

BULLETIN

ISSUE 22 · WINTER 2025

FOCUSING ON YOUNG EYES

CHARLENE TELLS US ALL ABOUT HER NEW PAEDIATRIC DISPENSING QUALIFICATION

CHILLY AIR, TEARY EYES!

THE WINTER MONTHS CAN REALLY MAKE YOUR POOR EYES SUFFER

TINY TECH, TOTAL CLARITY

THE LATEST HEARING AIDS PACK A LOT OF TECHNOLOGY - BUT ARE BARELY VISIBLE!



WRAPPING UP A BUSY YEAR

WE'VE LOVED SEEING YOU ALL THROUGHOUT 2025

Barraclooughs OPTICIANS & HEARING CARE

As the temperatures drop (considerably!) and the evenings draw in further, it's safe to say winter is on its way - officially starting on the 21st! While we're all wrapping up warm, it's worth remembering that UV rays don't take a break during the colder months - so don't forget to protect your eyes with quality UV-blocking lenses, even on bright winter days. Come see us if you're conscious of your eye health.

In this Bulletin, we're looking at how cold, windy weather and central heating can leave your eyes feeling dry or irritated, along with some simple ways to keep them comfortable through the season. We're also celebrating Charlene's recent qualification in paediatric dispensing - a fantastic achievement that means our youngest patients are in even better hands!

It's been a busy few months here at Barraclooughs Opticians, from welcoming new faces to introducing the latest eyewear collections, and we're already looking forward to what 2026 has in store.

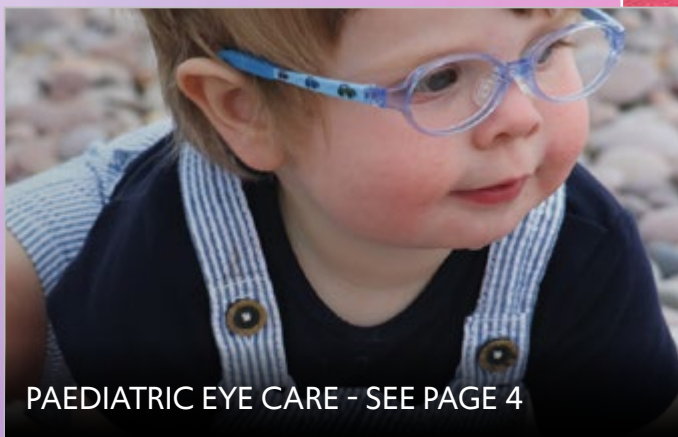
Stay cosy, keep your eyes healthy, grab a blanket and enjoy the read!

WINTER 2025

TEAM LOVE FOR CHRISTMAS	03
CHARLENE'S SUCCESS!	04
MENOPAUSE AND THE EYES	05
GETTING FESTIVE	06
SOME FAVOURITE FEEDBACK!	07
OUR RECIPE FOR YOUR EYES & EARS	08
WINTER EYE WOES!	09
OTICON ZEAL / WINTER DRIVING	10
WIN A HEATED EYE WAND!	11



Manage your vision: barraclooughs.uk/book



PAEDIATRIC EYE CARE - SEE PAGE 4



What the Barracloughs team love about Christmas!



I think for me without sounding too cliché I love being with my family, particularly this year. And we always have something Black Forrest related pudding like a trifle or gateaux. Favourite film of all time which reminds me of past Christmas's is The Wizard of Oz, always wanted Dorothy's red slippers. - Sam B, Bexhill

I'm sure I should say it's something deep and meaningful but I actually look forward to a Yule Log... covered with chocolate ganache and a little branch going off to one side with a sprig of holly on! Plus you can really only buy them at Christmas. I may eat a whole one! xxx - Rita,

I love a Christmas craft - whether it's making felt Christmas ornaments for my tree or for family/friends, or crocheting a Christmas blanket. I also love spending time with my family and our Christmas traditions: late night shopping, the Christmas tree festival in Uckfield, watching the Nutcracker with my Mum etc. - Victoria W, Eastbourne



My favourite thing about Christmas are the traditions, every year on Christmas Eve my family go to the Six Bells in Chiddingly for lunch, my mother in law head to Waitrose to do some last minute Christmas shopping. I also cover the living room door in wrapping paper so when the boys wake up on Christmas Day they have to burst through to see what Father Christmas has put under the tree. - Sophia, Polegate



I love Christmas films! It's Home Alone and the Miracle on 34th street remake for me! The food and family, Mince pies and a Snowball drink are my festive staples. It makes me so happy when the festive meal deals come up for lunch. - Kate, Bexhill

My favourite things about Christmas are spending time with my family and friends and the traditions we do every year like going to National Trust places and to see some sort of Christmas show at the theatre. I also love all the nice delicious food and watching my 2 favourite Christmas films It's A Wonderful Life and National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. Basically I love Christmas! - Claire, Polegate



Mine is a bit niche: Every year since my three boys were little I've written them a letter from Santa (obvs me!) telling them the achievements that I (Santa!) have been proud of them for throughout the year and also the things they need to work on! (like maybe eating their greens/sprouts!) I've always tried to make it funny and one of my joys on Christmas morning has been seeing them taking the letters out of their stocking and reading them...often in fits of laughter and sharing them with each other. Even though they are now grown up I still do it. - Jeremy, Head Office

For me it's matching Christmas PJs and eating guilt free as the calories don't count at Christmas! I also have a new favourite Xmas thing - McDonalds Grinch socks!! 3 pairs and counting!!!! - Chloe, Uckfield

I enjoy the Xmas decorations on my tree & Beautiful Victorian window displays in the Lewes Antique shops. Going out for a Xmas am walk & wishing everyone Happy Xmas... Pulling the Xmas crackers with a bang & wearing silly hats & spectacles, playing Pictionary & chilling on the sofa watching the Wizard of Oz or Agatha Christie. - Angela, Bexhill



I'm definitely a gift-giver by nature, so my favourite thing about Christmas is being able to make other people happy and seeing the joy on their face when they open their gifts but also the food, can't beat a good Christmas roast - Tyler, Battle

My favourite thing about the festive season is the FOOD! On Xmas day we do a Xmas 'breakfast' at the in-laws which is the BEST, then a roast dinner in the afternoon. I also love going to an Xmas Market, then going home to watch Xmas films (the cheesier the better!) with a cosy fire. - Lola-May, Seaford



I love the lights!! In the car all the way home me and the girls are shouting out whenever we see any. It's a noisy ride home. - Charlene, Eastbourne



I love putting up the tree and decorating it while playing some classic xmas bangers in the background. Also a big fan of watching The Holiday, Elf and Arthur Christmas throughout December. Can't beat the food over the festive season, love a roast on xmas day but for me it's a boxing day buffet full of xmas day leftovers and picky bits! - Sam C, Seaford



Christmas for me is spending time with family, playing board games, watching films and eating food - Kathrine, Battle



SPECIALIST PAEDIATRIC OPHTHALMIC CARE

Celebrating Charlene's advanced qualification!

At Barracloughs, we are dedicated to providing the highest standards of eyecare for every member of the family, and we're incredibly proud to celebrate a significant achievement within our team.

Charlene Whitmore, who many of our [Eastbourne](#) patients will know well, has successfully completed a specialist paediatric dispensing qualification. Having been a vital part of the Barracloughs family for 14 years - and a qualified Dispensing Optician (FBDO) since 2016 - this latest achievement further cements her expertise in an area she is truly passionate about: children's vision.

Expertise in Children's Eyecare

The year-long Paediatric Dispensing Course undertaken by Charlene comprised 10 in-depth units. These covered essential areas such as specialist care, refractive management, low vision, and the unique considerations required when fitting glasses for younger patients.



Charlene Whitmore FBDO Prof. Cert. PE

This advanced training has equipped Charlene with a deeper understanding of children's facial development and frame safety. It ensures that we can offer the best possible advice when selecting eyewear for developing eyes.

Enhancing Family Eye Health

Charlene's expanded skillset is a fantastic asset for families across East Sussex. It allows us to offer enhanced support for complex prescriptions and specialist lenses, including Myopia Management. These innovative lenses can help slow the progression of childhood short-sightedness, reducing the long-term risk of eye health complications later in life.

"We're incredibly proud of Charlene's achievement. Her dedication to advancing her skills reflects our wider commitment to investing in clinical excellence across all seven of our practices. Children's eyecare is a vital part of what we do, and Charlene's specialist knowledge will be invaluable to the families we support."

- David Cleworth, Director of Operations and Marketing

Since Frank Barraclough [founded the business in St. Leonards in 1957](#), we have always aimed to serve our local communities with the absolute best possible care. Today, operating across Bexhill, Battle, Eastbourne, St. Leonards, Polegate, Seaford and Uckfield, we continue to invest in our team and advanced technology - [such as OCT](#) and [Optomap](#) - to bring hospital-grade eyecare closer to home.

“

CHARLENE SAYS

"I've always believed that children deserve the very best start possible when it comes to vision correction. There are so many factors that can influence visual comfort and the way glasses fit, especially in younger children. Completing this course allows me to support families with confidence and ensure that every child receives safe, comfortable eyewear that fits to the highest standards."

”





Back in October, to help highlight Menopause Month, we highlighted how the menopause can affect vision.

The journey through menopause is a profound transitional phase in a woman's life, known for symptoms like hot flashes, night sweats and mood swings. However, an often-overlooked aspect of this hormonal shift is its potential effect on eye health and vision. Understanding these changes is crucial for women to prioritise their sight during this period, which typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. The significant hormonal fluctuations, particularly the drop in oestrogen, can directly impact the eyes and trigger several vision-related issues.

Common Vision Changes

Dry Eyes: This is arguably the most prevalent complaint. Hormonal changes can alter the composition and production of tears, often leading to [dry, gritty, irritated, or fatigued eyes](#). This can cause significant discomfort and intermittent blurred vision.

Fluctuating Vision: Hormones can affect the shape and elasticity of the eye's lens. This fluctuation can make it challenging to maintain consistently clear eyesight, especially for close-focus tasks like reading or using screens. Many women may find they need to update their prescriptions for glasses or contact lenses.

Increased Risk of Certain Eye Conditions: Menopause is associated with a slightly higher risk of developing serious conditions over time, including glaucoma and cataracts. Since these diseases often show no noticeable symptoms early on, regular check-ups are essential for early detection and management.

Light Sensitivity and Night Vision: Some postmenopausal women experience increased photophobia (sensitivity to light). Conversely, they may also report difficulty seeing clearly in low-light conditions (night blindness), which is more common in women than men of the same age group.

Caring for Your Eyes

Taking proactive steps can help mitigate these effects and protect long-term eye health:

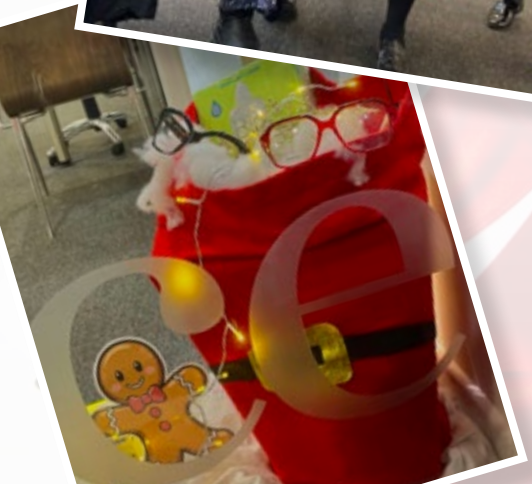
Routine Sight Examinations: Comprehensive eye exams are the most important step. They ensure your prescription is current and allow your eye care professional to screen for conditions before they progress.

Lubricating Eye Drops: Using lubricating eye drops or gels can provide much-needed relief from dry eye symptoms.

Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle: A well-balanced diet rich in eye-supporting nutrients—such as vitamins A, C, and E, and Omega-3 fatty acids—is vital. Staying well-hydrated and avoiding smoking can also help prevent dry eye symptoms from worsening.

Manage General Symptoms: Addressing severe general menopausal symptoms through stress reduction, adequate sleep, and consulting a healthcare provider about potential Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) can indirectly benefit overall health, including the health of your eyes.

By staying informed and prioritising routine eye care, women can navigate this significant life change and help maintain excellent vision. [Learn more here...](#)



I felt very comfortable and welcomed. This was my first experience with your company and it didn't disappoint, in fact it exceeded my expectations. - Mr Richard C, Polegate

Thank you the service was great & Stephen took his time & did a great job. He could not have been more helpful as he did a great job & was very professional. - Mr Peter M. St. Leonards

Excellent friendly staff. Mr Amey explains clearly what happens throughout the eye examination. A great and friendly atmosphere from the moment you walk in until you leave. Cannot see how you can improve, it is a really pleasant experience.

- Mrs Patricia B, Eastbourne

I'm extremely happy with how my appointment went. The staff are very welcoming, professional and the service is always very high quality and I'm always happy with the service and interaction with the staff. Would highly recommend this opticians to everyone.

- Mrs Emma P, St. Leonards

I had my eye test with Mr Harpreet Bahra and I was extremely impressed with him. He was very professional and methodical in his approach. He explained very clearly some of the possible problems I could experience from tablets that I have taken for many years. These had not been mentioned before to me. He was friendly and approachable. I can't praise him highly enough. I will certainly ask for him again. Thank you. - Mrs Kathleen S, Bexhill

Best opticians around! Polegate store staff including Mr Patel, the optician are all brilliant. - Mrs Margaret J, Polegate

My visit was excellent and I felt welcomed and valued. Kas the optician really took care of me and the service was very personal. I will recommend Barracloughs to friends and family. - Dr Andrew B, Battle

I have been coming to Barracloughs since I was in primary school. I started at Battle and then Bexhill. So I think that shows how happy I am with the service. Ms Panday did my eye test and she was brilliant very understanding about I lipread and made me feel very comfortable. Picking my new glasses was perfect, and myself and the staff were talking about Paddington Bear who was outside when my children wanted pennies to put in. It's nice that you have staff who have been there for long term.

- Mrs Antoinette A, Bexhill

It was a pleasure to be greeted by the reception team and then to be cared for by the Optician. No rush. Answered my questions and offered help and advice. The opticians rooms were warm and inviting. Lighting was dimmed when and after bright lights had been flashed in my eyes. A most pleasant experience was enjoyed by myself and my waiting husband. Thank you. Carry on doing what you are doing. I don't think my appointment could be improved upon. - Mrs Linda C, Polegate

Firstly, all of your staff are lovely! The optician I spoke with was charming, funny and very helpful. The lady I spoke with about new lenses was calm, understanding, and I will do as she suggested and get my silhouette pair fitted with new lenses. It's always pleasant to come to your store in Bexhill - Thank you for always providing a professional, friendly and supportive service.

- Mrs Fiona C, Bexhill

Excellent appointment - from start to finish. All staff bright, cheerful and friendly - and very efficient. I constantly recommend Barraclough's to all & sundry - including for any hearing concerns as I believe professional service which include caring for their customers is a first and prior concern ~ and Barraclough's have it !. As long as your staff are continually trained to the highest level and treat their clients with care and consideration ~ this doesn't leave any room for improvement ! - Mrs Anne A, Battle

Very nice staff in the branch. Bhavin the optometrist was very pleasant with a very friendly manner even though he was professional throughout. The lady that I dealt with after the eye examination was also very nice & even tried the Lens manufacturer to see if my current glasses were still under guarantee. No pressure to buy anything there and then either. Excellent service thank you very much - Mr Peter J, Seaford

The whole experience went smoothly and all staff were friendly and helpful. I was particularly impressed with the ophthalmologist, Ritz. She was kind enough to give me some contact lenses so I could see to purchase new frames. Thank you, Ritz.

- Mrs Sharon G, Uckfield

The staff were all lovely, it is certainly worth looking after great front of house staff. Victoria is lovely, very efficient, always smiling. The ophthalmologist was refreshing to talk to I enjoyed our general (life today) chats during my check up. Please keep up the great work, thank you. - Mrs Stephanie K, Eastbourne

Roasted Butternut Squash & Lentil Bake with Spinach and Feta

A cosy, nutrient-packed winter dish that nourishes your eyes and ears

Why?

Well, butternut squash is rich in beta-carotene (vitamin A), which helps maintain good night vision and a healthy retina. Spinach provides lutein and zeaxanthin, antioxidants that protect the eyes from light damage. Lentils supply zinc and folate, which support hearing health and help maintain the body's nerve cells. Feta cheese adds vitamin B12, which is important for the nerves connected to the eyes and ears. Olive oil and nuts or seeds (if added) boost healthy fats for vitamin absorption.

Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled and diced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tin (400g) green or brown lentils, drained and rinsed
- 2 large handfuls of fresh spinach
- 100g feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 tbsp chopped walnuts or pumpkin seeds (optional)
- Salt and pepper, to taste



Serves 4

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan).
2. Roast the squash: Toss the diced squash with 1 tbsp olive oil, paprika, cumin, and a little salt and pepper. Roast for 25 minutes until golden and soft.
3. Prepare the base: In a frying pan, heat the remaining olive oil and gently cook the onion and garlic until softened.
4. Combine: Add the lentils and spinach to the pan, stirring until the spinach wilts. Season to taste.
5. Assemble: Place the lentil and spinach mixture in a baking dish, top with the roasted squash, and crumble the feta over the top.
6. Bake: Return to the oven for 10–15 minutes until the feta starts to turn golden.
7. Finish: Sprinkle with chopped walnuts or pumpkin seeds before serving for extra crunch and nutrients.

Serve with a side salad of kale and citrus segments for an extra boost of vitamin C, which helps protect delicate blood vessels in the eyes and ears!



❄️ Your eyes might be feeling the chill! ❄️

Did you know that the winter months, while wonderfully festive, can sometimes be a bit harsh on your eyes? It's not just the dark mornings and icy pavements you need to watch out for! The change in season brings a host of factors that can leave your eyes feeling dry, gritty and generally pretty uncomfortable. At Barracloughs, we want to help you keep your vision sparkling clear, no matter the weather.

Dry air inside: Central heating, radiators, and log fires pump out warm, dry air that significantly reduces the humidity in a room. This causes natural eye moisture (your tears) to evaporate much faster than normal.

The chilly wind outside: When you venture out, the cold, dry air and blustery winds can strip moisture away from your eyes, making them water excessively or feel irritated.



Both of these factors often lead to dry eye, a term used when your eyes don't produce enough tears, or the tears they do produce evaporate too quickly.

Common symptoms include A gritty, scratchy, or burning sensation, or eyes that feel tired, heavy, or strained. Redness, irritation or even excessive watering (your eye's response to the irritation). Blurred vision, especially when reading or using a screen.

It's not all about the dry air! Other winter habits and conditions can impact your eyes:

- We tend to spend more time indoors and in front of screens (TV, computer, phone). This reduces our natural blink rate, which is crucial for spreading tears across the eye.
- The sun sits lower in the sky during winter, and when it reflects off wet roads or (if we're lucky!) snow, the glare can be intense. Always wear UV-protective sunglasses, even on cloudy days, to shield your eyes.
- Cold and flu season means we're more likely to rub our eyes after touching contaminated surfaces, which can lead to bacterial or viral infections like conjunctivitis.

Don't let dry, tired eyes ruin your festive fun! Here are some simple ways to protect your peepers:

1. Drink plenty of water! Hydration is vital for all bodily functions, including tear production.
2. Try placing a bowl of water near a radiator, or using a humidifier, to add moisture back into the air.
3. A fantastic way to soothe and treat dry eye is to use warmth. We're big fans of products like the Peep Club Heated Eye Wand, which uses heat and gentle massage to help release blocked oils (meibum) from your eyelids. These oils are essential for preventing your tears from evaporating too quickly, offering lasting relief.



Ready for clear, comfortable vision? [Read more about dry eye](#) or [book to visit us today!](#)



WIN A HEATED EYE WAND!
See back page!

Oticon Zeal

Advanced Hearing, Utterly Discreet

Just launched, the Oticon Zeal is a discreet, in-the-ear hearing device engineered for those who demand cutting-edge technology without making any compromises. It proudly introduces Oticon's completely brand-new NXT In-the-Ear style, marking a whole new category in hearing innovation. This remarkable device delivers natural, beautifully balanced sound and effortless clarity in a design that is practically invisible.

Packed with intelligent AI sound processing, seamless Bluetooth connectivity, and reliable all-day rechargeable power, the Oticon Zeal perfectly marries powerful performance with exceptional comfort and discretion.

Oticon Zeal marks the arrival of the next generation in discreet hearing aids. It's driven by an advanced Deep Neural Network (DNN) 2.0 and MoreSound Intelligence™ 3.0, meaning it processes sound naturally, just as your brain does. This brilliant tech sharpens speech, harmonises background noise, and guarantees a comfortable listening experience no matter where you are.



From a chat with family to chilling at home or a day out, Oticon Zeal adjusts itself automatically, ensuring you catch life's moments clearly and authentically. It's compact, rechargeable, and virtually invisible when you wear it, blending breakthrough innovation with absolute ease of use. [BOOK YOUR FREE HEARING TEST HERE.](#)

Why Sunglasses are a Winter Essential

The sun may be weaker in winter, but its low angle in the sky, combined with glare reflecting off wet roads, frost, or a dirty windscreen, creates a serious safety hazard. This blinding reflection can dramatically reduce your reaction time and obscure hazards, contributing to thousands of accidents each year. We recommend...

Invest in Polarised lenses. They're specifically engineered to block the horizontal light waves that cause blinding glare from flat, reflective surfaces like the road. They make the view sharper, clearer, and safer. They're a game changer, you'll never look back!

Opt for the Right Tint: For driving, tints like Grey or Brown/Amber are best. They reduce overall brightness and glare without distorting the red, amber or green traffic light colours.

UV Protection is Non-Negotiable: Ensure your sunglasses offer 100% UVA/UVB protection to safeguard your long-term eye health.

Barraclooughs *Competition Time!*

January is the perfect time to focus on eye health, which is why we're celebrating **Dry Eye January!**



We're giving you the chance to win a game-changing piece of dry eye tech: **The Peep Club Heated Eye Wand!** Say goodbye to tired, irritated eyes. This incredible device uses three key technologies to bring soothing, medical-grade relief right to your home:

It delivers a precise, gentle warmth to melt blockages in your Meibomian glands, one of the most common causes of dry eye discomfort. A gentle vibration massage helps to stimulate the

glands and spread the natural oils your eyes need. Last but not least, clinically proven LED light therapy can help soothe inflammation and repair the delicate skin around your eyes.

It's like a spa treatment for your eyes, leaving them feeling refreshed, soothed and comfortable!



How to Enter (it's quick and it's EASY!)

To be entered into the draw to win this amazing eye wand, all you have to do is:

- ✓ Visit any Barraclooughs practice throughout January 2026
- ✓ Purchase ANY dry eye product from us (that includes your favourite eye drops, cleansing blephaclean wipes, soothing eye balm etc.)
- ✓ Complete the short entry card in practice at the time of purchase
- ✓ That's it! Every dry eye purchase is an entry (limited only to one entry per person)

The winner will be picked at random from all entries at the start of February 2026. Don't miss this opportunity to upgrade your dry eye routine!

Please note that this device is not recommended for those with a nickel allergy, or those who have had recent eye surgery.

TERMS & CONDITIONS
Click here

