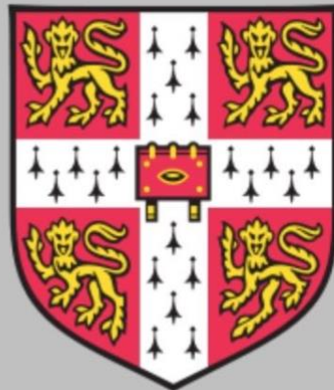


Norfolk Cambridge Society

April 2026 Newsletter



From the Editor

As the days lengthen and the sun shines, welcome to our Spring newsletter. Unfortunately, I have to begin by noting the cancellation of two planned events. A strike at the Fitzwilliam Museum on April 30th has put the kibosh on that visit and our talk by Toby Capwell at Ashwellthorpe church on May 20th has had to be postponed. Details of a new date for this event will be circulated as soon as we have them.

I'm pleased however to include details of two new initiatives, details of which follow: 'Chat and Cue' snooker nights to be held at the Norfolk Club and social golf matches - to be organised at a location and time to suit the participants.

Our Boat Race lunch held jointly with the Oxford University Society of Norfolk was once again a great success: Read Mu Gurbutt's entertaining account of this year's Race below.

Following the publication of Geoffrey Smart's book (covered in the last newsletter) I look forward to reporting details of our current Chair's latest oeuvre in an upcoming edition. There is no official requirement to be a published author before taking on the role of NCS Chair despite appearances to the contrary!

I will be putting together the next newsletter towards the end of August and, as ever, would be delighted to include reader contributions.

Kathy Moyse
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'Chat and Cue' Snooker Events

Do you play snooker? Or never tried it but want to give it a go?

If you want to know more then you are warmly invited to attend our 'launch' snooker sessions, to be held in the Billiards Room at The Norfolk Club. If there is sufficient interest we will ask the Committee to organise regular snooker nights, with a knockout competition as a possible future event. For now, though, the invitation is to a chat over a couple of frames.

The details

Sessions will be held on **Friday 29th May (17.00-19.00)** and **Saturday 30th May (10.00-12.00)** at The Norfolk Club, 17 Upper King Street, Norwich.

There is no charge but to assist with organisation please email Rob Edwards if you would like to attend one or both events.

rob.edwards@cantab.net

NCS Public Lectures

Our twenty fifth public lecture was held on 5th February in Norwich Cathedral. It was delivered by Professor Neil Lawrence who is, inter alia, the inaugural Deep Mind Professor of Machine Learning at the University of Cambridge. His topic was **'How AI Works and How it will Transform our Lives'**. Just under 500 people attended.

Unfortunately, poor sound was experienced by a proportion of the audience for which we apologise. We will ensure this does not happen again. The Cathedral also proved to be rather cold in January for events of this kind so we will not use it again during the winter months unless there is no alternative.

Professor Lawrence's lecture was otherwise very well received as evidenced by your feedback, some of which follows:

- *A most enjoyable and interesting talk. He was an engaging speaker and it was good to hear someone unafraid to explore complex areas with an educated audience. I particularly enjoyed the interdisciplinary aspect of the topic: roaming between science, theology and economics. Nice to see many of our sixth formers there.*
- *Professor Lawrence spoke extremely well and presented a potentially heavy subject in an engaging and very thought-provoking way.*
- *An absolute tour de force! I was worried I wasn't techy enough to make the most of it but Professor Lawrence is a renaissance man and a fabulous speaker at that. Thank you so much.*

Twenty Sixth Lecture



The twenty sixth Norfolk Cambridge Society Public Lecture will take place on **Thursday 14th May from 6.30 pm in the Blake Studio, Norwich School** and will be delivered by Professor Robin Franklin. His subject will be **'Brains, stem cells and growing old - reversing the ravages of time'** with Registration from 6.00pm.

- The event is currently sold out and there is quite a long waiting list so if you have bought tickets and cannot now come please let me know by emailing geoffreyjnsmart@gmail.com and I will put you in touch with people on the waiting list.

Further 2026 & 2027 Lectures: dates for your diaries

Thursday 17th September 2026. 'A conversation with Ed Balls'. Ed Balls, British broadcaster, economist, former Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and former Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer will be interviewed by **Philip Webster**, former Political Editor of *The Times*.

Tuesday 10th November, 2026. Sir Richard Dearlove, former head of the British Secret Intelligence Service MI6 will talk to **'The Geopolitical Decline of Interdependence and its Implications'**.

Thursday 28th January 2027. Lord 'Chris' Smith of Finsbury, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Provisional title **'Why Free Speech Matters'**.

Geoffrey Smart

2026 Boat Race

This year's boat race was very different to last year's. For both the men's and the women's it was pretty obvious after the first twenty strokes, which crew would win.

The commentator did a good job talking throughout the race when there was very little to say, except for the possibility that one of the boats would sink as conditions were exceedingly choppy. Were they taking on water? Were the pumps working? Should they have had the splashboards in place? The highlight was.... There's a branch floating in the water. Will they collide with it? This could be dangerous..... and both crews managed to miss it. Conditions made steering and maintaining rhythm very difficult.

The women's crew tried valiantly but Oxford were just too strong and the Cambridge men's crew dominated from Hammersmith Bridge to win by three and a half lengths which was their seventh win in eight years. Claire Balding and Jamie Laing had to apologise for the swearing by both crews - obviously never seen a football match! Goldie and Blondie won too, so with three out of four it was a good day.

I almost forgot: The sandwiches and cakes were delicious thanks to Angie and the team at the Norfolk Club and I wonder which of Jamie Laing's many qualifications landed him the job of commentating the Boat Race? But that's just my opinion. Definitely going to Bumps this year. Anyone for Pimm's?

Mu Gurbutt

Incrementum Lunchtime Investment Group



Our investment club currently has nine members and there is room for one more. No money has to be put up by anyone. All investments are purely notional. We are a mix of retired professional investors, plus amateurs with some experience of managing their own portfolios. Members are drawn from both the Norfolk Cambridge Society and the Norfolk Club. It is great fun and a source of excellent ideas for investing. We meet every two months or so at the Norfolk Club for a couple of hours, followed by lunch. Do contact me if you're interested.

Geoffrey Smart

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NCS Golf Singles

I'm hoping to put together a list of retired NCS members who are members of golf clubs and who are interested in widening their circle of golfing friends and acquaintances across Norfolk whilst getting to play different courses. The idea is for everyone on the list to play a couple of singles matches with each of the others on the list, at their respective clubs, over the course of the year. I am suggesting singles matches simply because they're rather easier to arrange and are a better way of getting to know people. I have no plans to ask for scores to be reported or league tables produced. The point of the exercise is socialising, not competing.

If enough people respond, I'll put together a list and circulate it so people can contact each other and find mutually convenient times to play.

If you're interested, please email me mentioning your name, your club and your handicap

Geoffrey Smart geoffreyjnsmart@gmail.com

Viewpoints



Our April Viewpoints meeting brought together a lively discussion on one of the more enduring questions in political and social philosophy: **Is wealth redistribution fair?**

The conversation covered a lot of ground. Members explored what fairness actually means in practice, and how our obligations to one another - particularly to those most in need - should shape the way Society is organised. The discussion also ventured into international territory, touching on redistribution between corporations and individuals, and between the wealthiest and poorest nations. By the end of the evening, a broad consensus emerged: yes, wealth redistribution is fair.

What remained genuinely open, and perhaps the more difficult question, is how wealth should be redistributed. Mechanisms, thresholds, and trade-offs proved far harder to agree on, and this remains something of an open puzzle - one the group seemed happy to sit with, at least for now.

A thought-provoking evening! The next Viewpoints meeting will take place on **Thursday 11th June**, with details to be announced shortly.

Sevi Marshall
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Book Group

We have met three times since the last newsletter and, although very different books, all three choices have produced wide-ranging and thought-provoking discussion.

Sally Carson's *Crooked Cross*, written in 1934 describes the effects on a small-town German family of Hitler's election to the Chancellorship the previous year above all the disruption of family relationships as its members take differing views of their new leader.

Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation of a Small Guest* is a wry take on academia in the USA of the 1950s. Clearly based on Nabokov's own experiences the characters are beautifully drawn while some of the absurdities of life on campus provoke laugh-out-loud responses. Stylistically he plays with tropes of American culture to make incisive observations about the contrasts between East and West.

April's book *Small Bomb at Dimperley* by Lissa Evans proved to be a deceptively uncomplicated read about social change in Britain, immediately post WW2. Sensitively drawn characters personify the constraints on a still class-ridden country as the owners of a minor stately home struggle to find a way to maintain it. The novel also deals in an understated way with issues of disability, mental health and illegitimacy.

Our next meeting is in June when we will be considering *Scoop* by Evelyn Waugh.

Kathy Moyse
ajskcm@btinternet.com

East of England Royal Geographical Society Events Summer 2026

Thurs 7th May 2026 7.30pm Blake Studio, Norwich School, The Close, Norwich NR1 4DD (doors open 7.00pm). Free for RGS members and students, otherwise £8 in advance or £10 on the door

Lemurs to Leopards: filming adventures from around the World, illustrated talk by Toby Hough, wildlife cameraman

Bio: Via a wandering career charted by taking opportunities as they came along, Toby Hough has ended up working mainly in television as a freelance 'Shooting Producer Director'. He has filmed with a host of well-known presenters, such as Ray Mears, Ed Stafford, Julia Bradbury and Chris Packham, in almost any kind of location. He began his career working on wildlife documentaries with ITV's Anglia 'Survival', based in Norwich, and for 10 years was a wildlife cameraman for the RSPB Film Unit. Since turning freelance he has worked on many prime-time series for major broadcasters including Spring Watch and Country File.

Event: Often working in faraway places for extended periods, Toby Hough's filming career has been an unplanned mix of excitement, responsibility, solitude and even terror. He is fortunate to have been on assignments filming Madagascar's crowned lemurs, Chukchi walrus hunters in Russia's Far East, turtle releases in a tropical paradise, and snow leopards in Tibet. Toby will give insights into what it takes to get the shot, wildlife encounters and how to protect yourself from polar bears.

Thursday 28th May 2026 2pm start from Smallsticks Café, Cart Gap Rd, Happisburgh, Norwich NR12 0QL. Free parking available. 3 hrs. duration. Need to register in advance. Free for RGS members, otherwise £10 on registration.

Coastline on the Edge: Happisburgh Past, Present and Future; a coastal walk led by Richard Powell and Rob Ferguson.

Bios: **Richard Powell OBE** is an environmental and charity adviser focused on climate, sustainability, governance and community resilience. Formerly a Regional Director at the RSPB and National Trust, he helped create major new nature reserves. He now chairs flood and coastal planning, supports youth conservation, and champions sustainable partnerships across the East of England. **Robert Ferguson** is a resident of Happisburgh who has been involved in the British Museum's 'Pathways to Ancient Britain' Project. The cliffs and foreshore at Happisburgh have revealed the earliest evidence of humans in northern Europe, dating back around 900,000 years ago. The project monitors and records new archaeological findings from the eroding coast.

Event: This walk will explore how geology, climate and human history collide at Happisburgh. We'll look at the eroding cliffs and understand how they have changed over time, examine the fossils and artefacts they reveal, and discuss what continued erosion could mean for the landscape, the community and wider environment.

Register or buy tickets for both events using this link [Event booking](#)

James Firebrace Chair

Contacts

Please take a look at our **website** <https://norfolkcambridgesociety.org.uk/> for more information about the society, events and meetings. Thanks to Peter Smith for ably maintaining this. If you have something to add he can be contacted at pdgsmith@hotmail.com

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