

Suspended jail term for OAP who attacked wife

An old-age pensioner who stabbed his wife while suffering with depression has been given a suspended prison sentence.

Paul Simmons, 84, of Kimberley Road, Cambridge, pleaded guilty to grievous bodily harm at Cambridge Crown Court last Wednesday (April 19) and was handed a nine-month jail term, suspended for two years. He was also made the subject of a mental health treatment order.

The court heard how Simmons, who was on medication for depression, was at home asleep with his wife Margaret, 80, on October 11 last year when he woke at about 4am saying "there are dangerous people everywhere".

He went off to the bathroom and came back with a pair of pinkish shears, which he used to poke himself in the cheek before poking his wife in the jawline and

then more forcefully in the neck.

Mrs Simmons, who was bleeding heavily, initially hid in the bathroom before trying to call an ambulance. The phone was unplugged so she went to her neighbour for assistance. Simmons followed her with a large kitchen knife and was arrested.

Mrs Simmons was treated at Addenbrooke's Hospital for a 3cm wound to her neck. She made a full recovery.

Detective Inspector Alan Page, from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire major crime unit, said: "This was a very sad case.

"Mr Simmons is a man of impeccable character who was clearly unwell at the time of this offence. I welcome the sentence as it will ensure he continues to get the help he needs."

HMO plan for guest house

The Southampton Guest House in Cambridge could be turned into a house of multiple occupation (HMO) under plans being considered today (Wednesday).

The end-of-terrace property in Elizabeth Way has nine guest bedrooms, which would be used as the rooms under the HMO proposals, providing "high-quality living".

Cambridge City Council's planning committee will consider the application for change of use, which does not include any internal alterations to the building. It does, however, include converting an outbuilding into a cycle store for nine bikes.

The plans have been recommended for approval by city planning officers.



Benjamin Black, 4, with his older brother Ollie, 6

Picture: East Anglia's Children's Hospices

Families get hope and memories to treasure

Gemma Gardner
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When Benjamin Black was born in August 2012, his family knew immediately something was wrong.

Seven months later they were told that Ben, who lives in Trumpington, had Bohring-Opitz syndrome, an extremely rare genetic condition. They were stunned and thought they would never cope.

Mum Amy explained: "It was a massive relief to have a diagnosis and know what we were dealing with, but devastating at the same time.

"I'd looked into the syndrome and knew the life expectancy was only two years, which doctors confirmed.

"We spent the first two years of Ben's life grieving the healthy child we were missing and almost waiting for the dreaded day. Once he turned two and we'd met that stage, our outlook changed and now we look forward to every day and take each one as they come."

Dealing with their anxieties alone

could be a struggle for the family; however, since Ben was a toddler they have been part of the community at East Anglia's Children's Hospices.

"Each gives us hope that there are other people out there you can talk to and people that want to help," said Amy. "Having that support has made it so much more bearable and easier to deal with."

Ben, now four years old and a pupil at Granta School in Linton, has to be fed via a tube day and night. His condition affects fewer than 60 children in the world. He also has global development delay and the development age of a six-month-old.

In addition, he has scoliosis – an abnormal twisting and curvature of the spine – high myopia, which in effect means he is severely shortsighted and has to wear special glasses, sleep apnoea, which causes his throat muscles to relax during sleep and so he needs oxygen and a specialist monitor for his breathing, and craniosynostosis, where bones in the skull fuse together.

Ben also has to wear splints on both legs to help support his weight when in

a standing frame. These complications mean he needs round-the-clock care.

As well as Amy, who is 30, Ben lives in Rialto Close with dad Danny, also 30, and brother Ollie, six, who goes to Trumpington Meadows Primary School.

Each continues to be of huge benefit, with Amy attending carer sessions, Ollie attending a siblings group and the entire family attending memory-making days.

Amy said: "The sibling days have been amazing for Ollie as he's started to struggle with Ben's situation and understanding what's going on. He gets that alone time away from the family home to talk about Ben and the situation, if he wants to."

Amy said the family would treasure their time together at Each, with too many highlights to mention.

■ The Cambridge Independent is raising £87,500 to help families such as the Blacks. The Each Help at Home service will provide volunteers to carry out simple chores, giving families extra time with their child. To donate visit <http://ow.ly/fMJH30a994P>.

University professor fears Brexit brain drain

A University of Cambridge professor has revealed there has been a 14 per cent drop in applications from EU students.

Professor of European law Catherine Barnard told an education select committee of MPs that her university had seen

a slump in applications from EU students and warned that it could mean the loss of talented mathematicians from eastern Europe who would take their skills elsewhere.

She said: "We have seen a 14 per cent reduction in the number

of applications from the EU at undergraduate level, although the number of postgraduate level has gone up."

MPs said that university staff from the EU should have a right to stay and work in the UK after Brexit.

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Jonathan Tewson



Joseph Christopher finishes in 2h 41m
Picture: Paul Sanwell



Sucre Gorge, aka Jean-Baptiste Bourdu, who was running for Act

Conquering the mighty MARATHON

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Among the record 40,382 runners who stood on the Virgin Money London Marathon start line in Greenwich on Sunday, you would have found dozens of Cambridge men and women – and a flamingo – intent on making it to the end of the 26.2-mile course.

And while some were looking to set new personal bests, others were satisfied with reaching the finish line, collecting their medal and adding up all the money they had raised for some fantastic charities at home and abroad.

One of those good causes was Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust (Act), which had 14 runners.

Among those raising money to benefit both the Rosie maternity and Addenbrooke's hospitals was **Tim Glenn** (4h 23m), acting deputy director of finance at

Addenbrooke's, who ran for the neonatal intensive care unit, following the care his twin daughters received when they were born prematurely at 28 weeks.

Flamingo character 'Sucre-Gorge' (**Jean-Baptiste Bourdu**) set out to keep hold of his Guinness World Record of 'fastest 3D bird', whilst **Jess Plummer** (4h 15m) was supporting Act's global health partnership programme, Addenbrooke's Abroad.

The Royston Runners were also on hand once again to cheer on club member **Spence Calvert** (4h 37m) and all of Act's runners as they roared encouragement along the route.

Businessmen **Tony Murdock** (3h 42m) and **Jonathan Tewson** (4h 44m) have raised more than £4,500 for World Child Cancer, which supports eight paediatric oncology programmes in Ghana, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Malawi, Myanmar and the Philippines.

Jonathan, regional partnership manager at The Jockey Club, trained with experienced runner Tony, who is general manager at Quay Mill Hotel & Spa.

Jonathan said: "It's a real challenge, something that you can set your sights for, and just successfully finishing the marathon is hugely rewarding, but really it's about how much money we can raise for charity, and I've been overwhelmed by people's generosity."

Tony's daughter, Drew, did her bit to raise money for her dad's marathon by holding a cake sale with her friend Breanna Keown. The pair raised £100.

East Anglia's Children's Hospices (Each) was also well represented among the charity marathon runners, including **John Menzies** (4h 46m), who works for Abbey College.

John's run was to add to the £4,000 staff and students have

raised for Each over the last year. John lives in Teversham with partner Laura and their one-year-old daughter Amy Grace. They are expecting a second child in July.

He said: "Having a young daughter and another one on the way has really put me in a position to reflect on the situation that the families the charity supports must find themselves in, so I'm happy to do anything I can to help."

Another Each runner was **Sarah Grosvenor** (5h 13m) from Milton.

The area's running clubs also had plenty of members taking part in the marathon with **Ben Shearer** of Cambridge Harriers finishing an impressive 25th overall in a time of 2h 25m 14s.

Act has secured six places for next year's London Marathon and applications are being taken now – the deadline is May 8. Find out more online at act4addenbrookes.org.uk/LondonMarathon2018.



Norman Shreeve
2h 37m Picture: Paul Sanwell



John Menzies



Tony Murdock



Daniel Hurst (2h 49m)
Picture: Paul Sanwell