

April 2026
Charity Reg No. 1038544



CAMELOT AREA
Newsletter

Who's Who in Camelot

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Contents

Who's Who in Camelot	02
Notes from the Vice Chairman	04
Camelot monthly Meetings	05/6
Caryford Cinema	06
Book Club	08
Digital Photography Group	09
Member Groups	10/11
Wednesday Walking Group	12
Step in Nature	12
Tuesday Art	13
Monday Art	14
Writing for Fun -Tutorial	15/16
Up and Coming	17
Good Tradesman Guide	18/19

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Notes from the Vice Chair

We hope you are enjoying your extra newsletter for April. A big thank you to our editor Sandie for suggesting this and to all the group leaders that have provided articles for this extra edition. It is always good to see and hear what you have been up to over the past few weeks.

In April, Kate Mair is standing down from group leader of the Bridge Group. Kate has been organising this activity for thirteen years, an outstanding achievement. Providing many happy hours of enjoyment for many, we would like to thank Kate from all of us at the u3a. Bridge will not be disbanding however, as Brian Hunter will be stepping forward to lead the group, thank you Brian.

Anne Wood has also mentioned that this is the last year that she will be organising the much-appreciated Travel Group. It is a relief to hear that in the last newsletter, Anne hinted that a volunteer group leader could be found. We hope so as this is a much-loved activity and is extremely well supported. No pressure at all...

We are extremely lucky to have 24 group activities available at our Camelot Area u3a, but there is always room for more. If you wish to attend an activity that is not presently offered and could be achievable, for example, Arc welding may be a little difficult, please send your suggestions to us and we will investigate the possibilities of such an activity happening. You never know, there could be someone in our u3a that would be willing to start an activity that you have always wished to do. Fingers crossed.

So, until the next month's newsletter, let us hope for some beautiful weather to enjoy our gardening, photography, walking, art activities or just the amazing feeling that a little bit of sunshine can bring. Looking at the spring bulbs and getting out on a warm, sunny day, lifts the spirits – enjoy. Until May

Stella Fairbairn – Vice Chair.

Camelot Monthly Meetings

Caryford Community Hall

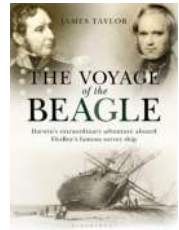
Friday 27th March 2026 at 2.30 p.m

Name of Speaker Dr James Taylor

The Voyage of The Beagle

Captain Robert FitzRoy, Charles Darwin and the Voyage of HMS Beagle

2026 marks the 200th anniversary of the first voyage of HMS Beagle when Robert FitzRoy became captain. This led to the second global voyage in 1831 with Charles Darwin as his shipboard naturalist and the collection of evidence for the publication *On the Origin of Species*.



FitzRoy paid for two artists, Augustus Earle and Conrad Martens, to paint the people and places encountered, and these images underpin the seafaring stories. This talk also focuses on the family and influences on FitzRoy and Darwin.

The speaker Dr James Taylor is a former curator of pictures at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich and author of *The Voyage of the Beagle - Darwin's extraordinary adventure aboard FitzRoy's famous survey ship*.

Friday 24th April 2026 at 2.30 p.m

Name of Speaker David Hindley

Thomas Russell: The man who helped secure the great poet's literary legacy.

Thomas Russell (born in 1570) came to Somerset when his widowed mother married Henry Berkeley of Bruton Abbey. His education was at the local grammar school, which is now known as King's Bruton.

He became a trusted friend of William Shakespeare



and eventually an overseer of the poet's will.

This is the story of how a wealthy country gentleman became part of the great Shakespeare narrative.

Friday 29th May 2026 at 2.30 p.m

Name of Speaker Sally Smith

The Women who went round the world

Sally talks about the extraordinary journeys of the women featured in her latest book, *The Women Who Went Round the World* – the women who were the very first to achieve a full circumnavigation by sea, land and finally by air. Her talk gives a fascinating glimpse into not just the personal lives and journeys of these groundbreaking women, but also offers a fascinating glimpse into society at very different times in history.

Sally Smith is a journalist and writer who has worked as a foreign correspondent for the Daily Mail and for BBC News. She was named Business Writer of the Year, has a Churchill Fellowship and is an established author with books published by Pelham Books, Rigby Books and The History Press.

Monthly Meeting Tea Rota 2026

The Tea and Coffee for the Monthly Meetings will be organised by the nominated Group below. It would be appreciated if the nominated group for that month could provide two to three group members to serve refreshments. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be brought to the meeting so only milk will need to be purchased. 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.

March	Bridge	Kate Mair
April	Wine Appreciation	Alan & Alison Gibbons
May	Book Group	Jill Halford

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.

The February raffle raised £41 for the Air Ambulance Service

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 25 March *The Choral* (2025)(12)

Ramsden, Yorkshire, 1916. The chorus master and most of the men of the ambitious local Choral Society have volunteered for the front, so under the direction of the demanding, driven Dr. Guthrie (Ralph Fiennes), the Choral recruits a crop of teenage boys and girls. Together they discover the joys of singing and the urgency of desire as the new boys come to terms with their imminent conscription into the army.



Wednesday 22 April *Springsteen "deliver me from nowhere"* (2025)(12)

This film chronicles the making of Bruce Springsteen's 1982 "Nebraska" album when he was a young musician on the cusp of global superstardom, struggling to reconcile the pressures of success with the ghosts of his past. Recorded on a 4-track recorder in Springsteen's New Jersey bedroom, the album marked a pivotal time in his life and is considered one of his most enduring works — a raw, haunted acoustic record populated by lost souls searching for a reason to believe.



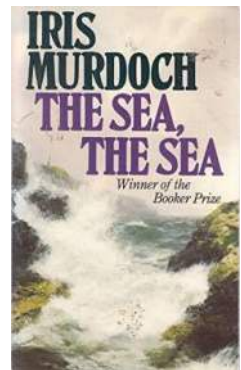
Book Group

The Thursday Book Group meets on the first Thursday of the month at a private house in Castle Cary. We have quite a mix of tastes for books so usually have lively discussions. Last year we decided that we would consciously read a wide range of genres, in order to widen our reading.



In the last few months we have read, *Fresh Water* for *Flowers* by Valerie Perrin. (Book in translation); *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf (early 20th Century novelist) *Muriel Spark - A far cry from Kensington.* (Mid 20th Century Novelist) *Death in a Strange Country* by Donna Leon (Detective); *I know why the Cage Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (autobiography); *Shrines of Gaiety* by Kate Atkinson (Post War Soho); *You will be safe here* by Damian Barr (Boer War, Historical, South Africa); *Love and war in the Apennines* by Eric Newby (Travelogue, Romance, Part escape story, Auto biographical)

Orlando, we found quite difficult, but most people enjoyed parts of it. It sent a couple of us off on a Virginia Woolf research project to learn more about the Bloomsbury set, which was fascinating and definitely invited a reread of the book with greater understanding. *Shrines of Gaiety* by Kate Atkinson gave us a lighthearted read to compensate. *Love and war in the Apennines* by Eric Newby was enjoyed by all and sparked lots of conversation about the war, and adventures and experience of relatives.



Next month we are tackling *The Sea, the Sea* by Iris Murdoch (Booker Prize winner.)"

Jill Halford

Digital Photography News

The March meeting was enhanced by a well constructed and informative presentation by Jenny on Sports Photography. A subject not for the faint hearted or fair weather photographers. We were given advice on what camera settings are best for this subject, where to place ourselves for the best angles and quite importantly, how to keep warm and dry. To prove her point, Jenny showed us a selection of excellent action shots that she has taken of different sports, particularly football and boxing. Thank you Jenny.



As usual, our group came up with a selection of varied photographs covering the subject of Contrast, Legs and Balloons. A few of which, you can view here.



The next meeting on 13th April will be a practical session on low light photography – portraits and table top still life photography, led by Eric and Jenny.

If you wish to come to a meeting just to see how things work, please join us or contact me for further details.



Anne Wood

Members Groups

Monday

Art (am Weekly)

Sylvia Mottram 07831 419729 mottramsylvia@gmail.com

Digital Photography (am 2nd Monday)

Anne Wood woodofcastlecary@gmail.com

History (pm 1st Monday of Month)

Bruce Bower 01747 840335 bowersxb@btinternet.com

Literature (pm last Monday of Month)

Sue Kewish 01749830665 suekewish2@gmail.com

Recorder (pm weekly)

Gill Bagnall 01963 350629 gbbagnall@googlemail.com

Garden Group (pm 3rd Monday)

Caroline Reeves 01963 351269 carolineofcc@gmail.com

Tuesday

Art (am Weekly)

Dayella Stickland 07866 173511

dayella_ruetsche@hotmail.com

Advanced French (alternate Tuesday pm)

Susan Keen 01963 33444 keensue5@gmail.com

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

Marion G Pace 01963 548217 mazpace@gmail.com

Play Reading (pm 2nd Tuesday)

Chris Martin 01963 350891. treborlodge@btinternet.com

Listening to Jazz (pm 2nd Tuesday)

Neil Houghton 07799 545278 houghtonneil@yahoo.co.uk

Wednesday

Wednesday Walking (am alt Weeks)

Ron Cossins 01963 350946 randb7968@gmail.com

Wednesday Poetry (am last Wednesday)

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 alternate Weeks)

Ron Cossins

Wednesday Poetry (am last Wednesday)

Hazel Hudson

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)

Brinan Hunter

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

Shorter Walks (am 2nd Friday Monthly)

Susan Keen

Non-Specific

Walk into Nature Seasonal

Ron Cossins (Group leader)

Vicky Taylor (Deput leader)

Travel

Anne Wood

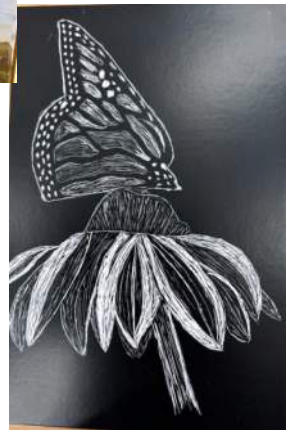
To check for spaces and other group details, contact the group leader by going to the groups page of the website, select your group from the list, then click on Group email: to send your message

in the sanctuary commemorates Barnaby Dirke (1578 to 1620) rector of Blackford who was reported for preaching only once a quarter.

Ron Cossins

Tuesday Art

A selection of art created in watercolour, acrylic and and with the scraper board effect.



Dayella Stickland

Monday Art

A selection of work we have done in the last weeks. The cakes look good enough to eat!

Sylvia Mottram



A Talk to budding Authors

To be read in the manner of an Author addressing a small assembly.



"Ladies, gentlemen, fellow procrastinators, logophiles and lexophiles. Answer to whichever term you prefer but tonight, we are all lovers of words. Thank you for your kind invitation to address you and I hope the next fifteen minutes answer many of your questions; I'll try and answer as many as I can.

One of the first questions is the hardest to answer and that is 'is there such a thing as an overnight success?' Wow, that is hard. On the face of it you may think that my debut novel, "The Midnight Murder on Sommoroy Island" was an overnight success but in truth, it took me almost 10 years to achieve. Not that it took me ten years to write, heavens no, I wrote it in a matter of months following a family holiday on the same island but with countless rejections from previous writings. That would put me in good company. Frank Herbert was rejected twenty-three times before his debut, Dune, was accepted for publishing. There are so many stories like his, and now mine.

My first attempt, 'Once, twice, three times a maybe,' I researched, rewrote, resubmitted more times than I care to recount. I almost gave up. I still have the rejection letters from agents and publishers; their caustic comments still resonate today but I knew, somewhere inside of me, was a story to be told.

For 'The murder on Sommoroy island,' it was an idea, purely by chance, which popped up on my laptop. An image with a few words that read 'where time doesn't matter.' I was intrigued, so first step was to look at the internet. It's amazing what you can find out on any subject. The first thing I learned was that the island has almost three months of continuous daylight and nine months of darkness, so time isn't recognised. Wikipedia is another great reference source but sometimes you must take it with a pinch of salt. Visiting Sommoroy was next on my list. What better research than walking the streets,

observing the people? There's a world of difference between what you know and what you need to learn.

Excuse me whilst I take a drink, I'm not used to talking this much, it's usually cramp from writing.

So, where were we? Yes, I mentioned Agents and Publishers. A good Agent is worth their weight in gold. They are the middle-ground between you, as the writer, and the publisher. They will read and comment on your work, often making subtle changes, long before your publisher ever gets to see it. How do you choose your Agent? My advice would be to find one whose clients already include writers who write the same genre as you. If you are writing science fiction look at the work of someone like Isaac Asimov. Where he credits his success will be the name of his agent, the same will apply to JK Rowling, Danielle Steele. In fact, every writer I have ever read, met, or admired all give thanks to their Agent; so, contact them first. It will save you a lot of heartache.

Finally, before I answer any questions in person, I'm often asked about 'getting started, getting stuck, when to finish.' Well, the starting point is the seed that was sown. For me it was the chance item that popped up on my laptop, the image and short paragraph about Sommoroy. You will get stuck, I got stuck, so don't expect to rattle off three hundred pages in one sitting. Take a break, take your time, revisit your research, talk to other writers. We've all been there, and they will be pleased to help over a coffee somewhere. Waterstones is a good venue to meet budding authors.

Finally, when to finish? We've all read books and thought the last thirty odd pages waffled on. If you've recognised that in your reading, then you will know when to come to a good conclusion in your writing. Leave your readers hanging but not drowning.

Right, any questions ?"

Steven Lodge

Up and Coming

Coffee Mornings at the Market House at 10am

Sat 04.04.26	Vintage Market
Sat 11.04.26	Museum and Tools For Self Reliance
Sat 18.04.26	Ansford Academy
Sat 25.04.26	Cary in Bloom

Special Events Caryford Hall

<https://caryfordhall.co.uk/events/>

Last Weds of the month	19.30	Cinema Caryford Hall
Last Fri of the month	14.30	u3a talk Caryford Hall

Special Events Market House

Fri 10.04.26	10.30 - 13.30 Textile Art Exhibition
- 26.04.26	
Tues 28.04.26	Cary in Bloom Sunflower workshop

Markets

Every Tuesday	08.30 to midday Castle Cary Town market
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Regular events

Every Tuesday	13.45	Up-reading Classes. The Market House
Every Tuesday	13.45	Deaf Plus, Lip reading
1st & 3rd Weds	10.00.	Memory Cafe Methodist Church
2nd & 4th Weds	14.30.	Singing for fun The Market House
Every Thursday	10.45 - 11.45	Nat West Van Market House
Last Thur of the month	19.30	Market House Acoustic evening all ages welcome
Fourth Sat monthly	10.00	Cary Repair Cafe (part of Eat Cary)
Fourth Thur monthly	10.00	Live well with pain. Catherine Close Community Hall
Every Friday	15.00.	Talking cafe The Market House

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

Matt O'shea

Mob: 07368 874603

Painter / Decorator

Adrian Richardson

Mob: 07815 618465

Jonathan Ackland

Mob: 07759 882591

Tel: 01963 351316.

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

Kevin 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 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

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