Barracloughs

BULLETIN

ISSUE 21 · AUTUMN 2025



A MAGIC WAND FOR THE EYES!

READ UP ON OUR POPULAR NEW HEATED EYE WAND ! MAYBE TREAT YOUR EYES THIS AUTUMN...

MYTH vs FACT!

WE BUST SOME OF THE FALSE "EYE FACTS" OUT THERE

COLDS AND HEARING LOSS

LEARN HOW COLDS CAN LEAD TO A LOSS OF HEARING

LITTLE EYES, BIG IMPACT

GOOD VISION UNLOCKS BETTER LEARNING POTENTIAL

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BARRACLOUGHS BULLETIN

Barracloughs

OPTICIANS & HEARING CARE

As the days shorten and the leaves begin to turn, we find ourselves at the start of a beautiful new season. But with autumn's crisp air and low, dazzling sun comes a new set of challenges for our eyes! The changing environment, from dry indoor heating to windy outdoor conditions, can lead to eye strain and discomfort. Here at Barracloughs, we want to help you transition into the season with healthy, comfortable vision. Feel free to drop by if your eyes need some TLC.

A common misconception is that sunglasses are only for spring or summer. However, the autumn sun is lower in the sky, often shining directly into our eyes and creating intense glare, especially when driving. What's more, harmful UV rays are present all year round, even on cloudy days. That's why wearing sunglasses with full UV protection remains essential. Don't be fooled by the autumn chill!

In this issue, we'll share what our team love the most about autumn. We also tell you about our brand new autumn eyewear collection plus you can read about Jack and his work experience placement in Uckfield. Also, for our younger patients and their parents, we have a special offer on our incredible myopia control lenses.

There's lots more too! Happy reading, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

AUTUMN 2025

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PEEP CLUB

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Myopia in Children
The Impact of Seasons and Screens



The number of children with myopia (also known as near-sightedness), has risen dramatically in recent years. This eye condition, where a person can't see distant objects clearly, is caused by the eyeball growing too long, which makes light focus in front of the retina instead of directly on it. This can lead to more than just needing stronger glasses; high levels of myopia increase the risk of serious eye diseases later in life, such as retinal detachment and glaucoma.

The increase is linked to a combination of genetic factors and environmental changes, particularly a shift in children's daily habits. Research indicates that the amount of **time spent outdoors** and **time spent on screens** are two major factors.

When autumn and winter arrive, the days get shorter, and the weather gets colder and wetter. This creates a perfect storm for myopia progression in children.

The UK weather takes us all indoors!
With less daylight and pretty grotty weather, children naturally spend more time indoors. Spending time outside, especially in natural light, is crucial for healthy eye development. The bright, natural light is thought to stimulate the release of dopamine in the retina, which can help regulate eye growth and prevent the eyeball from becoming too long. Studies have shown that just over an hour of outdoor time per day can significantly cut the risk of myopia.

Extra screen time is inevitable...
Colder weather also means more time is often spent on indoor activities that involve close-up focus, such as using phones, tablets and computers. This prolonged "near work" can cause the eye to strain and elongate, further contributing to myopia progression. The constant close-up focus and exposure to digital screens without breaks can worsen the condition.

Myopia management is now possible

The good news is that we now have ways to slow down the progression of myopia in children. While standard single-vision glasses and contact lenses can correct a child's vision, they don't address the underlying issue of the eye getting longer.

Myopia Control Lenses: These are spectacles with unique designs, often featuring a central clear zone for distance vision and a surrounding area with small lenses or "lenslets" that help to slow down the elongation of the eyeball.

Specialist Contact Lenses: These daily disposable contact lenses are designed with a dual-focus or multifocal design. The centre of the lens corrects vision, while the outer parts provide a different focus that signals the eye to slow its growth.

Orthokeratology (Ortho-K): This involves wearing specially designed rigid contact lenses overnight. The lenses gently reshape the cornea during sleep, providing clear vision during the day without the need for glasses or contact lenses, and also slowing the progression of myopia in children.

If you are concerned about your child's vision, book to see us, as early intervention can make a significant difference in their long-term eye health.

TWO PAIRS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE
ON ALL PAIRS OF MYCON MYOPIA CONTROL LENSES UNTIL THE END OF SEPTEMBER 2025

CLICK TO SEE THE WHOLE RANGE

PEEP CLUB

Modern Eyecare
Est. 2020

THE FUTURE OF EYE CARE IS HERE

Peep Club's Heated Eye Wand LED+ Combines Cutting-Edge Green & Amber LED Therapy with Soothing Heat for Brighter, Healthier Eyes.

Revolutionising an entire industry, Peep Club is committed to continuous innovation in eye care. Since launching its original Heated Eye Wand in 2020, new research - especially on the efficacy and safety of LED therapy - has emerged, leading to the creation of the brands most advanced piece of technology yet. The first and only one of its kind, the Peep Club Heated Eye Wand LED+ has been developed in collaboration with leading UK optometrists and shaped by feedback from Peep Club customers and is here to help with every common eye concern in one device.

After three years of research and development, the Peep Club Heated Eye Wand LED+ sees 10 significant improvements to the brand's beloved original models. It retains the core three modes - temperature-controlled hot compress, gentle massage, and red LED light - while introducing two new modes: green LED light and amber LED light.



HOW THE WAND WORKS

Hot compress therapy naturally restores hydration and comfort to dry and tired eyes, while gentle massage enhances the effectiveness of the hot compress and improves circulation to de-puff upper and lower eyelids.



Red LED has been shown to boost collagen and elastin, improving the appearance of fine lines over time.



Amber LED has been found to reduce redness, pigmentation and visible blood vessels, a key contributor to the appearance of dark circles.



Green LED is an exciting new advancement that has been shown to reduce redness, soothe irritated skin, be anti-inflammatory and aid in healing damaged cells.

Both green and amber LED wavelengths have shown impressive clinical results in reducing inflammation, calming sensitised skin around the eyes, particularly for conditions like ocular rosacea, and helping to diminish dark circles caused by damaged blood vessels or melasma*.

*Clinical studies:
• Green LED and inflammation: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36035005/ • Amber LED and pigmentation: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38018017/



"It was difficult at first. My glasses were very thick so I had no peripheral vision and struggled with things like ball games. I also had to wear a patch which I hated, and sometimes people made nasty comments. The lens implants have been life changing!"

Jack, when asked what it was like living with cataracts from an early age

FROM CLASSROOM TO CONSULTATION ROOM

In July we were thrilled to be joined by Jack, a student from Uckfield College, for his work experience at Barracloughs in Uckfield.

Jack was born with congenital cataracts in both eyes, a condition where the lenses are cloudy from birth, preventing light from reaching the retina. Congenital cataracts **only affects around 3-4 in every 10,000 babies**. It can stem from various causes, including infections during pregnancy, metabolic disorders and other medical conditions, but in many cases such as Jack's, it's not possible to determine the cause. Jack's cataracts were surgically treated at six months old.

This involved a lensectomy, where the cloudy lens was removed through a small incision in the cornea while he was under general anaesthetic. This procedure takes around 1 or 2 hours and was performed on both eyes on separate days. Jack wore spectacles until he was 12 when he had intraocular lens (IOL) implants. Now he only really uses glasses for classwork and reading. During his time with us he had a sight exam with Lucie, our resident optometrist in Uckfield. We're optimistic we can provide glasses that will give Jack the legal vision he needs to drive – he's incredibly eager to learn!

During Jack's work experience week, we wanted to ensure he gained a comprehensive understanding of our entire operation! His week was incredibly productive, covering a broad spectrum of the services we offer and the intricacies of managing an optician practice.

Jack began by learning about a variety of eye conditions, of which he found a lot of interest in the effects of macular degeneration. He learned about the distinctions between NHS and private optical services, gaining insight into our NHS contract obligations and the importance of adherence. We explored our various screening services, including Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) and visual field tests. We discussed specialised services available at other Barracloughs locations, such as Optomap wide-field retinal imaging, KUDOS bespoke lenses and advanced field of vision tests, with those last two being measured via VR headsets.

A significant part of his experience involved shadowing our optometrists during comprehensive eye examinations. Jack was particularly interested in our audiology services (as he wasn't aware that we provided hearing care), demonstrating a keen desire to learn about ear-related conditions and our hearing care offerings.

Towards the end of the week, we shifted focus to the less clinical but equally vital aspects of our business. We discussed our methods for gathering and analysing customer feedback and emphasised the critical role of consistently delivering high-level customer service. Furthermore, we introduced him to the various KPIs we monitor weekly to ensure optimal business performance across all departments.

We'd like to extend our thanks to Jack's parents for their permission for this article, and to Uckfield College for their seamless and streamlined approach to helping make valuable work experience placements like this take place.

Read the full article covering Jack's week over on our website!

Autumn Appreciation

WE ASKED THE TEAM WHAT THEY LOVE ABOUT THE BEAUTIFUL SEASON THAT IS AUTUMN!

My favourite thing about Autumn is all the lovely colours of the leaves! I love a walk on a crisp Autumn day!
Lola-May - Seaford Store

I like autumn for the change in the colours (leaves etc.) and conkers (spider repellent) haha!
Sam - Bexhill Store

Time to make chutneys and jams!
Lucie - Uckfield Store

I love the cosy jumpers, scarves and spiced apple scented candles to come home to.
Kate - Bexhill Store

Happiness in autumn is pulling on my favourite Wellington boots and crunching through piles of leaves. A walk at Sheffield Park is the best — the lakes reflecting fiery reds and golden trees feel like nature showing off, and I love every second.
Angela - Bexhill Store

Autumn is my favourite season! My favourite thing about Autumn is getting to read spooky books and watch horror films (more than I usually do). I love anything scary.
Victoria - Eastbourne Store

I love the crisp, cool mornings; dew on the grass and in spider's webs; all the colours of the leaves on the trees and the way the fallen leaves crunch under your feet. On the flipside, the worst thing about Autumn for me is when the spiders start 'coming indoors'!!
Avril - Multiple Stores!

My favourite things about Autumn (my fave time of ye are pumpkin spiced lattes, going for long walks and photographing the autumn colours. And of course if the weather is bad it would be drawing/painting and reading (with said pumpkin spiced latte to hand!)
Claire - Polegate Store

Planet-positive eyewear has landed



bird EYEWEAR

🥳 Exciting new brand alert!!!! 🥳

We are thrilled to announce that we are now stocking Bird Eyewear at our Polegate store!

Bird Eyewear is the UK's leading sustainable eyewear brand, and the highest-scoring B Corp in the global eyewear industry! Bird frames are multi award-winning, including Frame of the Year at the Optician Awards.

Founded by three brothers in Devon, we provide a planet-positive alternative to the millions of plastic frames that end up in landfill each year.

Made from plant-based bio-acetates, recycled metals and repurposed materials, every pair of Birds are fully repairable, recyclable, and low-carbon, all the while championing and protecting the natural world through initiatives and partnerships with various organisations including the WWF, RSPB and Solar Aid.

Sustainability is at the heart of everything Bird do, from reducing their footprint to developing fully circular materials and products.

You'll feel good knowing your eyewear is planet-friendly, and you'll look great too!

Check out all the styles over on our website.

A DANGER IN DISGUISE

THE HIDDEN HAZARDS OF NOVELTY CONTACT LENSES

Spooky season is just around the corner, and you may already be planning Halloween party costumes. For some, the perfect finishing touch is a pair of novelty contact lenses. They're widely available online, at costume shops or even from market stalls. They look like fun, but we want to warn you about the serious risks these 'one-size-fits-all' lenses can pose to your eye health, they're not just a harmless accessory.

It's a common misconception that because novelty lenses are just for "looks," they don't carry the same risks as prescription lenses. This couldn't be further from the truth. In the UK, it is illegal to sell any contact lenses- even non-prescription ones - without the supervision of a registered optician or optometrist. This is because all contact lenses are medical devices, and they need to be properly fitted and cared for.

So, what exactly happens when you put an off-the-shelf novelty lens into your eye?

Your cornea, the clear front surface of your eye, is incredibly delicate. Contact lenses come in various sizes and curvatures to fit different eyes. When you buy a generic, non-prescription lens, you are essentially gambling that it will fit your unique eye. A lens that is too flat or too tight can rub against your cornea, causing microscopic scratches or abrasions. This is not only painful but also leaves your eye vulnerable to infection.

Also, your cornea needs to breathe, and it gets its oxygen directly from the air. High-quality, professional contact lenses are made from advanced materials that allow oxygen to pass through to your eye. Many novelty lenses, however, are made from cheap, older-generation plastics that don't allow for adequate oxygen flow. Wearing these lenses, especially for an extended period, can cause oxygen deprivation to the cornea (a condition called hypoxia). This can lead to corneal swelling, blurred vision, and in severe cases, the growth of new, fragile blood vessels into the cornea—a condition that can permanently affect your vision.

Perhaps the most frightening risk is that unregulated novelty lenses are often sold without proper sterile packaging or disinfecting solution. The person handling your lens might not have washed their hands, and the lens itself could be contaminated with bacteria. Putting a dirty lens in your eye is like inviting a harmful microbe to a party. The bacteria can lead to a severe corneal infection, or a corneal ulcer, which is essentially an open sore on your eye. A corneal ulcer is extremely painful, can cause permanent scarring, and in the worst-case scenario, lead to significant vision loss or even blindness.

Your eyesight is priceless. While the idea of having unique eyes for a night might be tempting, the potential consequences are simply not worth it. If you are determined to use novelty lenses, please do so responsibly. The only safe way to get them is to visit a qualified optician or optometrist.

HEARING LOSS *after a cold*

We've all battled the common cold at some point in our lives. As frustrating as it is, it's inevitable to catch, especially during the colder months when people spend more time together indoors.



Luckily, most of us get back to our normal selves after a week or so. But, if the cold has caused other complications, leading to more infections, recovery may be longer. Experiencing colds and hearing loss is a little less common, and here we'll explore the symptoms of hearing loss after a cold, as well as treatment options and preventative measures.

How can a cold cause hearing loss?

A cold is a viral infection that affects the upper respiratory tract, including the throat, nose and sinuses. Since colds cause nasal or sinus congestion, the build-up of fluid and mucus can block the Eustachian tubes, leading to muffled or temporary hearing loss. This is known as 'conductive hearing loss', it's usually temporary and improves once the cold symptoms have subsided. Although rare, prolonged congestion and persistent fluid build-up can put pressure on the nerves in the inner ear, leading to permanent hearing loss.

While the majority of colds clear up on their own with no lasting effects, some people may suffer from other complications. Ear infections are a common complication of colds due to congestion and swelling of the nasal passages blocking the Eustachian tubes. Symptoms of an ear infection include:

Ear pain, ear discharge, headache, vertigo, ringing sound in the ear (tinnitus), loss of appetite, loss of balance, itchiness or blisters, fever

If you experience any sudden hearing loss after an ear infection, it's important to speak to a hearing care professional. Hearing loss during a cold doesn't always mean there's an ear infection. The extra fluid in the middle ear makes it difficult for the eardrum to vibrate and for the sound waves to travel through normally. It's estimated that this build-up can decrease your hearing by 24 decibels, meaning sound will likely feel muffled.

Generally, cold-induced hearing loss resolves once the cold symptoms have improved. Medications such as decongestants, pain relievers and ear drops can all help ease symptoms and clear blocked ears and sinuses. If bacteria caused the infection, antibiotics can be prescribed to you by your doctor. More often than not, hearing loss from a cold isn't anything to worry about as it is usually temporary. However, if your symptoms last over 10 days with no signs of easing, are severe and cause you abnormal discomfort, or you experience sudden hearing loss or loss of hearing in one ear, consulting a doctor is strongly advised. If you have a child younger than three months who is also exhibiting these symptoms, along with lethargy and a fever, it's vitally important to get them checked by a doctor as soon as possible.

Hearing loss and ear infections after a cold can be prevented by getting vaccinated with the annual flu jab. Not smoking and washing hands frequently with soap and water is a must. Avoid touching contaminated surfaces, such as escalator conveyor belts or poles on trains, and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes! Drying ears after swimming also helps. If you're worried about your hearing or are showing signs of hearing loss, book a free hearing test with us today.

MYTHS VS FACTS



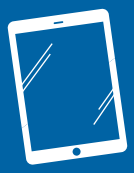
Myth: Wearing glasses all the time makes your eyes weaker

Fact: This is a very common misconception. Wearing prescription glasses does not weaken your eyes. Glasses are a corrective aid to help you see clearly, they don't make your eyes "lazy." The need for a stronger prescription over time is a result of natural changes in your eyes, not because you've been wearing your glasses. Not wearing your glasses when you need them can lead to eye strain, headaches, and fatigue, but won't cause permanent damage in adults. However, for children, not wearing the correct prescription can have a negative long-term effect on their developing vision.



Myth: Eating carrots gives you perfect eyesight

Fact: While carrots are great for your eyes, they aren't a magic bullet for perfect vision. Carrots contain beta-carotene, which the body converts into Vitamin A. This vitamin is crucial for maintaining good eye health and is essential for the function of the retina, particularly for seeing in low light. However, an average, balanced diet already provides all the Vitamin A you need.



Myth: Staring at a screen for too long will permanently damage your eyes

Fact: Extended screen time won't cause permanent damage to your eyes or make you need glasses. However, it can lead to digital eye strain, a temporary condition with symptoms like dry eyes, headaches, and blurred vision. This happens because we tend to blink less when we're focused on a screen. To combat this, follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.



Myth: Having perfect vision means yours eyes are perfectly healthy

Fact: Even with 'perfect' vision, a person can still have serious eye health issues. Clear central vision doesn't guarantee a clean bill of health; conditions like glaucoma, retinal disease, and corneal conditions can be present without affecting your sight initially. The loss of sight from these diseases often only becomes apparent after permanent damage has occurred. Furthermore, clear vision doesn't account for other crucial visual skills like tracking, focus and eye coordination, which are vital for everyday tasks like reading and learning.



Myth: Reading in dim light ruins your eyes

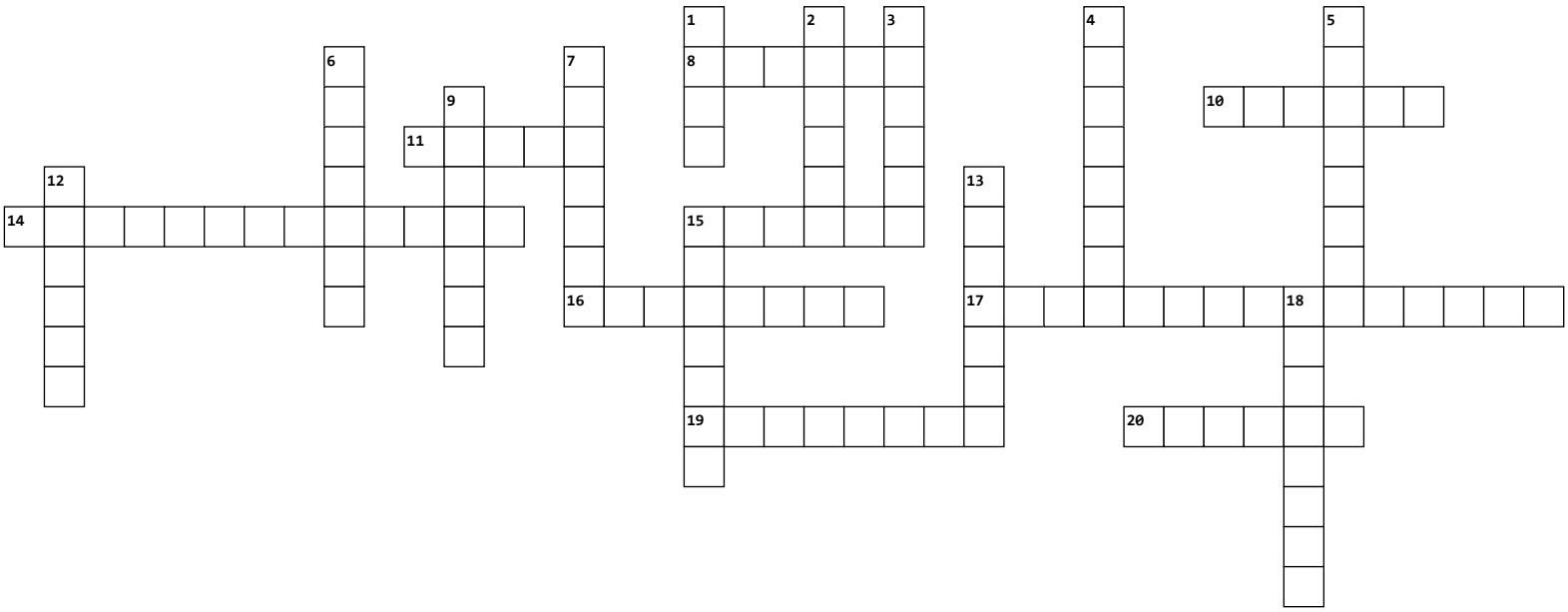
Fact: Reading in low light won't cause lasting damage to your eyes, but it can cause temporary eye strain. Your eyes have to work harder to focus, which can lead to discomfort, headaches and tired eyes. This is easily fixed by moving to a better-lit area.



Myth: You only need to wear sunglasses abroad and in bright sunlight

Fact: UV light can significantly damage your eyes and skin, contributing to the development of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Many people think sunglasses are only necessary on sunny days or on holiday. But eye protection is essential on overcast days and in watery or snowy environments where UV rays can be just as strong. When choosing sunglasses, always ensure they offer full UV protection. Don't wait for a sunny day to protect your eyes.

Barracloughs Autumn Crossword Puzzle



Across

8. The back of the eye containing light-sensitive cells (6)
10. From late September to late December (6)
11. A popular drink made from fermented apples (5)
14. The process of the eye adjusting its focus for objects at different distances (12)
15. Thin, clear layer across the front of the eye (6)
16. A collection of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve, often due to high eye pressure (8)
17. Someone who specialises in diagnosing, treating and preventing eye diseases and injuries (12)
19. A seasonal allergic reaction common in the autumn, causing itchy, watery eyes (8)
20. A common eye condition where objects at a distance appear blurry (9)

Down

1. The coloured part of the eye that controls the size of the pupil (4)
2. The sense responsible for sight (6)
3. The central point of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed vision (6)
4. An eye condition where the lens becomes cloudy, leading to a decrease in vision (8)
5. A small, furry animal known for gathering nuts (8)
6. Colourful tree leaves that fall to the ground (7)
7. Halloween activity with pumpkins (7)
9. A type of lens that corrects both near and farsightedness (7)
12. The transparent outer layer of the eyeball (6)
13. An autumn month, starting with 'O' (7)
15. The sound of walking on fallen leaves (7)
18. The term for a person who examines eyes for vision problems and prescribes corrective lenses (8)



ANSWERS HERE
No cheating!