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## From the Chair

### Privacy and Data Protection

As I told members in a previous newsletter, the committee has embarked on an annual cycle of reviewing our policies to ensure that our u3a runs effectively and legally, and in the interests of all members. We are looking at different policies each month. Our latest review included some matters which require us all to understand our responsibilities – Data Protection and Privacy.

We are becoming used to organisations of all kinds telling us how they use our data; this usually means our contact details but can extend to financial and medical information and other significant matters. The data Dawlish & District u3a holds is almost entirely limited to members' contact information, and I can assure members that we do our utmost to act properly in how we hold it and what we do with it. We certainly do not hold any financial information.

If you wish to know more about this, please follow the links to the policies page on our website [Policies - Dawlish & District U3A](#). The policies which have been reviewed recently are all follow closely the model policies produced by the National Office of the u3a, and are drawn up by lawyers with expertise in these fields. They may not qualify for the reading lists of our Literary or Page Turner interest groups, but they should be read by members to ensure that we are all up to speed with these matters. They affect us all.

### Party Time



You may not realise it but Dawlish & District u3a is approaching a landmark in its history: we were founded ten years ago in 2014. We don't have a precise date, and some of the details of who were the movers and shakers in bringing about this seismic event in the history of Dawlish remain obscure. Nonetheless, I think this event deserves to be marked and enjoyed by our members. So, please put in your diary that our birthday party will take place on the Lawns on the afternoon of **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July**. The sun will shine, cakes are already ordered but other than that, I have no details as yet. Nearer the time, the organisers will let us know what they have in store.



John Vick

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## Monthly meeting report

I was pleased to see another large attendance at the February monthly meeting. Judging by the number of questions, members were clearly very interested in Christine Wallach's extraordinary life story. For those who might like to know more and remain in touch with Christine, her email address is [christine.wallach@btinternet.com](mailto:christine.wallach@btinternet.com).

## Now I belong to me

I found the title of our February talk intriguing, and when I heard what Christine Wallach had to say, I was certainly not disappointed. The first fifty years of her life were spent within the Exclusive Brethren, a religious sect with membership spread across most parts of the globe. Brethren are brought up to reject the outside world as essentially wicked. The elders assert control over all aspects of members' lives, including education, dress codes, gender roles, finances and employment, even personal matters such as marriages and contraception. She

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and her husband, who was also brought up within the Brethren, raised their seven children to accept this way of life without question. Christine's life certainly did not belong to her.

Things unravelled suddenly when two of her sons did the unthinkable and chose to go to the cinema late on a Saturday night - and got drunk into the bargain. There had been a previous warning so on this occasion they were ejected from the community. The elders told Christine and her husband to cease any contact with the rest of their family. They refused to accept that they would abandon their children but from that time Christine had no contact with her daughters, her own parents or siblings.

Christine described in detail the huge challenges of adapting to a different world which she had been forbidden to know. She told us how she made a new career for herself and while also discovering that she really enjoyed new freedoms and opportunities - such as going to the hairdresser without permission and learning how to apply makeup!

As if this was not enough, Christine and her husband also had to contend with serious family issues, especially the need to support her sons. One son's life was in a spiral of drug misuse and addiction, with spells in prison. Their other son developed bipolar disorder and also needed an immense amount of support. Christine found she was having to live two 'separate' lives - the challenge of adjusting to a new way of living, while at the same time supporting her sons.

It is quite clear that Christine is an impressive entrepreneur. She discovered that her previous life had enabled her to develop some useful skills, especially in communicating with people. She forged a career in direct selling for Dorling Kindersley books and soon found that she was rather good at it. She acquired a reputation as one of the firm's best salespersons and found herself being invited to 'black tie' dinners and ventures overseas - including to the casino in Monaco, a considerable journey from the enclosed world of the Exclusive Brethren but one she obviously relished! She later went on to run her own business, a tearoom, where her previous experience in baking for the Brethren's tea parties came in very useful.

Her latest career is in public speaking, where she has a significant role with Toastmasters nationally. It is easy to see how she has made a success of this latest venture as she spoke with unusual fluency, without notes, and with no need for visual prompts to engage the audience.

Christine said she had enjoyed finding out who she is, and urged everyone to make sure that they knew who they are. Christine owns to being 80, and shows it is clearly never too late to find this out for yourself, and then to embark on new careers and adventures! As she said, 'I enjoy being me'.

## Super Sniffers



Next month, our speaker will be Peter Isaacson who will talk about the world of Medical Detection Dogs. If you would like an earlier idea of what these remarkable animals are able to do for us, visit the website [Super Sniffers Webinar - Medical Detection Dogs](#)

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Check out the latest news on our website: [u3a.dawlish.info](http://u3a.dawlish.info)

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## Important Notice \*\*\*

**Membership Renewals are due by 1<sup>st</sup> April.**

**The amount of £15 for full membership and £10 for Associate (if you are a member of another u3a too) remains the same as previous years.**

**Please look on our website (how to join) for information about renewing. It is particularly important that those who are Gift Aiders confirm each year that they are still a Gift Aider. Not sure what this means? Contact enquiries for an explanation.**

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## Interest Group news

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### 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

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### Art Appreciation

#### Pieter Bruegel the Elder

In February, Michael Heyden gave a presentation on the much-loved artist, Pieter Bruegel the Elder. He was born sometime between 1525 and 1530, and we first learn of him as a member of the painters guild in Antwerp in 1551. He soon established himself as one of the leading painters and

printmakers in the Dutch and Flemish Renaissance.



He travelled to Italy and was clearly strongly influenced not only by the art he saw there, but also by what must have seemed to a young man brought up in the Netherlands as extraordinary, the dramatic landscapes of the Alps and Italy. These become a major feature of his work.

He grew up in the protestant society of the Dutch Republic when religious subjects were no longer the staple of an artist's repertoire, and the church was not commissioning much art. However, some of his most famous works are of religious subjects but treated in his own distinctive style where often the

main subject does not physically dominate the scene.

In his early career he was a prolific designer of prints which were commercially very successful. His subjects were varied, and included classical stories such as Icarus, and many fables which obviously had wide appeal at the time.



Many of us know him for his landscapes and peasant paintings which portray everyday life in town and country, in great detail and often with much humour. They are usually filled with a great many people going about all manner of occupations and recreations. Bruegel's paintings show towns, villages and buildings in impressive detail, but his views of the landscape are often of mountains and forests, far removed from his native land.

Some of his most extraordinary paintings are reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch, with images of fantastic creatures and apocalyptic scenes.

At our March meeting Keith Feltham will be showing and talking about some of his own paintings and artistic development.

Lynne Vick, Convener

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## Discussion Group

The group restarted on the 17th of February after a long interruption, with some of the old members and some new ones.

We have decided to tweak the format a little, and so we started with everyone describing their hobby or special interest. Based on this, we chose a list of topics which would not be exhausted in one meeting. A member will now say a few words about their subject which will then be debated by the group. We have identified the environment, information and opinion, the generation gap, parenting, respect, and others as special areas to discuss.

The topic for the next meeting is Features of the Local Environment and how we can help improve it and the quality of our lives.

The next meeting will be held at the same venue on March 14 and on different days in the middle of each month thereafter, depending on members' availability.

The time stays at 10.30 am.

Dana Dima, Convener

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## Dog Walking

This month we have welcomed new members, both two legged and four legged. 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, Countryside Park, Dawlish Leisure Centre sports field, down Henty Avenue and crossing the road, through the woods and a coffee break at the Mushroom Farm, and the Obelisk.

Dogs need to be walked whatever the weather and the walks can be as long or

short to suit each dog and dog walker! Everyone is encouraged to suggest a walk. Contact enquiries if you wish to be added to the group.

Kate McCarthy

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## French Conversation



Our first meeting of the month was attended by four members and we discussed the subject of Valentine's Day. Is it nowadays just a commercial opportunity for the card, floristry and hospitality industries? Did any of us mark the occasion? Are men or women typically more romantic? Which love song did we think was the most romantic and touching?

One member did not mark St Valentine's Day and felt that it was an occasion more significant to the younger generation. Although we agreed that the day is hugely commercialised and no doubt very profitable for some businesses, one member felt that it was no bad thing for even us oldies, to be reminded to show appreciation to our partners. It also provides an excuse for a little indulgence; Marks and Spencer's Valentines meal deal for two was highly recommended! With regard to romantic songs, one member had fond memories of dancing with her husband to the song 'Lady in Red' at a dinner dance. Another told of

how Lionel Richie's song 'Hello' always reminded her of a teenage crush on a lad she saw every day walking to school, but never spoke to. The jury was out on whether one sex took the prize for being more romantic: I wonder what you think.

Our second meeting was again attended by four people. First, we heard some traveller's tales from a member who had recently returned from an exciting holiday in Costa Rica, and to some, an equally exciting trip to Ireland to watch a Six Nations rugby match.

We then went on to talk about books we had read recently. One person had recently re-read an ancient copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* which she had originally read many years ago in French. She reported it being rather hard going in English, but possibly more because of the small print than the content or the language!

The gentlemen present tended to read a mix of non-fiction and fiction and historical novels were enjoyed by all. One of us gave a review of *La Girona* by Niall Fallon, a novel which tells the story of a ship of the Spanish Armada which, overladen with passengers and treasure, eventually was shipwrecked off the coast of Ireland. Another recommended novel was *Act of Oblivion* by Robert Harris. Set in the years after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, it tells the story of two fugitive Roundhead colonels, signatories to the death warrant of Charles I, fleeing from a Royalist official who has vowed to bring them to justice. Other authors recommended included Ben Macintyre, Paddy Ashdown and Henri Troyat.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March, venue yet to be decided. We will be considering which person from the past or present we would like to sit next to at a dinner party for congenial conversation.

Lynne Vick

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- NT members free entry

## Gardens and Gateaux

The first meeting for the Gardens and Gateaux Group will be held on **Tuesday, 12 March 2024 at 12.30 - 1.30pm** at The Strand Hall, Lawn Hill, Dawlish to discuss the programme for 2024. £1 entry fee to include a hot drink.

The first outing will be on Tuesday, 9 April, by train, to Lanhydrock National Trust property and garden where we hope to see some beautiful magnolias, camellias, spring bulbs and perhaps some rhododendrons. Please see below for the details.

## Visit to Lanhydrock



**April 9<sup>th</sup>**

### **9.37 train from Dawlish, change Plymouth arriving 11.23**

Lanhydrock House and gardens are a 1¾ mile walk from Bodmin Parkway station

#### Costs

- Train fare, return to Bodmin Parkway station £18.80 or £12.40 with a rail card – if purchased before March 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Entrance to house and gardens £20
- Grounds free entry – three circular walks (see map)



#### Return train option

**15.31, change Newton Abbot, Dawlish at 17.47**

**16.05, change Plymouth and Newton Abbot, Dawlish at 17.47**

**17.06, direct Dawlish at 18.43**

Refreshments – suggest taking coffee to have on train, then choice of Lanhydrock café or your own picnic for lunch

Because our first outing is on 9 April, our second meeting will take place one week earlier on **Tuesday, 2 April at the Strand Hall, 12.30 - 1.30**, details as above.

Please contact Jenny on [enquiries@u3adawlish.info](mailto:enquiries@u3adawlish.info) if you have any questions.

Jenny Lancaster

Convener

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## Great Lives

Ten of us met to hear Charlotte give a fascinating talk about sea captain and philanthropist Thomas Coram (c1668-1751) and the Foundling Hospital which he started.

Although we knew his name as the creator of the Hospital in London we were unaware that Thomas Coram was in fact a West Country man, born in Lyme Regis.

Thomas' mother died when he was very young and Thomas never received a proper education. He was sent to sea aged 11 and apprenticed to a shipwright before travelling to Boston USA in 1694 to establish a new shipyard. He was a staunch Anglican and at times ran into trouble with his Puritan neighbours. In later life he promoted education for Native Americans and believed that education was important for both boys and girls.

When he returned to London with his American wife, Thomas was shocked by the state of infants on the streets, starving and often dying. He began a crusade for the creation of a Foundling Hospital where illegitimate babies could be properly cared for. He gained support from many rich and titled ladies and a charter was signed by George II for the formation of the hospital in 1739 and considerable sums were subscribed. The hospital slowly took shape and guardians were appointed.

The mothers were interviewed and the babies inspected for disease. Applications became so numerous that a system of balloting was introduced. The babies were fostered in the country for the first five or so years and then returned to the hospital where they later became apprenticed – the girls into service and the boys into a variety of occupations.

Hogarth displayed paintings in the Hospital and encouraged others to do so, making a permanent art exhibition to raise funds. Handel gave a benefit concert in the hospital chapel.

Thomas Coram by Hogarth



Coram remained involved in the hospital until 1742 when he received too few votes to remain on the General Committee and have any say in the management of the hospital. It is unclear why.

However, following the death of his wife in 1741 he neglected his private affairs and fell into difficulties. A subscription was raised and he was granted an annuity of £161 per annum.

Thomas Coram died aged 83 and was buried in the hospital chapel. A statue was erected in front of the building some time later.

The Foundling Hospital later moved to the country, the London hospital becoming the Foundling Museum. The Foundation Hospital ceased to operate in the 1950s when Social

Services provided the care, although the Coram Children's Society is still in operation.

At our next meeting Chris will talk about Karl Marx.

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## **In Our Own Write**

Five budding authors met on the 12 th with the topic being The Quick Thinker.

Yet again we had a wide range of plots, from a Wedding Planning Agency titled The Quick Thinkers to a romantic getaway coming to an abrupt end when one of the party rescued some children from drowning .

Our very own version of Agatha Christie surpassed herself with the story of a meek and mild gentleman who was injured in a train crash which killed the other occupant in his compartment. He was given the coat that his rescuers had wrapped him in and found to his amazement that there were uncut gemstones in the pocket. According to the newspapers the other gentleman had been a jewel thief but the police could not find any trace of the stones he had stolen.

Should he ring the police to say he had the stones or should he finally have some luck in his life, (and wasn't it a good thing that he knew a retired diamond setter!)

Our next meeting will be on March 11 and the topic will be Decision(s).

Travina White

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## **Literature**

Praise Song for the Butterflies by Bernice L McFadden

The story opens with a little girl, Abeo Kata living a comfortable, happy life in West Africa with her father, Wasik and her mother, Ismae but a series of disasters occur including illness and Wasik's suspension from his job.

This, tragically, coincides with her recently widowed paternal grandmother moving from her village with its traditional values and religion into her son and daughter-in-law's home in the city. She is a domineering matriarch who disapproves of their Christian faith and their modern way of life.

She tells Wasik that his God has not helped him and that their misfortunes all stem from a past transgression committed by a member of Ismae's family for which they are being punished. She browbeats him into thinking that the only way to resolve this is to appease the gods by giving up seven year old Abeo as a virgin slave to a Trokosi shrine.

She also has another agenda. Abeo, though she does not know it, was unofficially adopted and her much-loved free-spirited aunt, Serafina, who lives in America, is her biological mother.

During Serafina's last visit, Abeo took one of her rings, partly as a keepsake but also as a charm to ensure another visit.

When her father hands her over to the shrine Abeo, heartbreakingly, tries to make some sense of this unconscionable act by imagining that God is punishing her for the theft.

Abeo endures 14 years as a slave and a sex slave before she is rescued by a couple who run a refuge and by this time she is broken and has lost her sense of who she is particularly after the death by drowning of her baby son. The treatment of the slaves, beatings, rape, starvation rations and back-breaking work resulted in the outlawing

of the Trokosi shrines but it still continues and no one is ever prosecuted.

Ismae left Wasik when she discovered what he had done but, astonishingly, was persuaded to return and died soon afterwards of a miscarriage, left alone to die by her mother-in-law. Wasik remarried and we do not know if he ever suffered any remorse.

Serafina did try to find her daughter but there were so many shrines that her task was impossible.

Abeo went to live in New York where Serafina tried to care for her but was not able to and Abeo was befriended and made a new life.

This was a short book to cover so much in terms of the time span and the very difficult subject matter of abuse and betrayal and recovery.

Some of us liked the pared down writing style but most of us would have preferred more depth and character development. We had unanswered questions about efforts to help the shrine slaves and also about Abeo and how she dealt with her anger towards her father.

The dream sequence that book-ended the novel didn't ring true for us and felt abrupt.

It was interesting to hear Christine Wallach's talk, " Now I belong to Me" at our meeting soon after reading this as there were parallels with someone trying to find themselves after being subsumed by an oppressive cult and she expressed so well the difficulties of learning to live independently after escaping, or in her case expulsion, from a sect.

The story in Praise Song for the Butterflies needed to be told and we were left with a desire to learn more about the Trokosi slaves and when, hopefully they are rescued and

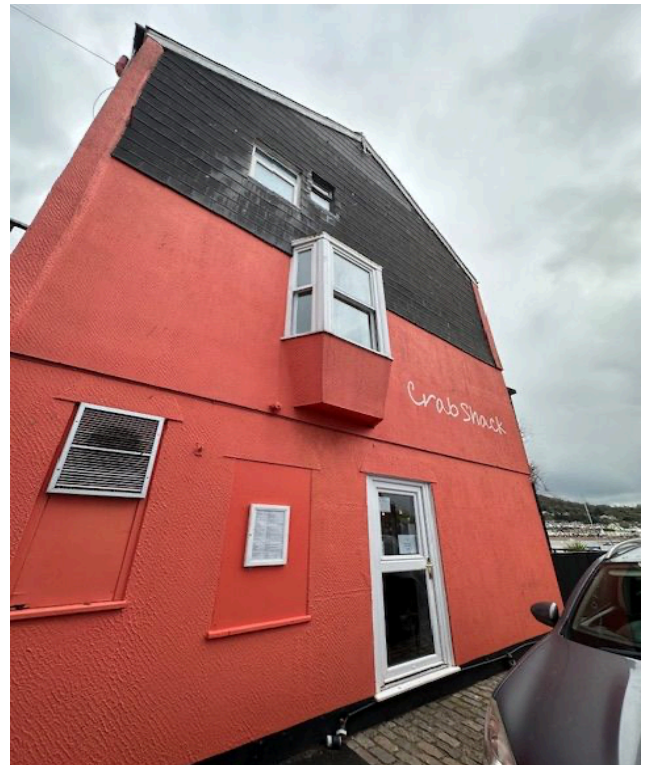
how they recover from an unimaginable ordeal.

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## Lunch Club

### Crab Shack review



It was not a great day for us with grey weather and intermittent rain but it did not take away my excitement to have lunch at the Crab Shack.

There were starter orders for Forest Fungi Mushrooms, Smoked Almonds, Smoked Salmon Tartare, Handpicked Crab, Game Terrine and Seared Scallops. The main orders were Singapore Chilli Crab, Sourdough Battered Fish, Teign Mussels, Confit Duck Leg, Catch of the day was Charred Monkfish and Hake.

I decided to bring a little Chinese New Year treat which was a pineapple tart. It symbolises wealth and upcoming prosperity throughout the New Year of the wood dragon.



During Chinese New Year fish is served. Fish symbolises good fortune. I think all of us would like a surplus of good fortune in the lunar new year. I decided to order fish because of the good symbol. What better place to eat fish than here.

Khim Sim Tan-Mepham - Convenor

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## Page Turners

The Page Turners book for January was 'The Bullet' by Mary Louise Kelly.

This thriller was published in 2015. It is difficult to fully share our thoughts about this book without giving away some secrets about the twists and turns of the plot but I can tell you what is already in the public domain.

The story is about - Caroline Cashion, a beautiful and intelligent professor of French literature who discovers that everything she's known is a lie. A single bullet is found lodged at the base of her skull. It makes no sense as she has never been shot. Then, she learns that she was adopted when she was three years old, after her real parents were murdered and she was wounded by a gunshot to the neck. Surgeons had stitched her up with the bullet still there, nestled deep among vital nerves and blood vessels. As she explores her past, Caroline realises she could be in danger as her bullet could hold the key to finding the murderer.

We found this book to be a real page turner and enjoyed following Caroline as she discovers about her birth parents and what happened to them. However many of us felt that the later developments of the story were out of character and less credible.

We had some interesting discussions about the impact of trauma on young children and about the nature of closure. Our reading of the book also prompted discussions about the adoption process, mental health and the death penalty.

It is always a pleasure for us to spend an afternoon together and put the world to rights.

We thoroughly recommend this book to you. A number of us have bought copies so if you would like to read it, please get in touch and swap our page turner for one of your own.

Deborah Wallis - Convenor

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## Quiz Group

Interestingly the word February comes from the Roman festival of purification called Februa, during which people were ritually washed. Perhaps for the quiz group it was a case of not being washed but rather feeling drained.. After all, 120 questions were answered, some which proved challenging.

As well as the General Knowledge subject in both quizzes, the other 10 rounds focused on 'Sleep on, I love rock and roll, Feeling Blue, Around India, Operatic works, TV presenters, Oscars, Grahams, Man made structures and Cricket.' Plenty to get the grey cells doing overtime!

Despite the theme of the round, Feeling blue ended up being on top of the first quiz scoreboard, with one team achieving maximum points. However, it was easy to realise that there are not many opera goers as the Operatic works failed to reach the high notes.. A u3a trip to Covent Garden calls....

So over to you to work these ones out:-

The 1991 film 'Sleeping with the enemy' starred which actress?

Which British rock band was originally called 'the New Yardbirds'?

How many American Presidents have been assassinated?

In which county is the 'Blue John cavern'?

What is the smallest state in India by area?

Which opera features the chorus of the Hebrew slaves?

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, some of our group were away but we still had 3 teams participating. It was another enjoyable evening and having received the individual totals the members



were not stumped when it came to the cricket round.

Good marks all round, with a maximum 10 out of 10 for one team. However, I am still crying after such a low score for the Grahams!! What have I done wrong...?

Here's a snapshot of the rounds:-

Name at least two people who have presented Countdown

Who won an Oscar for best actress in 'The silence of the lambs'?

Graham Chapman was a member of which comedy group?

In Trivial Pursuit how many segments must a player collect?

Haworth Parsonage in Yorkshire is dedicated to which family?

Name the England and Australian captains in the 2023 cricket test series?

Whilst writing, I would like to confirm that the next 4 quizzes will be held on **Mondays 11th and 25<sup>th</sup> March and the 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of April.**

With new members joining the u3a, hopefully we might be able to get a few more people on board.

Graham Carey

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### **Strollers Social Walking Group**

Those of us who walked to Turf Lock in Feb got really soaked so we're hoping for dry weather for our next Dawlish & District U3A walk on Thursday March 14<sup>th</sup>

Our walk (chosen by a couple of our Strollers) will be from Shaldon Bridge over to Ringmore church then on uphill to Homeyards Botanical Gardens ....followed by refreshments at the London Inn before we catch the ferry back over to Teignmouth .

Starting a little later than usual due to the walk leader having another commitment earlier in the morning - we are catching the number 2 Newton Abbot bus which leaves from Dawlish bus stop by railway station at 1pm and from Teignmouth Seaview Diner bus stop at 1.15pm

New Strollers are always most welcome to join us on our monthly walks.

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### **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.

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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

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### **Theatre**

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



We are looking forward to seeing 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

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## Other news:

### Visit to Dawlish Waterfowl Centre

Dawlish is famous for its Black Swans. At the Waterfowl compound there is an aviary. You can see ornamental waterfowl such as Whistling Ducks, African Geese, Carolina Ducks, Bahama Pintail, Call Ducks, Chinese Goose, Mandarin Ducks, Shelduck and Red Crested Pochard.



On Friday, Don Phillips gave an interesting talk about the important work they do to keep their charges safe and healthy.

We went into the enclosure where eggs are put into incubators. The incubator needs to maintain a constant temperature for chicken eggs to develop. It takes about 48 days for an egg to hatch.

We toured the compound with Don and Joe. We were shown how water is pumped into the compound pond from the brook.

Don and Joe took the chicks out of the cage. We got a chance to get close by holding the chicks. Some chicks were calm and some were fidgety.

We walked to two places where the adult swans are nesting their eggs. It was an experience to see the mother swan building its nest higher with the father swan helping as well.

Khim Sim Tan-Mephram

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

**Newsletter Editor:** Please contact Roz Summerton via [newsletter@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:newsletter@u3a.dawlish.info).

**Webmasters:** Please contact Dave and Miggie Pickton via [webmaster@u3a.dawlish.info](mailto:webmaster@u3a.dawlish.info)

Want to know more about Dawlish & District u3a? Check out our website: [u3a.dawlish.info](http://u3a.dawlish.info).