



Dawlish & District u3a

Newsletter May 2023

FROM THE CHAIR

Monthly Meeting, Monday 15th May – Exeter City FC

The topic of our next monthly meeting will be very different from our recent themes. I am looking forward to welcoming Nick Hawker, who is the Executive Chair of Exeter City FC Board of Directors. I have invited him to talk about the considerable challenges and opportunities faced by a relatively small football club in the current climate. Exeter City FC plays a significant role in the life of Exeter and the surrounding area, and not just one affecting football fans. It has a high profile, is very visible and is also a significant employer.

Over the years, the Grecians, as they are known, (I personally will be interested to know why this Devon club has this nickname!) has had a chequered history, facing having to go out of business on more than one occasion. It has a very distinctive ownership model which is in distinct contrast with the clubs we hear so much about who are owned effectively by foreign governments, sometimes with a questionable record on human rights and other matters. The Grecians are currently enjoying a period of success having been promoted to League One but that will bring its own problems.

The role of sports organisations of all sorts are being scrutinised these days to ensure they are accessible to all members of the community, as spectators and participants, and provide opportunities for people with no discrimination on grounds of age, gender or other protected characteristics.

I hope you will find this talk interesting,

even though you may not feel drawn either to Exeter City FC, or like me, you are a devoted supporter of another team! This may also be a talk which might appeal to non-members, so please do encourage guests to come along if they would like to do so.

Dawlish Celebrates the Coronation – Refreshers Fair, Monday 8th May

Like most other communities across the country, Dawlish will be helping to mark the coronations of Charles and Camilla by holding an event to celebrate volunteering in all its guises. Our u3a will be contributing to this Refreshers Fair by having a stand in the marquee on the Lawns from 11am to 5pm on Monday 8th May. This will be an opportunity to show the public some of the activities we offer and perhaps attract some new members.

We will put together a small display about what we do but I am looking for a few members to volunteer to help 'man' the display throughout the day. If a few members could do an hour or two each, probably in pairs, that would help the event to be a success. The main requirement is just to chat to passers-by about what we do, and encourage anyone who shows interest to find out more. Everything you need will be provided for you.

If you would be able to be involved, please let me know by emailing chairman@u3a.dawlish.info. It should be fun to be part of this event – and as we are inside the marquee, we should all be comfortable too whatever the weather!

John Vick, Chair

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

The visiting speaker at our April meeting was Chloe Wood. Chloe is a member of the 'social prescribing' team which operates across a number of surgeries around this area, including the Barton Surgery. This is a relatively new type of provision but it is clearly one which is much needed and is being very well received by medical professionals and patients alike.

I do not think I am alone in not having heard of social prescribing until recently. However, the greater awareness of mental health issues, isolation and loneliness experienced by so many people across our society, as well as the unprecedented pressures on our GP and other 'mainstream' health services, have contributed to the creation of alternatives to 'conventional' provision.

There is now a greater appreciation of how other strategies can help to alleviate some of the medical and mental health problems experienced by so many people. GPs and other medical professionals are clear that a great many people who come to them are often experiencing problems as a result of social and lifestyle problems of many kinds. If these are addressed, some of the other issues can be more successfully dealt with.

An initial consultation with a member of the social prescribing team can last an hour – a length of time which most 'mainstream' practitioners would love to have! Subsequent appointments are usually 30 minutes long. All consultations are subject to the important requirements of confidentiality. If an individual wishes to be accompanied by a friend or a family member, that is perfectly acceptable. Patients are often referred by a GP but anyone can 'self-refer' if they wish. The

outcome of a consultation can be suggestions about how to develop strategies to make changes with lifestyle and perhaps to connect with other people, often through engagement with organisations which offer stimulation, company and personal support.

Many people's mental and physical health issues are a result of life circumstances – poor housing, poverty, unemployment, family break up. A social practitioner can put a patient in touch with experts in these fields. This might include the Citizens Advice Bureau or other body which has expertise in financial, legal, housing or other specialist areas.

Whatever a social prescriber suggests is based on a broader understanding of how individuals are living their lives than can be accommodated by a GP in a standard consultation. It is gratifying to know that the u3a is one of the organisations which is regarded as offering a positive contribution to some people's lives – friendship, personal support, opportunities for mental stimulation, physical activities, broadening interests.

Chloe described a number of case studies, highlighting the remarkable range of people who are accessing their services. These included people across the full age range from a three-year-old child (a very rare example – and accompanied by the child's parents) through to elderly people.

I imagine that many of us will know someone within our family or network of friends and neighbours who might benefit from working with the social prescribing team, so why not share what we have learned about social prescribing to raise awareness across the community?

John Vick

THEATRE

April has been a quiet month although we did go and see *Piano Man* at Shaftsbury which was a thoroughly entertaining evening. Some members are going to see *Sunshine on Leith* on Friday evening 12th May. If you are interested in going, book soon, as seats are selling quickly. I am currently booking seats to see *Barefoot in the Park* in June. This is also at Shaftsbury. Some members are looking at performances in Plymouth, this trip will be train and taxi

with lunch before the Matinee. Bookings need to be made months in advance as this is a popular venue. Watch this space as we look at performances in May and June or simply email enquiries if you fancy joining us.

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

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

At the April meeting members were invited to select a work of art which showed an historical event. As is always the case, our members came up with a hugely diverse selection.

We looked at some very famous paintings such as Picasso's *Guernica*, Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp*, and David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, and *The Death of Marat*.

Less familiar to most of us were Velasquez's *The Surrender of Breda*, and Guercino's *The Woman Taken in Adultery*. Ford Madox Brown's *The Execution of Mary Stuart* showed a very famous event in history, but somewhat 'imaginative' in its portrayal, as was Jean-Leon Gerome's *Pollice Verso*, showing the thumbs down of the crowd in the Roman arena. Both of these captured the drama and in the latter case, the excitement of the moment.

We all learned some fascinating facts about the historical circumstances and context of these works, as well as about the artists themselves. An example of this was *Sunday Morning* painted in 1877 by the American

artist Thomas Waterman Wood. This showed two generations of African Americans. A formerly enslaved woman is shown doing her needlework, sitting alongside her granddaughter who is reading a book to her, probably the Bible as it is a Sunday. This was an optimistic statement about emancipation just a few years after the ending of slavery. Although they are portrayed living in impoverished surroundings, the youngster appears to be benefiting from emancipation having had some education and her grandmother, presumably once enslaved, appears now to have some leisure and family time.

Molly showed two paintings of the same subject, *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, one by Poussin and the other by Rubens. Although they were both painted in the 1630s, the treatment was very different, illustrating the contrasting styles of Classicism and Baroque art.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 8th May when David Gearing will be talking about the work of Berthe Morrisot.

Lynne Vick

METAL DETECTING.

We are hoping to start up a small metal detecting group if someone can come forward as convener. This would need very little organising, just keeping in touch with

other interested members. If you think you could do this, please let me know in the usual way.

Barry Baker, Groups coordinator.

THE QUIZ GROUP

Despite half of the quizzers away, we still held an Easter Monday special. This said, the subjects were not Easter related but touched on Named Airports, the Mediterranean, Pirates, The Body, Moons and of course General Knowledge.

It was a close call as only four points separated the teams. The top of the class subjects were Pirates and The Body. However, there is a need for further lunar exploration!

Let's take a look at a few questions to see how you would have fared...

Where is the Nikola Tesla airport situated?

The 'Calypso deep' is situated 60kms off of which coastline?

What other name was given to a Spanish dollar?

The ilium can be found in what part of the body?

How many people have actually walked on the moon?

We were back to nearly full strength for the second quiz, with the themes as well as General Knowledge being Which came first,

Country names, Natural History, It's all Greek and Classical Composers. 'The which came first round' was the strongest with the lowest score being 7 and the highest 9. So, was it the safety razor, the saxophone or the diesel engine that appeared first?

In the Natural History round we realised that the average life span of a mouse in captivity was three years. However, the oldest mouse recorded is Sir Patrick Stewart, almost 10 years old, living in the San Diego zoo!

As for the final round... ouch! it was over to Classic FM the day after the quiz as the highest score in the Classical Composers round was 4. The quizzers were asked to name the first name of some of the classical composers, such as Chopin, Stravinsky, Puccini and Vivaldi.

Whatever the scores each time, it is the fun, banter and fellowship that count.

As you are aware, 3 of the 5 Mondays this month are Bank Holidays (oh to be working again...) This said, the quiz group will be meeting on the 15th and the 22nd.

Graham Carey, Quiz Master

LITERATURE GROUP

Force of Nature by Jane Harper

Set in Australia, *Force of Nature* is a story about a corporate team-building exercise in the hostile environment of the Giralong Ranges that goes badly wrong. The men's team arrives back safely but the women's team are late, one snake-bitten, others battered and bruised with the 5th member missing.

The lost woman, Alice Russell, is a whistleblower in the process of passing incriminating evidence about corruption in the company so the Federal Police Agents in charge of that investigation become involved with solving her disappearance.

The book is written in two timelines, the current search for Alice and the unfolding of the women's trek. The women are not particularly likeable, which one of our group found off-putting, but they came across as all too human in a situation they were ill-equipped to deal with. We wondered if any corporation would really send people on such a gruelling dangerous so-called "*Executive Adventure*".

There were many red herrings and possible suspects including the son of a serial killer, a shifty petrol pump attendant or perhaps the CEO had discovered her betrayal.

Underlying resentments and hostilities between the women are revealed, far more than the usual workplace politics and jostling for position. Bullying among their teenage children had escalated with disastrous results. They take a wrong turn both literally and metaphorically and civilised behaviour rapidly deteriorates including physical violence.

Most of us thought that this was a satisfying, gripping story. Atmospheric and well told but we found a couple of loose ends and we were not satisfied that Alice's motivation in going to the police was plausible. She didn't seem like someone who would sacrifice her career out of moral concerns.

Force of Nature is a good holiday read. Given that we have selected, and enjoyed, so many page-turning whodunits, we did consider that perhaps we are being a bit audacious calling ourselves a Literature Group!

We awarded this book 3/5

GREAT LIVES

Eight of us met on 28 April when David gave us a full and entertaining presentation of Francois Truffaut's personal life and his films which included many stills.

Francois Truffaut (1932-1984) was best known as a French film director winning numerous awards, and his love of films dated from a very early age. He was founder of the French New Wave movement and was also a screenwriter, producer, actor and film critic. His off-screen life was as "colourful" as his films and his film "*Les Quatre Cents Coups*" (The 400 Blows) made in 1959 was largely autobiographical about his very difficult childhood in Paris.

Truffaut married in 1957 to Madeleine

Morgenstein, the daughter of Ignace Morgenstein, the managing director of one of France's largest film distribution companies. He was largely responsible for securing funding for Truffaut's first films. The couple had two daughters but divorced after 8 years of marriage. Truffaut also had numerous affairs with his leading ladies; however, unusually, he remained on good terms with them over the years.

Francois Truffaut died of a brain tumour in 1984 aged 52. He remains an icon of the French film industry.

Next month June will be presenting the life of Beatrix Potter, English author, illustrator, natural scientist and conservationist.

Jill Maynard, Convener

In April the **PAGE TURNERS** discussed '*Silverview*' by John le Carré. This book was published posthumously in 2021. Unfortunately, we agreed that it was a book that we would be taking to a charity shop rather than recommending it to a friend or relative. So, if you do want to read it you know where to go!

The book weaves together the stories of Julian, who has left a high-paid job in the City of London to become a bookseller, Edward, an enigmatic Polish wheeler-dealer he befriends, and Proctor, a British intelligence official hunting down the source of a leak. Seemingly unrelated events and conversations come together at the end as a rather convoluted plot is resolved. Some of

us read this book twice and still did not spot all the clues that would help us to understand what was going on. We admired le Carré's use of language and the quality of the writing but for us that did not overcome the lack of characters and a story that we felt invested in.

Those of us that had read and enjoyed other le Carré books did not feel it was a fitting finale to his career. Those that had never previously read anything by this author did not feel inspired to try other works. All, however agreed that the point of a book club is to try new things and there was as much to talk about in a book we did not like as in one that we did.

Deborah Wallis, Convener

ADVENTURE GROUP

Fresh off the back of an exciting exploration of the virtual world, Adventure group members will be heading underground for their next adventure.

On Thursday May 18th we will be visiting Pengelly Caves near Buckfastleigh. Carolyn has organised a guided walk there for us with an optional social lunch afterwards.

Adventures are open to all members of

Dawlish & District u3a. The details of each adventure are always advertised in the Adventure Group News on the u3a website (<https://u3a.dawlish.info/tag/adventure>). If you think Pengelly Caves are for you, then just check out the website and let Carolyn know via email to

adventure@u3a.dawlish.info.

Miggie Pickton, Convener

The **BOULES GROUP** has started its new summer playing timetable from the beginning of April. To cater for those people who like playing our version of indoor boules we are continuing to meet in the Strand Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 10.30. We'll then be meeting outside on the second Friday and fourth Wednesday of each month on the Lawn by the bandstand at 10.30. The weather was poor on our first

outdoors meeting in April, that we carried on inside. Outside we found the boules seemed to have got heavier over the winter, or perhaps we're just a little older and less fit. Preliminary arrangements are in hand to play a match against the Exminster petanque group. I do hope it will become an annual competition, with an extravagant trophy at stake.

Michael Heyden, Convener

PICKLEBALL

The Badminton group is expecting a new arrival, due to be born on **Tuesday 9th May**. We hope you can come along to witness the happy event. We are going to call it Pickle.

After a recent news item in the third age Matters magazine, I have had several of our branch members express an interest in Pickleball. (If you haven't read the article, I recommend digging it back out)

My first response was what on earth is that? Well, apparently, it's a game that's relatively new but rapidly growing, particularly within the u3a. It's described as a cross between

ping-pong, tennis, and badminton.

Not wanting anyone to suffer FOMO, I am going to start a Dawlish Pickleball group alongside the Badminton sessions on Tuesdays at 4.30. In the Dawlish Leisure Centre. To start off, it will be run the same as the badminton, just come along and join in, Paddles and Wiffle can be supplied. (With regret, George Clooney and Leonardo DiCaprio are unlikely to attend.)

As with all offspring, it is hoped that it will grow up strong enough to look after itself in the future. Hope to see you there.

Barry Baker

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. Next Tea and Chat is on Thursday 4th May.

Kate McCarthy & Michael Heyden, Conveners

DOG WALKING GROUP

The newly formed Dog Walkers Group has got off to a great start. We meet weekly on no particular set day, someone in the Group will suggest the following week's walk and the day. This is to try and accommodate all dog walkers. So far, we have been to Dawlish Countryside Park and Mamhead several times, walking either the circuit or

along the Dawlish Waters route. Next week's walk will be on Friday 5th May at 10am at East Cliff Park Teignmouth. We will be meeting by the Teign Bean Van just past the Lido on the sea front.

Contact enquiries if you wish to be added to the group or just come along and join us.

Kate McCarthy

FRENCH

Five members of the French Conversation group got together on Thursday, 20th April, several others having obligations to be elsewhere. The subject for discussion was 'On which gadget are you most reliant?' This simple subject allowed for plenty of conversation ... with plenty of humour! One member said the gadget she is most reliant on is the common zip which she uses on her trousers six or seven times a day!!! She said she even had them on her shoes and boots. Another member suggested the iPad and mobile 'phone. He loves the iPad for games and reading the daily paper. The most needed gadget for another member was her washing machine, especially when having visitors, when the machine is in use two or three times a day, as opposed to two or three times a week, usually. There was plenty of discussion on the lack of quality today for a machine of the same make as

compared to a previous one which lasted fifteen years! Another member suggested the iPad, electric shaver and electric toothbrush. Last but not least was the reliance on the remote control. This member re-enacted the pleasure he gets in clicking through the various programmes and 'catch-up' etc., making full use of every facility on his television with the remote control, often ending up listening to music. We enjoyed plenty of laughter!

June Ellen Wilson

The French Group is considering branching off into a French Beginner club, for those interested in learning some basic French conversation. Perhaps some of the more advanced members of our group could assist?

Bridie Cushion, Convener

ART AND CRAFT

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. Kim will be bringing something for anyone

who wishes to have a go at painting/sketching a still life. Just bring along a sketch pad, pencils, paints etc.

Kate McCarthy & Kim Walker, Conveners

Editor of the u3a Newsletter

We have been very fortunate to have had Dana as the Editor of our newsletter for the past year or two. Under her guidance, we have been able to read every month about the impressive range of activities we enjoy. She has decided that she now needs to hand the role over to someone else, so we need to find her successor. I am very grateful to her for her utterly reliable work for the members. The Editor needs to have word processing skills but please be assured, good support will be available. I am confident most people who are used to emailing, producing Word documents and are able to do some routine proof reading, will be well placed to perform the role.

Conveners and other contributors are asked to email their copy to the Editor so that the next newsletter can be emailed to members at the beginning of each month. We all have lives to lead, so while we would like the newsletter to be sent out on time, if the

editor is on holiday or otherwise unavailable, then we find solutions!

If anyone is interested in taking on this role, or at least to find out more about it, I am very happy to discuss it with them. I am sure Dana would also be happy to talk to anyone who would like to know more about what is involved, as would Miggie or Dave Pickton.

John Vick, Chair

I would like to thank all our wonderful members and conveners for the support they provided me since I took over. Our groups have been thriving and trying out new and interesting activities and topics throughout. Keep up the good work!

I am sorry to take a step back at this point in time; it is all for personal reasons and I shall offer to resume this position some time in the future. It has been a joy to edit our newsletter.

Dana Dima

SINGING

It has not been possible to start up the proposed singing group at this time. We may revisit this at the end of the summer; should

a member come forward as convener.

Our branch has many other great groups that can be enjoyed please keep up to date with what's available by visiting our web site.