
From the Chair

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The beginning of a new year should encourage us to make resolutions to aim for better things for ourselves and others. The Committee's resolution is perhaps an undramatic one but I believe will ensure that we continue to run a happy and successful u3a and serve and include as many people as possible in the community.

We have decided to include in our monthly cycle of committee meetings a review of our policies on all sorts of matters ranging from Finance to Privacy and GDPR. The Committee started by approving a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which now appears on this page of our website [Policies - Dawlish & District U3A](#)

Policies often appear dry, legalistic and not closely connected to what we want to enjoy doing day by day. That is a fair comment. In this case, I urge you to read it and do what you can to ensure that we continue to live up to the aspirations of our policy. It is often about ensuring that 'little things' are done well. This might be ensuring that we hold interest group meetings in places which all members can get to, that there is suitable access to toilets, that those with mobility or hearing difficulties are able to participate, and that we don't do anything to make a member or visitor feel uncomfortable. We should also do what we can to make everyone welcome, that we are not a 'closed shop' and new members are welcome at our groups – even if we might need to think about meeting in a different venue.

I believe in almost every respect we are currently doing well in these matters but we can always reflect on what we do and how we might improve. And the mantra embedded in the policy is that we are only asked to make 'reasonable adjustments', not completely change the way we operate – or attempt the impossible or unaffordable.

One matter where I hope there can be some action is the provision of amplification in the Council Chamber so those who are struggling to hear our speakers, have more help and feel included. After my lobbying a few months ago, the Council promised to invest in some technology to help all users of the Manor House, but it hasn't happened yet. I'll give them a reminder and suggest a New Year's Resolution might be in order!

Living

Laughing

Learning

Artificial Intelligence

It has occurred to me that an important and fascinating subject for a monthly meeting might be Artificial Intelligence. My initial attempts to find someone competent to talk to us about this have not got very far as yet, so a recent communication from the national office of the u3a was very timely. These are links which members might be interested to explore if they wish to get started on AI and discover a little of what it might entail.

Those who really know about these things (which at present does not include me!) are sure that there is a great deal to be positive and excited about, and that we should not just dwell on some of the obvious problems. As part of our mission is to Learn, then perhaps you might like to investigate this link: [u3a Communities - AI for everyone](#)

Have fun!

John Vick

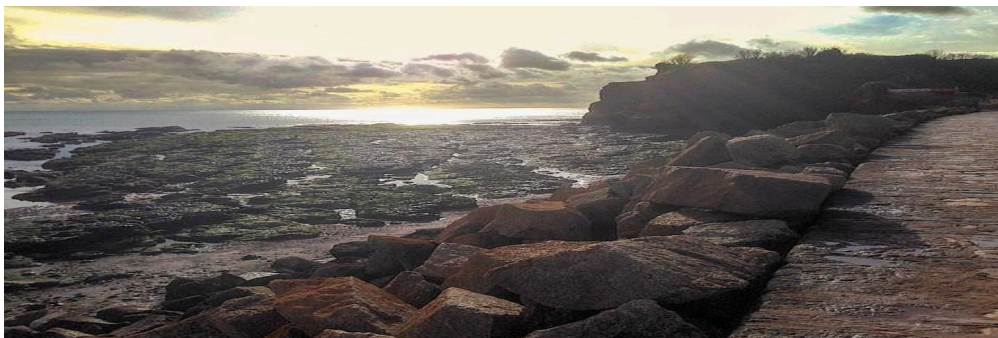
Monthly meeting report

Toby Sherwin – Life Between the Tides

Our programme of monthly meetings for 2024 got off to an excellent start with one of our largest ever attendances, topping 50, including several people who were having a 'taster' session as they consider whether to become members.

Toby Sherwin, one of our own members, has had a career as a professional physical oceanographer and is now an amateur marine biologist. As founder of Shores of South Devon marine life interest group no-one is better qualified to talk to us about the life on our own stretch of seashore.

Toby took us on a virtual walk from Cockwood Harbour, under the sluice gates, towards the Warren, past the Red Rock, the town beach, Boat Cove and ending at Coryton Cove. Under his expert guidance, we learned about the different habitats on that journey (rocks, mudflats, shipwrecks, beaches) and the wealth of wildlife you can observe – if you know what you are trying to find.



I suspect I am not alone in being sadly ignorant about what is just in front of me as I walk along the sea wall, cycle the Exe Estuary Trail, the Exe Estuary Trail, or enjoy a drink and the

view at Cockwood. Toby shared over 40 pictures of some remarkable creatures showing that we really do not have to travel the world with David Attenborough to find extraordinary creatures, some truly bizarre life stories and important habitats and ecosystems which deserve understanding and protection. The humble barnacle, Pacific oysters, some dazzlingly coloured sea weeds, crabs, sea slugs, sea anemones, bivalves and much else are all there for us to discover.



This selection of his slides, shows a beadlet anemone, Facelina Auriculata sea slug and edible winkle, tracks.



For those who would like to know more, then why not visit shoresofsouthdevon.org.uk and also the Facebook and Instagram sites with the same name.

I feel sure that those visitors who came to find out about our u3a can only have enjoyed this talk, and I look forward to meeting them again either in the Manor House on 19th February or at one of our interest groups throughout the month.

February Meeting: Christine Wallach, *Now I belong to me*

At our meeting on Monday 19th February, we will welcome Christine Wallach who will be talking about her remarkable life story. She was born into and brought up in a very strict religious cult but was excommunicated with her husband and five children when she was 50, and left isolated and without any support. She will tell us about her experience and how she built a new life as a successful businesswoman. What I have learned about Christine's experience sounds really fascinating – and shocking – and I am looking forward to hearing her speak. I hope we will have another large audience. More details can be found on our website page [About Christine Wallach - Dawlish & District U3A](#)

John Vick

Interest Group news

Adventure Group

Adventure Group members met in January to discuss and vote for the activities that the group would take part in during 2024. Based on members' votes and some practical considerations, this is the list we have come up with.

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| January | Tai Chi |
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| February | Archery |
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| March | Manor House Hotel |
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| April | Football golf |
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| May | Brixham Fish Market tour |
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| June | Paddleboarding |
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| July | Gliding |
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| August | Exeter treasure hunt |
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| September | Vineyard tour and wine tasting |
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| October | Orienteering at Killerton Park |
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| November | Dark sky experience |
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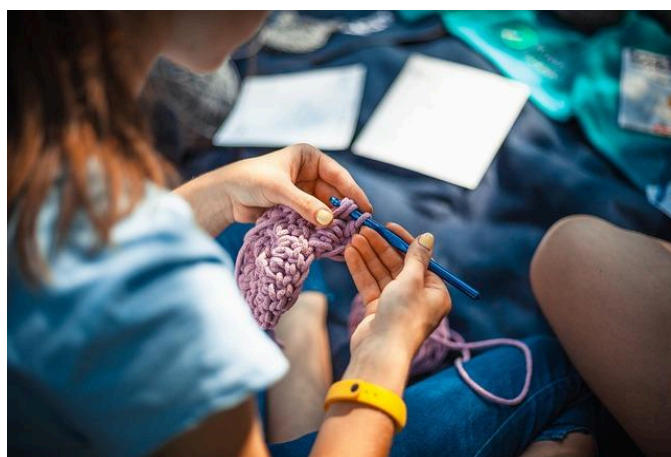
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| December | Clip 'n' Climb |
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If you are interested in joining the group for any of these adventures then look out for the details each month in Adventure Group News:

<https://u3a.dawlish.info/tag/adventure>

Miggie Pickton

Art and Crafts Group



We continue to meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm in The Manor House. All welcome and please bring along your current project you are working on. No particular skill is required just enjoy the company of a group with multiple interests and always someone on hand for help if you are stuck. 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

Convenors

Art Appreciation

For our first meeting of 2024, Molly gave a presentation on the sometimes confusing world of printmaking techniques. Some of the most famous works of art over the centuries have been prints of one sort or another. In previous meetings, we have looked at many of these, used terms such as lithography, etching and engraving, but have not always understood exactly what the technique entailed. Molly, although modestly stressing that she was not a print maker herself, did share her considerable knowledge of the many techniques that artists have used over the centuries. We were guided through a long list of techniques. These included woodcuts,

Bird/flowers - woodblock



linocut, etching, aquatint, mezzotint, drypoint, engraving, lithography, screen printing, monotype and collography. To illustrate her talk, she showed us some prints made by noted artists across the centuries, but we also had the opportunity to handle and closely examine prints and printing blocks which she had made herself.



Printing - Drypoint

Man on horse - woodcut



While some of the techniques enable anyone to produce a pleasing image, most of these techniques require enormous skill and hard work. The level of detail in some of the images was quite remarkable and Molly's explanation of how they were made added enormously to our appreciation of them.

At our next meeting, Michael Heyden will be giving a presentation on the Renaissance painter, Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

Lynne Vick, Convener

Boules

The Boules group continue to play our own version of indoor boules in the Strand Hall on the second Friday and fourth Wednesday of each month at 10.30. Everyone is welcome, no equipment or experience necessary, and all you have to lose is your dignity. We've been delighted to welcome our newsletter editor to the last two sessions, and she's still smiling. There can be no higher recommendation.



Michael Heyden

Discussion Group Restarting

We are delighted to announce the restart of the Discussion group.

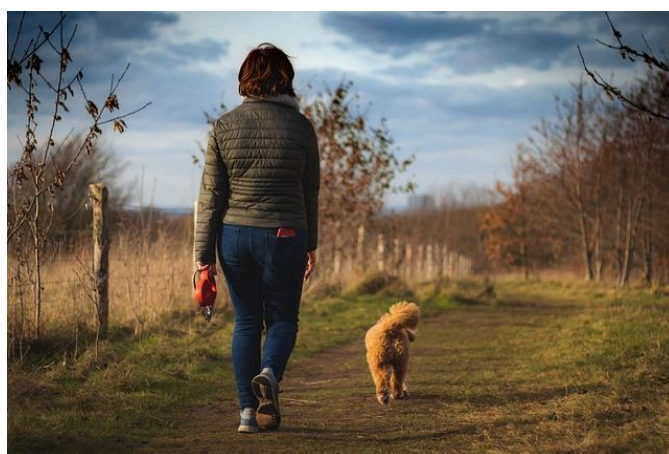
Dana Dima has agreed to be the new convener for this group. It will be meeting once a month at 10.30 am on the third Friday of each month, the first meeting being on **16th February**.

The venue for this meeting will be at Dana's home or a local café dependent on the numbers of those interested.

Discussions will be held on various topics as decided by group members.

If you would like to become part of this group please contact Dana via; enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info

Dog Walking



We aim to meet on Tuesdays at 1030 as this is the day that suits the majority of us. Walks this month have been Teignmouth beach and East Cliff Park, Turf Lock and Countryside Park. Dogs need to be walked whatever the weather and the walks can be as long or short to suit each dog and dog walker!

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

Kate McCarthy

Great Lives

Fanny Cradock (1909-1994)

Nine of us met on 26th January when I talked about the life of Fanny Cradock.

Perhaps not a great life but an interesting one nonetheless: Fanny Cradock was the first female celebrity chef on TV and was well-known for her often over-the-top recipes, her larger than life personality and her treatment of her seemingly hen-pecked husband Johnnie. People watched her for her outrageous behaviour as much as for her culinary skills.



Fanny married four times, twice bigamously. She met Johnnie Cradock, who was her fourth husband, in 1939. She changed her name to Cradock by deed poll but they did not in fact marry until 1977, shortly after her career on television ended.

Fanny came from a fairly wealthy family but later experienced real poverty. However, through her hard work and ambition she and Johnnie became well-known for their column "Bon Vivreur" in the Daily Telegraph and cookery demonstrations (often wearing evening dress) in theatres around the country. Her first TV appearance was in 1955. It seems she was in the right place at the right time. Rationing had only just ended and she brought glamour to the drabness of housewives' lives and showed them that cooking could be enjoyable. She enjoyed celebrity status, mixing with members of the

acting world and royalty. However, in 1976 her career ended following an appearance as a culinary adviser on Esther Rantzen's programme "The Big Time" where gifted amateurs crossed over into the world of the professional. Fanny's behaviour towards the winner of the Cook of the Realm title was extremely rude and belittling: she pulled faces and pretended to retch. (There is a clip from the programme on Youtube). The BBC received so many complaints that Fanny was never asked to cook again on TV, although she did continue to make the occasional guest appearance on various chat shows.

Johnnie died in hospital in 1987 and Fanny died in obscurity in 1994.

Charlotte will be presenting the life of Thomas Coram next month.

Jill

In Our Own Write

We had our first meeting of 2024 when five of us got together and the topic was "It was January ". As usual we had a wide range of interpretations of the subject matter.

1. A story set in the 1950's when washing was done by hand and clipped to the washing line by chapped hands. There was no such thing as mobile phones and women mostly were housewives. Children walked to and from school and what happened the day that a child was snatched by a stranger when walking home with her brother.
2. A poem of parallel lives with one young man celebrating New Year here with

fireworks and a young man in Ukraine on the same night dealing with real rockets.

3. A man perusing a pile of travel brochures as if deciding where to go and then the sting in the tail in that he was confined to a wheelchair and could only dream.

4. A woman experiencing pregnancy at a more mature age.

5. A group of grandsons secretly following their deceased grandfather's wishes on New Year's Eve by scattering his ashes at the traditional family firework display.

The next meeting will be **Monday 12 February and the topic is "The Quick thinker"**.

Literature

The Boy from Aleppo who Painted the War
by Sumia Sukkar

Sumia Sukkar is a writer of Syrian Algerian origins and this is her debut novel. It is written, mainly, from the perspective of Adam, a 14 year old with asperger syndrome and it opens at the start of the Syrian conflict. Adam tries to make sense of the unfolding chaos, death and bloodshed which he describes as "horrible and beautiful all at the same time" through his paintings. He particularly expresses his emotions through the use of colour and his artwork is vividly described.

For Adam, his family and, of course, the rest of the Syrian people, the war is an unfolding tragedy. They endure dreadful injury, loss and suffering, in particular his sister Yasmine, who holds the motherless family together. She is captured and subjected to

brutal rape and torture that is all too usual in any conflict.

The battered, near-starving family have to leave the ruins of their home to try to find safety but they receive kindness and hospitality on their way, which is a welcome relief.

We found this book harrowing but, of course, given the subject matter, it is not a novel that is written for the reader to enjoy but to bear witness to their suffering.

The fact it concentrates on one family's experience rather than the political background tells a timeless story of what happens to people caught up in all wars, no matter about the reasons or rights or wrongs of any conflict. It pulls no punches and the details of death and injuries are very graphically depicted.

3/5

Lunch Club



Our January lunch was at Castle Inn in Holcombe. We filled the restaurant with thirty three u3a members.



Please arrange your own transport. You can take bus 22 or 12 to the Crab Shack.

You can pay by bank transfer to

NATWEST

Dawlish & District U3A

Sort code : 52-30-22

Account : 34078967

Reference:

Crab Shack .. name

The Castle Inn serves British cuisine. Steve and Julie and their team served us with our pre ordered menu, sent to them two weeks earlier. It was a very successful lunch, apparent when I looked at how all of you were enjoying yourselves.

Thank you all for your support.

Upcoming Luncheon Club Dates:

February 23rd 2024 (Friday)

Crab Shack

3 Queen Street

Teignmouth TQ14 8BY

At every lunch event I am taking a deposit of £10 to secure your booking. **Non refundable.**

Please make sure your day is clear for each lunch event. If you cannot attend the lunch, please find another member to take your place to get your deposit back. All lunch deposits must be paid 10-15 days before the event.

Pre orders must be made and I have to email the head chef by February 7th 2024.

March 22nd 2024 (Friday)

Trade Winds

12 Station Road

Teignmouth



Natural History



At present, our Natural History Group is not running due to it needing a new convener. If you would like the opportunity to organise this group please contact Barry via; enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info

Page Turners

The Page Turners met between Christmas and New Year to discuss 'Playdate' by Alex Dahl which was much enjoyed by all but one of us.

This 2020 thriller is set in Norway and France and tells the story of seven year old Lucia Blix who goes for a sleepover with a new friend. When her parents go to collect her the next day the house is completely empty and we are plunged into a chilling story of child abduction. Why was this seemingly normal family targeted for this horrific event?

This was a well crafted and fast paced read - a real page turner. We liked the way it was written in short chapters, alternating between the perspectives of different characters, which created an urgent sense of needing to read on. The fact that some perspectives were written in the first person engaged us further. The clues that were dropped in and left hanging helped us to sympathise with different characters at

different points in the story and the twists kept us riveted until the last page.

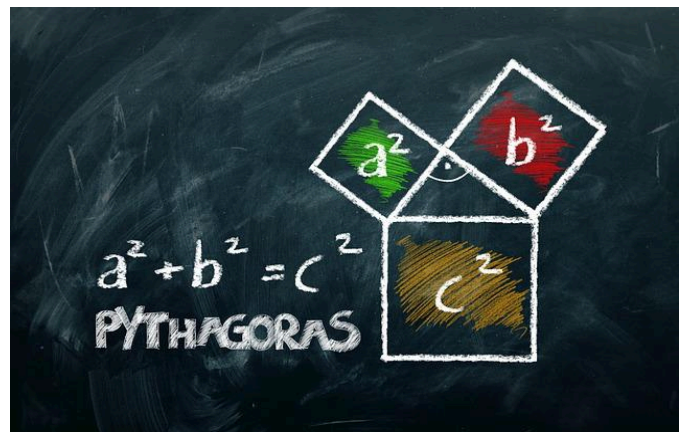
We definitely recommend this book to you - if you would like to read it, do get in touch as some of us may have a copy to share.

Quiz Group

After allowing time for the Christmas pudding to be digested, the wine bottles recycled and the decorations taken down, the alert members sat down on the 15th for the first quiz of 2024.

The subjects included the normal General Knowledge round, accompanied by questions on Roman history vocabulary (remember that quote from the life of Brian. "Apart from the sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order... and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?"), Josephs, What, no ball!, Sky and Maths related.

The results showed that because of two jokers played, the Roman Vocabulary gained the most points. This said, the Maths related Round saw 3 of the teams get their best score of the evening. Long live Pythagoras.



In fact it was suggested that our u3a treasurer Michael, who did well in that round, should commence a new group 'Maths with Michael'. Fancy joining?

The above said, the 'What, no ball' round clearly indicated that the members don't

like it when the ball is taken away from them...

As usual, here is a taster from each round; so would you have answered correctly that ..

Paris catacombs contain the bones of over 6 million people.

A consul was one of the two co-leaders of the Roman republic.

Joe Grimond was leader of the Liberal party for 11 years.

The foil, the epee and the sabre are the three disciplines of fencing.

Sirius is the brightest star in the sky from January to April.

The Binary numbering system only uses one and zeros

On the 29th, the chosen rounds were linked to Home time, General Knowledge, Australia, The 'X' Factor, Trees in the answer and I'm free! What subject would you have placed your joker on?

There were joint top teams, with the third placed team just one point behind. Taking aside the jokers, the Trees subject was the best round for 4 of the 5 teams. So the trees have it, with the General Knowledge score lagging far behind.

Now get your brain in gear and see if you can answer the following 6 questions:-

Which actor played Kevin in Home Alone?

Which other sport has been played at Wimbledon?

What is the national gemstone of Australia?

How many wooden bars does a Xylophone have?

What is Gin flavoured with?

Which footballer received the freedom of the City of London last May?

We look forward to our two quizzes in February; on the 12th and the 26th, when another 12 subjects will be up for grabs.

Graham Carey

Strollers Social Walking Group



Ten of us braved the cold on Thursday 11th January and met on Dawlish Road on the edge of Teignmouth. Jean took us through paths known only to her to St Scholastica's Abbey, a substantial property built for Benedictine nuns in 1863, and now private apartments. It's most impressive, and well worth the detour, if like me, you didn't know it existed.

From there we went down through the gardens of East Cliff Park, surprisingly dry after all the rain we've had recently, to the sea front. We called in at the TAAG Centre, which was showcasing local Teignmouth charity groups and on to a well earned drink.

After which we agreed that it hadn't been too cold after all, and it had been a delightful walk in the winter sunshine.

In February we are planning to go to Exminster, and from there down to the canal. The weather will dictate if we walk

along it, or scurry back to Exminster to get out of the rain.

Michael Heyden

Our **Feb 8th Dawlish & District Strollers** walk will be from near the Swans Nest Inn at Exminster to Turf Lock on the Exeter canal - from Teignmouth catch the number 2 Exeter bus at 12.13pm and same bus from Dawlish at 12.27pm...buses back from bus stop near Swans Nest are just before the hour and half hour.

Tea and Chat



We meet in the Riverside Centre next to the Manor House, on the first Thursday of the month from 2 -

4pm. Come along for a friendly chat or if you fancy a board game, bring one along. The Theatre Group now meets here too. Most Committee members are present and as many Convenors as possible. New members and those thinking about joining are strongly encouraged to come along to talk to Convenors 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.

Kate McCarthy & Michael Heyden
Convenors

Theatre

This group has now joined Tea and Chat on the first Thursday of the month.

January was Pantomime Season and many of the Group went to see Mother Goose at the Shaftsbury in Dawlish. A few words from one Attendee below:

Nine of us went to the Shaftesbury Theatre Panto on the last night.

It was a great atmosphere and lots of fun plus very good music and dance routines. Elsewhere some members went to the Shaftsbury for one of the film club's chosen films. There is no need to be a member, the cost is £5 at the door.

We are now looking ahead at upcoming productions. We have seats booked for Hound of the Baskervilles at Pavilions, Teignmouth in March. Further ahead I will be making bookings for The Haunting and Austen's Women: Lady Susan. These productions are in April but tend to get booked up quickly.



Kate McCarthy

Other news:

Burns night at the Strand Centre



There was a full house in the Strand Centre to celebrate the birth of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. Very few guests could claim any Scottish heritage but that did not prevent some of us from wearing some tartan – or drinking some whisky. Amid the throng were plenty of u3a members.

Robert Burns is one of the most widely loved and admired poets around the world, and not just by Scots and their descendants. Wherever his birth is celebrated, tradition insists that a piper parades into the hall to announce the entrance of the haggis. The haggis is then addressed in the words of Robert Burns:

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face, Great chieftain o' the pudding-race!

And this is followed by a toast with a tot of whisky.

After everyone had enjoyed the haggis, and a dessert which paid its respects to the traditional Scottish dish of cranachan, we listened to a talk on the life of Burns, more of his poetry:

Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim'rous beastie, O, what a panic's in thy breastie!

The evening ended with a quiz on all things Scottish, and the table decorations were auctioned to raise funds for the Strand Centre.



It was a most entertaining evening, and as usual, the staff and volunteers of the Strand Centre looked after everyone very well. We were all pleased to give generously to the Strand Centre to help it continue its fine work for the people of Dawlish.

Thank you to Khim Sim for encouraging so many u3a members to get together with others in the community to enjoy this.

Contact us:

You are invited to send us all your group news and updates.

Newsletter Editor: Please contact Roz Summerton via newsletter@u3a.dawlish.info.

Webmasters: Please contact Dave and Miggie Pickton via webmaster@u3a.dawlish.info

Want to know more about Dawlish & District u3a? Check out our website: u3a.dawlish.info.