



**CAM, DURSLEY & DISTRICT** u3a  
The Bulletin February 2022

**COMING UP SOON**  
Snowdrops at Colesbourne  
Bells in Loughborough  
Historic Hereford  
Morgan Motors Malvern  
plus walking, cycling, boules  
and all your regular local talks  
and activities

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## Branch News

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Hi everyone, welcome to the first edition of our Bulletin for 2022. Happy New Year to you all. Our Chair Terry has already thanked each of you for your support and involvement with our activities throughout the past, challenging twelve months and I join him in wishing you all a very successful and fulfilling time ahead.

As I write this, many covid restrictions have been lifted. I know however many of us will remain cautious. Please be assured that your Committee and the Group Leaders will follow all relevant guidance when planning our ongoing programme.

We held our monthly branch meeting on 19th January in Dursley Methodist Church, an interesting and informative talk on Woodchester Mansion by Liz Davenport. It was good to see that so many of you felt confident enough to attend. The next talk, Robin Burton's "Stories of Britain in Pictures and Song" will be on 17th February. There might be a singalong, and post-presentation coffee and chat should be back.

As the days begin to lengthen, there will be more trips out. The Gardening Group kicks us off with a visit to Colesbourne on 8th February for a private guided tour followed by tea and cakes. I went a few years ago and took the front page photo, so I know we could be in for a real treat. The cake was good too! There may be a few places left, contact Danielle Ellis to check.

Carol Tipper's 'Historic Places' group is off by coach to Hereford on 4th March. You can either go it alone in the city or join group tours of the Black and White House, the Cathedral and the Cider Museum. Carol will give you more information, including the all important details of how to pay.

Science and Engineering seem to specialise in away days. There are still a few places for a visit to the John Taylor Bell Foundry, Loughborough, on 24th February. It's one of the two working foundries left in the country.

There'll be a coach, and Donald Gibson will do a round-robin email soon with prices. My visit to Morgan Motors Malvern is booked for 24th March. This one's self-drive, and there are one or two places left. Get in touch if you'd like to join us, So many of you were interested in the Haresfield Energy from Waste Plant that Graham Ellis has booked more slots for later in the year. Look at the Events page of our web site for details and more on other planned trips by all our interest groups..

I mustn't neglect the Arts. Rosemary Canning has some great concerts booked, including the Russian State Ballet in Bristol, the Russian State Opera in Malvern, Classics and Bond Themes in Cheltenham, the Chepstow Castle Ukulele Band and much, much more. Contact her for dates and prices.

Your Committee has been reviewing our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Some members and group leaders recently joined a Zoom seminar run by the national Committee. Pam Davis is coordinating feedback and preparing an action plan.



Finally, while spring is hopefully on the way, it is still winter, and I'm grateful to Richard Barlow for this evocative image from near Wotton-under-Edge. Take care everyone.

Brian Gornall, Editor: *The Bulletin*

## Group News

### Boules

Boules-21 has morphed into Boules-22, reports leader Luke Wilson. "It's not just a French thing, but a good outside fun activity between consenting adults on Dursley Recreation Field, followed by a consoling cup of coffee at the pub behind the cricket pavilion. We play Boules, roughly following the correct rules, up to 3 sets with a set won by the first team to get to 13 points. The rules (Cam & Dursley u3a rules) are on our website, but to my knowledge nobody has read them. A vague understanding of them hardly helps, except to spice up any disputes.

"We started Boules-21 with 22 teams, two to a team, competing for the *Boules Championship World Cup*, won by Team Swanwick. A second competition *The Plate*, was won by Team Cary. The final competition *The Saucer*, unfortunately due to covid, was a shootout between Team Ewens, Team Pascoe and Team Francis. While Boules-21 was a series of knockout cups spread out over several months, Boules-22 will feature several mini leagues with the winners going into a short knock out phase. At present, with drop outs and add ins, I have 24 teams and so there is plenty of room for any new aspiring teams who want to show how Boules ought to/can be played. If you can't form a team then I will pair you with another member to form a wonder team. Just send me (Luke Wilson, Boules-22 Team Leader) a note."

### Walking

Alan Keith reports that ten members met at 10.30 on a rather dull and overcast 6th January at the main public car park on Stinchcombe Hill. They just managed to do the full three mile circuit of the top of Stinchcombe Hill, enjoying excellent views of the Severn Vale and the Cotswolds, before the rain set in.



The plan to head to the golf club for lunch was unfortunately frustrated by the fact that the kitchen was closed for refurbishment. The next walk will be on Thursday 3rd February at 10.30.

## Craft and Textiles

Pauline Chidlaw tells us that the Craft and Textile Group have been meeting on Zoom throughout the pandemic and more recently for informal outdoor gatherings over coffee. They have been so pleased to have felt able to meet in person since and to be able to do something practical and creative together. They were even more pleased that Carol Barton came along to the November meeting to show them how to make lino prints. Carol was planned to come just as the first lockdown hit, so they have been waiting a long time for this. They all enjoyed learning a new technique or being reminded of something they had not tried for some years and were very grateful to Carol for sharing her skills with them. Even better, Carol came back the next month so they had the opportunity to make more prints.



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## Group Reports

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### Cycling

The Cycling group restarted last November. “Not the best timing with the days getting shorter and colder but it’s important to get out and get some exercise especially during the winter” reports group leader Paul Lewington. The group meets most weeks on Thursday mornings around 10:30 at various locations. They use WhatsApp and email to arrange leaders, dates/times, starting points and routes – all very democratic. To date, they have been doing rides of around 20 miles, in small groups, generally on the quieter lanes and without too many hills. There were coffee stops until the Omicron wave hit. Stops will resume when it seems safe to do so.



*Berkeley ... All bikes welcome whatever their age, colour and frame shape.*

Members have a mix of conventional road/touring/hybrid bikes and eBikes, with a broad mix of cycling experience and come from anywhere between Eastington and Wotton. “We have a good balance of sexes. We are still experimenting with ride format and in future when the weather improves some rides will be longer and/or hillier and we will choose starting points further afield that may require transporting the bikes (lifts may be possible for those with eBikes).” Let Paul know through the Blue Bird if you would like to join and he will add you to the WhatsApp and email group so you will know where and when two start each week.

## Art Appreciation

The Art Appreciation Group, reports Rita Dee, restarted following the Christmas and New Year break on Wednesday 12 January, with a slide presentation on double portraits. “Other recent topics include images of autumn, the engravings of Piranesi, the life and art of Paul Gauguin, paintings depicting the Nativity and an illustrated talk on the Great Exhibition of 1851” says Rita.



“So far this year we can look forward to a presentation on Henri Matisse by visiting speaker Brian Etheridge and a visit to Grayson Perry’s curated exhibition at Bristol Museum. Hopefully we may be able to manage a few more visits to local exhibitions. None of us are experts, just a group of people who enjoy looking at and discussing art-related topics. New members are always welcome to join at any time with meetings on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month in Dursley Methodist Church. We collect £2 per session to cover room hire costs.”

## Science and Engineering - CSI Gloucestershire



Patricia Main reports on the Group’s annual open meeting, held on 25th November, when Gloucestershire Constabulary’s Forensic Coordinator Martin Coffe gave a fascinating presentation ‘*Scenes of Crime - The Science Behind Investigations*’. Martin is not a police officer but he oversees the whole of a forensic investigation, deciding which experts need to be pulled in and how to manage the Scene of Crime Officers (SOCO) staff in his team.

Every contact leaves a trace. In other words, any criminal is almost certain to leave some trace of his or her presence and it is this trace that the forensic investigator needs to find. This may be through fingerprints, footwear marks, DNA, or the more obvious CCTV or fibres from clothing.

SOCO are garbed in the white body suits familiar to most people from TV crime dramas. This is to avoid the central tenet of their trade and leave their own traces, thus contaminating the crime scene. They take photos of every possible angle and pick up

possible evidence. At this stage in an investigation, it is unlikely that they will know precisely what is or isn't relevant to the crime so they don't take chances and collect everything. The material collected undergoes Forensic Analysis, including dealing with the more obvious things like fingerprints, DNA, footwear marks. Fingerprints can be developed chemically from less obvious sources, a more invasive process. The Digital Forensic Unit gets evidence from mobiles, computers and any other technological gadget. The third unit, Central Forensic Subs, oversees costs and does cost-benefit analysis to check if a process can be justified.

Martin went on to describe the history and science of fingerprinting. Interestingly, prints can't be recovered from most surfaces in car interiors. Footprints are more important now criminals are aware of how to avoid leaving fingerprints or DNA. Because they walk on the crime scene, police will seize the shoes of any suspect, including any that may be at his or her home. They take impressions of the shoes recording the pattern of the soles. As with fingerprints, there are good and bad surfaces for recording prints. Good surfaces are tiled floors, laminate flooring, UPVC sills, mud and sand; bad ones include frosty lawns, carpets and public areas where many prints are likely to have built up over time. A SOCO team has to be very careful not to add their own prints to a scene as not all are immediately visible to the naked eye and only appear when treated with chemicals or photographed.

Glass breaks in a very precise way and, as a result, the person breaking it will invariably have minute shards on their person. These can be matched to the glass that was struck. Clothing inevitably leaves traces on anything it touches, which can be used to place individuals at a crime scene. Paint is the same and this type of evidence is used when investigating car crashes. Even a tool used in the crime has individual marks on it which will be transferred to the surface used. These striations can be used as evidence linking a tool found away from a crime scene to the scene itself. Coffe cited the example of a house break-in which took place in 2009. By linking the evidence left on a crowbar to a specific man and linking the car seen leaving the house to one of his friends a chain of evidence was created which resulted in the successful prosecution of two men.

## Natural History

The Group enjoyed a lecture on 13th January by Gordon McGlone, a well known local naturalist. He is a former chief executive of the Gloucestershire Naturalist's Trust and an academic at Bath University. His lecture '*Bees, Birds, Butterflies and Bats*' was an extensive overview of the wildlife that can be seen locally, particularly along the River Cam at the back of Gordon's garden. He went on to discuss all the things that we can do to encourage wildlife in our own gardens. This led on to a more wide ranging discussion about land use, agricultural and the re-wilding of the landscape. There was intense interest and a lively debate, particularly about re-wilding.

## Wine Appreciation

*Claire Haines sends us this account of a memorable evening out.*

Our first gathering of the year took place on 10th January and was a very special occasion – a taxi was needed to get to our destination! Sean lives far, far away in Wortley and although we had walked to his house last summer, we felt that a slippy sliding traipse

across muddy fields in the dark with a glass or two of wine taken would be a step too far – literally.

Sean planned an evening of fortified wines for us to sample, so we settled round his cosy log burner with a glass of Croft original sherry. Most of us had not had a sherry for a long time and had forgotten how delicious its light honeyed sweetness was. All sounds very “Homes & Gardens” so far! We then moved into the dining room where a veritable banquet was laid out for us, comprising platters of charcuterie, oven roasted stuffed peppers and spicy olives. Our accompanying wine was Madeira which was a delightful twinning, blending the rich hints of vanilla and brandy in the wine with the robust flavours of the meats. More prose worthy of Home & Gardens

Our next drink to sample was Calvados, an apple brandy produced in northern France. This was served with a delicious chocolate torte and home made ice cream. By now conversation was getting pretty loud, as well as varied. I think coronavirus was mentioned briefly in passing, otherwise we focussed on more important matters such as holidays, relationships, golf and such like. Definitely a move away from Home & Gardens. I should add that the evening was enlivened by Sean asking us to send in our Desert Island discs beforehand. These were played while we ate our dessert and cheese, with port. We had to guess who chose which piece of music, and why. A lot of us had gone for music that we plan to have at our funerals – a telling pointer to the age of the group! A lot was 60s music with Elvis and Jailhouse Rock played loudly and featuring Sean and Jacky attempting a jive. Yes, that track will be at my funeral but maybe not with the jiving. I wouldn't mind if it was! The evening rounded off with two choices of whisky to choose from: Jura Journey or Cotswold Single Malt.

Even more special was the tableware: this was made by Sean in his kiln. I think the only thing he didn't make were the glasses that we were drinking from. It was a splendid evening to kick off events in 2022.

## Bookworms

Sue Dunn and the Bookworm group met on 17th January. Says Sue “Everyone was able to attend, and we had a most enjoyable morning.

“We had been reading *Piranesi* by Susanna Clark. This is a new book, and won the Women's Prize for Fiction 2021. It really depends on what sort of fiction you like, and we were somewhat ambivalent about it. Piranesi has no memory of how he came to be living in a labyrinth of many halls and thousands of statues, surrounded by the sea and governed by the tides. He's a likeable, intelligent chap who writes in his diary every day and lives a very simple life. The only other person in with him is ‘the Other’ whom he meets twice a week. More characters were introduced later, but it did become a bit confusing. The book is slow to develop the story, and does become more interesting at the end, but most of us were somewhat baffled by what it all meant. There were no explanations, and there was obviously a deeper meaning. We discussed this at length, but came to no definite conclusions.

I hesitate to describe the story as it's a spoiler for anyone who wants to read the book. If you enjoy fantasy, it may be the book for you!”

## Travel Group - *The Baltic with the Wettons, Part Three.*

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, was the final port of call in the Wetton's Baltic trilogy, writes *Myrtle Morton-Cox*.



It's one of the few places in Europe where the aura of 14th and 15th century survives intact. The Old Town is a delightful jumble; medieval walls, turrets, spires and winding cobbled streets. The 14th century Town Hall, the only surviving Gothic Town Hall in Northern Europe, is surrounded by rich merchants' houses. These were usually three or four storeys high with the upper level being used for storage. Panoramic views of the Old Town, with a fascinating mix of architectural styles, were afforded from the Tower.

The central feature of the Old Town was the Square, a hub of activity which gave ample opportunities to sit out under parasols and watch the world go by whilst partaking of a meal or drink. Narrow streets and cobbled alleyways led to a viewpoint from which could be seen the city walls and watch towers with the Baltic sea in the distance. Also offered en-route was the opportunity to purchase souvenirs including photos and original paintings. A square tower was known as the Virgin's Tower, possibly because it was reputed to have been a prison for medieval prostitutes. Brian and Christine found the Russian Orthodox Alexander Nevskiy Cathedral to be the most striking building.

Tallinn is a beautiful city, full of atmosphere with many attractive churches including the Lutheran Toomkirk (or Dome Church), St Olaf's Cathedral (named after the 11th century King Olaf of Norway) and the Niguliste Church (named after St Nicholas) which is now an Art Gallery and Concert Hall. Most of the Churches were floodlit at night and some contained valuable medieval paintings. Tallinn also has its Palaces. The Kadriog Palace on the outskirts of the city is now the home of the President of Estonia.

Europe's worst peacetime tragedy was the sinking of the Estonian Ferry in September 1994. A three metre long black marble slab was carved with the names of all 852 victims. A very different memorial, a monstrosity overlooking the Baltic Sea, is to Russian soldiers lost during the so-called liberation of Estonia by the Red Army from the Germans in 1944. This is bitterly resented by many Estonians. A very significant symbol of Estonia's struggle for independence is the Song Bowl where the National Song Festival is held every 4 years. The main covered stage area will hold a massed Choir of 30,000 voices. The singing of these national songs, originally banned by the Soviets but later relaxed, enabled the Estonians to keep their own identity and culture alive and, eventually, gain independence in 1991. Little wonder it was called the singing revolution!



Estonia, generally, has welcomed the free market economy and Tallinn has many modern buildings. Not surprisingly most of them are banks and one of them is said to be the most expensive new building in Tallinn!

Our next meeting: Dursley Methodist Church on Thursday 10th February at 10.15 for 10.30, when Alan Keith will talk about the USA. Potential new members please e-mail [moretoncoxm@gmail.com](mailto:moretoncoxm@gmail.com)

## Coming Up

Date	Group	Event
Tues 8 Feb 11.00	Gardening	Visit to Colesbourne Snowdrops Garden Few places remaining - contact Danielle Ellis
Wed 9 Feb 2.30	Gardening	Garden Design Zoom talk
Thurs 17 Feb from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church "Stories of Britain in Pictures and Song" by Robin Burton
Thurs 24 Feb All Day	Science and Engineering	Tour of John Taylor Bell Foundry Loughborough More details from Duncan Gibson
Fri 4 March All Day	Historic Places	A trip to Hereford The Block and White House, Cathedral, Cider Museum
Thurs 17 March from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church Patrick Marks on "A Trip to The Wash by Narrowboat"
Thurs 24 March All day	Science and Engineering	Morgan Motor Co Factory Tour More details from Brian Gornall
Fri 1 April All Day	Historic Places	Visit Stanway House, Gardens, Mill and Fountain
Thurs 21 April from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church 'Those were the Days, the Sixties" by David and Virginia Adsetts
Thurs 28 April All Day	Science and Engineering	The Museum of Bath at Work and the Herschel Museum of Astronomy Details from Paul Sheppard

**Full details of all these events, and lots more planned for 2022 are on our website.**

**Use the Bluebird to send leaders an email.**

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