

# EAST

## NEWSLETTER

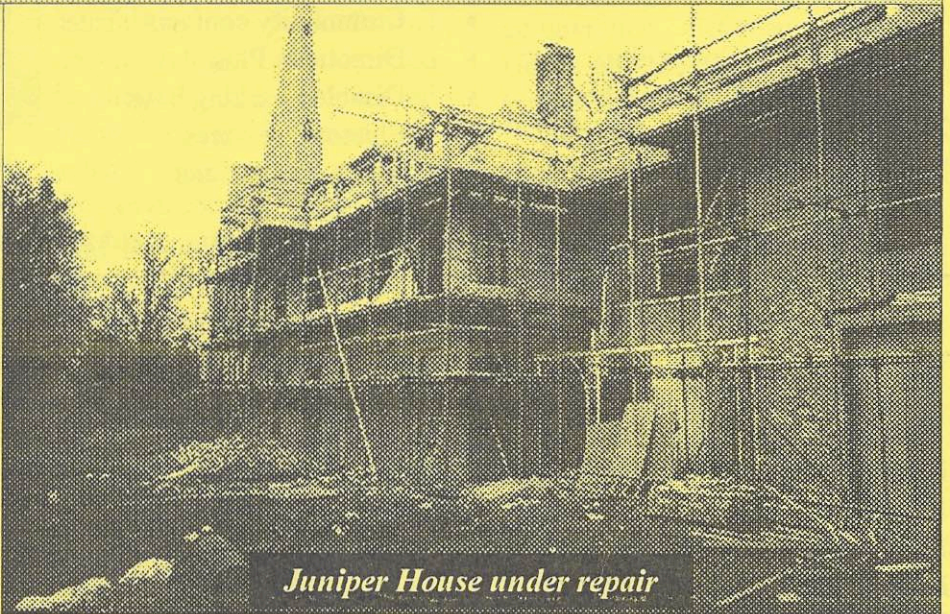
East Anglian Autistic Support Trust 52 Windsor Road Cambridge CB4 3JN Spring 1998

### Juniper House to open this autumn

The rewards of seven hard years' fundraising and planning by local supporters of the East Anglian Autistic Support Trust (EAST) are being realised with the news that their project to house adults with autism is ahead of schedule.

EAST, which masterminded the £900,000 project in partnership with Hereward Housing Association in Ely and five Cambridgeshire District Councils have announced that Juniper House at Stretham, near Ely, will be ready to take its first residents by October this year.

Parents desperate to find specialised housing close to home for their adult sons or daughters will soon be able to place them in the county's first specialised accommodation for people with autism. Because the county lacks adequate facilities, Cambridgeshire has to send many of its more severely autistic children and adults to other parts of the country.



*Juniper House under repair*

Some local autistic people are being cared for miles away from their families, some as far away as Devon, Cornwall and Yorkshire. Other parents have been caring for their adult children at home for decades.

The specialised service at Juniper House will be run and managed by the National Autistic Society which is building up a network of centres of excellence for autism nationwide.

The Chairman of EAST, Owen Spencer-Thomas, said

that the mild winter meant the refurbishment of Juniper House was going ahead quicker than expected.

He said, 'Social Services have written to me saying that they are committed to our project and will be purchasing places for local people in our new service. This is all wonderful news.'

He added, 'Ageing parents deserve a little respite; some are just worn out by the rigorous demands of caring for someone with autism. It's a great relief to families who have struggled for many years to look after their adult children at home.'

## EAST ANGLIA MEETING

Members of the National Autistic Society and affiliated societies are to meet on Saturday 16 May at 10.30 am. This is an opportunity for all members in the region to meet question and discuss issues with their representatives on the NAS Council. This year the meeting is being held in the south of the region in the Education Centre at Southend Hospital.

Your regional Councillors are Michael Butler and Sheona Gray. Your National Councillors are Jamie Nicholls, Helen Murfin, Alan Cheyney and Owen Spencer-Thomas. The new Chief Executive of the NAS, Paul Cann, will also be there.

This will be your chance to raise issues which you think should be brought to the attention of the NAS, air your views or seek help with any problems you may be facing.

The meeting is expected to end at 1 pm. If you wish to attend please inform our local development officer, Greg Pascoe, at NAS headquarters, 393 City Road, London, EC1V 1NE. Telephone 0171 833 2299 Fax: 0171833 9666

## EAST AGM

The EAST AGM will be held on

**Sunday 21 June**  
**Rees Thomas School**  
**at 2.30 pm.**

Creche facilities

## Council Services for Disabled People

A new 20 page guide to services for disabled people is published this month by Cambridge City Council.

This booklet gives information about a range of services available to people in Cambridge, such as:

- ◆ Access Grant fund
- ◆ Care Call (Lifeline)
- ◆ Community contacts;
- ◆ Directions Plus
- ◆ Disabled parking bays
- ◆ Electoral services
- ◆ Home adaptations
- ◆ Home aid
- ◆ Housing and Council tax benefits
- ◆ Keepsafe home security
- ◆ Leisure facilities
- ◆ Taxicard

Booklets are available from the  
EAST office.

☎01223 358446

## COLLECTING BOXES

Shops, pubs and garages throughout the county are displaying the green EAST collecting boxes.

Can you help us by distributing or collecting boxes from stores in your area? Perhaps your local shop hasn't got one. Or you might be able to organise a street collection in your district. Give us a ring on 01223 358446 if you can help.

## Access to the NHS

New NHS guidelines state that barriers preventing people with learning difficulties from gaining access to NHS services must be removed. The document, *Signposts to Success*, is available from:

Department of Health Stores  
PO Box 410  
Wetherby  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 7LM

## But who wins?

EAST is working to heighten the public awareness of autism. Together with your help we can build a brighter future for children and adults with autism. And we really do need your help. Without it, who wins? Try this Riddle-Me-Ree and find out.



My first is in Norman and also in Connie,  
My second's in George and also in Johnny,  
My third is in Robert but not in Larry,  
My fourth is in John but not in Harry,  
My fifth is in Linda and also in Mandy,  
My last is in Yvonne and also in Sandy,  
My whole is the person who wins this great fight,  
But not the fighter who thinks he is right.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

See page 4

# RESEARCH PROJECT

*EAST Trustee Maggie Spencer-Thomas has graduated in Social Policy at Anglia Polytechnic University. She writes about her dissertation on the need for specialised accommodation and services for adults with autism.*

Altogether 26 people completed the questionnaire which was part of my research project for my degree in social policy, and I describe my findings briefly below. If anyone really wants to see the whole 10,000 word document, I would be very happy to let you have a copy!

I reviewed a large body of research undertaken by leading academics in the field of autism. In my research, I compared two care models for adults with autism. The first was the small living unit in the community shared with people who have other kinds of learning disabilities, and the other was a larger living unit, the National Autistic Society service, Middle Field Manor in Suffolk, which provides a specialised structured service purely for people with autism.

My hypothesis is that adults with autism reach their best potential when cared for in a structured environment specifically tailored for their special needs and that this can best be provided by a larger living unit staffed by people specifically trained in the care of autistic people.

The research I undertook among families with an autistic son or daughter in Cambridgeshire shows that they were far more satisfied with the specialist care provided by the NAS. The higher

response rate and letters I received from the group not in specialised accommodation showed a much higher level of concern for the future care of their sons and daughters.

Care in the community is not a cheap option for people whose behaviour falls within the autistic spectrum because of the high staffing ratio and sufficient space necessary for their satisfactory care. Lack of social understanding, impaired language and disturbed behaviour are caused by autism. They are not caused by the environment of a large institution and do not disappear in a more 'normal' setting.

People with autism have the right to further education, mainstream training and employment services. They can excel in tasks that do not involve social contact, but because of their disabilities they need specialist flexible support to enable successful access.

In the current climate of equality for disabled people, those with autism deserve and need to live in an environment which is far better than 'normal'. In short, normality is not good enough. For them to thrive and have as good a quality of life as possible, they need a stable, structured and predictable environment in which they are cared for by people who are trained to understand their particular needs.

I would like to thank all the people who took the trouble to complete the questionnaire and help with my research.

## ACTING MANAGER NAMED

**Sandra Harper**, who is Day Care Co-ordinator at the National Autistic Society adult centre at Mildenhall in Suffolk, has been appointed Acting Manager at Juniper House.

The new adult service at Juniper House will be run and managed by the NAS. There will be close co-operation between Juniper House and the highly successful service at Mildenhall.

Experienced staff from the Suffolk adult centre are already involved in setting up the new project. There will be staff vacancies at both centres and the NAS has begun recruiting new support workers in the district.

Juniper House will be run on similar lines to Middle Field Manor at Barton Mills, one of the houses in the NAS Mildenhall service. Middle Field Manor opened in 1990.

Ian Brown, Manager of the Suffolk based service, will be line manager to Sandra for her first year at Juniper House.

### Useful Numbers:



<b>East</b>	01223 358446
<b>National Autistic Society</b>	0171 833 2299
<b>Cambridgeshire carers</b>	01223 712072
<b>Directions Plus</b>	01223 313600
<b>Samaritans</b>	01223 364455 0345 909090

## HOME FROM HOME

The new service for twelve adults with autism at Juniper House will be the first of its kind in Cambridgeshire. It will be run and managed by the National Autistic Society as part of a nationwide network of centres providing accommodation and education for adults and children with autism.

Juniper House will contain two residential units. The emphasis will be on providing a homely atmosphere backed up by internationally recognised models of good practice.

There will be a range of services available to meet the special needs of each resident so that individual

preferences can be identified and met. The service will operate for 52 weeks in the year.

Priority will be given to people living in Cambridgeshire or neighbouring counties. However, in building up a small homely community, staff will make sure that residents are able to fit in with each other.

Entering a residential home is always a big step. If you have a relative who might benefit from a place here or you are considering a place yourself, you can write to Sandra Harper at Middle Field Manor, Barton Mills, Bury St Edmunds, IP28 6AW or phone her on 01638 716910.

## Did you know?

The capital funding of Juniper House has been brought about by a unique partnership between EAST, Hereward Housing Association and five district councils, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Cambridge City and Huntingdon.

Although the Government has been encouraging these broad based partnerships, few projects have achieved such a fine example of co-operation.

## JUNIPER TAPESTRY

A special tapestry to commemorate the opening of Juniper House is being made made by church embroiderer, Christine Watts.

The design depicts the Franciscan monk Brother Juniper with his superior Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and birds.

Mrs Watts hopes to exhibit the tapestry at Stretham this summer before it is completed. Local people will be invited to add a few stitches. Each person who contributes will be given a certificate.

"I hope they will be able to identify with the project." said Mrs Watts.

Visitors will be able to meet EAST organisers to learn more about the project.

Juniper House was named after the 13th century monk, Brother Juniper, who is believed to be the first known autism sufferer.

## STRETHAM PARISH CHURCH

near Ely

# CONCERT

in aid of the

## Juniper House Appeal

given by

St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir

The Wicken Youth Brass Band

**SATURDAY 30 MAY**

**7.30 pm**

Tickets: £4 Adults £2 Children £10 Family of four

From: Lawra While  
East Office

01353 652625  
01223 358446

Answer to Riddle-Me-See.

Without your help, who wins?  
Nobody

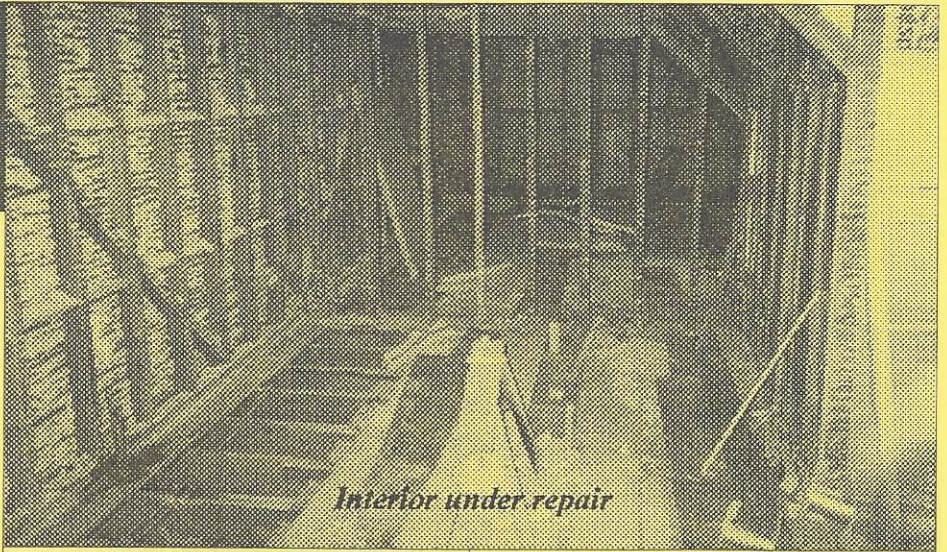
## NEARLY HOME

*Lawra While, Public Relations Co-ordinator of Hereward Housing Association, reports on the progress of the refurbishment of Juniper House.*

Hereward Housing Association and EAST began discussions about a joint venture to provide first class accommodation in Cambridgeshire for adults with autism almost five years ago.

Hereward itself is only just five years old; we came into being when East Cambridgeshire District Council transferred their entire housing stock to us in 1993. The project may seem to have taken a long time. However, it has certainly been well worth the wait!

The building work is now at the stage where real progress has been made, and everyone can see the fruits of their labour. When work began on Juniper House, the building had been empty for



*Interior under repair*

almost a decade. It was severely neglected and was hidden from view by what can only be described as a jungle.

Five months later the picture is an entirely different one. The refurbishment is now more than half way to completion which will restore it to its former splendour.

The architectural plans were drawn up by Hereward's award winning in-house design team, and the building work has been carried out by S S Ambrose of Ely under the watchful eye of both Hereward and EAST.

The roof has now been entirely replaced with hand-made tiles which are replicas of those originally used on the building. All the internal structural work, repairs, and re-plastering have been completed and the more detailed work can now begin.

The task of landscaping the garden and patio areas will soon begin, and putting the restored windows back in will complete external work to the property.

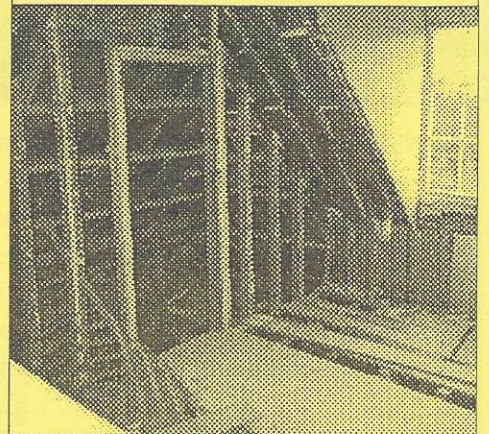
Meanwhile, the partners to the project, Hereward, EAST, the National Autistic Society and the Local Authorities, have chosen the paint, curtains and carpets as well

as bathroom and kitchen furnishings. All these will make the property feel like home for its residents and carers.

Hereward's Chief Executive, Nick Abbey comments: "We are extremely pleased with the progress that has been made and look forward to an early completion of the project in the summer."

"It is a fantastic achievement for everyone involved, and we are very much looking forward to seeing the building finished and up and running as Cambridgeshire's first residential centre for autistic adults."

Hereward Housing owns and manages approximately 4,000 properties. 250 of these we have built as part of our promise to provide an excellent service of affordable housing throughout the district of East Cambridgeshire.



## JUNIPER HOUSE - What does Stretham say?

*Meg Spencer-Thomas chose the Juniper House development as the subject for her 'A' level project in geography. In this article she describes the impact a new service will have on the village and how the residents of Stretham have reacted to the scheme.*



I needed to study an area of urban change for my geography project and after racking my brains for ideas of what to do, I decided that the Juniper House project would be perfect.

I gleaned some information by interviewing people and asking them their thoughts and feelings on the impact of the development. Fortunately, most people were willing to be quizzed and I got a lot of positive feedback

One of the questions I asked people was what they thought the good and bad impacts on Stretham would be as a result of the development. Many people said they thought there would be more jobs in the area, which is a

justified opinion as at least thirty people will be needed as care workers. One or two others said that it would be a good thing to integrate the residents into village life as they could learn more about autism.

Nobody mentioned any possible bad impacts, although a couple of mothers are slightly concerned for the safety of their young children. This is a fear which should be allayed once the residents move in as they will be able to prove for themselves that they are really not a threat.

There was only one surprising response which was that Stretham Old Rectory would be better used as a hotel or restaurant. I think the person concerned felt that there were not enough places to eat out in Stretham.



## PARENT PACK

The National Autistic Society has produced a new parent pack to help families of young children with autistic spectrum disorders. The pack is being sent free to all new parent members of the NAS and mailed to all existing members with the latest edition of *Connection*. The pack contains general information that a parent new to autism may find useful. For non-members the pack will be available at £1.20 including postage and package from the Publications Department, The National Autistic Society, 393, City Road, London, EC1V 1NE

## Our special thanks to

- Abbey National Charitable Trust which has donated £5,000 towards equipping a bedroom for a physically disabled resident.
- Alex Kirby who raffled a prize of a weekend for two at a health spa and raised £208.
- Domino UK for their donation of £380. towards the Juniper house project.
- The boys and girls at St John's College School who gave £180 from their chapel collections.
- The members of Waterbeach Community Association who raised a total of £444.
- Betty and Derrick Cunnington who raised £217 at a coffee morning in their home.
- All the charitable trusts who shun publicity but have made substantial gifts to our appeal.
- Jean and Eric Page for raising £317 and their friends and relatives who marked their ruby wedding by giving donations.
- Roy and Janice Papworth whose friends celebrated their ruby wedding by also giving to EAST.
- The Cambridge District of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes who gave £652.
- The Cambridge branch of the Association of Wrens for their £100 cheque.
- Barclays Bank for their donation of £250.
- All those supporters who have made generous personal gifts.
- Christ's College for donating £300 from their chapel collections.

## ABC for Carers

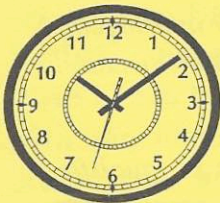
**A** is for attention to yourself, even if it's only for a few minutes each day.

**B** is for beginning from now on to remember that you matter too.

**C** is for coping with stress and anxiety, taking some breaths and just sitting still for a minute or two.

**D** is for doing something every now and again that you enjoy; it might mean having to get help for the person you care for, but you deserve it!

**E** is for eating food that gives you energy, and taking a bit of care over what you eat.



**F** is for five minutes at least that you give to yourself each day.

**G** is for giving, learning that other people like to give and that you haven't failed when you have to accept what they give.

**H** is for help that it can be very difficult to ask for and accept.

**I** is for individual; that means that what you need may be different from everyone else, but you must do what's right for you.

**J** is for joining a carers' group, it might be just what you need to help you cope and gain support.

**K** is for keeping yourself healthy, remembering to have check ups.

**L** is for laughing with someone now and then and not feeling guilty about it.

**M** is for making sure that you have all the help that is available for someone in your circumstances.

**N** is for the word NO and learning to say it sometimes.

**O** is for only, for telling yourself that you are only human.

**P** is for planning for someone to sit with the person you care for, so that you can have some time for an interest or hobby of your own.

**Q** is for questions, and not being afraid to ask them however obvious you may think they sound.



**R** is for relaxing, giving yourself time to catch your breath even if the dust is piling up.

**S** is for sleep, and making sure that you get enough of it.

**T** is for treats, which you deserve every so often.

**U** is for understanding what is happening; it can sometimes help you to cope better.

**V** is for your value as your own person and not only as a carer.

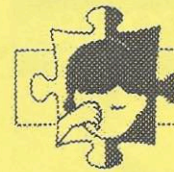
**W** is for worries, remembering that there are people you can share them with if you need to.

**X** is for exercise which you should take regularly to keep fit.

**Y** is for yourself, remembering that doing something for yourself every day helps you and the person you care for.

**Zzzzzz** ... by the time you've got this far, you could be ready for some sleep!

*With acknowledgement to The New Cambridgeshire Carers' Newsletter.*



THE NATIONAL  
AUTISTIC SOCIETY

### Looking for a new career or a change of direction with every day different?

The National Autistic Society provides a range of support services for people with autism and their carers. Due to the exciting new residential project for adults with autism at Strettham near Ely, there are vacancies for positions assisting residents in all aspects of daily life:

- ♦ Senior Support Workers
- ♦ Support Workers
- ♦ Relief Support Workers
- ♦ Night support Workers
- ♦ Day Care Co-ordinators

Experience with autism is desirable; however, reliability, initiative and calmness in crisis are essential. Due to expansion there are also vacancies at the Mildenhall Service in Suffolk.

#### Benefits include:

Excellent salary with shift allowance  
25 days holiday and bank holidays.  
Choice of pension.  
First class training at locations throughout the country.

For further information including job description contact:

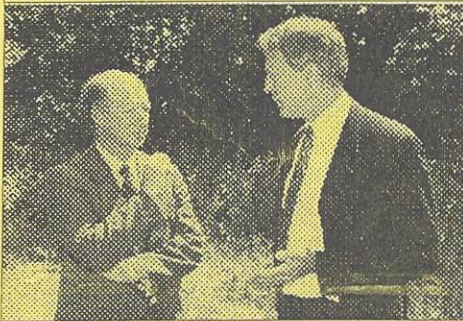
Ian Brown or Sandra Harper  
Middle Field Manor  
The Street  
Barton Mills  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP28 6AW

☎ 01638 716910

## OUR VISITORS



President of National Autistic Society, **Jane Asher**, left, officially names Juniper House.



The MP for South East Cambridgeshire, **James Paice**, talks with EAST Chairman Owen Spencer-Thomas on his visit to Juniper House.



NAS Chief Executive **Paul Cann**, right, is shown building work by representatives from EAST and Hereward

## WHO'S WHO

EAST is a charitable trust which is managed by six Trustees. Its objective is to support children and adults with autism in Cambridgeshire and the surrounding counties. It has a special responsibility to provide accommodation.

The Trustees are accountable to the Charity Commission, they have full responsibility for EAST's affairs and must act in the charity's interests. They are:

***Ray Heppell**, who is a former senior teacher, was one of the founder members of the adult service at Middle Field Manor in Suffolk, former chairman of its service support committee and former NAS Councillor.*

***Alasdair MacGillivray** who is Treasurer, is a qualified accountant who runs his own business in Cambridge.*

*The Revd Dr **Andrew Macintosh** is President and Dean of St John's College, Cambridge. His wife Mary is a foster parent and together they have cared for many children including a boy with classic autism.*

***Margaret Spencer-Thomas**, who is Secretary, is a qualified occupational health nurse and a member of the NAS accreditation team. She was Secretary to the Cambridgeshire Autistic Society for 10 years. She and her husband Owen have a son who is severely autistic.*

*The Revd **Owen Spencer-Thomas** is Chairman; he is a National Councillor of the NAS, former chairman of the Eastern Region and a member of the accreditation team. A broadcaster and former television journalist, he is now Chaplain to St John's College School and Christ's College in Cambridge University.*

***Jean Taylor** is a librarian in the University of Cambridge criminology library.*

A parent representative also attends Trustees' meetings. He is:

***Derek Cupit** currently chairs the service support committee at Middle Field Manor and serves on the NAS accreditation team. He has just retired from being Senior Community Education Tutor at Sawston Village College.*



52 Windsor Road  
Cambridge CB4 3JN  
Reg Charity No: 1009836

## EAST is Online



You can contact us on  
[spencer-thomas@dial.pipex.com](mailto:spencer-thomas@dial.pipex.com)

Work has started on producing our own EAST web page.