

u3a The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

Committee News

Excellent news – someone has now come forward to take on the Officer Role of Secretary.

The Committee Members are very grateful to Christine Haestier for agreeing to take on this side of the Role.

She will be welcomed into the Committee at our next Meeting on Wednesday 8 th November.

I am sure the committee will be very pleased to vote her into the role. This is covered under our constitution as a Casual Vacancy – as was the recent appointment of Debbie Sirett as Treasurer.

It is hoped that we will also be able to welcome the volunteer Minute Secretary at the November Meeting – look out for news on this in our next month’s Bulletin.

Once again, thank you so much Christine for coming forward.

We also need someone who would be willing to prepare and print the posters for our Monthly Meetings please?

Thank you.

Myrtle Moreton-Cox – Chair

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Group News

Historic Places Group visit to Caerphilly Castle and Coch Castle – October 6^t Sally Benyon

These castles were very different from each other in design, purpose and appearance.

Building of Caerphilly Castle was started in 1268 by Gilbert de Clare to protect England from the Welsh prince, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. The resulting stronghold became the largest fortified castle in Wales covering 30 acres, with massive walls, towers and gatehouses. Large water defences still surround the castle. Once Llywelyn had died, Caerphilly Castle was transformed from a frontline fortress into a palatial home with a hunting park and northern lake. Edward II gave Hugh Despenser, the castle and he revamped the great hall. The castle is now a ruin and the central part is not open due to ongoing major repair work. The south-east tower leans over more than the Tower of Pisa, due to gunpowder damage sustained in the Civil War.

The fourth Marquess of Bute restored part of the castle between 1928 and the start of the Second World War. At the time, it was the biggest, most thorough and most authentic renovation of its type ever undertaken in Britain. Since, Bute's methods have been used to repair of the large dams, refill the lakes, repair the floor and roof of the inner east gatehouse floor and roof and restore the elaborate windows of the great hall.

Story boards around the castle give an insight into the people who lived there, The marriage of Gilbert de Clare to his first wife, Alice, was annulled in 1285 because she had an affair with a local knight. The knight was hanged and the ghost of Alice is said to haunt the castle. Gilbert de Clare married Joan his second wife in 1290 and they had four children. When Gilbert died in 1295, Edward I arranged another marriage for her, but she married a commoner called Ralph de Monthermer secretly. Edward I was furious but eventually allowed Ralph to use Gilbert's titles. As Gilbert and Joan's son died at Bannockburn in 1314, their three daughters inherited the land, but were controlled by their uncle King Edward II. Llywelyn Bren led a Welsh uprising against Edward II, and one of the sisters, Eleanor de Clare, was inside Caerphilly Castle during the siege. She held out for six weeks until help arrived. She also survived after her husband, Hugh Despenser was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Working replicas of four types of siege engine and an area where jousts and tournaments were held can be seen.

Coch Castle is a medieval castle renovated by its Victorian owner as a Gothic fantasy. At first glance it looks as if it should be in a fairy tale with Rapunzel at one of the tower windows. Although it looks far more modern than Caerphilly Castle, Coch Castle was originally built in the eleventh century when the Normans attempted to invade south-east Wales. By the thirteenth century, the Clare family-controlled Glamorgan and they were probably responsible for building three towers onto the castle: the Well Tower inserted into the shell keep; and two added to the southern face overlooking the Taff Gorge. It is thought that the castle fell into ruins and, hence out of use, after the Welsh rebellions of the fourteenth century. Five and half centuries later, the Third Marquis of Bute hired an eccentric architect, William Burgess, to create a 'Middle Ages' vision of a fairy tale castle. Work began in 1875, but

as Burgess died six years later his team of craftsmen interpreted his designs. Lavish decorations and furnishings resulted in Castle Coch being used as a holiday home until Lord Bute's death in 1900. It became an exotic folly and the Fifth Marquess of Bute gave it to the State in 1950.

Coch Castle consists of the following rooms; octagonal dining-room with a tiled fire place, exotic birds on the wallpaper and painted flowers on the wall panelling; a banqueting hall with tiles painted on the walls, scenes painted at the top of the walls and ceiling, crests on the stained glass windows and fire place, and an extensive view along the river; bedrooms, one of which had a domed ceiling painted with flowers, birds, monkeys and squirrels, a high chest and basin; a circular kitchen with a wood ceiling, table and kitchen equipment; a chapel with wood panelling, ten stained glass windows depicting saints and a fire place, and battlements round the towers.

Natural History Group Meeting – Thursday, October 12th

The last meeting of the the Natural History Group took place on Thursday October 12th at Lower Woods nature reserve, Wickwar. In this season of mists and mellow fruitfulness it was as you might expect a fungus foray. John Ryman a permanent volunteer at Lower Woods and an expert in fungi once again very kindly agreed to lead us. We identified a good many species, none of them edible. They included :- Bracket fungi, Wax caps, Amanita, Magpie ink cap, Candle snuff and the fascinating Bird's nest fungus which appears to contain "eggs", in reality packets of spores which are dispersed by rainfall.

The next meeting will be at Frampton on Thursday, November 9th at 2.00pm.

Whist Group

The Whist Group are a happy and sociable group who meet in the afternoon of the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month in the Dursley Methodist Church. Until recently the Group has been full, but they now have space for a few new members. So, if you enjoy whist and would like to join them, or would like any more information, please contact the leaders, Sylvia Moreton-Cox and Ronnie Harding via the Bluebird.

Garden Visits Group

Danielle Ellis has been leading this group for a number of years and we are very grateful to her for all the hard work she has put in arranging talks and visits. However, she now feels she would like to hand over the reins to someone else. So, if you enjoy visiting gardens and feel you are able to offer some time either in sharing the organisation of this group, or indeed leading it on your own, please get in touch.

Don't feel you need to arrange a visit every month, as 2 or 3 visits a year would be quite enough. They can either be local, with people sharing cars for the visit or, if further afield, by coach. Danielle is happy to offer you the benefit of her experience.

If you are interested in helping with this group, please either contact Danielle or Elinor Padfield (Groups Coordinator) via the Bluebird.

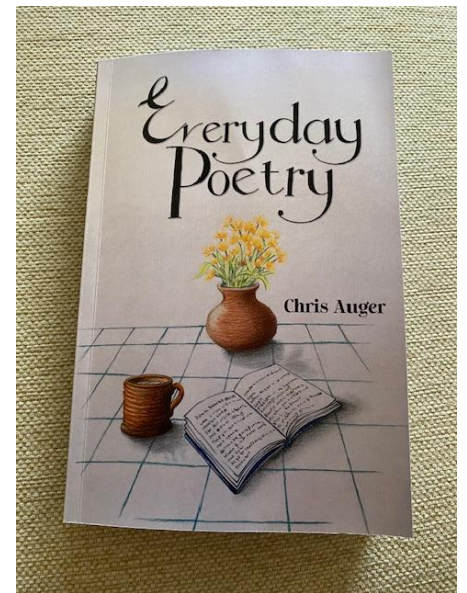
Special News from the Poetry Group

Many congratulations to Chris Auger, whose first book of poems has just been published.

She has been a keen member of our first Poetry Group since it began and with the support of family and friends has now produced this lovely book of her work. There are poems about life, loves, nature, family and special events. Something for everyone.

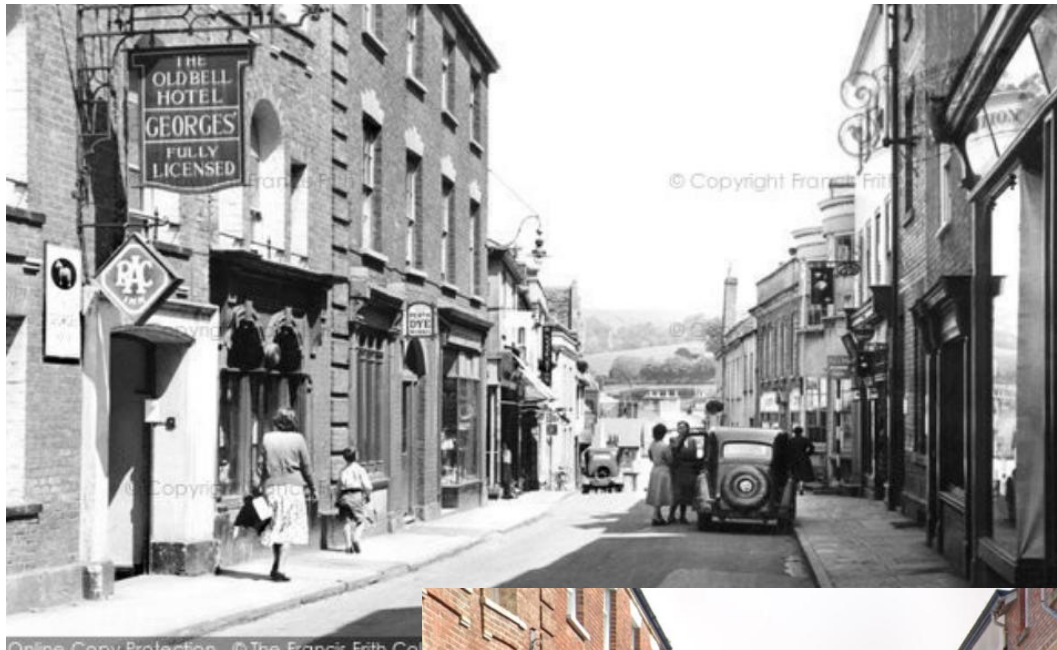
The cover was designed by Jocelyn Rymer Gilfoyle, who is a well-known local artist and also a member of our u3a, so congratulations also go to Jo as well.

Copies of the book are now available on Amazon.



Dursley – Past and Present – an occasional series....

Then...



And now...



The Pedersen Bicycle (adapted from Wikipedia)

The Pedersen bicycle was developed in Dursley by the Danish inventor Mikael Pedersen. Though never hugely popular, it enjoyed a devoted following and is still produced today. Its unusual frame features a distinctive hammock style saddle. Pedersen also designed two- and three-speed internally-geared rear hubs.



Pedersen received a patent in the United Kingdom for his bicycle in the early 1890s and constructed the first model out of wood. Approximately 30,000 units were produced by the early 1920s, but the design never really caught on. In 1978, Jesper Sølling resumed production in Copenhagen and has been followed by others.

Technology

Pedersen wrote that he developed the hammock style seat first. It provides suspension from road imperfections with much less weight, 4 ounces (110 g) instead of 3 pounds (1.4 kg) of traditional leather and steel spring saddles of the day. Pedersen then developed a frame, a truss assembled from several thin tubes, around his new seat design. He attributed his inspiration to the Whipple-Murphy bridge truss. The design initially did not support seat height adjustment, and even after some adjustability was added, required the manufacture of eight different sizes. The non-standard frame design would not accommodate a traditional front fork. Instead, Pedersen developed a fork that also consisted of thin tubes assembled into a truss, which was attached to the frame with bearings at two distinct points, instead of through a traditional head tube. Pedersen also received patents for a chainwheel and bottom bracket combination and lightweight pedals.



Forthcoming Events

U3a meetings

Monday 23 rd October	Family History	Meeting in Dursley Methodist Church at 2.30 pm. Meeting Topic: If only I had known – things I could have done better. An opportunity to share experiences. If anyone has any specific questions or topics they would like to know about in future sessions – please let me know. Session is free but we would like a volunteer to help Wendy Gilvear please.
Friday 3 rd November	Historic Places	We have booked into the Tewkesbury Historical Society for a guided walk and talk on the Abbey.
Thursday 9 th November	Natural History	Meeting at Frampton Lakes, mainly to look for migrating birds, so bring binoculars. Meet at 2 pm in the small car park at on Watery Lane at the end of the Green. We will be walking around the lake – about 2 miles on the flat.
Thursday November 16 th	Branch Meeting	Monthly Branch Meeting held at Dursley Methodist Church. Doors open 10 am. Meeting starts at 10.30 am. Talk by David Whelan 'Teaching in Sudan'.
Thursday November 23 rd	Science and Engineering	The Science and Engineering Group hold an annual members' meeting in November. This is especially for Group members but all members of Cam and Dursley u3a are welcome to attend. The meeting is at 10.30 am at Dursley Methodist Church. Please bring £3 to cover costs.. No need to book. There will be a TALK by Andrew Moyes – former MD of Nicholson Organs' in Malvern. The Pipe Organ – art, science, craft and technology: He will look inside 'the King of Instruments' from an engineer's point of view, revealing some of the fascinating facts and its inner workings. This will include manufacturing pipes in metal and wood for sound production, the challenge of making purely mechanical linkages to transmit the organist's finger-tip movement to the pipes, and the use of power assistance for the largest organs. Following the talk there will be free refreshments (Volunteers required please). The leadership team will be available to discuss ideas for the group. The meeting is being organised by Graham Ellis who may be contacted via the blue bird.
Monday 27 th November	Family History	Meeting in Dursley Methodist Church back room at 2.30pm. Topic: TBA If anyone has specific questions or subjects they would like to know about in future sessions – please let me know. Please bring £2 to cover room hire and refreshments (volunteers required please).



Dursley & Cam Royal British Legion



Presents our Poppy Proms2023

Featuring

Wotton & District Silver Band and the Dursley Male Voice Choir

Pianists Barrie Cooper & Matthew Sharp

Saturday October 28th - Tickets £10.00

The Chantry Centre, Dursley

Doors open at 1800 show starts at 1900

Tickets available (cash only) from Belle's Kitchen, Durcan's and the Chantry Centre Café
Or call 07763 495156 All profits to be donated to the Poppy Appeal