



Dawlish & District u3a

Newsletter May 2022

Enjoy the coming summer!

FROM THE CHAIR

The decision to invite Tara Bowers to speak at the April monthly meeting could hardly have been better timed. I won't take the credit for this as it was the invitation came as a result of a fortunate meeting at our Open Day in September.

The subject of green energy has been at the top of the political agenda for some time now, although the discussion has now been complicated by the current surge in energy prices. The legacy of the pandemic together with the disruption to energy supplies arising from the war in Ukraine makes this an extremely complex but vital subject. There is little doubt that energy is going to be one of the most important issues for every nation for years to come.

While governments address these national and international issues, individual consumers need to make their own decisions and judgements about how to manage their finances while being mindful of the broader environmental questions.

Tara Bowers represents Exeter Community Energy whose purpose is to enable local people to own renewable energy and energy saving projects. In addition to offering advice to individual households and the community at large on how to use energy efficiently and thereby reduce their bills, they also offer the chance to invest in green energy projects. You can learn more about their diverse range of activities on their website

<https://www.ecoe.org.uk>. It makes

interesting reading. You might also take the opportunity to drop into the Strand Centre for one of their clinics when you can receive individual advice tailored to your situation.

Tara invited members to offer their own tips on how to save energy and reduce their bills. Suggestions included: only boil as much water as you need in your kettle (a kettle costs 5p each time to boil, and that soon adds up!); if you do boil too much put the excess in a thermos; shower for just four minutes; shower every two days rather than daily; use energy saving light bulbs such as LEDs; keep your central heating set at 21°C in living rooms, and 18°C in bedrooms; seal drafts around windows and doors; use reflective backing behind radiators; bleed radiators; don't leave immersion heaters on all day; an hour a day is enough; wear extra clothing rather than turn the heating up; make sure you close windows and doors when the heating is on.

All of these make sense – but if you need more ideas, Tara says Exeter Community Energy's own list has an impressive 31 tips! You might like to think what you could add to the list above.

Next month's meeting will be at 3.30pm on Monday 16th May in the Council Chamber of the Manor House. Well known local historian Robert Hesketh will be talking to us about 'Smuggling in Devon', a subject which I hope will attract a good audience.

John Vick, Chair

The **DISCUSSION GROUP** met on Monday 11th April at the Manor House to talk about trans issues, something which has received a great deal of press attention recently. It was very satisfactory to welcome all nine of our members, something which hasn't happened for quite a while.

Both the government and the charity Stonewall estimate that there are between 200,000 and 600,000 trans people in the country, slightly less than 1% of the population at the upper estimate.

Our discussion ranged around a large number of issues within the general terms of the topic. Concern was expressed for trans individuals struggling with the difficulties they must surely experience. The rights of people, especially women, to enjoy safe spaces in hospital wards, refuges etc. was felt to be equally important. The language used in this very polarised debate was referred to, on the one side self-identification was considered sufficient for trans individuals to be treated as their chosen gender, on the other there was a considered belief that people should have lived in their preferred gender for some period of time, with drug and surgical intervention being further steps down the line.

There was mention of how far the rights of gay people had progressed over the last few decades to a position now where being gay was quite unremarkable, leading to speculation that over time trans issues might become just as uncontroversial.

Difficulties surrounding the identification of trans people before puberty, concerns over misidentifying gay children as trans, and

consent issues regarding drug treatment at this stage in people's lives was talked about. The need for unbiased professional expertise seemed essential, although doubts were expressed over whether in practise such unbiased expertise exists.

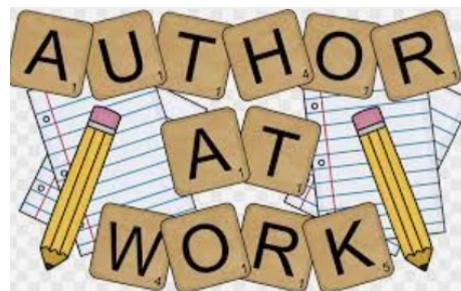
The problem of trans individuals competing in sports was discussed. There was concern that growing up in one sex defined body shape and musculature, and that hormone therapy at a later date would not alter that. At the least, competitions including trans people seemed unfair, and at the worst dangerous.

Mention was also made of cultures where trans people were apparently thriving and better accepted, such as Thailand, although no one had any direct experience. It did lead to a general feeling that instead of shoehorning trans individuals into existing categories in hospitals, prisons, sports etc, perhaps trans men and women should have their own designated facilities.

Lastly it was noted that following a period in which the views of lobbying groups such as Stonewall had been much to the fore, there appeared to be a degree of pushback against them at present. Where the pendulum will stop we shall have to wait and see.

Michael Heyden Convener

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



CREATIVE WRITING

At the March meeting members read pieces we'd written on several different topics, including an amusing one from the point of view of a sofa, tracing its existence from being the cherished focus of family life to being dumped in a field.

We then did a short exercise where we wrote for 5 minutes on the subject 'Blue', without using that word.

The next meeting will be on 23rd May at a member's house, with a choice of subjects to write upon.

Alison Symons, Convener

LITERATURE GROUP

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce.

This story is deceptively simple. A retired man in Kingsbridge receives a letter from a colleague he has not been in contact with for 20 years, Queenie Hennesey, telling him that she is in a hospice in Berwick-upon-Tweed. He writes a brief letter back, goes to post it but instead just keeps walking 627 miles in 87 days first having phoned the hospice to tell her to wait for him.

Harold is totally unprepared for this long journey, no map, no compass or phone, wearing yachting shoes. On his way he encounters many different people, some who share personal details of their lives, some who kindly assist him, and a group of people who, having heard of his pilgrimage, latch onto him.

He stays in touch with Maureen, his wife, and we know that there has been a rift between them concerning their son.

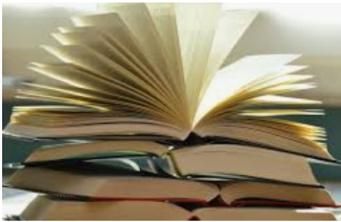
Harold completed his walk and we felt that we had taken every step of the way with him. A seemingly ordinary man, we learn of his sad life and the brief happiness he found at the start of his relationship with Maureen.

This book was very well received by the group, and we reflected on grief and thought about times in our lives when we felt like just walking away.

Some of us had read the companion book *The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennesey* and recommended it.

We awarded it an almost unanimous 5 out of 5.

Liane Goulding



The **PAGE TURNERS** met in April to discuss 'The Reading List' by Sara Nisha Adams. This debut novel, published in 2021, tells the story of teenager Aleisha who finds a crumpled reading list while working at her summer job in the library. Impulsively she decides to read the books on the list. When Mukesh, a grieving widower, arrives at the library looking for a way to build a relationship with his bookworm granddaughter, she recommends the books on the list to him. Soon Aleisha and Mukesh build a connection as they discuss the books they read and find they help them to come to terms with all that is going on in their lives. We also discover other readers who have mysteriously found the same reading list. Most of us had read a good number of the books that featured on Aleisha and Mukesh's list and, although we felt it was a little implausible that these two previous non-readers would have tackled the more challenging books on the list, we enjoyed the way the books were woven into the story. As many of us are strong believers in

the importance of libraries we were also pleased to read a book that championed libraries as being at the heart of a community.

This was a heart-warming book with an interesting cast of characters, and we recommend it.

Following discussion of some of the issues raised by the book, the talk turned to what we would put on our personal reading lists.

All of us have read widely and all have been impacted by different books for different reasons. We look forward to future opportunities to share our favourites with the group.

We also touched on the 'Big Jubilee Read' and the reading list that has been compiled to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee ([BBC Arts - BBC Arts - A literary celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's record-breaking reign](#)) and hope to enjoy exploring some of the books on that list that we may not yet have read.

Deborah Wallis, Convener

PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY



There were only two of us attending the April meeting, for various reasons. The topic sounds exciting and we have kept it for the meeting in May, which will take place at 3.15 on the 12th, at the Swan Inn. Although we'll try to tackle Moral Development, a challenging sounding topic, we shall keep it low key and talk about what we personally know or have experienced, in an effort to nurture exchange of information in a friendly environment.

The group is still open to new members and we could select among a long list of everyday concerns, such as the ethical effects of modern medicine or the way we are affected by science. We could discuss climate change and the role of information in the development of future generations... Who knows? Perhaps we can help each other better understand our world.

Dana Dima, Convener

CRAFT

We are a small group who enjoy each other's company in a lovely relaxing atmosphere.

We meet each month on the 1st Wednesday of the month. Our next meeting will be on

Wednesday 4th May from 1.30 – 3.30pm at a members house. New members always welcome. Contact me via 'enquiries' if you wish to join us.

Kate McCarthy, Convener



THE ADVENTURE GROUP

This month's adventure took us back to Haldon Forest, this time to go Segwaying.

We began our training by getting a feeling for the movement of the Segway (wobbly), then moved on to travelling forwards (toes down) and stopping (heels down). Next came turning. Unlike a bicycle, on a Segway you have to slide the handlebars from side to side to change direction – not a natural action for most of us!

Now fully trained, we set off on an accompanied tour through the forest. The big chunky-wheeled off-road Segways felt much steadier than the ones we'd trained

on, so all went well. There were a couple of close encounters with trees but we all arrived back in one piece.

Next month we are going sailing at Teignmouth. Keep an eye on the website for future adventures and contact us via adventure@u3a.dawlish.info if you wish to take part.

Miggie Pickton, Convener



THEATRE We have changed how we meet as booking a room at the Manor was simply not financially sustainable.

A small group of us will meet each month and look at local productions and look ahead at upcoming productions at the larger venues which need to be booked well in advance.

We have just booked tickets to see Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty at Plymouth Royal for the Matinee Performance on Thursday 17th November at 2.30pm. We will be

getting the train and plan to have lunch first before attending the performance. Want to go and don't fancy going on your own? Book your ticket and let me know.

Four members have tickets to see Chicago in June in Plymouth.

If anyone fancies attending a production but may not fancy going on their own, please email me; I can send the message out to see if there is anyone else who fancies going. Going to productions as a group makes it more fun.

Kate McCarthy, Convener



STROLLERS

We all enjoyed our new walk (Cofton Garage to Kenton) led by Michael in April ... chilly, misty weather on the coast.

However, inland it was warm and sunny for our Strollers ... lots of wildflowers in the hedgerows plus we saw a couple of large oil beetles.

Michael and Liz are doing a recce soon for our June walk ... another new walk route around Powderham and Kenton ... more details asap.

Our May 12th walk is a new circular stroll around the Wellswood, Lincombe and Illsham areas of Torquay.

We are catching the 22 Torquay & Paignton bus which leaves Dawlish (stop by railway) at 12.17pm and Teignmouth (Seaview Diner stop) at 12.32pm.

Plan is to get off the bus at Wellswood, walk up Higher Erith Rd, along Lincombe Drive then Meadfoot Sea Road and on through Illsham valley to Wellswood. Refreshments at The Kent's then bus back home i.e. buses from nearby stop at 15 minutes before each hour

Jean Gitsham, Convener



The **BOULES GROUP** has started playing outside on the Lawn again, but the weather was against us earlier in the month and we had to cancel our scheduled meeting. However, despite a rather chilly wind it was fine on Wednesday 27th, and nine of us met to play after a winter playing our own version in the Strand Hall with bean bags. The council had even cut the grass for us.

We shall be meeting again on Friday 13th (what could go wrong?) and Wednesday 25th by the bandstand at 10.30 a.m.

Everyone is welcome, you don't need to have played before or have any equipment. In June I hope that we'll be able to play for one of our monthly dates on the boules 'terrain' at Exminster, and I hope to have more news of that in due course.

Michael Heyden, Convener



ART APPRECIATION

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the April meeting had to be cancelled at short notice. The next meeting will be at 2pm on Tuesday 10th May in the Mayor's Parlour in the Manor House. I will

give a presentation on Marc Chagall as was planned for April. Members wishing to have a taster session will be very welcome. Please contact me if you intend to come so we can cater for the correct numbers.

Lynne Vick, Convener

BADMINTON



Our last meeting of April was well-attended and great fun. With fifteen players and three courts on the go, it didn't leave a lot of time to "sit one out",

but I managed to take a couple of photos and enjoy some of the action, in-between being given a thorough thrashing by many of the other players.

The Badminton group has almost thirty members in total at present. We play when time and fitness allow. We are always pleased to welcome new players, so if you think you would like to have a go, please come along to one of our sessions.

We play every Tuesday at 4.30 in the Dawlish Leisure Centre. We can lend you a racket and it's free for the first visit, then £4.00 a session should you wish to join our group. Play when you feel like it.

Further information and contact details can be found on our website. Dawlish & District u3a

Barry Baker, Convener



THE QUIZ GROUP

There were two quizzes in April, both containing a round on General knowledge. The first on the 4th saw those present being tested on the main subjects of Gemstones, Little things, Measuring up, Cartoon Capers and Who wrote the poem. With the jokers played the most points were tabled in the Measuring up round and the weakest link was the General Knowledge section.

Despite the Measuring up round being top of the pops there were some teasing questions. Would you have known how many times bigger Texas is than Wales or as the crow flies how far it is from the most inland location in England to the sea?

The Cartoon capers took us back to our childhood days and characters such as Officer Dibble in Top Cat. The concern was that no one remembered SpongeBob Squarepants and the fact that he lives in a pineapple under the sea.

Our second quiz took place on the 18th; Easter Monday. With the chosen subjects being Place names in songs, Acronyms, This means business, Hearts and of course it would not have been an Easter Monday quiz

without a round on eggs.

The hearts came out on top, but the quizzers need to brush up on their business knowledge.

As usual, there were some interesting questions and would you know your RAMs from your ROMs? The song round took many of us back to our youthful days and would you have guessed the British city mentioned in Abba's Super Trouper?

No one played their joker in the egg round. Perhaps it was because they were aware of what was coming up! Would you have responded correctly to what Joseph Coyle invented in 1911 linked to eggs or how much bigger than a large chicken egg is an average sized ostrich egg?

The quiz group continues to enjoy great banter and fellowship, especially if the quiz

master is seen to give a wrong answer... 😞

The two quizzes in May will be held on Mondays 9th and 30th, both at 7pm. Now off to set the questions...

GRAHAM CAREY, Convener



PAINTING AND DRAWING GROUP

We meet on the 2nd and 3rd Mondays at 11am till 1pm in the Lounge Room, Strand Hall, Dawlish @ £2 per session.

We welcome anyone who is interested in spending time with other people who like to sketch and to paint. There is help at hand if you need guidance with painting or if you have experience yourself and would just like to join like-minded people then come along. You will be welcome.

We are a small group, meeting in a comfortable, light room, the access to the Lounge Room is from Lawn Hill, the second

door into the community centre, up the hill from The Strand. We have room for more people to join us, there is plenty of space with tables and chairs. Just bring your art materials.

If you spend time at home painting, then it is good to come along and share your enthusiasm with other artists.

If you have always wanted to explore painting more, then try it in a group that has the same interest as you.

Any questions about the group please contact me through the Dawlish U3A website.

Kim Walker, Convener



TEA AND CHAT A lively group with interesting conversations. We meet on the third Thursday of the month. Our next meeting will be Thursday 19th May 2 - 4pm at the Riverside which is the blue building next to The Manor House. Why

not come along and meet other members? All members are most welcome and, new members or those of you who do not know many others and would like some company are encouraged to join us.

Michael Heyden & Kate McCarthy, Co

Another reminder about "BOARD WITH BEER"

For those of you who haven't already seen this on the web site, I'm placing this copy in our newsletter in the hope that there is sufficient interest to start the group next month.

Bored with TV. Why not try, "Board with Beer"?

I propose to start a new group for those who would like to spend a quiet hour or two playing Chess, or similar Board games, in one of Dawlish's pubs or beer gardens, from time to time.



I envisage this group more as a list of interested persons, who share contact details and use a group email. Members would post on the group email, what games they would like to play and any preferences on times and dates. Members can then contact each other to arrange to play at mutually conven-

ient times and venues, probably in groups of two and four persons.

The main focus would be on two player board games, such as Chess or Drafts, accompanied with the occasional Beer. Other board games and beverages are available. Personally, I would mostly like to play Chess or Backgammon, My standard of Chess is very low and I only just about know the basics of Backgammon. Grand Masters need not apply.

I see this group as casually playing a variety of games at very basic levels, with the possibility of spin-off groups arising later that concentrate more seriously on one game only. Group members could suggest any other games. Cribbage has already been put forward.

If you are interested, please contact me via enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info

I will be available to discuss the idea on Thursday 19 May at the Tea & Chat meeting in the Riverside Centre and would hope to start the group soon after.

Please come along and give me your ideas.
Barry Baker.

IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS FOR 2022/2023

A reminder please to those of you who are yet to renew your membership for 2022/2023.

If you are unsure whether you want to remain a member please contact me via our enquiries email address with your telephone number and I am happy to chat.

*We do have a number of new Groups getting established so there may be something that you would like to try. **Kate McCarthy, Membership Secretary***

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

13 members met on the afternoon of Wednesday, 20th April, for a botanical walk around

Dawlish Warren.

Although too early in the season for most flowering plants, we did find a late flowering Sand Crocus. Dawlish Warren is one of the few rare sites where this species flourishes.

The walk was jointly led by Barbara Rains and Kerry Sherwin; and the latter's experience as medical herbalist added interest to the identifying of non flowering species.

From left to right in this image may be seen: Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*), Gypsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*) and Watermint

Skullcap may combat anxiety, stress & insomnia. Gypsywort may counteract an over-active thyroid. Watermint, as an infusion, calms the nerves and settles the stomach. Elsewhere a small group have been meeting on Wednesday mornings to promote the re-wilding and bio-diversity of St. Gregory's Churchyard; and are eagerly awaiting the results of our areas of wildflower seeding.

George Lipscomb, Convener



The **FRENCH** group met face to face at June's on April 7th. The topic was "An artist, whether it be a painter, sculptor or whatever, who you admire."

We had Chagall with examples of his art, specifically his self-portrait with seven fingers and an account of how he left Russia for France but returned years later. We had Picasso and talked about Guernica, Gaudi and his incredible architecture and the unfinished Sagrada Familia, a Japanese artist and Devon artist Rebecca Morche. A very interesting and enlightening session.

Guernica is one of the strongest anti-war and anti-fascist works of the 20th century. It is a personal and universal work at the same time; an expression of private, individual pain and public opposition to the actions of fascists during the Spanish civil war. The immediate context for the mural was the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica in April 1937.

Guernica was created over five weeks between May and June 1937. The work commemorates the events of April 26, 1937, when the ancient city of Guernica in the north of Spain, considered to be the oldest capital of the Basque culture, was bombed. The air raid was carried out by Nazi Luftwaffe troops, supported by planes of Italian fascists. The action was a military

experiment, during which the strength of the newly developed explosives was tested. Guernica is filled with chaos, fire, despair and death - in the picture we see a woman jumping out of a burning building, faces twisted with suffering, lips opened in a silent scream. The central part of the composition presents a mixture of human and animal limbs. Picasso illustrates the monstrosity of war with the image of its victims - the bodies of women and animals twisted and joined in pain.

Our next session was a short zoom one where the topic was "Do you or did you have a pet and would you like one?" A couple had wanted a cat or a dog but felt it unfair when out all day at work. One had been forced to part with her beloved dog as she couldn't manage him. One had never had a pet. We are still deciding the topics for the next sessions in May and have received interesting suggestions.

Bridie Cotton, Convener

