

**WITH JANUARY OUT OF THE WAY, BRACE UP FOR THE WINTER STORMS!**



#### **FROM THE CHAIR**

I am pleased to let you know that after we had to cancel the last two meetings, we will be resuming our regular Monthly Meetings on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February. It was disappointing not to be able to meet in the last two months but I know that cancellation was the right decision.

I am particularly looking forward to seeing and hearing David Gearing's presentation on *Dawlish Life in Pictures 1865-1925*. As well as being one of our members, David is also the Chairman of the Dawlish Local History Group. In that role he has access to an extensive archive of photographs of Dawlish over the past two centuries. I have enjoyed similar presentations from David in the past; he has a wealth of knowledge about our town. I can promise you that you will be fascinated by what he has to show about places, buildings, people, events and the way this town has evolved over the years. I hope you will want to attend.

Because the whole point of the presentation is to be able to look at the photographs and see all of their detail, it is vital that we meet in a room which has suitable light (or should I say dark?) for projection. We know that Rooms 4a and 4b in the Manor House do not have ideal black outs, so we have decided to move to the Council Chamber. Unfortunately, the Chamber is not available at our normal time of 2pm, so I have decided that we should meet later than usual at 3.15pm in the Council Chamber. I felt it was worth changing to this later time so that we can be in an environment which will enable us to enjoy the presentation to the full. I hope this later time does not cause you difficulties.

As the Chamber is in use by another organisation before 3pm, we will need to have a little time to set out the room and the projector, so it would be best if you were to plan to arrive at 3.15pm with the expectation that we will begin at 3.30pm.

**John Vick**

The **PAGE TURNER**'s book for January was *Golden Hill* by Francis Spufford. This 2016 novel won the Costa Book Award for a first novel. It is set in New York in 1746 when it was still just a small town and tells the story of a traveller who arrives from England with a bill for £1000 but refuses to reveal how he came by the money or what he intends to do with it. We read of the adventures that befall Mr Smith while the whole of New York waits for the next ship to arrive, which will either bring proof that his bill is genuine and he is a wealthy man or reveal him to be a fraudulent imposter. Through his experiences we explore the workings of New York society in that period. In addition to being set in 1746 the book is written very much in the style of that time. As well as reading the book we were able to listen to a podcast in which the author was interviewed about it.

The novel was widely praised on publication for its rich historical detail, vivid descriptions and lively style. However, whilst one of our members loved the book and described it as 'utterly captivating', the majority failed to enjoy it. Many found the writing style, with its long, convoluted sentences, difficult to follow and they

failed to engage with the characters. By about a third of the way through the book they were really struggling and several failed to finish it. Nevertheless, we had a lively discussion about the book and the topics within it. If anyone is interesting in trying the book for themselves, do contact the Page Turners. It seems some members have copies they would like to give away!

The date scheduled for the February meeting is half term and also Shaldon bridge will be closed, and these combine to mean that the majority of us are unable to attend. The group have therefore agreed to move the meeting to 3<sup>rd</sup> March, when we will be discussing 'All the Light We Cannot See' by Anthony Doerr. Following suggestions brought to the meeting by members, we have agreed that the book for the end of March meeting will be 'Trust Me' by T.M. Logan and in April we will be reading 'The Reading List' by Sara Nisha Adams.

Page Turners has space for a couple more members so if you have been enjoying reading our news and think you would like to be part of our discussions, do contact our convenor **Deborah Wallis**.



### **GARDENS AND GATEAUX**

Can I remind all u3a members that the Gardens and Gateaux Group will be holding their first meeting of 2022 at the Strand Centre, on Tuesday 8th February.

Anyone who thinks they may be interested in joining us on our visits to various public gardens during the summer, please come along.

We will be visiting the Toby Buckland Garden festival on 29th April and Coleton Fishacre on 27th May.

New group members are always welcome. Bring your ideas for further visits.

**Barry Baker**

The **BOULES GROUP** has been meeting up in January to play our version of a indoor boules tournament for an hour or so, before retiring to drink coffee. There is a lot of fun to be had playing with erratically flying juggling balls and banter and encouragement are rife.

In February we shall be meeting up at the Strand Hall at 10.30 a m on Friday 11th and Wednesday 23rd February. There's a small entrance charge and everyone's welcome.

**Michael Heyden**



## DISCUSSION GROUP

The Discussion Group met on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January to talk about the difficult subject of the prosecution of rape within the justice system. Some basic statistics had been obtained, and no one doubted the abhorrent nature of the crime and the problems of prosecuting it. The Office of National Statistics carried out a large-scale survey in 2020, and 1.6 million adults in the UK had experienced rape or attempted rape in their lifetime, half more than once. About half the cases involved a partner or ex-partner, and only 16% were reported to the police. In 2020 there were about 60,000 complaints leading to 2,000 prosecutions and 1,400 convictions, or about 70%.

Bearing in mind the low prosecution rate we talked about several quite radical ideas. Taking account of the lack of collaborating evidence in many cases, should they be decided on the balance of probability rather than beyond reasonable doubt? Should the defence have to prove innocence rather than the prosecution guilt? Should cases continue to be heard in public before juries or could anything be learned from the more closed nature of family court cases? In view of the statistics, it seems unlikely that all jury members can be unaffected by some personal connection to a victim.

Some of these ideas are very radical indeed. More consideration was given to areas which were perceived as being subject to unfair practices. The adversarial nature of our legal system leads to efforts to damage the reliability of

the evidence of the parties and witnesses. The length of time criminal cases takes to come to court, and the vast amount of potential evidence on computers and phones seem to be big problems. Judges are sometimes perceived as allowing unfair questioning over sexual histories, for example, for fear of a mistrial. The difficulty of accepting the testimony of the parties if they had been drinking was mentioned.

A number of other matters were touched on. The possibilities of videoing statements and perhaps also attendance at court to give evidence electronically rather than in person was spoken about. There was a general acceptance that the whole court procedure has to be seen to be fair and balanced for both the prosecution and defence. It was felt so many cases might turn on the issue of consent that that alone could be treated as a topic by itself.

Two points came out that were considered to be worthy of real consideration. Firstly the creation of special courts dealing with sex crimes, and connected to this professional (but not full time) jurors. It was felt that jurors having experience of such court proceedings may be able to be more objective and that questioning might get fairer if barristers haven't got a gallery to play to. Making the court process as user friendly as possible, whilst retaining fairness is of paramount importance.

**Michael Heyden**

The correct legal terms are not necessarily used in this article.

Please note that the views expressed by the Discussion Group may not represent those of the wider Dawlish and District membership.

## CRAFT

Our January meeting was cancelled due to the uncertainty at the time with Covid and many of us were still busy with family, friends etc. following the Christmas festivities. Our next meeting will be Wednesday 2nd February, from 1.30- 3.30 in Room 6, The Manor. Members are encouraged to bring along a piece of work they are currently working on to show other members or seek advice if stuck. New members are welcome to join us. Kate McCarty

Our **DAWLISH & DISTRICT U3A STROLLERS** next walk is on Thursday Feb 10<sup>th</sup>. We are planning something different!

Train to Newton Abbot leaving Dawlish at 12.30pm and Teignmouth at 12.35pm. We will then walk via Forde Park to Decoy Park where there are lots of pathways to explore plus a cafe...walk to Decoy from station takes about 20 minutes.

Return journey ...there are plenty of trains i.e. 2 or 3 leaving Newton Abbot every hour

14.37  
15.12.  
15.28  
15.41  
16.09  
16.25



Strollers wishing to go by car can meet up with us at about 1pm in main car park at Decoy.

**Jean Gitsham**

### TEA AND CHAT



A small but select group met in January at the Riverside Centre, The Manor. We all enjoyed getting to know members we hadn't had the opportunity

to chat to previously. Our next catch up will be Thursday 17th February at 2pm at the Riverside Centre. When facing the Manor walk down the right side of the building and you will see the Riverside Centre which is a blue building by the river.

Everyone is welcome to come along especially new members who might want to find out a bit more about Interest Groups both current and those that are not yet up and running. Members will be required to pay £1 towards the cost of room hire and refreshments. No need to book a place just turn up and enjoy an afternoon of catching up with fellow members.

**Kate McCarthy**

### FRENCH CONVERSATION

We have had two meetings this month and in the first one where we talked about Christmas and the feast of the three kings. Annie told us about the traditional French cake with the bean in one slice.

The topic of the next meeting was pros and cons of online shopping .

Clearly it's been a godsend (aubaine) during the lockdown. People were able to get their groceries delivered and remain safe. The cons of that were that the supermarkets will substitute goods if they're not in stock and you might get something you didn't want!

And often things ... like books ... are cheaper online and easy to return if they aren't wanted. And it's great to have heavy items delivered to your front door. You can also send gifts by putting down a different address so that saves a lot of time and effort. Certain

things, like clothes, shoes, are less popular buys as we like to try on and check the quality of what is being ordered. And the downside of all this is the effect on the high street where shops are not doing well. Shouldn't we be supporting local?

At the moment some of us have returned to going into shops as they are safer and it is nicer to be able to browse and pick out what's wanted as well as maybe getting a bargain! Booking flights, hotels, theatres, etc is very convenient online.

The only worry is making a mistake!

We had one concern...if you never go out and do everything on line you could get isolated, become a hermit! And of course, some people don't have a computer or don't feel confident using one.

**Bridie Cushion**



## **PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY**

With a reduced attendance, the first meeting of the P&P group went ahead at the Swan Inn to talk about Transgender Issues. We had a guest speaker, Lisa Heatley, a psychotherapist who worked for many years at the West of England Gender Identity Clinic and helped understand the physical, psychological and sociological issues involved in transitioning. They affect the person as well as their spouse and are always traumatic. It is estimated that more than 1% of the general population are non-binary, most likely a lot more than are registered with the NHS.

We agreed that sexuality is really on a spectrum and individuals have hormones in different proportions, with very few situated in the middle of the scale. New research has established that there are anatomical differences in the brain of transgender people, therefore this is not an imagined condition.

An issue that was also pointed out was

that genuine dysphoria was usually mixed up with sexuality, especially by the LGBT+ activists, who are often playing a nefarious game that harms many in their own community.

We touched upon acceptance and how transgender issues are dealt with in other cultures, where such people are respected and even venerated, as they can sympathise and share experience with both sexes.

In our western culture, transgender people are often victims of abuse, and there is a lot of controversy regarding shared spaces and medical assistance.

Looking at these issues from an ethical perspective, we assume that all people are equal, therefore should be treated equally. Education is removing some prejudice in the younger generations. Being right is a moral issue.

Our next meeting is at the same time on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February to discuss the concept of Beauty.

**Dana Dima**



## **THE CREATIVE WRITING**

The group met in January via Zoom. Our prompt was to write a piece including 3 or more of: a caterpillar, a kitchen chair, a quiz, a nun, a locked door and a limerick or Limerick. We produced, not surprisingly I suppose, a number of limericks, plus a couple of thoughtful pieces which reflected the research made into the subjects. We then each wrote a 10 minute piece of flash fiction on 'This is what came out of the lab' which inspired some intriguing and impressively coherent offerings. Our next meeting will be 28<sup>th</sup> February with 'Birthday' as the writing prompt.

**Alison Symons**

## **THEATRE GROUP**

Our January meeting was cancelled, but with Covid rules now relaxed it is hoped members may start looking at upcoming productions and plan group bookings to enable members to travel and attend together.

Our next meeting is planned for Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 2pm, in room 4a at the Manor.

New members welcome. Members will be required to pay £1 towards the cost of room hire and refreshments.

**Kate McCarthy**



## LITERATURE

Our book for January was 'Good Girl Bad Girl' by Michael Robotham.

The author is an investigative journalist and writer who has worked with clinical and forensic psychologists looking into complex crimes.



In 'Good Girl Bad Girl' psychologist Cyrus Haven, himself a victim of childhood trauma, brings his expertise to assist with two cases, both involving teenage girls.

One, Jodie, an ice skater, has been found murdered, her promising future cut short. The other, known as Evie though her identity and age are unknown, is resident in a secure children's home. She suffered appalling abuse and incarceration as a small child but now wishes to live independently, so must be assessed by Cyrus.

He becomes very involved in the complexities and secrets of the lives of both girls and things are not at all as they, at first, seem. Jodie's apparently safe and caring home was not able to protect her from a dangerous underworld of drugs and corruption and Evie, although damaged, self-destructive and institutionalised, shows astonishing strength and resourcefulness, particularly at the dramatic denouement.

Some of our group were initially put off by the subject matter of the book but were glad that they persevered and we all found it hard to put down. There were some intriguing loose ends and most of us said that we would like to read the sequel and probably other work by the same writer. We gave 'Good Girl Bad Girl' 4 out of 5.

**Liane Goulding**



## QUIZ GROUP

With the Christmas and New Year period over, the quizzers met twice in January. The members energetically exercised their brain cells and enthusiastically answered the set questions.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> the subject rounds were Mellow Yellow, The Longest, Please Miss, The Last, Kings, General knowledge. In the Mellow Yellow round a question was asked as to how many bananas did one man manage to peel and eat in 1 minute, thus setting a new record. 8 was the answer. So how about having a go when you have a spare moment! The Kings round was more about Kings such as Martin Luther, Stephen, Mervyn, Billie Jean.

The second quiz tackled the chosen subjects of General Knowledge, Remember 2021, O brother, Testing, Disney characters, Sisters.

The O brother round was where all the answers ended in O. Now this proved to be controversial when one of the questions was 'In musical terms it is seen as rapid in tempo?'. The answer given was allegro. Not so, said one of the group members; 'It is presto'. Interestingly, Allegro means performed at a brisk speed and Presto means in a quick tempo. Is a brisk speed a quick tempo? So I presume both are correct; however, I am now grovelling and eating my musical score... The testing round revealed that in 1960 when the MOT was introduced, a car was required to be tested every 10 years. Those were the days.

We look forward to our next stretching of the grey matter and in February we will be quizzing on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> and Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February, both at 7pm.

**Graham Carey**



**ADVENTURE GROUP** members escape from prison and find Shakespeare's Script.



I am pleased to report that after a tense and exciting hour of frenetic activity, five members of the Adventure group successfully broke out of HMP Standfast!

For most of us '*Prison Break*' was our first experience of an escape room, and the first attempt at a live video version for everyone. The format worked well, with the five of us being joined in a Zoom call by Josh of [Escape Live](#) who acted as our live games master. Josh was our host in the actual room, there to follow our instructions and share the clues using 'Telescope', a piece of software which enabled us to see images, codes and even assemble a jigsaw, all from the comfort of our own

homes. Despite the odd hint, I think we did a good job of decoding inmate Terence "T-bone" Swift's clues and we successfully escaped with nearly five minutes to spare.

Similarly, a second group of five adventurers took on the task of finding Shakespeare's Script, just in time for its debut at King James' birthday. Chatting afterwards, our group concluded that it was a fun experience, and one which we might like to repeat in person at one of the local escape rooms.



Our next adventure will be climbing in February. Please see the Adventure news on the website for further details or contact us at [adventure@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:adventure@u3a.dawlish.info) if you would like to be put on our circulation list.

**Miggie Pickton**

### **ART APPRECIATION GROUP**

At our January meeting, John Vick took the lead giving us a presentation on the works of William Hogarth. He is best known for his engravings showing aspects of life in early 18th century England.

Many people will recognise his '*Gin Lane* and *Beer Street*' pictures from their school history books. They are full of fascinating, shocking and often amusing details. We learn a great deal of social history from his pictures and they are a fascinating reflection of the moral values and preoccupations of the time. Many of these engravings were developed from oil paintings, and he also had a considerable reputation as a portraitist.

Whereas many artists relied on portraits and patronage to make their living, Hogarth was a shrewd businessman who realised he could make a good living by selling his work in reproduction to a newly prosperous middle class. This meant that his art could represent his own choice of subject matter. A lot of

his art is derived from his interest in the theatre, and included scenes from Shakespeare plays, '*The Beggar's Opera*' and street entertainment. He was a close associate of John Gay, David Garrick and George Frederick Handel. In addition to his artistic endeavours, Hogarth is a very interesting figure in our national life, being largely responsible for the passing of a law to protect copyright for artists. He also helped to create the first art gallery open to the public which eventually became the Royal Academy. He was also a major supporter of the Foundling Hospital which rescued and cared for thousands of babies abandoned on the streets of London.

Our next meeting will be at a different time from our normal slot. We will meet at 2pm on Thursday 10th February in the Mayor's Parlour of the Manor House. Members have been invited to talk about a work of art of their choice on the theme of Work and Industry.

**Lynne Vick**

## IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE



### **u3a radio now on podcasting platforms**

The u3a radio podcast has now launched on podcast platforms, including Apple, [Spotify](#) and [Google Podcasts](#). The episode can also still be listened to on our [u3a YouTube channel](#), with captions.

In the January episode, the team discussed the Kindertransport learning initiative, talked to a member of u3a in Australia and heard about the milestone of 5,000 trees being planted in the u3a 40th anniversary wood.

If you or a member of your u3a has a story to share with u3a radio, please [get in touch](#).

**Peter Thorogood/John Vick**

### **BEACON**

With the risk of on line hacking amongst other scams on the increase, the committee made the decision to investigate a more secure way of holding members personal data.

After lengthy discussions with the Beacon Team at the u3a National Office, we have recently migrated our data over to Beacon the u3a's national database. This is a far more secure way of holding members personal information and in time, members will be able to access their own personal details. No other record of members personal data will be held by any committee member.

The information we hold is what you supplied on the application form. The one addition will be Gift Aid which when renewing or joining our u3a, each member will have the option if they do pay tax to tick the relevant box.

Many of you who have come from another u3a or are an Associate member will already have experience of Beacon.

We will keep all members updated as this progresses.

Any questions or concerns, please contact [membershipsecretary@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:membershipsecretary@u3a.dawlish.info)

**Kate McCarthy**

Check out the latest news on our website: [u3a.dawlish.info](http://u3a.dawlish.info)