



February 2025



Charity Reg No. 1038544

**CAMELOT AREA
Newsletter**

Who's Who in Camelot

Officers

Chairman:	Vacant	<i>To contact any of the Committee Members go to the contacts page of the website, and send a message</i>
Vice Chair:	Stella Fairbairn	
Hon. Treasurer:	Peter Kennedy	
Hon. Secretary:	Catriona Cole	

Committee Members

Membership Secretary	Caroline Reeves
Speaker Secretary	Gill Bagnall
Newsletter Editor	Sandie Docherty
Publicity	Vacant
Beacon Admin	Robert Reeves
Website Assistant	Peter Townley
Groups Co-Ordinator	Vacant

Non Committee Members

Website Editor	Alan Gibbons
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Website: <https://camelot-area.u3asite.uk>

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March 2025 issue is 14th February 2025**

Cover Painting: by Heather Martin watercolour

Website www.camelot-area.u3asite.uk

Web Editor: Alan Gibbons

Notes from the Vice Chair

Notes from Vice Chair.

As this is the first newsletter of 2025, we, the committee, wish you a very happy and healthy New Year. Christmas probably feels a long time ago now and by returning to our groups, we will hopefully have chased away the excesses of the festive period - particularly the walkers.

Are you aware of our website address as access through the old site ceased in January? If you are having problems getting connected here is a quick reminder camelot-area.u3asite.uk

Upcoming events include a group leader's coffee morning on February 14th. A time for group leaders to discuss new ideas and views.

We have been invited by Cary Town Council to represent our u3a in celebrating volunteering in our community. There is to be a formal presentation on Friday 7th February to the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset. Trina and myself will showcase our activities and the exhibition will be open to visitors on the weekend of the 8th and 9th. The council hopes that many residents will discover the many volunteer groups that exist in Cary. You never know, you may find a worthy cause you might like to volunteer for.

Our monthly talk in February, 'The Charles Dickens Story' promises to be highly interesting. Looking forward to hearing not only about his 'literary genius' but also his controversial private life! We are fortunate that all of our monthly talks offer new and often amusing facts and information. Please join us for the afternoon of Friday 28th of February, free to members and refreshments provided.



Once again, a very happy belated New Year to all,

Best Wishes

Stella Fairbairn – Vice Chair.

Notes from the Editor

The **u3a** are welcoming in 2025 with their usual range of groups, outings and events. We will keep you in touch with all that is going on locally as well, so take this opportunity to make use of all that is being offered, albeit a new venture, new hobby or a catch up with friends, new and old at one of the coffee mornings.

The choice of the monthly meeting speakers have been excellent, interesting and well very attended. 2025 will not be letting us down. The last event of 2024 we had was "Race to Scotland". Kenneth Fowler kept us mesmerised with the account of his journey from Lands End to John O Groats in his bath tubbed size dingy, against all odds for charity.



Monthly Meeting Tea Rota 2024

The Tea and Coffee for the Monthly Meetings will be organised by the nominated Group below. The nominated Group for that month will liaise with the group from the month before to bring the box of tea coffee etc. Please also bring fresh milk, teas and biscuits if necessary.

The Group should arrive early enough to set out the cups before the meeting and stay to serve the teas and to make sure the washing up has been done afterwards and the kitchen left clean.

With meetings only eight times a year and currently twenty four Groups, each Group will be asked to do this only once every three years or so.

2025

February	Recorder	Gill Bagnall
March	Garden Group	Caroline Reeves

The Group Leaders are invited to use the Tea Rota as a guide to also mount a small display or information about what happens in their Group.

Camelot Monthly Meetings

**Caryford Community Hall
Maggs Lane Ansford BA77JJ**

Friday 31th January 2025 at 2.30pm

Name of speaker Dr C Southgate

Poetry and Science

Synopsis:

Here Christopher examines points of commonality between poetry and science, by giving illustrations of each one. To do it, he uses poets such as Gerard Manley Hopkins and R.S. Thomas, plus some of his own work (which in turn draws on his first career as a research biochemist).

Your Speaker - Christopher Southgate:

Christopher trained as a research biochemist at Cambridge University and in the U.S. He has subsequently been both a University Chaplain and part-time hospital lay chaplain specialising in mental health chaplaincy. He is author of eight poetry collections. Christopher currently works at the University of Exeter, where he recently finished a project on the science of the origin of life.



Friday 28th February 2025 at 2.30 p.m

Name of speakers Brian and Jacqueline Sutton

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times
- the Charles Dickens story.

Brief resume of talk: The life of the great author and social campaigner; his books and stories; his wisdom, characters and humour, his controversial love life including 'The Invisible Woman'.

Brian and Jacqueline have been married for 25 years. Both are retired, Brian having worked as a Property Manager and Theatre Manager, Jacqueline as an English teacher.



WEDNESDAY POETRY GROUP

at The George, Castle Cary

For a Christmas 'treat' we decided to share the reading of Edgar Allan Poe's poem 'The Raven' (1845) which is set 'in the bleak December'. It's difficult to know whether to take this narrative poem seriously as a doom-laden reflection of Poe's deeply troubled soul or was he being tongue-in-cheek, with an eye to commercial success? But we agreed that the technical accomplishment – stunning patterns of rhythm and rhyme - offset the bleakness of the subject. We went on to read more of Poe, being particularly struck by an early poem 'Alone' - 'From childhood's hour I have not been / As others were' - which really did read as a *cri de coeur*.

Then it was midday and we transitioned into lunch at The George, not needing to move an inch. It was an excellent end to a year of monthly sessions whose focus ranged from such single authors as John Donne, Derek Walcott, Mary Oliver, Charlotte Mew, AE Housman, Siegfried Sassoon to the themes of Abolitionist and Protest poetry, Fathers, Endings, Welsh poets and poetry. We have now generated a programme for the next six months.

Jane Crozier, Dec. 2024

Group Leaders

Variety is the spice of life!

Members would enjoy reading and seeing photos of your activities. If you or a nominated member of your group would like to send me some information or photos, please do. Thank you.

Quote of the Month

“Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.” —Winston Churchill

If you have a quote that impresses or amuses you, let me know and if we have room, I will put it in the newsletter.

CARY IN BLOOM 2025

Castle Cary won one gold and two silver gilt medals in Britain in Bloom in 2023. We are now working on an entry for 2025 and need your help. We want 3 Gold medals!!!!

Britain in Bloom is a countrywide RHS project and Castle Cary will enter the Southwest area.



The award is not just about flowers, though making our town look good helps a lot. We need to consider sustainability, the environment and the community.

We have a small working group. The Primary School, Garden Association, Eat Cary, Moat Garden, U3A groups and the Allotment Association are all on board.



We started work in July 2024 and get judged in July 2025.

Photo by Anne Woods

- We want houses and businesses to display hanging baskets/ window boxes or tubs to bring colour to all our streets.
- We want to hear about your "green" projects and find out how our town is becoming more sustainable.
- We will be building a living wall.
- Holding a scarecrow competition.
- Having a series of informative and educational talks
- Holding an exhibition on Cary in Bloom.
- Overall bringing the community together through creativity/ gardening and fun

If you are interested in learning more and becoming involved in this project, contact.

Penny Steiner

Chair of Cary in Bloom Working Group

Cinema in Caryford

Caryford Community Hall , Maggs Lane

Doors open 7.00pm Film starts 7.30pm All tickets £6.00. Available from the Market House Mon - Fri 9.30 - 12.30; Sat 10 - 12.

Wednesday 22 Jan. *Thelma* (2024)

June Squibb, who did most of her own stunts in the film, plays Thelma Post, a feisty 93-year-old grandmother who gets conned by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson (Fred Hechinger), and sets out on a treacherous quest across Los Angeles, accompanied by an aging friend (Richard Roundtree) and his motorized scooter, to reclaim what was taken from her. With Malcolm McDowell.

WHY BOOK THIS FILM? A perfect comedy for a gloomy time of year

Wednesday 26 Feb. *Paddington goes to Peru* (2024) (family)

Paddington Bear has been living with the Brown family in London for many years now, but he still feels the tug of his Peruvian roots. Hearing that his Aunt Lucy, now living in the Home for Retired Bears, has been missing him terribly, Paddington and the Browns set off to Darkest Peru, only to discover on arrival that Aunt Lucy has disappeared. So off they go into the Amazon to find her, accompanied by a boat captain, Hunter Cabot (Antonio Banderas) and his daughter Gina. What could possibly go wrong?

WHY BOOK THIS FILM? Who doesn't love Paddington?

Wednesday 26 March. *Gladiator* (2024) (R)

After his North African home is conquered by the tyrannical twin emperors who now lead Rome, Lucius (Paul Mescal) is forced to enter the Colosseum as a gladiator under the control of Macrinus (Denzel Washington). He must look to his past to find strength to return the glory of Rome to its people.

WHY BOOK THIS FILM? At 86, Ridley Scott probably doesn't have many more. epics in him!

Digital Photography News

Despite the weather the photography group decided to meet in November and December and show the



Photo by Denise Bailey

pictures that had been taken during the preceding months. The November meeting went without mishap and there were some interesting interpretations of the topics Through a



Photo by Colin Constable

wind, Puddles and Fairies. (As it was Halloween, I'm sure the topic should have been Witches!!)

We were not so lucky in December as the meeting was just after Storm Darragh and part way through our meeting we suddenly lost the electricity as workmen dealt with a fallen tree. Unperturbed we crowded round the little battery powered laptop and view our photos of Leaves, Fungi, and Something beginning with P. The power-cut only lasted 40mins , then we were back in business again - in time to enjoy seasonal treats supplied by Denise and Anne.



Photo by Robert Reeves

A selection of Photographs are given below.

Meetings are in Galhampton Village Hall at 10:30am on the second Monday of the month. Contact Anne if you would like to attend.



Photo by Vicky Taylor



Photo by Nicky



Photo by Joan Williams



Photo by Mike Antony



Photo by Barbara Boules

Up and Coming

Saturday 5th April 10am **Digital Photo Exhibition**

to accompany Coffee Morning at Galhampton Village Hall.

The topic is "The Natural World" as we have some photos to use already but please send us any photos you may have so that we can display them. There will be more information coming regarding stands etc shortly.

Put this date in your diary, come along and see the photos, enjoy coffee and cake and chat to other visitors.

Anne Woods

Writing for Fun

"A Sword's Tale"

Story written by Alan Gibbons

I'm flying. Spinning like a sycamore seed a drift on the morning breeze. Each turn made at a snails pace. Every rotation drawing me closer to the inevitable. I land with a dull thud into thick mud that immediately consumes me. Horse's hooves pound towards where I lay unseen. Hoof after hoof drives me unintentionally deeper into the mire. Moments later the affray is gone. Replaced by a spectral silence and a sense of abandonment. As though I'm to be flotsam from yet another insignificant skirmish. An event of so little merit that those who died aren't even warranted a runestone. Casualties of a forgotten melee doomed to remain lost for eternity.

All that's happened leaves me confused and bereft. Wondering what went wrong? Where's my Lord? Why did he let go of me? Had I done something wrong to be forsaken thus?

Time passes and with all hope gone I take comfort from good times past. Memories of battles won and spoils taken. Of course, I wasn't always Viking. My origins lie further South with the Carolingian armourers who made me. Men who's mastery of metal is unrivalled. Known as they are for creating weapons so superior, that if by magic, they could make a warrior invincible. No really; what I say is true. These clever smiths developed a technique for making swords that, forgive the pun, had the edge. They'd discovered that by melding different metals together to form laminations, it greatly enhanced both strength and durability. Thereby giving their swords superior sharpness, toughness and most importantly, reliability in battle. A true game changer and a deterrent to any sporting inferior weapons.

So here we have it, my pedigree, the finest fighting implement known to mankind. A sturdy double-edged sword that can penetrate armour.



Balanced to perfection, I'm equally adept at being used to slash or thrust. Beautifully adorned with Norse motifs and bejewelled with an amethyst for the protection it gives during battle. A cleverly crafted creation that's worthy of a King's ransom, which is exactly what my Viking Lord willingly traded for me. An amount he'd easily recoup during his next sortie across the 'West Sea.'

I remember the first time my Lord grasped me two-handed in his iron grip. That feeling of being at one with him. The swish as my blade swept through the air. The satisfying crack of splintering wood as the head of the effigy is severed from its torso. A successful test that seals the contract.

Compared to most of his compatriots, my Lord was not especially tall. However, what he lacked in height was more than compensated for by his extraordinary strength and wisdom. Sporting fiery red hair and full beard, he was omnipotent among fellow men. A warrior born to lead.

My first kill happened unexpectedly. It was Winter and we were resident in my Lord's homestead. His training ground was a nearby secluded glen surrounded by forest. We'd begun an exercise in swordsmanship with a retainer when a crazed bear bore down on us. With death looming large, my Lord instinctively and skilfully swept my tip across the beast's torso. As it recoiled, he thrust me deep inside its chest. Smashing bone and piercing the brute's heart. The threat extinguished, my compatriots shouted wildly in exultation.

As years pass, Viking aspirations turn from pillaging to absolute conquest. Always ready for a fight and with an eye to even greater rewards, my Lord answered the call to join Lord Guthrum's mighty Viking army.

Successes over two summers in the Western Land had subjugated almost all Anglo Saxon held territories. Only part of Wessex offered any sort of resistance to Guthrum's aspirations. Here the King known as Alfred, had retreated with his minions to the remote marshland settlement of Athelney. Just one more push was all that was needed to achieve total domination.

Certain of the coming victory, our camp in Cirencester was in high spirit. But being a somewhat restless soul, my Lord decided to take me and three retainers on a scouting mission to establish the oppositions strength. We left early and headed towards the low lands surrounding the enemy's stronghold. The attack on us came unexpectedly. I recall being drawn from my scabbard, but little else. Other than, that is, the surreal descent into the underworld we call Hel. As for my Lord, I trust he had died valiantly enough to earn his rightful place beside Odin's throne. How I wish I too could be with him in Valhalla.

Other than an occasional vibration there's little to disturb the solitude I find myself in. Gradually I'm aware of not being what I once was. That once immaculate sheen, strength and sharpness succumbing to those corrosive elements in the earth that keeps me prisoner. Knowing that my usefulness had all but gone, saddens me. I'm left without hope.

Suddenly a scary screech resounds all about me. Making me fearful that Lord Loki had sent his tormentors to take me deeper into Hel. The noise of their shrieking wafts this way and that. Travelling up and down my length. Then nothing. A void. I anticipate the worse. Again comes a burst of the terrifying din; quickly followed by another interminable silence. The tension is broken by a disturbance in the soil that covers me. Bringing with it a shard of warming light. Gentle hands carefully brush away the last remnants of dirt. Realisation turns to relief. I'm rescued at last.



Now cleaned and buffed, I begin to take stock of the changed world I find myself in. Here there's no warring. At least not for my kind. Without worthwhile purpose, I find myself residing amongst familiar items of my past existence. There's a helmet, an axe head, a gold arm-ring, an amulet, a silver-gilt vessel and much more. It is a much quieter existence than I'd once known. But at least here there's life, warmth and light. I'm content to live on with that.

Monday Art

We had a really great workshop with Kate Lynch in November using charcoal and rubber. The subject was faces . We all started and had to pass the paper to the next person to continue until it came round to the first person again The results were very interesting! It was very light-hearted and great fun and we learnt a lot, especially that drawing faces quickly is not easy!

Sylvia Mottram



Monday

Art (am Weekly)
Sylvia Mottram

Digital Photography (am 2nd Monday)
Anne Wood

History (pm 1st Monday of Month)
Bruce Bower

Literature (pm last Monday of Month)
Sue Kewish

Recorder (pm weekly)
Gill Bagnall

Garden Group (pm 3rd Monday)
Caroline Reeves

Tuesday

Art (am Weekly)
Dayella Stickland

Advanced French (alternate Tuesday pm)
Susan Keen

Mah Jong. (pm 2nd and 4th Tuesday)
Marion G Pace

Play Reading (pm 2nd Tuesday)
Chris Martin

Listening to Jazz (pm 2nd Tuesday)
Neil Houghton

Wednesday

Wednesday Walking (am alt Weeks)
Janet Ansell

Wednesday Poetry (am last Wednesday)
Jane Crozier

To check for spaces and other group details, contact the group leader by going to the groups page of the website, select your group from the list, then click on Group email: to send your message

Bridge. (pm Weekly)

Kate Mair

Wine Appreciation (Evenings 3rd Wednesday)

Alan & Alison Gibbons

Thursday

Book Group (pm 1st Thursday)

Jill Halford

Looking at Art (pm 2nd Thursday)

Jenny and Colin Bowen

Writing for Fun (9am 1st Thursday Monthly)

Helen Tracy

Thursday Poetry (am 2nd Thursday)

Ray Leary

Scrabble (pm 4th Thursday)

Karrie Barron

Reading (am 2nd Thursday)

Gill Bagnall

Friday

Friday Walking (am 1st & 3rd Friday)

John Stalley

Short Walks

Susan Keen

Non-Specific

Natures Walks Seasonal

Joan Williams (Group leader)

Vicky Taylor (Deputy leader)

Travel

Anne Wood

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Good Tradesman Guide

Home Improvements

Carpet Cleaning

Orchid Carpet Cleaning

Richard Payne

Tel: 01963 371284

Mob: 07599 789725

Roofer / Carpenter

Dave Whitehead

Mob: 07932 058681

General Builder

Andy Baker

Mob: 07510 943009

Painter / Decorator

Adrian Richardson

Mob: 07815 618465

Jonathan Ackland

Mob: 07759 882591

Tel: 01963 351316.

Roger Welton

Tel: 01963 440341

Plasterers

Colin John Caren

Mob: 07749890798

Plumbing and Heating Engineer Gas Safe Reg'd

Perkins Plumbing & Heating

Andrew Perkins

Mob: 07815 515671

Warm Welcome Heating Services Gas Safe Reg'd

Roger Welton

Tel: 01963 440341

Plumbing & Heating

Kevan Davis

Mob: 07976 741029

Electrical & Electronic

Computers - Technology and Software

Nigel Smith

Tel: 01963 220993

General Services

Domestic Appliances

Domestec

Washing machines /Dishwashers.

Tel: 01963 220366

Servicing & Repairs Servicing and Repairs

PRM Domestic

Mob: 07977 802756

Chimney Sweep

Tom Sweep

Mob: 07340 743366

Vehicles

Car Body Maintenance

SMB Body Repairs

Shaun Browncey

Tel: 01935 840301

Car Repairs.

Bayford Motors

Tel: 01963 33746

We have space in the Good Tradesman Guide if you know someone you would like to recommend for their
Products and Services.

Please e-mail smutzdoc@gmail.com

All of the above businesses have been recommended by individual Camelot Area U3A members based on their own experience. Each of the businesses listed above have given their permission for their details to be included - last checked in January 2020. Disclaimer: Inclusion does not constitute endorsement by Camelot Area U3A. No liability is accepted by the Camelot Area u3a trustees

Dates for your Diary 2025

- Wed 22 Jan Film **Thelma (2024)**
- Fri 31st Jan Monthly Meeting: **Poetry and Science.**
Dr C Southgate
- 8/9th Feb **u3a** showcase Market House
- Fri 14 Feb **Group Leaders** Coffee Morning Market House
- Wed 26 Feb Film **Paddington goes to Peru (2024) (family)**
- Fri 28 Feb Monthly Meeting: Brian and Jacqueline Sutton
(**TWOgether** talks) (**Dickens it was the best**)
- Sat 5th April 10am **Digital Photo Exhibition**
to accompany Coffee Morning at
Galhampton Village Hall.

Newsletter Distribution

Patsy Diamond & Hilary Dunford