the effects of all disabilities and health conditions and how they interact with each other;
- List things that your parent or partner struggles to do unaided, even if they have developed ways to cope. If an activity takes longer than it would someone else, or if it's difficult to do safely then this can be taken into account.

Also say if they need reminding or encouraging to do things, as this also counts as help.

To qualify for the lower rate of Attendance Allowance you have to show that help is needed "frequently" – e.g. help with your appearance on a daily basis.

Bear in mind that Attendance Allowance doesn't usually take into account problems with housework, cooking, shopping and gardening. If you mention problems with these make sure you also include other "health related" problems as *you're unlikely to receive support if household chores are the focus of the application*.

A Carer's Allowance £83.30 (2025/26) per week, is available if the person you care for is already getting benefits such as Attendance Allowance. It is for someone who spends more than 35 hours per week caring for someone else (who may or may not be a relative). This is a means tested benefit, so is only available to someone earning (income and benefits) less than £196 a week after tax.

There are a number of criteria the carer needs to fulfil in order to be eligible; the Carer's Allowance is taxable and may affect an entitlement to other benefits. Only one person can claim the Carer's Allowance if there are more than one person caring; if you are in receipt of other benefits, such as retirement pension, you may not get any or all the Carer's Allowance. If you were entitled to Carer's Allowance before claiming it, you can ask for it to be back-dated for three months.

How to apply: call the Carer's Allowance Unit on 0800 731 0297

There's more useful information on how to claim benefits on the Age UK website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Buying in Care

Finding the best home care provider is a difficult decision that can become overwhelming when faced with the abundance of care choices out there. With so many options available, knowing what to look for and the right questions to ask, will help steer you in the right direction.

Step 1: Identify Your Care Needs

Home care covers a broad range of care services, from help with simple daily tasks to more complex needs, such as using hoists, moving and handling, and care for chronic conditions.

Start by considering your physical and emotional needs – having a comprehensive list, makes it easier to narrow your search and target the best home care providers offering the most suitable, personalised care for you or your loved one.

Step 2: Identify and Understand Your Home Care Options

There are different kinds of care services available.

Domiciliary care refers to care received within the home, either live-in or hourly visiting care and is entirely personalised to your routine and needs, by dedicated staff who value and promote independence, dignity, and respect.

Live-in care, where a carer lives in your home, provides full-time physical care and emotional support.

Hourly care is when a carer visits your home regularly, from one hour a week, to longer periods of time, and offers support with certain tasks.

Step 3: Evaluate Potential Home Care Providers Reputation and Trustworthiness

is vital when evaluating a potential home care provider. Start by checking their registration with the regulatory bodies of the industry – in England, this is the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC rates home care providers on a four-point scale: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement, or Inadequate. Only 5% of home care providers in the UK are rated Outstanding.

Step 4: Questions to Ask Homecare Providers

Asking the right questions is essential in making an informed decision regarding the care of your loved one.

Questions about caregivers

- Are the caregivers vetted?
- What are the training and qualifications of the caregivers? Is caregiver training provided on a regular basis to keep carers' skills up-to-date?
- If you or a loved one have a specific health condition, is that condition covered in their caregiver training?
- Are regular caregivers assigned? How are caregivers

matched to clients to ensure compatibility?

- If a carer does not arrive, will a temporary caregiver be assigned?

How far in advance do you need to request a schedule change or cancel a visit?

Questions about the service, procedures and policies

- What is the procedure for emergencies? How are unexpected situations handled?
- Are the services flexible? If care needs change over time, can that be accommodated for? If you are not happy with your care, how much notice do you need to give?

Questions about costs

- What is the cost of the care needed?
 - How frequently does the company bill?
- Get a clear breakdown of costs to avoid any unexpected expenses. For a home care provider to estimate the cost of care, they will need information from you about the level of care required. Be prepared to answer in-depth questions about you or your loved one's health conditions and needs – the more information that you provide, the better the care provider can help you.

Step 5: Review Your Findings.

As you review home care providers, look for those that stand out from the crowd:

- An outstanding organisation will provide comprehensive care plans tailored to the needs of the individual
- Look for services that offer continuity of care, where the same caregiver regularly visits a client so that a strong, trusting relationship can be built.

Compassion is the cornerstone of quality home care and is a critical factor in the selection process of the best home care service. Compassion goes beyond just providing a service; it builds an empathetic relationship between carer and client.

Reliability and friendliness are of paramount importance. A reliable home care provider ensures that care is consistent, of the highest quality, and creates a stable and nurturing environment for the client.

Step 6: Decide with Peace of Mind.

Reflect on the interactions that you've had with each provider.

- Have they responded to you with warmth and understanding?
- Did they show the traits of compassion, friendliness, and reliability that are so critical to home care?

Adapted from website: www.christiescare.com



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

MOBILE AND COMMUNITY WARDEN SCHEMES (sometimes called Community Care Schemes) have been set up in South Cambridgeshire to support older people to live independently in their homes and in the community they know, and which knows them.

The wardens are a familiar face, offering a listening ear and supporting you to stay in your community for longer. They are also valuable support if you're returning from a stay in hospital, and can offer reassurance to families who aren't able to visit regularly.

Examples of Support provided: • Friendship and emotional support to combat loneliness and for improved mental wellbeing • Helping with errands like picking up prescriptions or going to the Post Office • Help with shopping, reading post, filling in forms and making phone calls.

The Warden Schemes can help to combat loneliness and social isolation, and can provide significant benefits to clients at relatively low cost. Fees will vary from £20 to £40 per month.

For further information about local schemes, look on the South Cambs website: www.scambs.gov.uk and do a search on [Mobile/Community Warden Scheme](#)

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cambridge@greenwoodhomecare.co.uk

What Was Whistling?

The sound of someone whistling while they work, or just while walking down a street, is one of those sounds that have all but disappeared from British life.

Sometimes I wonder if there really was a Britain of whistling postmen, factory workers and dustmen. Did dads whistle while washing the family car on a Sunday?

Cultural historians will tell you that, yes, we were once a whistling nation. In *A Brief History of Whistling*, the authors Allan Chatburn and John Lucas evoke a Britain where whistling was a common practice among coal miners, factory workers, errand boys and hotel doormen. They argue it was a working class culture, practised mainly by men.

Before and after WW2, whistling was a popular form of entertainment, heard in music halls and vaudeville, where popular professional whistlers, such as Ronnie Ronalde, Percy Edwards and Fred Lowery would imitate birds and wildlife calls. In the 1960's and 70's, whistling superstar Roger Whittaker took whistling to the pop charts with such hits as *Mexican Whistler*.

For many, the whistle is what made films memorable. In *The Bridge on the River Kwai* British prisoners of war defy their captors by whistling 'Colonel Bogey'. Even today people who normally don't whistle will do so to 'Always

Look on the Bright Side of Life' from Monty Python's *Life of Brian*. Whistling was an uplifting tonic for troubled times, or just to relieve the tedium of a working day. Disney's seven dwarfs advised us to whistle while we work. Today's remaining whistling advocates claim it is a great stress-buster and mood enhancer.

So when and why did whistling die out? It was the appearance in 2002 of the first generation of iPods, and later the rise of the smartphone, that marked the death of the whistle. Why bother to whistle when any song you ever wanted to hear is audible at the flick of your fingertips? Added to which, we don't live in a whistling kind of world any more. Many factory jobs have gone and so have variety shows. And in the age of Uber, nobody needs to know how to whistle to summon a cab.

Whistling now has largely negative connotations, the wolf whistle, the dog whistle and the whistle-blower. But I miss the sound of the whistle. It had a kind of cheerful defiance to life's problems and setbacks, a just-get-on-with-it nonchalance that we need more than ever today.

Based on an article by Cosmo Landesman, The Oldie, November 2025 adapted by David Bailey



Cambridge Dial-a-Ride is expanding its services to East Cambridgeshire Village Residents

CAMBRIDGE DIAL-A-RIDE, a Not-for-Profit entity which provides an essential minibus service transporting people with mobility issues in the Cambridgeshire area, is delighted to announce that it is expanding its membership services to the villages of Quy, Lode, Bottisham and Long Meadow in East Cambridgeshire.

And Cambridge Dial-a-Ride will now be able to take on new members (both individuals and groups) who can use its minibus services to take them on visits to health appointments, shopping trips and visits to family and friends around Cambridge.

Now servicing the villages of Quy, Lode, Bottisham and Long Meadow the Charity can transport members from their doorsteps to their chosen destination using their special fleet of minibuses. All Cambridge Dial-a-Ride buses are fitted with electronic lifts and safety belts for wheelchair, mobility scooters and walking frame users or those unable to use the entrance steps. Members can also bring along a carer too for an additional fare if they need to.

If you or someone you care for or help support would be interested in joining or finding more about our services, please give one of the team a call on **01223 506335** where they will be happy to discuss your transport needs and explain our membership scheme and fare pricing structure. Concessionary prices are offered to all members who hold a current Concessionary Bus Pass issued by the Council.

Full details are on our website www.cambridgedialaride.org.uk/

Word Search

DECEMBER 2025

WORD TILE

C	A	P	I	N	G	R	H	E
C	A	R	L	A	C	R	I	C
C	C	I	L	I	A	R	I	G
C	I	O	N	D	A	R	O	D
D	I	G	O	L	D	R	U	D
D	I	L	O	L	E	S	I	E
E	L	I	O	R	E	T	R	O
G	F	R	O	R	E	T	T	O
I	E	D	P	A	G	V	A	T

AIM: Place the 27 three-character 'tiles' in the left-hand grid to the CORRECT spaces in the right hand grid giving NINE answers related to OPERA horizontally and in alphabetical order. Solution in the next Newsletter

Last month's solution

B	O	L	L	I	N	G	E	R
C	A	R	M	E	N	E	R	E
C	H	A	M	P	A	G	N	E
C	L	O	U	D	Y	B	A	Y
C	O	R	B	I	E	R	E	S
L	A	N	G	U	E	D	O	C
P	I	N	O	T	N	O	I	R
S	A	U	V	I	G	N	O	N
S	T	E	M	I	L	I	O	N

"I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas with a note on it saying, 'Toys not included.'" – Bernard Manning

"The four stages of man: 1. You believe in Santa Claus. 2. You don't believe in Santa Claus. 3. You are Santa Claus. 4. You look like Santa Claus." – Unknown

Christmas, here again. Let us raise a loving cup; Peace on earth, goodwill to men, and make them do the washing up. (Wendy Cope)

I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store, and he asked for my autograph. (Shirley Temple)

What do you call Santa when he uses Apple Maps? A lost Claus.

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinselititis.

"The office Christmas party is a great opportunity to catch up with people you haven't seen for twenty minutes." – Julius Sharpe

COPE Valentine's Day Lunch

Friday 13th February 2026



12:30 for 1:00 pm Chesterton Indoor Bowls Club
Logan's Way Cambridge CB4 1BL

Main Course (£12):

- Fish and Chips
- Cottage Pie
- Ham, Eggs and Chips
- Vegetarian (eg Omelette)

Dessert (£4.50):

- Sticky Toffee Pudding
- Ice Cream / Sorbet
- Valentine Sponge Cakes

Tea or Coffee (£1.20)



TICKET REQUEST-----

COPE Valentine's Day Lunch Friday 13th February 2026 12:30 for 1:00 pm

Please send a cheque for the appropriate amount made payable to COPE with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: COPE, The Olive Golding Room, St Luke's Church Centre, Victoria Road, Cambridge, CB4 3DZ.

Print Name(s).....

Phone no.....Post Code.....

Please circle your choices below

1st person:

Main Course:

Fish / Cottage Pie / Ham & Eggs / Vegetarian

Dessert:

Toffee / Ice Cream / Sorbet / Cake

Tea / Coffee

2nd person (if appropriate):

Main Course:

Fish / Cottage Pie / Ham & Eggs / Vegetarian

Dessert:

Toffee / Ice Cream / Sorbet / Cake

Tea / Coffee

Due to the anticipated high demand for this lunch please reply promptly

What Was The Star of Bethlehem?

The science behind a key feature of the nativity scene.

IT'S A KEY FEATURE of a school nativity play, but what's the science behind the Star of Bethlehem?

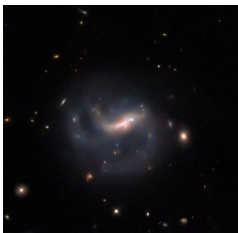
Also known as the Christmas Star, the Star of Bethlehem appears in the Gospel of Matthew. The disciple relates how the Magi came to Jerusalem and asked: "Where is the one who has been born king? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

Disturbed by this news, King Herod secretly sends the Magi on to Bethlehem to search for the child and report back to him. Matthew then continues...

"...they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed."

But what could the star have been, given that – as far as we're aware - there's no Star of Bethlehem in the universe?

Dr Matt Bothwell, Public Astronomer at the University of Cambridge, is often asked this question by children at the [free stargazing events](#) held every Wednesday evening at the Institute of Astronomy. Matt, a Bye-Fellow at Girton College, says there are three key theories...



1) A **supernova**. Matt explains that a supernova is essentially a big star that explodes. "They can be very bright, because stars get tens of thousands brighter when they go supernovae, it can take a star that's not currently visible and make it visible. So something would literally appear in the sky when a supernova goes off". The case against this theory however is that it wasn't recorded by anyone at the time or after.

"Even 2,000 years ago Chinese astronomers were doing quite a good job of observing things they saw in the sky and there are no obvious supernova remnants we can see in the sky," says Matt.

2) A **comet**. Comets can have "incredibly long orbital periods around the sun", Matt explains, and there are some that come by astonishingly rarely. "Two thousand years ago there could easily have been one of these very, very distant long period comets that dipped into the

solar system, and we've not seen it since, that could be very possible," he says.

But the historical argument against this theory is that comets were normally seen as bad omens. "The chances of the Magi seeing what was traditionally a herald of doom and thinking 'this is good news, our Saviour has been born' doesn't seem very likely," says Matt.

3) **Conjunctions**. This theory is based on the fact that the planets are not fixed like stars, they change their position in the sky.

Four years ago Jupiter and Saturn's paths happened to cross in an event known as the great conjunction. Conjunctions like this would see two planets very close together in the night sky, and appearing as one unusually bright dot or 'star'.

"It's pretty rare but it could have been something like that," says Matt. "Or an alternative is a bit more boring – it could've just been Jupiter, which can be astonishingly bright, depending on the time of year".

However, the case against both conjunctions and confusion between a planet and a star is that even though they did not have modern astronomical science at their disposal, the Magi themselves are described as astrologers and there was enough astronomical knowledge at the time to identify Jupiter.

So what's the answer then? Matt says he thinks the most likely explanation is a comet.

"I'm an astronomer not a historian obviously, but a comet feels like it could really be the explanation – we do get these very striking bright things which just hang in the sky and they happen once and don't happen again for a very long time. Apparently around 5BC Chinese astronomers did notice a comet in the sky. They called it a 'broom star' because it has this long fluffy tail, so that seems to strengthen the comet idea."

Perhaps the last word should go to a man known as the Pope's Astronomer. Br. Guy Consolmagno SJ:

"Ultimately nobody is sure, but for me the deeper message is that the sky itself – the joy and beauty that you find there – is a guide to lead us to the Christ Child," he says. "To me, any star would be the Star of Bethlehem."

Hilary Fletcher at www.cam.ac.uk

Batch Cooking Bolognese Sauce

Batch cooking is really just like thinking along the lines of cooking for a family of four.

Where to start?

To cook about 100g of meat for a casserole, cook your usual way adding herbs and stock. Once cooked, then cool at room temperature and divide into four aluminium containers and seal. Make sure you label the container and put down a date when cooked. It should be eaten within a month of this date. When cool, you can place in the freezer.

Defrosting

When defrosting make sure the meat is well defrosted, at least 24 hours in the fridge. It can then be put into a microwave.

If in the microwave (using guidelines for individual machine power, 700 Watts or more) always make sure you stir the contents halfway through in case there is a cold spot. Then put it back in the microwave for a couple of minutes. You can also re-heat the dish on the hob, making sure the meat is bubbling.

Delia Smith's Bolognese Sauce recipe

Ingredients

Knob of butter
50g bacon, rinded and chopped
1 small onion, skinned and chopped
1 carrot, peeled and chopped
1 stick of celery, washed and chopped
225g minced beef
100g chicken livers chopped
15ml (level tbsp) tomato paste
150ml dry white wine
300ml beef stock
Salt and Pepper
15ml Parmesan cheese



Method

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan, add the bacon and fry for 2-3 minutes. Add the chopped onion, carrot and celery and fry for 5 minutes until just browned.
2. Add the beef and brown lightly, then stir in the chopped chicken livers and cook for a further 3 minutes. Add the tomato paste and wine and simmer for a few minutes more.
3. Stir in the remaining ingredients and simmer for 30-40 minutes, until the meat is tender. Serve with cooked spaghetti and grated Parmesan cheese.

British Lung Foundation

Helpline 03000 030 555 Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm
www.lunguk.org

Breathe Easy is part of the *British Lung Foundation's* support network

Breathe Easy Cambridge City www.lunguk.org/cambridge

Breathe Easy Fenland -Derek Bond tel 01354 680466

Breathe Easy Ely - tel 01353 668937

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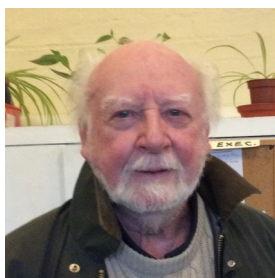
Half Page £100

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To insert pre-printed leaflets/fliers with
Newsletters £200

Trustees / Chair's Report

Trustees (2025/2026)



David Bailey,
COPE President



Peter Murfitt
COPE Chairman



Hugh Barton
COPE Treasurer



Jennie Jenks



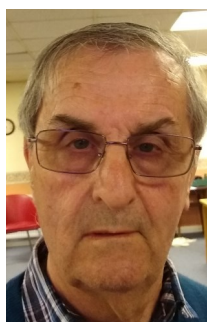
Marian French



Vacancy



Deborah Katznelson



Brian Reynolds

DONATIONS

Once again, thanks for all the donations, both monetary and raffle prizes, which are very much appreciated. With the monetary donations, would you please fill in the 'gift aid' section of the application form.

Hugh Barton, Treasurer

Chair's Report

Thanks to all those who filled in the questionnaires, they have just been evaluated and hopefully we can answer some of your concerns, as well as using them to assist us in our quest for getting more grants.

I hope you will take advantage of the covid and flu injections as we approach the winter months.

Talking Together continues to flourish with a good attendance and a good variety of topics.

Moans of the Month

Where are the policemen on the beat,

Who fills the potholes in the street,

On the bus we can't get a seat,

And the councils are on a three day week..

Plus cyclists who use any colour traffic light as go, plus traffic that blocks road junctions and islands in queues.

Peter Murfitt

Disclaimer

Whilst every effort is made to ensure information is accurate at the time of going to print, no responsibility can be accepted for loss or damage caused by published information found to be inaccurate.

Submissions for our December / January issue must be received no later than
6th January 2026

Activities and Events

Arbury Artists Watercolour Painting Art Classes: Tuesdays 10am– 12noon at Meadows Community Centre, Cambridge. Contact **Celia Conway 01223 523680**

Abbey Leisure Centre Complex Astro turf, CB5 8NT. Supervets football. Contact Helena.knock@gll.org

Barrington Forget-me-not club Meets fortnightly on a Thursday. Tel. **Jim Burton 01223 870192** or email jimandlindab@lineone.net. All welcome.

Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue lunch club every Wednesday—all welcome. Auckland Road Cambridge CB5 8DW Contact aureore.karat@beth-shalom.org.uk to confirm attendance.

Castle Street Methodist Church Coffee Morning every Wednesday 10:30—12 noon followed by over 50s Strength & Balance Class 12:00—1 pm (£3 per session) Contact **Amanda 01223 354904**

Cherry Hinton Church End WI meets every Monday. Contact **Margaret** on **01223 249247** or kjrmdpl9@btinternet.com

Cherry Hinton Friday Friends: group for senior citizens offering knitting, crafts, scrabble and cards 1:30 - 3pm every Friday at the Family Centre, Fishers Lane, CBI 9HR. Contact **Nic or Jo Boyns 01223 561139**

Cherry Hinton Care Home (TLC Care) 369 Cherry Hinton Road CBI 8DB.

- Parkinson's Café - every 3rd Wednesday of the month
- Paw-sitive Café 2pm on the last Friday every month—well-behaved dogs welcome. To book phone **01223 210070**

Cherry Hinton Leisure Centre Contact julie.howard@gll.org **01223 576412**

1 **Men's Social Group** Mondays 2-4 pm for cards, dominoes, scrabble, chess and darts.

2 **'Young At Heart'** Women's social group. Open to all women 50 plus every Friday 2-4.00pm.

Cambridgeshire Companions: A lunch club for the single over 50s Contact **Celia Conway - 01223 523680**

Chesterton Knitters meet on the 1st Thursday of each month 2.30-4.30 at: Café 121, 121 Milton Road Cambridge. Bring your own work if you wish. Telephone **Eileen Flood—01223 369376** for details.

Comberton Friendship Club: meet on 2nd Thursday of each month 2.30 p.m. at Comberton Village Hall. Telephone **Sue Allin - 01223 262990**

Coton Garden Club Contact **Ailish Meadows 07952 694666**. email: ailishmeadows@gmail.com. Meet 1st Monday September – April at 7.30 pm.

Coton Village Hall Internet Club Thursdays 10.00—12.00 Contact **Carolyn Postgate 01954 211033** email: carolyn@clara.co.uk.

Dunstan Court Wolfstan Way: Bingo! Wednesdays, 6.30 pm for an hour and a half. Contact **Beryl 01223 240918**.

Ely Library Activities - Scrabble, creative Tuesdays, local studies, arts and crafts. Contact for all activities: **0345 045 5225**, Ely.Referral@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Grovebury Ladies club: meet Tuesdays 7-9pm Arbury Community Centre, Campkin Road Cambridge. Contact **Barbara Watts** on **01223 570707**

Hiam Sports & Social Club, Prickwillow, Ely. Ballroom Dances 3 times every month, Tea Dances every Thursday. Contact: **01353 688 269 (club) 07842 146308** email: info@hiam.co.uk

Keep Moving—gentle exercise and dance to music for the over 60s. Tuesdays 2-3pm St Thomas's Hall, Ancaster Road (off Birdwood Road). Enquiries **Val Ford 07870 911556**.

Meadows Bowlers (Carpet), Meadows Community Centre, Arbury Road. Every Thursday 2-4 pm £3 per session incl. refreshments.

Newnham Walkers meet every Monday at 10:30 by the Crofters Café (Lammas Land) for a short, gentle walk followed by refreshments in a local café. Contact **Michael Bloy 01223 355686**

Rampton Tea Club at Rampton Village Hall, alternate Tuesday afternoons 2.30—4.30pm. Telephone **Sylvia Beaumont - 01954 252043** for date of next meeting.

St Augustine's Community Centre, Café 99, Richmond Road, Cambridge. Open Monday and Friday Mornings from 10.45 to 12.15—all are welcome.

St Luke's Knitting Group: Meets last Tuesday of each month, 2-4 pm. All welcome, it doesn't matter if you cannot knit or crochet. Telephone for information **Judith Crowe - 01223 357627**

Tea@3 St Giles Church, Castle Street, Cambridge every Wednesday at 3pm - tea, cake & chat. All are welcome.

Waterbeach Happy People's Club—Waterbeach Social Club, Cambridge Road CB25 9NJ. Every Friday 2—4 pm. Bingo, raffle and auction.

Willingham Social Club, Fen End CB24 5LH: Jazz Club on first Sunday each month Feb-Dec 12:30—3:30 pm Tea, coffee, rolls, dancing. Admission £10. Contact **Rosie Val Barrett 01954 789670**.

COPE Events, Activities and Outings

Please contact the COPE Office for further information
COPE, St Luke's Church Centre, Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3DZ.



The Evelyn Charnley Memorial Lunch Club Peter Murfitt — 01223 364303

NEW LOCATION: *Dunstan Court, Wulfstan Way, Cambridge, CB1 8QN*

With grateful thanks to the manager of Dunstan Court for allowing us to host our monthly meetings free of charge.

11.45 – 2.15 p.m. every third Wednesday. Tea & Biscuits provided, bring own Lunch if required.
£1 Raffle with donated prizes. Everyone is welcome

**December 17th
January 21st
February 18th**

**Social & Quiz
Dave McCandles — Road Safety
Marian French — Virtual Journey**

COPE in St Ives

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Corn Exchange, The Pavement, St Ives, PE27 5AG

Meetings held on third Thursday of each month. Contact Angie 01480 300726
Entry is £3.00 to help meet costs of these meetings and includes refreshments and the celebrated £1 Raffle. COPE membership is free and members are encouraged to bring friends, carers and partners. Everyone is welcome.

**22nd January
19th February
19th March**

**Call of the Kingfisher
Role of a Magistrate
Quacks and Charlatans**

March Friendship Club

Regular meetings will now be held from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm at St Peter's Church Hall, High Street, March, on the second Thursday of each month. Refreshments available.

**8th January
12th February**

**Social
Flag Fen**

For further information, contact Rosie on 07547 191315.

FREE TRIPS TO CAMBRIDGE BOTANIC GARDENS

COPE members meet monthly at **11 am** at the Brookside Gate entrance to the Gardens (corner of Bateman Street and Trumpington Street). **Next dates: 18 December; 15th January**

Please call COPE on 01223 364303 to register your interest. This scheme, a gift from the Gardens, only applies to COPE members. Remember that membership of COPE is FREE and brings all sorts of benefits!