



# Dawlish & District u3a Newsletter June 2022



## JUBILEE DAYS

The whole of Dawlish will be putting on an impressive show to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, and many of our members will be contributing strongly to the programme as well as enjoying all that is happening. The Dawlish & District u3a will be making a strong contribution. On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June we will have a stand in the marquee where a myriad of community groups will be showing what they offer. Michael Heyden will be managing our contribution, but he would be pleased to have some support from other members who can 'man' or 'woman' the stand to talk to members of the public about the u3a and what members enjoy about their membership. If you could contribute for an hour or two on the day, please get in touch with Michael by emailing [enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info). This can be a great way to meet people and make a valuable contribution to the success of your u3a. Please be generous with your time and help this to be a successful occasion – and allow Michael time to enjoy the day himself as well!

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, also in the marquee on the Lawns, our Great Lives

Group will be giving an account of twenty 'great lives' from across the seventy years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. George Lipscomb and the group have been putting a great deal of work into this project, and I am looking forward to seeing which Lives have been included in the selection. What a fascinating challenge! I have been trying to decide which people would make my list but have failed to reduce it to twenty. I am sure George has ensured that the list will not be dominated by white men, and that there will be figures from across the Commonwealth as well as all parts of the United Kingdom, and from a diverse range of backgrounds and careers. What actually defines 'Greatness'? Who would you choose? I know that all those who have worked hard to put together this presentation would be delighted if you would come along to the marquee on 5<sup>th</sup> June. You can see if you agree with the group's selection, or whether they have come up with some surprises to make you think.



## **MONTHLY MEETING**

### **Smuggling in Devon**

It was good to see another large attendance at our monthly meeting in May to listen to well-known local historian Robert Hesketh talk about Smuggling in Devon. Smuggling forms part of folklore and features in legends, novels and art works of many kinds. At its heart, smuggling is motivated by something which is timeless and certainly not something confined to history: tax evasion. The motivation of those today who use offshore accounts, tax havens in the British Virgin Isles or Jersey, or clever accountants to exploit loopholes in the law is very little different from those in earlier centuries who took great risks to bring into the country brandy, silk, tea and other commodities which were subject to high taxes. They just don't like paying taxes!

Until tax and trade policies substantially changed in the mid-19th century, governments relied heavily on duties charged on imports to raise revenue. This made luxury goods, some becoming part of our everyday diet, very expensive. Smugglers knew that there would be no shortage of customers for these goods from people from all walks of life pleased to pay lower prices. The dangers faced by smugglers were considerable, as much from the risks all seafarers faced as from the force of law. In reality, there were many instances of tolerance of smuggling by the authorities, not least because so many people were happy to buy the tea or brandy at attractive prices. Collusion and corruption were widespread. Furthermore, the navy often preferred to focus its efforts on fighting the French or other enemy ships rather than pursuing smugglers.

The numbers of men, women and children involved in the smuggling industry in the 18th century is estimated to have been well over 160,000, with a very large number of vessels being used in the trade. The value of the trade is hard to calculate (smugglers weren't keen to maintain their accounts!) but must have accounted for a large proportion of total imports, leaving a considerable hole in government finances.

Smuggling has certainly not disappeared

from our world, and sadly we now know about it in all likelihood in the context of the smuggling of people, drugs and armaments. Few people today regard smugglers as in some way performing 'a public service' in the way that a large part of the population would have regarded smuggling up to the middle of the 19th century. Smugglers were often regarded as heroic and romantic figures, or just as likely, part of the everyday fabric of life in coastal communities in Devon. The same feeling hardly applies in modern day Kent or Calais.

The talk was highly instructive and enjoyable and Robert also offered some of his many booklets about local history and attractions, that the members could peruse and purchase on the spot.

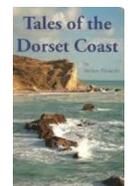
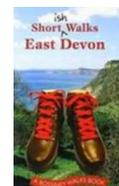
### **June Monthly Meeting**

In June we will be welcoming one of our own members as our speaker. Keith Feltham will be sharing his love and knowledge of Film Music. I am certainly looking forward to what Keith has to share with us, and I am sure there will be another good audience for the occasion.

As you know, we have had to alter our normal meeting time in recent months. I do understand that for some people this has not been ideal, and I apologise for the disruption or disappointment that this has caused. The Committee continues to keep the options for our meetings under review so we can have times and locations which work well for everyone.

Since moving to the Council Chamber meetings have been planned to begin at 3.30pm. In future, can I ask members to ARRIVE at 3.30pm with the meeting beginning at about 3.45pm. This is to allow the previous activity to finish without feeling pressurised by our members arriving before they have cleared the Chamber.

**John Vick, Chair**



## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

It is good news that so many members have renewed their subscriptions for 2022-23 although a number of members have yet to do so. It would be very helpful if all members intending to renew for the year ahead could contact our Membership Secretary, Kate McCarthy, as soon as possible. At £15 per annum I am sure you would agree the subscription is extremely

good value. The subscription is primarily used to enable us to maintain our current programme of meetings in Dawlish, and to pay for your copies of the u3a magazine Third Age Matters which comes to you three or four times a year from the national u3a organisation. If you need more information, please contact Kate by emailing [enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info)

**John Vick, Chair**

### "BOARD WITH BEER"

It has been agreed that a new board game group is setting up for u3a members. It is for those who would like to spend a quiet hour or two playing various board and card games, without the pressure of having to be very good at them.

The group is to be more of a register or list of interested persons, so that members can contact each other making their own meeting and game arrangements, these participants will agree to share contact details.

Group members can contact each other to arrange to play at mutually convenient times and venues, probably in groups or two and four persons.

The group will host an open games table every month at the tea and chat meeting in the Manor house Riverside centre.

I see this group as casually playing a wide

variety of games with members arranging their own games and venues most of the time. Many of these games (Chess, Cribbage, backgammon, drafts, Dominos, etc.) are all well suited the being played in public houses, with no need to pre-book or pay for a room. What's more, there is a plentiful supply of refreshments (OK, beer in my case).

It's likely that some regular game times and venues will emerge, but I am hoping that there is also room for some spontaneity.

If you are interested, please contact me via [enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info) or join us at any of the Tea & Chat meeting in the Riverside Centre.

**Barry Baker, Convener**



### TEA & CHAT

This meeting is going from strength to strength. All members are welcome, and you don't have to confirm you intend to join us.



We are also going to have board games for anyone interested in having a game.

New members are very welcome to come along and

chat to any Convenors present about any of our Groups they wish to try.

Our next meeting will be Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June from 2 – 4pm at The Riverside Centre up at the Manor. There is a small charge of £1 towards the cost of the room, but includes as many cups of tea or coffee as you want. Good company is guaranteed.

**Kate McCarthy & Michael Heyden, Co-Conveners**

The **FRENCH** group has grown as we've now invited more from the waiting list partly on the basis that not everyone comes each time!

We had our early meeting in May but, unusually, we could not get enough people available for our second. At our only session we had two new members who introduced themselves and both have lived in France so had plenty to talk to us about. We heard some interesting things about housing and inheritance laws as well as great cycling experiences. Seems it's really difficult to get a mortgage in France, it's difficult to sell a house and disappointing for those who renovate and hope to make a profit. Also the law says you must provide for your parents if

they are in need ....so you'd have to pay for any care.

The topic was "How would you ideally like to spend your birthday". We had a range of contributions including ignoring it, having a big family gathering, cycling, bird watching and having a helicopter ride to a restaurant in France. Dreams and fantasies joined the bucket list...

Our next topic was to be memories of your grandparents which we will save for one of the next meetings in June.

**Bridie Cotton, Convener**

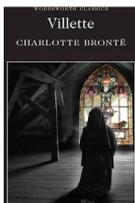


Sadly, the **PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY** group did not manage to bring together enough interested people, so we decided to close it. If anyone might be interested in exchanging words of wisdom and information on ways of dealing with the world we live in today, and on coping with the challenges of modern life, will you please contact [u3newslettereditor@gmail.com](mailto:u3newslettereditor@gmail.com) and see if we can start a new group.

**Dana Dima**

## LITERATURE GROUP

### *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte



Written in 1853, *Villette* was Charlotte Bronte's final novel. It is based on her experience of teaching in Brussels.

The protagonist, virtually penniless, is struggling alone with few choices open to her. We do not know why she has not received any help from her godmother or the family of the elderly woman she cared for who had intended to leave her some money. Was she too proud to ask or did it simply not occur to them?

There had been a catastrophe with her family, the reader assumes they are dead but we are not told the details.

Learning more about the heroine's background might have helped to bring the book to life but, as it was, nobody in the group enjoyed it. Most of us found we dreaded picking it up again to continue reading it.

For us, *Villette* lacked structure, sentences were so long and convoluted that they needed rereading to try to make sense of them. Added to this, much of the dialogue was in quite difficult French so we had to consult the notes which interrupted the flow of the novel.

We had good intentions of studying some neglected classics but *Villette* was not a success with us and we awarded it 1/5.

**Liane Goulding**

## THEATRE



A small group of us meet monthly to look at upcoming productions and circulate to our mailing list. If you would like to be included or

want to go to an event but don't fancy going on your own, please contact me via [enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info).

**Kate McCarthy**

**Quiz** is continuing to have fun and a couple of people have recently joined the group. The two quizzes in June will be held on the

6<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm.

**Graham Carey, Convener**



The **BOULES GROUP** should have met twice in May, but the convener paid too much attention to the weather forecast, rather than checking his seaweed, and cancelled the second meeting in the expectation of rain, which then failed to fall. My apologies to all affected.

In June, we shall meet on the Lawn by the bandstand at 10.30 a m on Friday 10th June.

Then on Wednesday 22nd June I hope we shall be able to meet in Exminster, and play on the boules terrain there. More details about that, and any other queries you may have can be sent to the convener. New members always welcome, no equipment or experience required.

**Michael Heyden, Convener**

**Page Turners** again enjoyed a wide-ranging discussion in May and some of it was about books!

We began by discussing 'The Red Tent' by Anita Diamant. This book is set in Old Testament times and tells the story of Dinah, the little-known daughter of Jacob and Leah. While most of us think we know the story of the twelve brothers, including Joseph with his coat of many colours, we are probably not aware of Dinah. The book massively broadens her story from the brief mention in the Bible and shows her as a strong, loved and respected woman. Whilst we cannot be certain of the historical accuracy, it gives an insight into the lives of the women of the time and their customs and beliefs. The book's title refers to the tent in which they took refuge while menstruating or giving birth, and in

which they found mutual support and encouragement from their mothers, sisters and aunts.

Our discussion included the origins of the Jewish faith and the place of women in society, then and now, so plenty to get our teeth into as a result of reading this fascinating book.

The majority of us enjoyed the book as a work of fiction and its biblical setting should not deter those without faith. Also despite its historical setting the central themes of women's lives are timeless and remain relevant to the modern world.

**Deborah Wallis, Convener**



## Art Appreciation



The May meeting saw a presentation led by Lynne on Marc Chagall (1887-1985). Chagall was born in what is now Belarus, then part of the Tsarist Russian Empire, and he moved to France in the 1920s where he spent most of the rest of his life. He was an extraordinarily prolific artist, working right up to the end of his long life, and producing work in a remarkably wide range of media.

His most famous works are colourful oil paintings, most of which show his love of his home town of Vitebsk with images of churches, synagogues, violins, and often cockerels and cows. He also produced ceramics, textiles and designs for theatre and ballet. He was of Jewish heritage yet he was commissioned to produce stained glass windows in Christian churches. He was commissioned to produce a window for the United Nations building in New York, windows for the Hebrew

University in Jerusalem, windows in Chichester, Reims and Metz Cathedrals and many other places of worship.

The next meeting will be at 2pm on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June in the Mayor's Parlour of the Manor House. David Gearing will give a presentation on Titian. Those who have heard David speak previously will know this will be something to look forward to. If you wish to know more about the Art Appreciation Group, and would like to join or have a taster session, contact Lynne Vick by emailing [enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info).

**Lynne Vick, Convener**



## ADVENTURE GROUP

As I write, Adventure Group members have completed two out of three sailing taster sessions. It is indicative of the hardiness of the group that, despite freezing temperatures and torrential rain during the last session on Monday, everyone has professed to having had a great time. What an amazing bunch of people!

Back on dry land, Ann and I have been planning our next few adventures. Subject to availability, cost and safety constraints, these are to be as follows:

### 2022:

**June:** Quad biking (already arranged - see <https://u3a.dawlish.info/adventure-group-quad-biking>)

**July:** Town quiz and scavenger hunt, followed by optional pub meal

**August:** White water rafting or RIB ride

**September:** Archery

**October:** Caving

**November:** Short break at Manor House, Okehampton

**December:** Sequence dancing

### 2023:

**January:** Tobogganing

**February:** Drumming workshop (Ann)

All adventures are open to all Dawlish & District u3a members and the full details are always made available in our web news (<https://u3a.dawlish.info/tag/adventure>). If you belong to the Adventure Group you will also be contacted by email in advance of each activity.

**Miggie Pickton, Convener**



## STROLLERS

The Strollers met on Thursday 12th May, and there were 7 or 8 of us who travelled to Wellswood, Torquay on the bus, and a lovely journey it was. From Wellswood we walked down through Lincombe Drive, stopping to admire Lincombe Keep,



designed by a protégé of the architect Sir Edward Lutyens. It's a four bedroomed detached house, built only 30 years ago, but hidden behind apparently medieval walls with gateways and turrets. We carried on down to the sea along a lovely road with woodland, to Meadowfoot Beach, and back through Meadfoot and

Illsham Green to our starting point. We had a while to wait for the bus, and, sensibly, spent it in the Kent's pub.

Our next outing will be on Thursday 9th June, when we'll take the No 2 bus (12.25 from Dawlish) to Powderham, and walk on the path to the side of The Castle estate, with lovely views of the Belvedere and estuary, before dropping down to Powderham church and to the garden centre for refreshments.



NB reminder to walkers as weather gets warmer please make sure you bring water and appropriate sun protection.

**Jean Gitsham, Convener**

## Gardens and gateaux



Our group enjoyed lovely weather on the trip to Coleton Fishacre, at the end of May.

We were escorted around for part of the time, by one of the gardening team, who gave us an insight to how the National trust care for this lovely house and gardens.

The house was originally built by the D'Oyly Carte family, in the 1920s as a holiday getaway, where they would relax on the beautifully planted terraces with views out to sea. No doubt enjoying a G&T while watching the family play boules on the

green.

There were some lovely semi tropical plants flourishing in the shelter of the valley. The landscaping and planting were excellent.

We also had plenty of time for the obligatory tea and cake.

Our thanks go out to Ian, our coach driver and the Dawlish community transport team for their excellent service. Everyone in the group was very happy with the trip, so much that we are likely to include it again in next year's program.

We are now all looking forward to our next monthly trip at the end of June to Bickton Park botanical gardens, with its much older and well-established gardens

**Barry Baker, Convener**



## In Our Own Write

We have had our May meeting on the topic of a ghost story. All of us found it a more challenging brief but managed to come up with the telling of a tale of a local florist who met her demise in an accident; a recently deceased husband having his revenge on his wife who had caused his death and a World

War II pilot's ghost saving some children.

Due to the majority of us being on holiday in June we have decided to have our next meeting on the 11th July.



**Travina White, Convener**

## CRAFT

We are a small group who meet monthly bringing with us something we are currently working on. Feel free to come along and join us. As this is a relatively new group, we are always open to ideas.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 1.30 - 3.30 in room 6 at The Manor House.

**Kate McCarthy, Convener**

