

# CAM, DURSLEY & DISTRICT u3a

## Branch News

### JOHN MORTON



We are sad to lose John Morton, who died recently and was one of the earliest members of our branch. A former British Airways pilot, widower John moved from the Gatwick area in 2013, just before the launch of u3a in our area, to be with his family in Cam. John joined the Committee, becoming our second Membership Secretary, and made a huge contribution to its early development. He also edited the Bulletin for some years.

Many groups benefitted from his many enthusiasms. He ran the first French group, and was also a member of Geology, Historic Places, Members on their Own (MOTO), Theatre, Science and Engineering, and memorably, says Valerie Moores, Wine Appreciation. She shared the happy photo of John and recalls “We

always enjoyed the wine group meetings and when John was our host it was an educational experience. I particularly remember one of the meetings where his focus was on white wines from around the world made from German grapes. He was a caring host who took a great deal of trouble over the wines and the accompanying food.”

Valerie, having shared experiences of many of the places John had flown to during his flying career, was particularly interested in the talk he gave to the Science & Engineering group. He provided a very entertaining insight into some of his experiences over 37 years as a pilot, as well as some of the detailed technicalities involved. Carol Tipper, Historic Places group organiser, also has fond memories of John. “He had a wicked sense of humour and a liking for cream teas,” she said. “I remember when the group visited Beaulieu that I was able to reassure him he could have them at any time, all day!”

John was also responsible for some great branch social events. He organised a fiendish car treasure hunt around the district and our first annual group outing, a particularly social canal trip from Saul Junction.

Outside of u3a, John had many interests, particularly a long-standing commitment to the Scouting Movement, stepping down recently but retaining the significant responsibility for producing the Scouts’ monthly 36-page magazine for the whole of Gloucestershire.

We extend our sincere condolences to his family on their loss and fondly remember an outstanding contributor to the u3a. John’s funeral will be held at Gloucester Crematorium at 11.30 am on Thursday 18th November. No flowers by request. Please advise the family, via our Welfare Officer Myrtle Moreton-Cox, if you plan to attend. Myrtle also has details of the nominated charity for donations in John’s memory.

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## Group News

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### **GROUP UPDATES FROM COORDINATOR PAM DAVIS**

#### *New Groups for the New Year - and Goodbye to some old Friends*

**Dowsing for Beginners** led by Trish Mills, starts on 9th November while **Psychology in Practice** begins in January. Both full at the moment but should any spaces become available they will be advertised via the website.

**Recorder, Geology, Archaeology** and **Architecture** groups have now been closed.

**Church Explorers** is still without a leader, and vulnerable unless someone comes forward.

The **French** Group were all sad to hear the news of John Morton's sudden death. He led the French group enthusiastically from the beginning and will be missed by all. Hopefully, the group will continue to flourish with members helping each other, but new members are very welcome, especially confident French speakers who could help to plan future meetings. Please let me know if you wish to join.

#### **Family History**

With a new series of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' on TV, this could be just the time to find out more about your own ancestors. Graham Ellis is taking our Family History Group back to basics at their regular meetings at 2.30 pm on the fourth Monday in the month at Dursley Methodist Church. Aside from finding ways to dig into your own family records, there are presentations on useful topics, and time for questions, a cuppa and a chat. Contact Graham via the Bluebird on the **Family History Group** page on our website

#### **Could you lead a new u3a Group?**

u3a Groups are led by its members. If you have a special interest or skill, why not share it with other? Groups can be- Creative, Musical, Sporty, Social, Adventurous, Fun. They can involve serious study or research or take on the challenge of learning something new. There are no limits! Just let me know what you can offer and I'll help you set it up.

You can contact me via the Groups Co-ordinator button on the website or by email at **cam.u3a.groups@gmail.com**

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## The Bulletin

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Hello everyone, Brian Gornall, your new Bulletin editor here. Hope you enjoy the new format. Contributions for future editions should be sent as Word or Pages documents to **mag.u3a@gmail.com**. Please keep contributions as short as possible, maximum 400 words. One or two photos per item welcome. Please compress jpeg files to low or medium quality. All contributions may be edited for publication.

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## Group Reports

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### Historic Places

#### *A Walk Around Wotton* with Sally Beynon

Members took a guided walk on 3 September around our neighbouring town, Wotton-under-Edge, starting in the Chipping carpark, once a grassy market place full of animals. The Under the Edge Arts building was once the National School for Girls. The County Secondary School was in terrapins behind until the advent of the new Katherine Lady Berkeley Comprehensive in 1963. KLB goes right back to 1384, and in 1726 had buildings in the town down in School Lane. The head lived in house across the Chipping, along with boarders from all over the country. Today's Heritage Centre was a Fire Station with a horse drawn engine, although if the firemen couldn't catch the horses they had to pull it themselves. Eventually money was raised for a Dennis Fire Engine.

Market Street, as the name suggests, gave access to the Chipping from Long Street via a toll booth. It once had a Firework Factory that later burnt down. Today's Cinema was established in 1913. The Town Hall was once similar to Dursley's with pillars around a sheltered open area. Some original timber framed buildings survive. Two pubs remain, the Swan, rebuilt in 1975, and the Star, dating from 1572 and once owned by the Cambridge family. One member founded the White Star Shipping Line, operators of the ill-fated Titanic, which is commemorated today on the pub's Inn Sign.



There are some interesting tales, one gruesome, from Tabernacle Pitch, home of the 1887 Alms Houses. Foxes Book Of Martyrs states that Thomas Horn and an unnamed woman were both burnt to death in the reign of Queen Mary, on what is now the grassy area beside them. The Tabernacle, now Wotton Auction Rooms, was once used by Edward Jenner to give smallpox vaccinations to the congregation. Isaac Pitman, the inventor of shorthand, came to Wotton Under Edge as a preacher at the Tabernacle, but was dismissed because he refused to teach religion in the traditional way. The vicar at the parish church allowed him to worship there but not to preach. So Pitman set up a school in Bradley Street where he taught his invention to, mainly, boys whose parents could afford the fees.

The fine houses in Old Town at the lower end of Gloucester Street included the 440 seater parish rooms, built in 1883 by the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army held regular marches and many people joined - until they realised that they were expected to remain teetotal. Now a private house it was also used a school, and by the British Legion.

Renishaw's factory was once the Rack Fields, where cloth was hung out to dry from a steam mill where the Catholic Church now stands. The 'Church of the Holy Cross' is so named because a monastery was established nearby in 1379 by the Crutched Friars, who used staves with a crucifix on the top. The large house next to Culverhay Surgery was built with East India Company money. Used in WW2 as a girls' school run by nuns, it then became a film studio, an old peoples home and is now a private house again. Another large house, the Moorings in Coombe Road, was used as a home for retired nuns. On the corner of Culverhay and Parklands was the original site of the Blue

Coat School, now in Symn Lane. Under The Edge House , once owned by John Moore Adey, editor of the Strand Magazine and friend of Oscar Wilde, can be seen above Parklands.

The ancient thirteenth century 'most haunted' Ram Inn in Potters Pond allegedly only had 'ghosts' since the owner wanted to attract Americans into the damp and dingy building. In the early 1930s, locals started swimming in the millpond, not realising that the water was full of sewage and the muddy bottom contained leeches. It was closed in about 1938. The Perry and Dawes Alms Houses in Church Street are still standing and occupied. Lugate Hill used to be known as The Steep and the house at the top is still called Steep House. The tour finished walking up Long Street, which has changed little in appearance for 500 years.

## Science and Engineering take to The Wave

*You don't have to be beside the seaside*

Reporter: Paul Sheppard, Photographer: Dave Messenger



On 23rd September, 17 group members headed to Easter Compton on a day out to The Wave. It's the first inland surfing destination in the world, built in 2019 at a cost of £30 million. The developers chose the site because of the proximity to Bristol and its suitable geology. The ground water contour, on a flood plain, was challenging. Forming the wave floor, Bathymetry, involved removing 40,000 cubic metres of soil and installing 520 large intricately shaped concrete slabs,

highly polished to improve the waves and reduce algae growth. The lake contains 26 million litres of slightly chlorinated water costing £30k a fill. The water is driven up to a reef to create the waves from a motor room housing 40 motors and paddles, of secret design. Many different waveforms are available. At the lake they watched the surfers, both from the sides and the central pier. There are up to 1,000 waves per hour, with short breaks every few minutes to allow the surfers to get into position. Typically a surfer could experience as many waves in an hour here as in one day at the seaside. The surfers choose which side to surf on dependent on which foot leads on their surfboard. It felt as though they were at the seaside with the sound of the waves breaking and so many people walking around in wet suits.. The Wave was designed for youngsters with mental and physical problems, with no steps between the lake and the 1km away carpark. Beginners are given wet suits and boards, then instruction at the shallow end on the much gentler waves, to learn how to balance. It was easy to see how being there could help with anxiety. The site has camping facilities for serious surfers. The cafe welcomes barefoot surfers in wet suits, and of course our u3a members for some socialising before the trip home.

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**NEXT EDITION DECEMBER - COPY DEADLINE FRIDAY 19th NOVEMBER**

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## Coming Up

Date	Group	Event
Tues 9 Nov 14.30	Gardening	Zoom Talk by Darren Lerigo "A Very British Garden"
Thurs 11 Nov 13.30	Natural History	Frampton-on Severn A walk around the lakes
Thurs 18 Nov from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church Jennifer Tann on "Sweeps, Servants and Slaves"
Mon 22 Nov 14.30	Family History	Dursley Methodist Church How to do productive internet searches
Thurs 25 Nov 10.30	Science and Engineering	Dursley Methodist Church Martin Cuffe on "Scenes of Crime, the Science Behind Investigations"
Mon 6 Dec 14.00	Gardening	Make your own garden themed Christmas Card Instructions by Zoom.
Thurs 9 Dec All Day	Concert Group	Coach trip to the Royal Albert Hall for John Rutter Christmas Celebration Concert Further details from Rosemary Canning
Thurs 9 Dec 14.00	Natural History	Dursley Methodist Church A Quiz with refreshments, including mince pies
Mon 13 Dec from 12.00	Science and Engineering	Informal Christmas social at the Old Spot, Dursley Order food and drink from the Bar on arrival
Thurs 16 Dec from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church Our Christmas Quiz
<b>2022</b>		
Thurs 13 Jan 14.00	Natural History	Dursley Methodist Church Gordon McGlone on "Birds. Bees. Butterflies and Bats"
Thurs 20 Jan from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church - talk by Liz Davenport Woodchester Mansion - an unfinished masterpiece"
Mon 24 Jan 10.30	Gardening	Zoom Talk by Patsy Rayner "Japanese Gardens"
Thurs 3 Feb 10.00	Science and Engineering	Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility, Javelin Park A further chance to visit, contact Graham Ellis
Thurs 17 Feb from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church "Stories of Britain in Pictures and Song" by Robin Burton
Fri 4 March All Day	Historic Places	A trip to Hereford The Block and White House, Cathedral, Cider Museum
Thurs 19 March from 10.00	Branch Meeting	Dursley Methodist Church "Charlotte Bronte/ Jane Eyre" by Dr Keith Hooper

**Full details of all these events, and lots more planned for 2022 are  
on [our website](#)**