



# Dawlish & District u3a

## Newsletter August 2022

### From the Chair

Yet again, our lives have been disrupted by forces beyond our control. The pandemic, of course, and now extreme temperatures and climate change. While I have every sympathy with the aims of climate change activists, I have to confess my immediate feelings towards them were less than positive on Wednesday. I was en route to Heathrow to meet my son who has been working in Australia since October. My journey had been untroubled and my main concern was arriving too early and incurring Heathrow's exorbitant parking charges when I was suddenly plunged into a four mile queue of traffic and a two hour delay as protestors closed off the motorway! At least I saved money on the parking! Perhaps the Discussion Group might like to explore the ethics of such direct action?

It was disappointing to have to cancel July's monthly meeting with Bert Parton, but I hope members understand why the committee felt it necessary. With extreme temperatures forecast and clear advice from health authorities to avoid unnecessary journeys, we felt it was irresponsible to encourage members to come to the Manor House in the hottest part of the day. My concerns were amplified by the fact that Bert would not

only be playing some of his brass instruments but would be inviting members to have a go as well.

This cancellation meant that we were facing an extended period without a monthly meeting. I know how much the opportunity to meet each other means to members, so we have decided to arrange an additional meeting in August, a month we usually have a pause in our programme. Corina Skerritt, who runs the Dawlish Library, has kindly agreed to bring forward the talk previously scheduled for March to Monday 15th August in the Manor House. Her talk has the title '**What can Dawlish Library do for you?**' For those who had been looking forward to hearing Bert Parton in July, I hope to find another date for him next year.

The summer months are an opportunity for us to go on holiday, entertain visitors - or just enjoy relaxing in the sunshine (provided it is not too hot!). This can mean that some of our normal activities are put on hold or at least are less active. Despite this, I know that most interest groups are still meeting and have a full and interesting programme in July and August, and you can read about these in this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you at the August meeting, and also at the AGM in September

**John Vick, Chair**



### TEA AND CHAT

#### IMPORTANT UPDATE

We are now meeting on the first Thursday of each month.

Our next meeting will be Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August. The venue remains the same - we meet at The Riverside Centre at The Manor from 2 - 4pm. We have Board Games tables set up for anyone wishing to play; this month, games included Chinese

Checkers and Backgammon. Crafters also welcome to come along with their current projects, alternatively, if you simply want to have a cuppa and chat, there are always members happy to do this. Some Conveners are always on hand if any new member wants information on joining groups.

**Kate McCarthy & Michael Heyden, Conveners**

Living

Laughing

Learning

## ADVENTURE GROUP

Thursday 7th July saw some 17 adventurers and their friends tackle our first ever town quiz and scavenger hunt. The route took participants from the Bandstand; along the Strand; up to the Manor House; then back along the brook; over to the Lawn; across Jubilee bridge and finally up Brunswick Place - to the final destination of the [Brunswick Arms](#) for a well earned drink and lunch for those who were up for it.

Our teams had to answer no less than 50 questions - most were straightforward, but some were mildly cryptic - and collect five designated items.

Everybody acquitted themselves with great aplomb and competition for the top places was intense!

So for the results... the clear winners were the appropriately named team *Vicktorious* with 65.5 points, followed by *The A team* (61.5); *Thai Cheese* (61); *The Tarnses* (or possibly *Tarnzes* - there was some dissent in

the team over the spelling) (60.5); *Adventure Not Dementia* (AND) (59.5); *Basil's Crew* (including Basil the dog) (57.5) and last but not least, our only solo player, *Billy No Mates* (44).

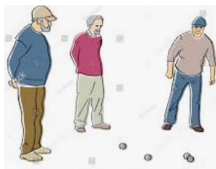
Only one question was not successfully answered by anyone - question 49: "The item produced by Peter Savage covers how big an area?" The answer can be found near the Chinese restaurant on Brunswick Place but I'll let you go and find it.

I am very grateful to June Cassidy for co-writing the quiz and scavenger hunt with me. June and I had great fun making up the questions, and the excuse for a coffee afterwards was good too!

If you would like to join in our next adventure, which will hopefully be either white water rafting or RIB riding, then watch out for details on the website and get in touch with us via

[adventure@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:adventure@u3a.dawlish.info).

**Miggie Pickton, Convener**



The **BOULES GROUP** has met to play twice in July on the Lawn, and the weather has been kind. In August we are going to play on the boules terrain in Exminster on Friday 12th, and on the Lawn on Wednesday 24th. Everyone is welcome, equipment is provided, and no skill is required unless you want to show the rest of us up. Do come and join us.

**Michael Heyden, Convener**

## CRAFT

We are a small group who meet on the first Wednesday of the month in Room 6 at The Manor, from 1.30 – 3.30pm.

New members always welcome. Bring along your current project and join in the chatter or enjoy the calm of just listening.

**Kate McCarthy Convener**



Our Dawlish & District U3A **STROLLERS** next monthly walk is on Thursday August 11<sup>th</sup> when we will be exploring the new TDC Ridgetop Country Park at Exminster.



We are catching the 12.10pm number 2 Exeter bus from Teignmouth and from Dawlish at 12.25pm. We will get off the bus

opposite the petrol station at the far end of Exminster then take the nearby footpath into the park ...the first field is somewhat steep but thankfully only a short climb.

Onwards pathways run alongside hedgerows with beautiful wildflowers, butterflies etc and great scenic views to enjoy (thankfully, there's a choice of seating along the route)

We return to Exminster downhill via Deepway Lane then, after a refreshment break at the Royal Oak we'll catch our bus home.

Strollers please do remember to wear sun protection plus suitable footwear for walking and to bring your own drink for our countryside walk!

New Strollers most welcome to come along and join us on our August 11<sup>th</sup> Exminster Ridgetop Country Park walk.

**Jean Gitsham, Convener**

## LITERATURE

### ***Love and War in the Apennines by Eric Newby.***

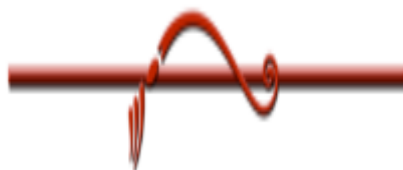
Eric Newby, famous for his travel writing, wrote this account of his time as a P.O.W. his escape and the help he received from the local people who hid him in the Apennines. He also met his future wife and travelling companion, Wanda. The Italians were kind to him in their brusque way, sharing what food and resources they had, often showing their emotions only when he had to leave their homes. They regarded the war as a dreadful misfortune that heaped misery on everyone.

At one point Eric is summoned to a meeting with the village dignitaries as an important decision has been made. He, and the reader, fear that he will be told to leave because of the danger in which he is unwillingly placing them. Instead of this they have a plan to build him a house hidden in the side of the mountain. They say that they have sons, husbands and brothers missing in

Russia and feel honour bound to help Eric as they hope that Russian people might be coming to the aid of their men. Even so, their courage is astonishing given the danger of their actions. We wondered how brave we might have been if tested in that way.

The book was written as a tribute to these people and Eric Newby downplays his own stoicism with dry humour. Some of the book dragged a little, we felt, and the ending was very abrupt. We wanted to know what happened after he was recaptured and how he managed to reconnect with Wanda. But, on the whole, a good read that left us thinking that we would like to read more of Eric and Wanda's travel books. 3/5

**Liane Goulding**



## PAGE TURNERS

met in July to discuss 'Lark Rise' by Flora Thompson. This is the first book of a trilogy which is normally sold



in one volume as 'Lark Rise to Candleford' so some members had opted to read more than just the first book. The book is autobiographical and is set in an Oxfordshire hamlet in the 1880s. It

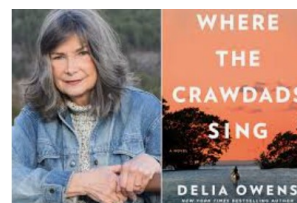
describes the detail of various aspects of life at the time through the eyes of a child. Each chapter has a different theme and tells us memories around that theme but there is not really a cohesive narrative until you move onto the later books. Some of us read for some considerable time wondering when the story would start!

We found it very interesting to explore what life was like in the 1880s and enjoyed comparing it with our own childhoods and

the lives of modern children. It was particularly interesting to read about the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Jubilee so close to our own Jubilee celebrations.

Also, this month we talked further about 'Where the Crawdads Sing' by Delia Owens. This was our book some months ago, but we returned to it because a number of us have been to see the film. We were pleased that the film did justice to the beautiful landscapes that we had read about.

**Deborah Wallis, Convener**





## DISCUSSION GROUP



The Discussion Group met on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July to talk about the police service. The general theme was what the public expected from them, were our expectations reasonable and were they met. Some basic information suggested the current numbers, 160,000, had declined from 172,000 in 2010 but were still greater than the 155,000 20 years ago. The Office of National Statistics conclude that the level of crime has been broadly stable over recent years with 6 million offences recorded. Noticeable was the huge increase in computer related crime which now accounted for over 50% of all criminal activity. The Metropolitan police have just been placed in special measures, joining several other forces, which made this a very topical subject.

We talked about whether the current 45 individual police forces would be better combined. There are also 3 special forces, British Transport, Civil Nuclear and Ministry of Defence, and some discussion took place on whether such matters as government, royal and foreign embassy protection, and airports would be better served by having their own separate force.

Some concern was expressed that, at a time when computer crime, together with a requirement for evidence purposes of huge amounts of data to be examined, sufficient people with the necessary skills were not being employed. The National Police Computer was 50 years old, suggesting insufficient attention being paid to rapidly advancing technology.

We talked a little of whether we expected too much of officers. We expected both the ability to deal with violent criminals and to police riots, whilst they were the first call for people with mental health problems and other issues such as domestic violence, requiring understanding and tolerance. We asked whether, at the recruitment stage, officers might specialise, and have a career path in a single area of expertise.

We briefly discussed Crime Commissioners and whether it made any sense to have elected political figures with power over hiring and firing the Chief Constable, or whether this function was better exercised by the old-style police boards. Mention was made of the policing of the vigil following the murder of Sarah Everard, which some felt to be heavy-handed and demonstrated a lack of empathy, which was felt to be too often present in police interactions with the public. Whilst recognising the difficult nature of the job there was concern over the 'canteen culture' leading to bad behaviour and a lack of empathy amongst officers, and over the apparent difficulty in getting rid of bad ones. There was a wish for more neighbourhood-based policing to take place so that contact between officers and the public were more frequent and remind both the police and the public of their joint responsibilities in a culture that depends on policing by consent to act together in the best interests of the community.

We shall meet next on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August when, following *Roe v Wade*, we shall discuss abortion.

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

**Michael Heyden, Convener**

## GREAT LIVES GROUP



7 of us met at Barbara's on 22<sup>nd</sup> July for Hil's presentation of the Great Life of Jules Verne. We all thought we were familiar with Jules Verne; but, as usual, we discovered there was so much more that we didn't know; and although he wrote for entertainment, many of his ideas were

extraordinarily prescient.

We have been pleased to be joined by new members; and there is always room for more. Although I shall soon be passing the Convener's baton to Jill, I shall remain a member of the Great Lives Group: truthfully, the most empathetic group I have ever convened.

**George Lipscomb, Convener**

**Badminton** is still being played at the Leisure Centre, **Board Games** and **Rummikub** groups can be joined at the Tea and Chat meetings, while the **Life Matters** group hopes to start meeting in September, to talk about the challenges of living, perception, new or old ideas, coping with a changing world.

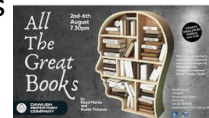
## THEATRE

Some of us went to see *The Mellstock Quire*, a play adapted from Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Powderham Castle created a perfect backdrop to this wonderful production helped by house martins catching insects on the wing, swooping and flying in and out of one of the arches. A thoroughly enjoyable evening performed by Topsham Players and well worth going to any future productions they may have planned.

A group of us are going to see *All The Great Books* at Shaftsbury Theatre on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August. If you fancy going but don't want to sit on your own, book your ticket and join us at the Bar at 7pm.

We now meet in Daisies at 2pm on the second Thursday of the month. If you fancy coming along and joining us for a cuppa, let me know.

**Kate McCarthy, Convener**



## QUIZ GROUP

After a three week break the quizzers met on two consecutive Mondays; 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July. The first quiz evening saw those gathered racking their brain to answer questions on Mythology, In the Navy, Reds, Fight or flight, Assassinations and



General Knowledge.

Three teams played their joker in the Reds round, ensuring that the score was the highest. This was closely followed by In the Navy. However, Mythology was not a hit with people and believe or not the lowest score was on General Knowledge. No idea why as you would know who or what suffers from crib biting.

The Mythology round touched on Egyptian, Greek, and Roman mythology, including a question about which celestial body was known as Hesperus, God of the evening star. The Assassination round was a bloody affair as we relived shootings, stabbings, car bombs. Can you remember which President was shot whilst reviewing a military parade in October 1981?

On 25<sup>th</sup> July the subjects were less gruesome. As well as General Knowledge, the teams answered questions on Africa, the

BBC, Colourful, Composers, and UK seaside locations.

The General knowledge round was far better than the previous week and due to the jokers played the Colourful round had the best score. We spoke about 'A whiter shade of pale' and what a great record that was, recorded by Procol Harum in 1967.

The Africa round was a good one with almost everyone knowing where Timbuktu is. The BBC was not exactly everyone's cup of tea (no comments), but the score was reasonable. The weakest links were Composers and UK seaside locations. The composition 'Country Gardens' is well known, but what was the name of the composer?

I challenged the quizzers to take their bucket and spade to visit some of the places I mentioned. Would you have known in which county is located Ingoldmells, Dovercourt or St. Margaret's at Cliffe?

Despite the Summer months the quiz group continues to hold its own and a lot of banter and heckling of the Quizmaster takes place. Overall, all good fun!

The quiz group will meet again on 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August, then on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September.

**Graham Carey, Quiz Master .**

## FRENCH CONVERSATION

For health and family reasons, the first meeting in July was only attended by four members and two guests, who all enjoyed the beauty of our host's garden and the quite strong winds sweeping over Dawlish all morning. We talked about the best holiday in our life, with frequent digressions into our personal life and recent events. The general topic inspired nostalgia and brought back fond memories. Best holidays from the group covered a holiday in Barbados 43 years ago, a cruise on the River Volga in Russia (the longest river in Europe), Lake Baikal, another holiday in Russia (apparently

the deepest lake in the World) and a safari trip in the United Republic of Tanzania including a climb to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. We learned that the Swahili word for 'granddad' is 'Babu-baba', which he was when he climbed the mountain!

The members were unable to attend again in July and will not be meeting in August at all, as they will be caught up in other commitments. So the next session will be on 1<sup>st</sup> September, when the holiday topic will be continued, but mostly focusing on this year's experiences.

**Bridie Cushion, Convener**



## NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

**St. Gregory's Churchyard** Unfortunately, the June strimming destroyed the summer flowering, except where we had sowed wildflower mix on selected graves. However, TDC have admired the diversity there and agreed not to carry out further strimming until October, and then including consultation with us. They are also enthusiastic on our plans to prepare for a major sowing of Yellow Rattle. That should parasitise the grass and ultimately transform the currently parched desert Grassland into Meadowland.

The hot dry summer has meant that only some 50% of our wildflower sowing has germinated; but the future is brighter. The PCC have given us access to the Sexton's Hut for storing of tools, etc. and the Rector has given approval for us to draw water for irrigation from the disabled toilets.

**July Visit to Dawlish Countryside Park**  
On 20<sup>th</sup> July Chris & Travina White hosted 7 of the group from their home on the Redrow



Estate to visit the DCP. The rest of the group had sent apologies, and missed a rare treat. The image shows members surrounded by

Laceflowers. There were many *Meadow Brown* butterflies, whose typically active and restless flight was challenging to image. We did get spectacular images of 6 Spot Burnet Moth, Cinnabar Moth Caterpillars, Longhorn Beetle and Comma, Common Blue, Peacock butterflies — and the Meadow Brown.

For our 17th August meeting Toby will be presenting a PowerPoint showing of his and Kerry's private ancient woodland in Mid Devon. The venue will be either at the Manor House or 6 Town Mills, dependent on the number of members who sign up for attendance.

**George Lipscomb, Convener**

The **PAINTING AND DRAWING GROUP** meet on the 2nd and 3rd Mondays of each month 11am to 1pm in the Lounge Room, Strand Hall, Dawlish.

We welcome new members to come and join us. If you would like to meet with other people who like to paint and draw in a casual, relaxed environment then this group could be for you.

Also, if you have an idea of what to do, but are not quite sure how to start, there is help at hand, we give each other support and assistance if wanted. Just bring along some art materials and have a go.

We are also open to new ideas, if you would prefer to have a theme or subject to work

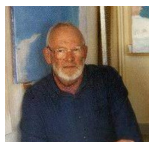
to, we can work with you on that; sometimes we paint still life from objects we bring into the meeting or work from photographs you have taken.

We look forward to meeting new members. If you have any questions, please contact me through the U3A Dawlish website.

**Kim Walker, Convener**



## ART APPRECIATION GROUP



At the July meeting, Keith Feltham gave a presentation on John Miller, a modern British artist whose work is especially popular with visitors to Cornwall where he lived. His early style was similar to the impressionists, but he made his name with tranquil minimalist paintings of the Cornish coastline. These evocative images showing sweeping sands and turquoise seas with clear blue skies, have an enormously wide appeal and made him financially successful in his own lifetime – no mean feat for any artist. You can find examples of his art by typing *john miller artist cornwall* into your browser.

By contrast, our next meeting at 2pm on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August will focus on artworks representing the theme of War and Conflict. Members are invited to select an artwork of their own choice and talk briefly about it. These meetings are always particularly interesting as many choices prove to be completely unexpected or unfamiliar.

**Lynne Vick, Convener**

