

What time's the  
next swan?

# Chat from the Chair



**H**ello there, I hope all is well with you!

A bit of news from our greenhouse; twenty-seven sunflower seeds have done their stuff and come through (in pots at the mo)! Do you remember Martin standing by a 9ft plus sunflower (pictured in a previous News-letter)? What a whopper! So, watch this space..

Also, all the runner beans in pots have come through!

Again we had a very good turn out for our guest Speaker Brian Fleetwood-Freeland with his talk: The View from The Wings. A most interesting and very amusing afternoon..

As you will see from your Newsletter, our guest on the 15<sup>th</sup> June will be Mike Dawson who will be presenting a talk on The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. This will be, I'm sure, a most interesting afternoon so please come along, rally the cause and give support to The CWGC.

As you will read in Phil's monthly Newsletter, we have a good variety of speakers in the pipeline plus information on the activities of the many interest groups. Do have a look and see what's on offer in the Blackwater Valley u3a Group.

Kind regards,  
**Barbara**

# Forthcoming Meetings

**June 15th**

**Mike Dawson**

*The Commonwealth War Graves Commission*

**July 20th**

**No Speaker: Our Garden Party**

*We shall be holding a Summer Meeting using **The Coffee Shop on the Green** as last year as our meeting point. Members are asked to bring their own refreshments strictly for their own use.*

**August 17th**

**Mel Rees**

*Telling us more about his life.*

**September 21st**

**Michelle Cleave**

*Savill Gardens*

**October 19th**

**Bobbi Derbyshire**

*“Where do authors get their ideas from?”*

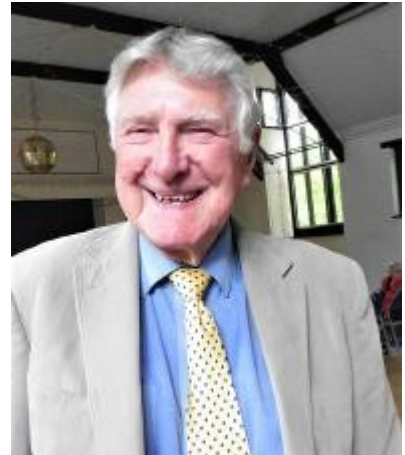
# Our last speaker

## BRIAN FREELAND

### *The View from the Wings.*

Brian's experiences and ability to name drop with the best soon won over a receptive Black Water Valley audience.

Everything but the kitchen sink springs to mind but is inappropriate for a man whose career spans stage managing and directing variety at the London Palladium and Butlins and stints with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Scottish Opera the National Theatre and Sadler's Wells Ballet.



Brian's theatrical life started in the fifties after National Service in the RAF [where he learnt Chinese] becoming a trainee manager with Moss Empires working at the Palladium with the legendary Crazy Gang.

It was here that he became involved in the production of Sunday Night at the London Palladium with its first comperé Tommy Trinder and a run of Christmas Pantomimes with many stars of the current TV shows such as Sir Harry Secombe.

He was informative about his time in Ballet where he became a director for the first time but it was Opera that provided one of the best anecdotal asides in his talk when relating the story of a production of Lohengrin when the mechanical swan taking the lead role across the stage broke down because a stage hand misread the signal leading to historic utterance by the Tenor: "What time's the next Swan?"

Brian's career has taken him to over forty different countries including residencies in the Middle East, tours of the India and going around the world twice.

His talk was very entertaining and [good news!] he will probably be back with us at a later date with an entirely new subject to which we can all look forward.



# Catching up with the Groups

## The Book Group

**I**n life there are many challenges, and this month I feel that for the book club one of these challenges maybe reading our latest book. The Map of Love by Abdaf Souelf has been a difficult read, but I did persevere until the end. I have been in the book club about 13/14 years and in that time there has only been a couple of times I have given up on the read, but this came close!

At either end of the Twentieth century, two women fall in love with men outside their familiar worlds. One in 1901 and one in 1997. Both travel to Egypt to find love.

A difficult time for Lady Anna travelling to an outpost rolling in nationalist and political sentiment. Also a difficult story for Isabel, a descendant of Anna, who goes to Egypt in 1997 and obviously finds a different world to her Aunt.

So, why was it a challenge for me to read? I find books with pages and pages of description not very inspiring so I find myself flicking over the pages to get back to the actual story.

Let's hope the rest of the ladies enjoy it more than I did, you never know!

Our next meeting is Thursday 29th June

**WENDY DAUVEN**

## MOTO

### MOTO NEWS:

In May we celebrated the Coronation with a very well attended and enjoyable Tea Party. Many thanks to Irene for hosting the event. In June we are looking forward to a pub lunch and canal trip.. To be followed in July by a second visit to Riseley Village Tea Room. The next business meeting will be in August.

PLEASE NOTE: I am very sorry to report that we have decided, for the time being, to cap our MOTO membership at its present level. The reason is that we are finding it difficult to book restaurants and outings for large numbers. (If there is sufficient demand it may be time for Blackwater Valley u3a to consider setting up MOTO2)

**JUDITH SHAW** 0118 973 2724 mobile: 07508 724876

email: [jmshaw17@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jmshaw17@hotmail.co.uk)

# Walking Together

WITH MIN GARDINER AND ROMY WHITE

**S**tarting from the Bird in Hand in Lower Sandhurst we walked through to the Ambarrow bluebell woods and up onto the Finchampstead Ridges. The bluebells were a bit battered by the rains but still splendid. We crossed into Simons Wood and looped past Heath Lake to Crowthorne and the path back to the pub for a well earned lunch. Excellent value at £8 for a main course.

June's walk will be led by Jane Ingram, meeting as usual at 0930 for a prompt start at 0945 in Potley Hill school car park. Please feel free to join us





# Out and about

WITH MIN GARDINER AND CAROLE FOWLER

## WALKING TOGETHER CORNWALL BRANCH

On our first day looking after former member Kathie Hugill's dog in Redruth we took the dog to Carn Marth, a local high spot, disused quarry and now open air theatre. From the trig point at the top we could see both coast-lines. No pubs on the route though so it wouldn't do for a Walking Together walk!



### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — OVERDUE

Please be aware that if you have not paid your annual subscription this will be the last BVu3a Newsletter that you will receive.

Please ensure that your remittance is with Meg Thomson our Treasurer ASAP.

# The Art Group

Having three public holidays in May, the Art Group could only meet twice.

We reconvene on June 5th, and depending on the weather may take ourselves off to paint outdoors. Later subjects for the month are 'A Rose in bloom' and 'A Garden Centre'.

We meet every Monday at 11am to 1pm at the Darby Green and Frogmore Social Hall in Frogmore Road.

Contact; Martin Brooks 01252 871333 or [thebrooksies73@gmail.com](mailto:thebrooksies73@gmail.com)



## On a Musical Note

Wednesday afternoon 2.00pm) 7<sup>th</sup> June will be our monthly get together at The Tythings. Our DJ Graham has already put together our playlist so there's plenty of songs to have a good crack at!

JULY – Date/details to be confirmed.

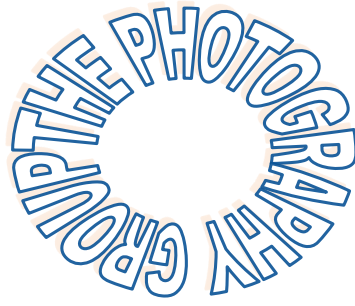
AUGUST – Clear month.

SEPTEMBER – Back at The Tythings Wednesday afternoon, 6<sup>th</sup> September.

If you fancy singing please come along, you'd be most welcome!

Regards  
BARBARA





**The Photography Group is arranging a field trip for this month. Details to follow**



**Group member Mel Nicolson sent his photo of what is officially called "The Gateshead Millennium Bridge" One of several iconic bridges on the River Tyne. Viewed from his hotel room on the Newcastle quayside that used to be a Cooperative flour mill in the days when the Tyne was a working river.**

# Popeye the Sailor Man - who knew?



## **His real name was Frank "Rocky" Fiegel**

He was born in 1868 in Poland and, as a child, immigrated to the United States with his parents, who settled down in a small town in Illinois.

As a young man, Rocky went to sea. After a 20 year career as a sailor in the Merchant Marines, Fiegel retired. He was later hired by Wiebusch's Tavern in the city of Chester, Illinois as a 'Bouncer' to maintain order in the rowdy bar.

Rocky quickly developed a reputation for always being involved in fighting (and usually winning). As a result, he had a deformed eye ("Pop-eye"). He also 'always' smoked his pipe, so he always spoke out of one side of his mouth.

In his spare time as a Bouncer, Rocky would entertain the customers by regaling them with exciting stories of adventures he claimed to have had over his career as a sailor crossing the 'Seven Seas.'

The creator of Popeye, Elzie Crisler Segar, grew up in Chester and, as a young man, met Rocky at the tavern and would sit for hours listening to the old sailor's amazing 'sea stories.'

Years later, Segar became a cartoonist and developed a comic strip called 'Thimble Theater.'

He honoured Fiegel by asking if he could model his new comic strip character, 'Popeye the Sailor Man,' after him. Naturally Fiegel was flattered and agreed.

Segar claimed that 'Olive Oyl,' along with other characters, was also loosely based on an actual person. She was Dora Paskel, owner of a small grocery store in Chester. She apparently actually looked much like the Olive Oyl character in his comics. He claimed she even dressed much the same way.

Through the years, Segar kept in touch with Rocky and always helped him with money; giving him a small percentage of what he earned from his 'Popeye' illustrations.

WHO didn't love the cartoons??? We watched them religiously ... so funny, so moral ... each story had a good ending ... wonder if kids these days even KNOW who Popeye is??? Who knew he was a real man?? Awesome!!!

*[A contribution from Martin]*

# More from Martin

**K**ing Charles III was Coronated,  
On May the Sixth just gone.  
Now only Working Royals are tolerated,  
On the balcony they stand on.

We were given a day off on the Monday,  
A full day for celebration and cheer  
Good old Charlie - bless him!  
We had lots to eat – and beer!

He's been very patient until now,  
and most of us wish him well.  
Times are changing for the Royals.  
Will it work? Only time will tell.



The car is having a new windscreen,  
It developed a bit of a crack.  
It's going in this morning,  
This afternoon it's coming back.

I've cleaned it – it looks very shiny.  
Why should they work in a mess?  
Whilst fixing the damage inflicted  
And repairing with such finesse.



# In case you were wondering . . .

*Our very lucky Averil made sure of her Monthly Draw winnings by collecting a cheque from the guardian of the BVu3a coffers Treasurer Meg Thomson*



*Our resident poet and major contributor to the Newsletter Martin Brooks raises a smile realising that the front-page scene he witnessed was just for the camera. A scene directed no doubt by the wonderfully talented Brian Freeland.*

## At the Garden Party — 25th July

Bring a couple of books in good condition for our **BOOK EXCHANGE** at the Party. There will also be an opportunity for the **GARDENERS** amongst you to bring in any plants or seedlings for a similar exchange. Don't worry if you have neither books or plants and would like to take an item or two. There will be a jar for cash donations — a small amount will secure!

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Barbara Brooks	01252 871333	<a href="mailto:thebrooksies73@gmail.com">thebrooksies73@gmail.com</a>
David Dickinson	01252 879056	<a href="mailto:daviddickinson9@btinternet.com">daviddickinson9@btinternet.com</a>
Marilynne Gardiner	01252 877510	<a href="mailto:xansamaz@aol.com">xansamaz@aol.com</a>
Carol Pascoe	01252 651872	<a href="mailto:capascoe@ntlworld.com">capascoe@ntlworld.com</a>
Sue Puxley	01276 513031	<a href="mailto:suepuxley@virginmedia.com">suepuxley@virginmedia.com</a>
Philip Rowling	01252 870879	<a href="mailto:rowlingphilip@gmail.com">rowlingphilip@gmail.com</a>
Meg Thomson	01276 33727	<a href="mailto:megtho@ntlworld.com">megtho@ntlworld.com</a>