

Dawlish & District u3a Newsletter

April 2023



APRIL MEETING – Social Prescribing

After not being able to attend the last three meetings, I really am determined to clear my diary for our next meeting on 17th April. Our speaker will be Chloe Wood, a Wellbeing Practitioner (Social Prescriber) who works in the team which serves GP practices in this area.

I have been trying to get someone from the Social Prescribing team to come to speak to us for well over a year but, such are the pressures on all parts of the NHS, this has had to be postponed on more than one occasion. Let's hope there are no hitches this time!

I imagine that many of you will be very familiar with the concept of 'social prescribing' but if, like me, this is a relatively new area of provision, you might be interested in this definition on the Barton Surgery website: *Social Prescribing is a means of enabling GPs to refer patients with social, emotional, or practical needs into a service for additional support. The Social Prescribing service aims to improve health and wellbeing by promoting patient*

empowerment, supporting them to engage with their health needs into a service for additional support.

I know that the Social Prescribing team regard the u3a as a very positive means of supporting people's social and emotional needs and do promote our organisation and activities to some of the people they engage with.

Chloe tells me that she intends to lead us in a discussion rather than make a conventional presentation. She is happy to discuss with us what Social Prescribing offers and also share some case studies so that we are able to get a good feel for the style of work the team offers. Before the meeting, you may be interested in visiting the Primary Care Network website on this link [here](#). This may encourage you to come to the meeting with some questions which Chloe will be more than happy to answer.

I am sure this will be an interesting subject for us to learn more about. I look forward to seeing you there.

John Vick

THEATRE

March was a busy month with a small group of us travelling to Wednesday's Matinee performances at the Northcott, Exeter. For first timers we were impressed at how easy it was to travel by train and pick up the bus outside the train station which dropped us off outside the Northcott. Watch this space as we look at performances in May and June or simply email enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info if you fancy joining us.

We will be going to see Piano Man at the Shaftsbury on Thursday 6th April.

Members are also arranging amongst themselves to see other productions throughout the month.

Interested in joining a group of Theatre goers? If you fancy going to an event and don't fancy going on your own, email me via enquiries.

Kate McCarthy, Convener

Living • Laughing • Learning

ROWCROFT HOSPICE

At our March meeting we were introduced to Rowcroft Hospice and the many services they offer. Most of us think of 'end of life' care when we think of Rowcroft, but I confess I hadn't realised the full range of what their work actually covers.

The history of Rowcroft Estate is quite interesting. It was bequeathed by Ella Rowcroft, the daughter of the family who owned the estate that made their fortune from the ownership of a well-known cigarette brand! In her will Ella Rowcroft's stipulation was that the house was to be used for the healthcare of the local community.

A few interesting facts:

Rowcroft is the local Hospice for South Devon and covers a population of 280,000. The Hospice sees 2500 individual patients in a year and can take referrals from GPs, Community Team or family and friends.

End of life care can be either as an inpatient or at home, which sees upwards of 700 patients a year and is the preferred choice for most people.

With a need to fund 160 staff and steadily increasing costs, plus all other costs associated with Rowcroft, from 1st April they will need a budget of £10m. They will receive a grant of £2.2m from the NHS and the rest will be from benefactors and fundraising.

With an ever-increasing ageing population, resources are stretched to the limit. In anticipation of this, there are pre planning stage discussions to build a 60 bedded nursing home on the Rowcroft Estate for Dementia care. It is hoped work will start in

the next year or two. In the long term there are also plans for an Assisted Living Service. How to staff these facilities? With the withdrawal of bursaries by the Government to fund nurse training several years ago, there is a nationwide shortage of nursing staff. Rowcroft are funding bursaries for nurses, with the first cohort of nurses expected to start in September 2023.

A new incentive is to provide home delivery of meals. Working with local NHS Dieticians, Devon Farm Kitchen will source ingredients for the meals locally and unlike other companies, meals will be delivered on ceramic plates and bowls which are collected at the next delivery. For the last five months, this has been piloted in a small area. Profits from this new business will help support nursing care costs.

Another new service is a project called "You Can", a service that offers a review of someone's home following a stay in hospital. This service is chargeable and will enable more people to live independently.

The above sounds somewhat similar to the service offered by the NHS's hugely understaffed Occupational Therapy departments: the difference is that there is a charge for Rowcroft's service, and patients wanting to leave hospital won't be caught up in the long wait time for a visit. This service will hopefully help to free beds in wards.

All in all, it was an interesting talk delivered by Justine Geldard, Project Manager, and Jonathan Hill, Accountant, which generated some challenging questions.

Kate McCarthy

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Membership renewals for 2023 are now overdue. Membership is £15 for full and £10 for Associate (if you are another u3a member).

To enrol, please go to our website u3a.dawlish.info and click on the drop-down box "how to join". If you are a taxpayer and wish to be included as a Gift Aider, it is important you tick the relevant box on the membership renewal form so that we can claim on your subscription.

TEA AND CHAT

We meet in the Riverside Centre next to the Manor House, on the first Thursday of the month from 2 - 4pm, all welcome. Come along for a friendly chat or if you fancy a board game, bring one along. Most Committee members are present and as many Conveners as possible. New members and those thinking about joining are strongly

encouraged to come along to talk to Conveners and group members about any interest group they may be interested in trying.

No need to book a place just turn up on the day. Our Next Tea and Chat is on Thursday 2nd April.

**Kate McCarthy & Michael Heyden,
Conveners**

GREAT LIVES

Jill Maynard writes:

"In February and March we discovered **Mary Somerville** (1780-1872). She lived at a time when it was believed that education made women morally and physically unfit for motherhood. Yet she was a wife and mother, and by her own efforts became a leading expert and gifted writer in many branches of science and was honoured throughout Europe."

The remainder of Jill's interesting and comprehensive article covers Mary Somerville's life: through childhood, two marriages and a lifetime spent seeking, and eventually achieving, acceptance in the male-dominated scientific community.

Jill's article can be found in the Great Lives group news on our website: <https://u3a.dawlish.info/great-lives-february-march-2023>.

SINGING GROUP IN NEED OF CONVENER

Following several requests from u3a members, I have been trying to create a Singing group. Although there was a reasonable amount of initial interest, the first two meetings were poorly attended. Even given that those that did attend were very keen, we have not been able to find anyone to lead the group forward.

The room at the Methodist Church Brunswick place is booked for one more meeting, on the 12th April at 12.30.

For the group to continue we will need someone to come forward that is capable of

leading in some way, definitely a keyboard player would be a good start. If you think you can help get this group off the ground, Tuesday the twelfth is your chance.

I will be taking along a couple of old vinyls, and if no one comes forward, I will be brutally subjecting whoever is there to my rendition of "Combine harvester" from The Wurzels.

Can you come and save the day?

Barry Baker,

Temporary convener of what may unfortunately be a temporary singing group.

DOG WALKING GROUP

Due to walking groups in and around Dawlish not overly welcoming to dog owners, this is a newly formed group for dog lovers who fancy

walking with fellow dog walkers. Further information to follow. Contact enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info if you wish to be added to the group.

LITERATURE

Dissolution by C. J. Sansom

Our latest book choice was another murder mystery. This one was set in a Sussex monastery in 1537 during Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. Thomas Cromwell's commissioner has been beheaded and the murder has been staged to appear to be an act of sacrilege, involving devilry or witchcraft.

Cromwell sends his lawyer, Matthew Shardlake, with his assistant, Mark Poer, to investigate and what follows is a well-plotted whodunit. There are more murders to solve and the corruption and depravity in this, supposedly, holy order come to light.

The Abbot and the monks are a disparate group varying from the good who are genuine in their religious calling to the greedy, the sadistic and those who use feeble excuses to justify the sexual abuse of women and boys.

Shardlake does not allow his personal feelings to cloud his judgment and he is a compassionate and moral man in a cruel

world. He is also a clever detective who unravels the truth.

Although we did engage with the story, we found that we were as interested, if not more, in the historical setting, the machinations of the elite and the grasping of money, position and power. So many other people endured filth, cold and stinking squalor vividly described in the novel. The monasteries could have, as Shardlake says, afforded to give so much more out of their immense wealth.

C. J. Sansom cleverly weaves his fictional characters with real people and events. Thomas Cromwell's involvement in the accusations against Anne Boleyn and torturing a false confession from Mark Smeaton are part of the plot. It was, however, pointed out that Hilary Mantel held a more sympathetic view of him.

This was a popular read with vibrant characters, colourful descriptions of medieval life, a gripping story and an appealing hero.

The majority of us said we will read the rest of the series and we awarded *Dissolution* 5/5

IN OUR OWN WRITE

We had our last meeting on the 13th March when the topic was "*The Newcomer*" and as usual we had totally different stories. One was about coming as newcomers to the town including joining u3a; another a cat being ousted by a newcomer to the household; a woman reluctantly joining a slimming class; and a family clearing out their mother's possessions after her death finding an old picture of a strange baby.

This triggered a conversation about early memories with Ruth telling us that as a young child during the war her father took her to a hilltop and pointed out the red sky on the horizon that was Portsmouth burning after being heavily bombed. She had so many tales to tell that we felt she should record her memories down for her family to read.

We all may have memories of a carefree childhood where you packed a picnic, headed off with friends into the woods and came home in time for tea, unlike the children of today. The talk of Liberty bodices, trudging through snowdrifts to school, rationing, etc made us decide that our next topic would be Memories, either real or invented.

Who knows, perhaps everyone will have a stab at writing their own life story for future generations to share.

The date of our next meeting will be Tuesday 11th April from 2-4 pm rather than the Monday, due to the Easter holiday.

P.S I helped my own mother write her own life story about growing up in rural Lancashire on a farm on Pendle Hill and gave all her grandchildren a copy.

Travina White

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Our March meeting was led by John Vick. Despite some technical difficulties with the projector, we were able to enjoy John's presentation on the celebrated 17th century Dutch artist Rembrandt van Rijn. As he had a truly prolific output of work, including drawings, etchings, and paintings with a wide variety of subjects, John chose to focus on Rembrandt's portraits and self-portraits.

Rembrandt's brilliant technique and ability to convey a sense of physical presence led him to become the foremost portrait artist in Amsterdam. The fact that forty of his portraits are dated 1632 or 1633 is testament to the demand for his work. His subjects were the wealthy middle class rather than the aristocracy, and they are portrayed against dark backgrounds with strong use of chiaroscuro, focusing attention on the face and eyes rather than details of costume or surroundings. A strong sense of the sitter's personality is conveyed.

Throughout his career, but especially in the early and later years, Rembrandt painted

himself many times, but we shouldn't deduce from this that he was vain or self-obsessed. One obvious advantage of painting a self-portrait is that the artist doesn't have to pay a model to sit for him. One can see in Rembrandt's self-portraits that he was taking the opportunity to explore all manner of different facial expressions as well as costumes. Certainly, he does not seem to flatter himself, and we see him ageing like the rest of us as time goes by. Frequently we can recognise his face as one of the characters in his religious and narrative works, as well as that of his first wife, Saskia. They both seem to have had a taste for dressing up!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday April 11th at 2pm in the Mayor's Parlour at the Manor House. Members are invited to choose a picture of an historical or mythical event which they find interesting, and to talk for five minutes or so about it to the rest of the group.

Lynne Vick

The **BOULES GROUP** have continued to meet inside in the Strand Hall in March, and have decided to continue doing so on the first Wednesday of each month at 10.30am throughout the summer, our version of indoor boules being unique. From April until September, we meet by the bandstand on the Lawn at 10.30am on the second Friday and fourth Wednesday of each month for something more traditional.

In addition, I hope we shall travel to

Exminster on a few occasions, to use the boules terrain there, and I've been in touch with Exminster's petanque group with the intention of arranging a match between us. We've agreed to this in principle, but there are no details available yet. All Dawlish u3a members are invited to join us over the coming weeks indoors or out, no equipment or experience is necessary.

Michael Heyden, Convener

STROLLERS

Four of us brave souls put our trust in Jean, despite the weather forecast, to lead us safely to the Old Cemetery at Teignmouth. Jean and other volunteers do sterling work keeping the whole site as clear and accessible as possible. She's also a mine of information about the people buried there.

She's not to be trusted where the weather is concerned, though, and after an hour the rain started. We ignored it. After a few minutes we took shelter. After quarter of an hour, it was obvious that it wasn't going to stop, and we decided to walk down into town, in limited visibility and accompanied by torrents of water rushing in the same direction.

We found solace in the Alice Cross Centre, where hot drinks and a large variety of food was available, and somewhat invigorated, we went to get the bus back to Dawlish. Typically, the rain had stopped by now, and all we had left to do was get home and wring ourselves out.

Michael Heyden

Our next D&D u3a Strollers walk will be around the nature reserve at Dawlish Warren on Thursday April 13th 2023

From Teignmouth catch the 12.21pm

Dawlish Warren bus from stop by WH Smith or same bus from Dawlish at 12.36pm. We'll get off bus at stop near Marine Stores i.e. just before the bus turns down towards Dawlish Warren; plan is to walk along country pathway down to Dawlish Warren where we'll be exploring the nature reserve pathways plus possibly walk along the beach depending on tides and weather conditions of course ...refreshments at The Boathouse then bus back home - 22 Paignton/Torquay bus leaves Dawlish Warren at 5 minutes past each hour.

ADVANCE NOTICE of our May D&D u3a planned walk. This walk will be on Thursday May 11th 2023 and will take us from Wellswood to Torquay Harbour!

From Dawlish catch the 22 Torquay/Paignton bus at 12.17pm or same bus from Teignmouth at 12.32pm

We'll get off bus at Wellswood then walk along Lincombe Drive and on across to Daddyhole Plain via Parkhill Rd. From Daddyhole Plain we'll be walking along the beautiful SW Coast Path. There are a few steps down to navigate on the way to the harbour. Refreshments at harbourside Lighthouse café. The 22 bus home to Teignmouth & Dawlish leaves from nearby harbourside bus stop at 40 minutes past each hour

Jean Gitsham

ART AND CRAFTS

Due to the increase in numbers, we are moving to a larger room at the Manor House. We will continue to meet on the first Wednesday of the month in room 4b at 2pm with the **exception of Wednesday 1st April when we will be in the much smaller room 6.** Please contact me if you plan on

coming so that I can check there will be enough space and add you to the circulation list.

Kim will be bringing some flowers for anyone who wishes to have a go at painting/sketching a still life. Just bring along a sketch pad, pencils etc.

Kate McCarthy & Kim Walker, Conveners

NATURAL HISTORY

It is with regret that the Natural History Group is suspended owing to the retirement of the convener from u3a membership, and the fact that nobody was available to accept the role: always a challenging one owing to the varied interests and commitments of the members. One member, Dave Hutton, is a Devon Wildlife Warden and is prepared to co-ordinate the flagship programme of supporting the biodiversity of St. Gregory's Churchyard; but he is so involved in many other local non-u3a projects that he simply cannot undertake the convener's role.

The putative Friends of St. Gregory's

Churchyard plan to meet, weather permitting, from 9.30 every Wednesday and Friday mornings. (These are times when the church is open for access to water.) All help from other u3a members, and even from other members of the wider community would be most welcome. The final field trip for the group, on our scheduled meeting date of Wednesday, 19th April, will be to Dawlish Warren in search of the elusive sand crocus. We would be delighted to welcome any other interested u3a members. Just turn up in the car park for 2pm and make yourself known.

George Lipscomb

THE QUIZ GROUP

The group got together twice and on both occasions there was a good attendance.

Our subjects for the first quiz centred around Valleys, General Knowledge, Miles, The Roman Empire, The Fashion World and the Animal Kingdom. Jokers were played in four of the rounds; two in the Animal Kingdom, ensuring that it came out on top. This said, without any jokers played, the Fashion World was a close second. Miles came out worst! Here is a selection of the questions asked and I wonder how many you would have got right:

Where is Taylor Valley? What creature is Indian Jones most afraid of? 1 league is equivalent to how many miles? What relation was Caesar Augustus to Julius Caesar? Who is credited with the design of the 'little black dress'? Finally, a pandemonium refers to a group of which birds?

Our second quiz covered questions on The Coronation, Alloys, General Knowledge, Eat drink and be Merry, Chocolates, and Operation Code Names. The players steered

away from playing their joker in the Coronation and Alloys round. No idea why! This said, The Coronation was the round with the least number of points. Top of the pops went to the General Knowledge subject.

There were 3 jokers played on the chocolates and food subjects. Perhaps seen as tastier...

So where was Forrest Gump sat when he said: "Life is like a box of chocolates?" or where was mayonnaise invented? Thinking of alloys what two metals make up a UK 50p piece? The operation code names round included some teasers such as what was Operation Musketeer linked to?

Despite the 10th April being Easter Monday, there will be sufficient players to be able to hold the quiz. The other quiz is scheduled for the 24th April.

We certainly have some fun and the quiz master is often challenged regarding the answers; as yet, he has not had to ask for police protection!! Feel free to join us for a taster session.

Graham Carey

ADVENTURE GROUP

Sixteen members of the Adventure Group met on Thursday 23rd March at the *Boom Battle Bar* in Exeter for a taste of axe throwing and Crazier Golf.

Axe throwing looks simple enough, but proved to be surprisingly tricky. However, most of us experienced the satisfactory 'thunk' of a well thrown axe on more than one occasion, and a £10 prize for the highest score was announced. Both Kerry Sherwin and John Vick showed a remarkable aptitude for throwing axes, but whether the skill had been gained in this life or a previous incarnation remained a mystery. However, Graham Winchester came through strongly with his last few throws to be awarded the prize.

Crazier Golf was also scored individually with four people playing at a time, and if my companions hadn't placed a limit of 10 strokes at each hole I'd still be there. The initial result was a draw between Mary Mansfield and Barry Baker. Their 22 strokes each

suggest a misspent youth. A thrilling playoff was arranged, and Mary was awarded the £10.

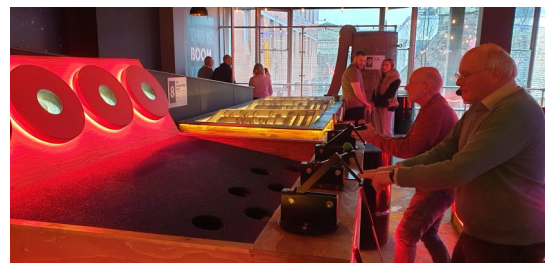
It was an entertaining afternoon doing something I doubt any of us would have tried outside the group, and I'm sure we're all looking forward to whatever Deborah has in store for us in April.

Michael Heyden

The group's next adventure will be Virtual Reality gaming at the VRVE in Exeter. We hope to have two groups going, on 21st and 27th April. Please see the Adventure Group news on the website for more details or contact Deborah Wallis via

adventure@u3a.dawlish.info.

Miggie Pickton



FRENCH

We were joined by a new member this month. Welcome Mary! The first meeting's topic was about how much time you like to spend on your own. We agreed there are advantages and disadvantages to being on your own as often you are not alone by choice. And that's not easy if basically you are a social animal. However, it's nice to be able to get up and go to bed when you want, to eat when and what you want, watch the TV programme you prefer, etc. And having a dog is great company...and gets you out! However, the question was really about how much time you like to have on your own. One person said he and his wife have different interests and he likes to walk and enjoy some solitude AND do his crossword. Then they can enjoy each other's company. Another commented that he always liked fishing and being on his own but that now he's retired he has less time on his own. Another person said she isn't so keen on solitude. She likes company but would just

like a bit of time to herself. So an interesting discussion.

Our second meeting had the topic "*Is there something you'd like to try but never have?*" Most of us were aware that we're now a bit more risk-averse than in our younger days! Otherwise we might have suggested more adventurous things such as water skiing, para gliding, snowboarding, deep sea diving. Maybe we should stick to writing a book or fulfilling earlier possible dreams like dancing, horse riding? We had one adventurous soul who has crossed Patagonia on foot and is doing a Dolomites walk. And another who'd like to fly a plane and look down over where she lives as well as flying over South America. Of course, we chatted about other things plus we had an article by Alphonse Daudet with deliberate mistakes in it that we looked at. We might introduce similar things in future sessions if someone has an interesting article especially from a French newspaper or magazine.

Bridie Cushion

PAGE TURNERS

In March Page Turners met to discuss '*What Alice Forgot*', a 2009 novel by Australian author Liane Moriarty. We found this to be an interesting book, with realistic characters. Alice wakes up on the floor of the gym with a bump on her head, thinking she's still a fun-loving young woman with a loving husband and pregnant with their first baby. But she soon discovers that she has lost ten years from her memory! She can't remember giving birth to her three children and she's puzzled why her husband seems to hate her. She also can't imagine what she has done to upset her sister, who will hardly speak to her, as they had always been so close.

We thought it was a clever idea, with well-developed characters and an engrossing plot. We all enjoyed the book and found it an easy read. We liked the way the first-

person journal by Alice's sister Elizabeth and the first-person blog by adopted grandmother Frannie sat alongside the third person story line of Alice and enabled us to see the development of the plot from different points of view.

Despite being an easy read, it gave us some interesting themes to discuss. It was an eye opener about how we transform as people with each new age. How many of our lives have developed in ways that might have surprised our younger selves? Alice had the opportunity to revisit the choices she had made and finally her family got the happy ending we hoped for, although the author kept us guessing right to the very end about which way things would go.

We recommend this book to you.

Deborah Wallis

HAPPY EASTER

Have a wonderful spring!

