

Cambourne & District u3a

u3a
learn, laugh, live

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026 Issue 85

In memoriam

Robert with a bat
Robert in a hat
Robert with a snooker cue
Robert - Yorkshire, through and through
Robert - family man
Robert - handyman
Robert - cheerful chappie
Robert - made us smile
And Robert made us happy.



Robert Thompson (second left) was a member of the Darts and Pool group as well as the Table Tennis group. He brought enthusiasm, positivity and fun to each group. We all enjoyed his company.

Lucy Purvey

FOREWORD

Just a few words from your new Newsletter Editor. As you know I have taken over from Peter Cornwell and am producing this first letter in sunny April ready for the May edition. I live in the lovely village of Elsworth where I have been for the last few years after returning from about 18 years living in the Sierra Nevada of Spain. My passions are creating books for family, friends and others, researching many aspects of history, most things sporting, nature and wild places, finding good coffee shops and, of course, my family. Now you know a bit about me, it's time to find out a bit about you! As I said in my email to Members, this Newsletter succeeds or fails by Members input. So:

Please send to me articles about your interests, passions and hobbies. Share with us. Keep the Newsletter relevant and interesting. I have written 3 articles on life in Spain - my next contribution will probably be about exploration in the far east of Turkey. Now it's your turn, so get out that keyboard and let the keys hum! Thanks in anticipation.

Paul Middleton



*A small leaved lime tree
telling us that spring has at last sprung*

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

At our April meeting we welcomed a new member Jeanne Van Antwerpen, and look forward to seeing her again at our future meetings.

We had set the discussion subject of “Movement”: how does the artist create a sense of movement in their work; perhaps also, what motifs could have been used, and what effect has been produced.

Renoir - Un Coup de Vent (The Gust of Wind 1872, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge): it has been suggested that Renoir's ambition was to capture the elusive nature of air itself, an invisible force rendered perceptible through his loose brushstrokes. In addition, the blurriness of his technique could be likened to a film camera capturing the effects of the wind on the landscape with a slow shutter speed.



William Morris - the Cray Floral wallpaper: the stems of the plants illustrate the organic rhythm and botanical craftsmanship of traditional Arts and Crafts design, whilst also representing the flowing tributaries of the upper reaches of his beloved River Thames near Kelmscott Manor, Oxfordshire.



Rosa Bonheur - The Horse Fair (1852-55, The Metropolitan Collection, New York & National Gallery, London): in her renowned oil-on-canvas painting, Bonheur depicts a bustling, chaotic horse market on the Boulevard de l'Hopital, Paris. Celebrated for its dramatic, dynamic scene of powerful Percheron horses with detailed realism.



Capturing the movement of horses has proven difficult to be realistic as well as creating that sense of power and movement:

George Stubbs - Whistlejacket (1762, National Gallery, London). Principally a self-taught artist, Stubbs spent 18 months in a Lincolnshire farmhouse dissecting the cadavers of dead horses to better understand their physiology.



Chiharu Shiota - The Moment the Snow Melts (2025, MUDEC, Milan): Shiota is a performing and installation Japanese artist, known for her large-scale installations of connecting threads which engulf everyday objects. The threads can symbolise movement and connections with the world around us.



SPEAKERS FOR 2026/2027

<i>DATE</i>	<i>SPEAKER</i>	<i>SUBJECT</i>
15-May-26	Sue Baker	History of Belly Dance through costumes
19-Jun-26	Suzie Harrison	The Cambridge Military Cemetery
17-Jul-26	Damien O'Dell	Chicksands Priory - England's Most Haunted House
<i>SUMMER HOLIDAY - NO MEETING</i>		
18-Sep-26	Jenny Malin	Behind the scenes at the BBC Broadcasting House
16-Oct-26	Fiona Rose	Uncompromising genius - The Life and Work of Frank Lloyd Wright
20-Nov-26	Hemant Jariwala	Flowers through my Viewfinder
18-Dec-26	<i>CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION TBA</i>	
<i>2027</i>		
15-Jan-27	Anne Lawrence	Anti-Terrorism
19-Feb-27		
19-Mar-27		
16-Apr-27	Bruce Keith	Bridgecaples
21-May-27		
18-Jun-27		
16-Jul-27		
<p>All meetings are held on the third Friday of each month starting at 1030 with tea and coffee being served. The talks start at 11.00 and usually finish at 11.45 - 12.00</p>		



15th May at 11.00 am
 The Hub Community Centre
 Talk on
THE HISTORY OF BELLY DANCE THROUGH COSTUMES
 By Sue Baker



Sue will be covering some of the very extensive history of Egyptian Belly dance, illustrating with costumes, music and dance demonstration. At the end of the talk there will be an



opportunity to learn some of the technique and have a dance. (Risk assessment is in place.)

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Sue was awarded her [JWAAD](#) Teaching Diploma in 2014. The

JWAAD Teaching Diploma is accredited by the [ONE AWARDS](#). As part of her qualification, Sue attained a distinction in her background knowledge and professional awareness.



Possible New Group

Hello All,

Someone has very kindly volunteered to lead a non tuition and social Watercolour Painting Group, meeting once or twice a month.

Please reply to this email if you are interested and I will pass on your details. I'm sure numbers will be limited so please reply a.s.a.p.

Look forward to hearing from you. Asking for anyone interested to email me using u3a.membership@cambourne.org.

Jan Nuttycombe

Membership Secretary
Cambourne and District u3a

May Points to ponder

Answers at end of Newsletter

- 1 What was the first video uploaded to YouTube?
- 2 'Bell the cat' is an expression in English. What does it mean?
- 3 What percentage of bones in the human skeleton are in the hands and feet?
- 4 In which century were electric cars first produced?
- 5 True or false. Adolphe Sax invented the saxophone.
- 6 What is the study of flags called?
- 7 What top speed can be achieved by Japanese Maglev trains?
- 8 Who said: 'It is not the strongest who survive, it is those most responsive to change'.
- 9 Is this sentence grammatically correct? "Between you and I, I believe John and Mary are getting married".
- 10 Which came first - expressionism or romanticism?

Thanks to Lucy, Brian and Derek for this great idea!

BOOK GROUP

Our U3A Cambourne book group first came together nearly 4 years ago. That time has flown; it really doesn't feel that long but it surely must be as we have celebrated three Christmas get togethers already. We are not a large group but we are a tight group. However not so tight we are inflexible, exclusive or closed off to others and we aim to be welcoming. We lost one member who moved away but another joined us early this year who had recently moved to Cambourne. She is, already, "one of us". We are a mix on the continuum from introvert to extrovert but it works and we are careful to make sure we all get to have our say.

We didn't know each other when we first met up to start the group but we had 2 things in common. We each had a love of reading. We also each wanted to join a book group but all the other U3A Cambourne book groups were full up and had waiting lists. So we simply started a new one. We didn't know it then but we also had in common that we value social generosity.

If we walked into a Waterstones book store, at the same time, we each would choose a different book off the shelf to feed our imagination for sure. But difference is healthy. We take it in turns to choose a book and thus have been presented with new genres and authors we would never have picked on our own. That definitely helps break out from reading ruts to explore new and exciting narratives. Not every time however - there is the odd occasion when it's quite permissible to say- "*I didn't like the book and here are the reasons why....*". Full disclosure, I was looking forward to reading "*Labyrinth*" by Kate Mosse, a 694 page epic, but despite slogging away, hoping it would get better, it didn't speak to me.

What a variety of books we have covered over the years. From classics such as "*To Kill a Mocking Bird*" by Harper Lee, (a story of racial injustice, morality and lost innocence told through a child's eyes) through to "*The Five: The untold Lives of the Women killed by Jack The Ripper*", by Hallie Rubenhold, (a historical, deeply researched, non-fiction book that shifts focus from the murderer to his five victims and dismantles the myth that all the victims were prostitutes) to "*Scandalous Women*" by Gill Paul, a fiction novel following the 1960s rise of Jackie Collins and Jacqueline Susan, that looked at sexism in publishing, the price of fame and a juicy story line. Many, many more featured in between and the perennial question, is it better to read the book before seeing the film or vice versa, seems to have concluded that reading the book first is best, most of the time.

We get to hear about each other's different take on the book and perceptions of the characters and their motivations.

In all honesty though the book is usually the middle part of one of the nicest sandwiches. You see we've built connection and friendship bonds. We kick off with a catch up of events over the past month. As life can be relied upon to present with ups and downs, loss and beginnings, that may include fun and

laughter or the reaching out of support, nurturing or reassurance. We then remind ourselves to get down to business and discuss the book. I'm always keen to hear why that person chose their particular book and a bit about the author to set the scene. That leads us into a merry dance of discussion, different viewpoints and sharing life experiences in relation to some of the key themes in the book, until we've entirely forgotten about the book and find ourselves back in friendship land. We have all concluded that we are so relieved and grateful we were born as working class females, not landed gentry for sure, in the middle part of the 20th century and not before.

We don't have a leader as such- we have shaped ourselves collaboratively. We still are different personalities yet still have the same things in common; we each enjoy being a member of a book club and each enjoy reading books. I could not imagine writing this piece for the newsletter however without including contributions from us all. So, Dear Reader, from us to you.....

"A great job of describing our little family. I would join if I was looking for a book club"

"I am honoured to be "one of us". The group is really great!

"It is so true but made me a bit emotional and grateful for all the lovely times we have shared with each other. I myself feel enriched not only by the books but having met lovely friends who are always happy to share good news, support when needed and just be there. My life would be less rich without the group"

"As the newest member I would just like to add- you made me feel welcome immediately! Words can not describe what this meant to me and how it helped me overcome a very difficult period in my life"

"It's a lovely worded piece which perfectly reflects our brilliant book club and friendships. Additionally, you have all supported me through the many challenges and unexpected curve balls retirement has thrown at me. I'm so glad this was the bookclub I joined".

Thank you Cambourne U3A for bringing us together.

Janet Leonard

THEATRE GROUP

There are currently 22 members of the group. We have been delighted to be able to enjoy performances at the newly refurbished Cambridge Arts Theatre, we certainly missed it while it was closed but it has proved worth the wait as we now enjoy the new decor and seating. A couple of us recently really enjoyed the production of *Midsummer Murders*, it was very entertaining with really good performances from the cast and it was clear that it was greatly enjoyed by the whole audience. We are now looking forward to *Death on the Nile* this week, which will hopefully keep us engaged in the plot. The group are due to meet on the 4th June at the Belfry to discuss the upcoming performances and which we are hoping to see.

Sandra Davies

CLASSICAL MUSIC GROUP

We're just two sessions into a series of meetings which are exploring the development of the symphony from about 1750 to the middle of the 20th century. So far we have looked at the beginnings of the symphony through the music of Haydn (known as "*the father of the symphony*") and Mozart in the classical era, and are now moving on to the symphonies of Beethoven which take us into the romantic era and move the symphony on to a new level. In future I plan to include Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Mahler, Tchaikovski, possibly Elgar and Vaughn Williams, and definitely Shostakovitch in the series.

The meetings are well supported by enthusiastic members and we are most grateful to Jo Darlington, who hosts the meetings, for welcoming us into her home every fortnight.

John Thornton

TABLE TENNIS GROUP

The table tennis group meets at Everyone Active in Cambourne on alternate Mondays. If there is enough interest, either badminton or pickleball can be added. Of course we play to win but it is also about meeting friends, having a chat and having fun. If you wish to join please contact me and once you are added to the list, you will receive alerts about dates and times. Please note that there is a small charge for the hire of the court. I look forward to seeing you there.

Lucy Purvey



MY FIRST ADVENTURE

Looking at this week's photos of my 6 year old twin grandchildren, making early morning paths through an overgrown nispera and avocado plantation deep in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, and their comment that this was '*better than telly*', made me think about the whole concept of what makes a (Real) Adventure.

For the children it was the unfamiliarity of the experience, the thrill of exploring the completely unknown and the feeling that they were 'making' the adventure themselves.

I remember that feeling well. It started a train of thought which has ambled through my brain during the last 24 hours. What about my adventures? My Real adventures?

I have decided that my first came in 1956. Sure, I had already had loads of minor adventures in the Cubs and the Scouts. Travelling, camping, tramping (that's a fine old word!), getting lost, muddy, wet and very happy. But my first started in a very strange way.

At the age of 15 I was living with my grandfather, and on Saturday mornings after breakfast I always asked him if he wanted any shopping. One such day he asked me to buy a tin of Erinmore tobacco from Mortimer the Tobacconist on the way home from school. (Yes school was until 12 noon in those days!).

Old Man Mortimer was a great character – a tobacco stained moustache above a wide grin, sparkling eyes below a minimal comb-over hairstyle. He always chatted to his customers, young and old. But on that day he was extra excited and said to me that he had just got in a new kit and would I like to have a quick look? I nodded, as I knew what he meant. Mortimer also sold boats. Yes boats. From the corner of his tobacco shop.

He had just received a new model from Percy Blandford called the PBK2 – standing for 2 seater kayak. Percy Blandford, was a legendary designer and builder of boats and canoes for home building, who died in early 2014, aged 101. He wrote over 100 books and 4,000 articles on a diverse range of topics, from blacksmithing to kayak building.

An adventure had just been born.

I spent every summer holiday with my cousins who were living in Hitchin at the time. My cousin Mikey and I talked on the phone that weekend and decided that we had to somehow build a canoe and go on an adventure of our own making. Mikey would talk to my uncle and aunt and I would talk to my mum. Somehow it worked. I cannot now remember how, but we bought the kit, and over many weekends built this 2-seater kayak in Uncle's garage. We did it properly and then sat down to plan the adventure.

We decided to set off from Bedford and canoe down the Ouse as far as we could. We took our own camping gear, a primus stove and minimal food and a waterways map. Maybe one change of clothes.

It was a real adventure with no plans except finding village shops to buy bacon and eggs, corned beef and mash, bottles of corona, chocolate, fruit and water. Glorious. At one with nature. Camping on the banks. Carrying the boat around locks. Exploring the villages on the way.

From Bedford to St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives, Ely, Littleport, Downham Market and Denver Sluice. Then back through Ely, up the Cam to Waterbeach and finally Fen Ditton.

During my Covid walks I retraced the last steps of that adventure - the final camping field where Mikey climbed the large poplar tree, the walk up to the King's Head where I had my first illegal pint of cider and sniffing the air, I swear I could still breathe in the lingering smell of slightly burnt corned beef hash.

Now that's what I call a real adventure - a life-long bond with a cousin, a life-long love of nature and a life-long love of the River Great Ouse.

What was your First Adventure?

Paul Middleton

RISK ASSESSMENTS

DON'T FORGET – IF YOU ARE PLANNING AN EVENT, ORGANISING AN ACTIVITY OR A TRIP OUT, THEN A RISK ASSESSMENT MUST BE UNDERTAKEN BEFOREHAND

THE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM CAN BE FOUND ON OUR U3A WEBSITE [HERE](#) ALONG WITH [FAQS](#) TO ASSIST YOU

ON COMPLETION OF THE FORM, PLEASE SEND TO:

U3A.SECRETARY@CAMBOURNE.ORG

May Points to ponder

Answers

- 1 'Me at the zoo'. It was uploaded by co-founder, Jawed Kerim in April 2005
- 2 it means - to take on a dangerous task on behalf of a group. It comes from an Aesop's fable where a mouse is tasked with hanging a bell around a cat's neck to warn of its approach
- 3 It's 51 per cent. Hands and feet contain 106 of the 206 total number of bones in the body.
- 4 The 19th century
- 5 True
- 6 Vexillology
- 7 Top speed of 375mph
- 8 Darwin
- 9 The correct grammar is - Between you and me. Prepositions are followed by the accusative form.
- 10 Romanticism was the late 18th century and expressionism began around 1905