

Cambourne & District u3a

Bulletin December 2023

Issue No. 59

Christmas Meet on the 15th



**It's not Mastermind! It's a fun
Christmas quiz to take part in
and enjoy**

Kath writes:

Over two years ago low on a cliff side on the Cromarty Firth, stood a lonely sheep crying out to a Kayaker as she passed. The woman in the kayak saw the distressed sheep but was comforted by the thought it would make its way back up the cliff. However, this was not to be, as repeating the experience more recently, she was horrified to see the sheep call out to her again. She contacted many agencies who, although acknowledging it was sad, said the sheep was well fed and a rescue would be very difficult. To those who know the story, rescue did come in the shape of a group of brave farmers. 'Fiona' was resettled and had her enormous coat sheared.

Why does the story of a stranded sheep resonate with thousands signing petitions? We just need to think of Tom Hanks, who marooned on an island in *Cast Away*, created a friend Wilson by drawing a face on a ball. Then as he sailed away on a raft escaping the island after 4 years isolation, found himself utterly distraught when Wilson was swept away.

While it's easy to anthropomorphise, we are social beings and recognise that animals also have an emotional intelligence and seek to be with others of their kind.

The World Health Organisation has said loneliness can have the same detrimental health effects as smoking. It has certainly come to the fore since the pandemic. I was reading recently that a small city in Sweden has started a 'Say Hi' campaign to nudge people into gentle bonding or to just feel seen. As a trekker of the Peak district for 40 years saying hello to fellow walkers was standard even for grumpy Yorkshiremen. So despite probably thinking it is strange and random, maybe we should just acknowledge it is an attempt to start a process and get us thinking.

As a u3a one of our aims is to reach out to people who may be on their own, offering friendship through shared interests and activities. We have recently been approached by someone in the surrounding district to look at a project on tackling loneliness in his area. Something worthy for discussion in the New Year.

So as the festive season approaches Peace on Earth will surely be high on most peoples' wish list. But we can all hope, that at least, it will be a time when we can spend it with others we know and love.

Merry Christmas

Kath

A Lean Spell

You prop me up
and I prop you,
it's the least
that I can do,
when you find
it hard to cope,
and each day's
a long, steep slope,
the world has
gone aslant
and your bed
you can't recant.
A day will come
when things
come straight
but until this
spell abates
just lean on me,
I do not mind,
should you feel
that way inclined.

Brian Bilston

EDITORIAL

Not one, but two poems in this edition; Kath forwarded the one on the previous page by Brian Bilston and Lucy's offering about Christmas are very different, but perhaps complement each other. I'll leave that one hanging.

I will print the information about groups for a few months until it is deemed unnecessary. Please note the list of suggested new groups on Page 11.

A big thank you to Gill Habicht for the lovely article about her walk on the Camino Way. What a tremendous achievement and in such weather!

Has anyone else done a memorable walk recently? We'd love to hear from you.

Please can we have some pictures from keen photographers, especially for the cover.

Peter

Need help with risk assessments for u3a activities /outings etc? Wendy Park will help or advise.

Contact Wendy : fwendypark@aol.com

Forthcoming Talks

15 December	Christmas Celebration
19 January	N.E. Spain & the Pyrennees by Graham Bruce
16 February	Traditional winter festivals and feasts by Joanna Bogle
15 March	C.H.A.S.E. (Community Health and Sustainable Environment) Africa - a British charity providing medical and environmental aid in East Africa by Prof. Stephen Bown
19 April	East Anglia and the Danelaw by Ian Cameron
15 November	Winter Feasts and Festivals by Joanna Bogle

Here comes Christmas

I remember the time
When we stood in a line
My cousins and me
By the big Christmas tree
We delighted the room
Though we sang out of tune
It was all such good fun
But those days are done

I remember the time
Drinking lots of cheap wine
Excitedly young and carefree
Singing, dancing till long after three
Bottles and cans everywhere
Tobacco smoke thick in the air
It was all such good fun
But those days are done

I remember the time
Stealthily, clandestine
We hid toys, games and books
Where we hoped they'd not look
Boxes, wrapping paper galore
All over the living room floor
It was all such good fun
But those days are done

Here comes Christmas again
But I'm who I am now
Not who I was then
My plate will be modest
My glass will be honest
I'll still be gregarious
With my pleasure vicarious
It will still be good fun
In this Christmas to come

Lucy Purvey
November 2023

Cambourne and district u3a Interest groups Nov 2023

Dance Fitness Group -members 12

This group meets weekly in term time, on Wednesday from 12.15 to 1pm in the Cambourne Hub meeting room (currently). It is led by Tanya Grey, a professional dance tutor who uses music from the 60s 70s and 80s to create dance sequences, mostly in lines or circles. It is energetic, but can be taken at a pace appropriate to the individual. The form the class takes may change over time. Appropriate wear could be light, loose clothing or tights, and trainers or similar. The cost will be termly at £5 per lesson and would be payable in advance.

To express an interest please contact

Fran Panrucker: fran@panrucker.co.uk

Art Appreciation -members 10

Meeting usually on the first Thursday of the month, this is a self-led group for those interested in learning more about the art of the twentieth century and contemporary art. It sometimes takes the form of visiting exhibitions in galleries both local and sometimes further afield. We may also gather to watch a DVD of a particular artist or type of art, or research to produce short presentations to share with the rest of the group.

Leader: Fran Panrucker fran@panrucker.co.uk

Allsorts -members 38

This is by the group for the group, in that anything not covered elsewhere in our u3a can be suggested and organised by Allsorts members. This can be a trip to a garden centre; somewhere to meet for coffee or afternoon tea; a visit to an historic house; trip to a mosque or museum; or anything else that a member may be interested in.

It really is up to the individuals in the Allsorts group to suggest something to the rest of the group, and those who are interested can then enjoy the experience together.

Leader : Fran Panrucker fran@panrucker.co.uk

Theatre group -members 13

We are a group who meet to go to the theatre, at present, in Cambridge.

(preferably matinees) We buy our own tickets, but try and coordinate so we can sit together and arrange where and when to meet up. We meet over coffee twice a year to agree the productions we want to see. Members may also discuss other options such as concerts.

Leader Sandra Davies

Gardens Galore

This is an opportunity for you to visit gardens you might not have thought of visiting, or revisiting old favourites. You do not have to be a gardener to enjoy the results of others labours. Some of the gardens have a house attached which can also be visited. Each trip usually incorporates a coffee and possibly a lunch break depending on the length of the visit and peoples wishes.

For journeys of up to an hour we usually travel in each other's cars and make a contribution to the cost of the fuel. We also try to keep costs down by making use of special offers such as The Gardeners World 2 for 1 offer.

Everyone welcome

Leader Lesley Woodger lesley610@hotmail.co.uk

Out to lunch group -members 31 -monthly usually Thursday
This group aims to try out restaurants with a difference in Cambridge and the surrounding area. Many of them accessible by bus. One month we may be exploring the delights of Jordanian food and another vegetarian. The possibilities are endless and suggestions are always welcome. After all it is your group and you are only billed for what you order.
Leader Lesley Woodger lesley610@hotmail.co.uk

Book group 1 -leader Lois Kershaw -meets 2nd Tues of the month

-leader's house

Book group 2 -leader Fran Panrucker -meets the last Thursday of the month

-The Holiday Inn express members 8 Maximum 9

Book group 3 -leader Janet Leonard -the first Tuesday in the month at the Holiday Inn Express. Members 5 Maximum 6

New book groups can be formed when others are full. If you wish to start up another one the committee can put information out.

Bridge Club -leader Colin Norman

Members 14 Can take more but must have experience of basic bridge conventions.

Venue —the Hub meeting room on Wednesdays 2.30-4.30
Day/time Wednesday 14.30-16.30

Walking Group -leader Janet Leonard

Members -41

Group walkers encouraged to plan and lead a route. Usually 5miles.

Day/Time -Every 2 weeks on a Friday morning start 10am

French Intermediate -leader Christine Tyler.

Members -8

Online with Zoom -easier for members living in Cambridge

Day/time -Every other Tuesday morning.

World war II leader Richard Davies

Members -9

Venue -House rotation. If the group gets bigger a venue will be sought

Day -Last Friday of the month rmdavies47@gmail.com

Genealogy-leader Jeff Jones

Members 9

Venue -Jeff's house in Hardwick but with increased membership may look for an alternative venue.

Meeting -every 3/ 4 months

Getting to know your I pad -leader Anne Jones

Members -9

Venue -The Apple store Cambridge

Day/time Wednesday morning every 3 to 4 weeks.

Apple will only allow groups of 8 at one time so there are now 2 consecutive sessions booked for the designated Wednesday.

It is helpful to bring your own I pad.

This group was proposed by Richard Davies.

Does the thought of putting together a Powerpoint presentation fill you with dread? Have you ever wondered what an Excel spreadsheet is and what on earth it is used for? If any members have any problems with Microsoft Office programs, Word, Powerpoint and Excel, I am willing to share my knowledge either as a group if sufficient numbers, or on a more individual basis rmdavies47@gmail.com

Study Trips —these are trips that are advertised to all members when they are organised.

I have put a leader for all groups although all are facilitated and many are shared responsibility in terms of organising events/ trips. Jan, the membership secretary, has organised the updating of membership lists for each group.

All of these leaders have spent time exploring what's possible and getting these groups up and running. So thank you.

You can contact group leaders either by the e mails provided or through the link on the website and we will pass enquiries on to the group leader.

Kath

The following new groups have proposed by members.

Singing Jazz appreciation. Classical music Board Games

Medieval history Railways Science. Table tennis

Gardening Watercolour group Craft and sewing.

Current Affairs Spanish/French beginners and intermediate group Spanish/French conversation

To get any of these groups going requires members to identify what groups they would be interested in joining. If there is enough interest, people can get together to decide what to do. If you want to register an interest contact me through the group coordinator link on the website.

WALKING THE CAMINO WAY Gill Habicht

A very close family friend, Steph, had always wanted to undertake the Camino walk. When my husband, Jon, only had a few weeks left to live the three of us were talking on Facetime. I flippantly commented that there would be no reason for me not to join Steph on her Pilgrimage. Jon immediately homed in on this and said it was a great idea and would be good for me... Two years later, this journey became a reality!

Steph and I spent a great deal of 2023 walking to get fit. 3-5 mile walks were no longer the norm, these were upped to 10+ miles and on consecutive days!! Having researched the various possible routes to walk the Camino Way, we decided on the Camino Portugués (the Portuguese Way). I should explain that there is a network of many different paths, all leading pilgrims to the city of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, in the north of Spain. Each route has its own history, heritage and charm and there is route for every interest and ability. The Camino de Santiago is the St James Way and, according to legend, it is here in the Cathedral of Santiago that the remains of St James (Santiago in Spanish) are said to be buried.

On 16 October Steph and I left Stansted to fly to Porto, our starting point. At this stage, we had no real concept of what was in store for us for the next 13 days! We had used a company to book our hotels (a different one at the end of each day) and to transport our luggage daily. They also provided us with excellent interactive maps that indicated our exact route each day. The daily distance varied from 8 miles (on one or two days) to 16+ miles (on at least four days!).



On the day we arrived in Porto, we were able to explore the vibrant city in the afternoon as our walk started the following day. Porto is a coastal city which is known for its port wine production. We were able to visit the ornate Gothic cathedral and the railway station with its amazing blue tiled décor.



We awoke the next day to heavy rain which, unfortunately, proved to be pretty constant for the majority of our walk! However, the rain had eased before we set off and we were in good spirits. We started with a Metro ride to the outskirts of the city before setting off along the coastal path. As the day progressed, the weather deteriorated with strong winds and heavy rain. We walked almost 20 miles (and over 45,000 steps!) arriving at the next hotel soaking wet, with wet boots and blisters – not the best of starts!! Luckily, our second day was a vast improvement with the sun even making an appearance!

For our first few days it was fairly flat on boardwalks following the Atlantic Ocean. We certainly experienced a variety of terrains from cobbled roads, through towns and villages, up rocky paths and through woods with some stunning views and scenery.



Two of the memories that will stay with us is walking through eucalyptus woods and the incredible aroma. And, secondly, our “ferry” at Caminha which took us over to A Guarda in Spain. I think you will agree from the photo that it was an interesting form of transport! [Photo next page]



We met so many Pilgrims along the way and the camaraderie and support was reassuring, not to mention uplifting at times! So many locals also wished us “Buen Caminho” as we passed.

I think we perhaps also ate and drank our way along the Camino! We consumed some delicious meals, drank superb coffee and sangria, and discovered the very scrummy Tarta da Santiago (Spanish Almond Cake).

I won't bore you with a day-by-day breakdown of events but, suffice it to say, that we did have to dig deep on a number of days to get through what was thrown at us! We so often arrived at our hotel dripping wet all over their reception floor and finally arrived at the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral late on day 13 having walked nearly 164 miles and over 421,000 steps!! It was extremely emotional when we finally reached the Cathedral at the end of our arduous journey, but such a sense of achievement which is hard to describe. The following day we returned to the Cathedral (in sunshine!) and attended the Pilgrims' Mass. The Mass was very moving and a time when we thought of – and remembered – our family and loved ones. For many people doing the walk it is a true spiritual pilgrimage. We were also fortunate enough to witness the swinging of the 'Botafumerio', the famous giant thurible or censer. It weighs 53kgs empty and up to 10kgs more when full, and is pulled by eight men, 'tiraboleiros'. It has been used since the Middle Ages, originally to clean the air when crowds of pilgrims having completed the Camino de Santiago arrived in Santiago de Compostela after their long journey!





ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Life drawing class next term

A five session life drawing class will be held at Cottenham village hall on Monday mornings next term from 10 to 12. The sessions will be led by Steve Ferris, an excellent and highly skilled teacher and professional artist.

Steve hires both male and female models who are all experienced at modelling. The setting, in the upstairs room at the hall, is superb with excellent lighting. The sessions usually begin with five or ten minute studies with a different theme or focus each week. After coffee the poses generally last for fifteen to thirty minutes.

This is an established group who are very friendly and supportive.

The fee is £18 per session and 'drop ins' are welcome. If there is enough support for the course it may continue for a further five sessions.

Further information from
Jennie Browne jenniferannebrowne@gmail.com
or Peter Cornwell pccornwell@icloud.com

Shared transport may be a possibility.

Please note this is not currently a u3a course although it may be of interest to members.

