
From the Chair

Last month I wrote about the need for some volunteers to help in the running of our u3a. The Committee is beginning to plan the AGM in September and thus giving thought to the future of our u3a. Every year, the Chair asks for members to join the committee and to take on roles, including becoming a convener, to help run our organisation. As you will be aware, we are very fortunate that in the past couple of years we have had some excellent new members joining the committee who are really making a difference. However, as is inevitable in any voluntary group, some very valuable committee members have indicated that they wish to step down in September, and so this leaves the pressing challenge of finding replacements.

I continue to be optimistic about the future of our u3a, but we must also be realistic. Unless some volunteers step forward, we are approaching a position where the future of Dawlish & District u3a will be at risk. We must all understand that if we want our u3a to flourish, we cannot ask the same people to take the strain, year after year. So, I ask all of you to consider how you can help to run our affairs. While there is 'work' to be done, it really is not too arduous if the roles are shared around properly and we all support each other.

When he was inaugurated as President of the United States in 1961, John F Kennedy used memorable words as a call to action: "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country". I would not wish to make comparisons between asking for volunteers to help run the u3a and JFK's rallying call to his fellow Americans, but I think you get the point!

If you would like to know how you can get more involved, please speak to any member of the committee, or contact me directly via enquiries@u3a.dawlish.info.

Two invitations to u3a members

I have received two invitations to u3a members, from Dee McVey, the Chair of Okehampton u3a.

BBQ on Wednesday 13th August at Coombe Meadow near Ashburton

Living



Laughing



Learning

'As not all of us are away in August, nor on grandchild minding duties, I am organising a BBQ on Wednesday 13th August at Coombe Meadow near Ashburton in Devon.

This lost garden, by a beautiful Dartmoor stream, was overgrown and neglected. Since 2016 its mature magnolias, camellias, azaleas and other trees have been rescued. Paths and ponds have been cleared, archaeology preserved, borders created, bridges and terraces repaired and over 15,000 bulbs planted. The meadows contain wild daffodils and bluebells,

The price is only £15 per person to include the following:

- A tour of the Gardens for those who would like to arrive by 12.30pm
- BBQ from 2pm with smoked brisket, pork spare ribs, burgers, chicken legs, sausages and vegetables
- Tea or coffee and cake
- Please bring a salad or dessert for sharing
- Dogs are welcome but not on the lawn where food is served.

The maximum they can cater for is 40 so please email Dee McVey chair@okehampton-u3a.org.uk (tel 01837 658590) if you'd like to go. Once the limit has been reached, she'll have a reserve list in case anyone drops out. Details re payment will go out shortly, directions etc will be sent out when you've paid'.



A Day at the Races

This is another tempting offer from Dee McVey from Okehampton. She has negotiated a discount at Newton Abbott racecourse for u3a members. Instead of £18 for an online purchase of Paddock tickets it's been reduced to £10 per person for admission on Tuesday 9th September. She says it would be great to meet up with members from neighbouring u3a's, and combine this with a day at the races.

If you would like to go, please let her know by email to chair@okehampton-u3a.org.uk or phone her on 01837 658590 by 25th August'.

It sounds like fun!

John Vick

Monthly meeting report

Let's Talk About Rubbish

At our June meeting, we welcomed Vanessa Ryley, a founder member in 2018 of Dawlish Against Plastic. This is a community group which encourages people and businesses to reduce single-use plastic products and packaging, and also to increase recycling of plastic and other materials.

Vanessa told us how she first started to be involved in campaigning on these issues; she was walking on the beach and realised that in the seaweed washed up on the sand was an enormous amount of rubbish, much of which was plastic.

Dawlish Against Plastic does a great deal of work in our community to raise awareness about the effects of plastic, and to learn about the alternatives to using plastic in our everyday lives. The group works with schools to educate children, organises volunteers to undertake monthly beach cleans and litter picking in the town, and uses every opportunity to campaign in the community. The main messages can be summed up with these words:

- Reduce
- Reuse
- Recycle

A major focus of campaigning is the use of 'single use plastic'. They are very concerned about the prevalence of so-called 'environmentally friendly' disposable cups sold in cafes, take away businesses, convenience stores and supermarkets. In Dawlish alone there are over 20 businesses which sell drinks in these containers. While it is often stated that these cups are recyclable, the reality is that overwhelmingly they are not truly recyclable, and most of them end up in landfill, not least because businesses which use them make little effort to collect them for recycling.

The impact of plastic on our environment is wide ranging and cannot be understated. 10% of all oil production goes towards making plastic with consequences for global carbon emissions. The unpleasant sight of plastic and other litter can be seen almost everywhere, impacting on the quality of our lives but also doing untold harm to wildlife, especially in our seas. One very clear message is that if the plastic is on our streets today, it is in our rivers tomorrow, and in our oceans forever. The current United Nations Ocean Conference is trying to address this issue, as well as many others. We should be reminded of David Attenborough's powerful statement: 'if we save the sea, we save the world'.

Vanessa is clear that we are all able to make a difference by being much more thoughtful and careful in how we dispose of our own rubbish. Devon's record on recycling is actually better than the national average but there remains much more that we can all do to improve the situation. 41% of all material in our black bins could be recycled, including vast amounts of food which is often thrown in a black bin inside its plastic packaging. We can all use the food waste bins provided by the council but so many people appear not to be prepared to take the trouble to separate this out. Devon does not now have any landfill provision and has made a commitment instead to incinerate waste to generate electricity. The impressive Exeter Energy Recovery Facility at Marsh Barton is where most of our black bin waste is taken.

While action by governments and large businesses is vital, we are all able to make a contribution in our everyday lives. We can be more thoughtful in how we shop; we can try to repair products rather than throw them away and replace them; we can choose to buy products which use genuinely recyclable packaging; we can use the recycling schemes which are provided – and save our council very large sums of money to the benefit of everyone.



If you want to know more about these issues, these websites will provide you with useful information:

For Teignbridge Council's services www.teignbridge.gov.uk/recycling and www.teignbridge.gov.uk/foodwaste

For information on Community Action Groups which take action around waste and reuse locally) www.cagdevon.org.uk

There is a scheme to reward customers who use reusable cups, at Woody's Café on Queen Street, Ryder's Bakery on the Strand, and the Local Scoop on Piermont Place.

If you would like to contact Dawlish Against Plastic directly, email dawlish.against.plastic@gmail.com

The speaker at our next meeting will be writer Rosemary Griggs who will be giving us 'An Audience with Lady Katherine'. She will invite us to step back in time and journey to Tudor Devon with Katherine Champernowne. Dressed in full sixteenth-century costume, Rosemary will bring Katherine to life, allowing her to share stories about her life in Tudor Devon. Prepare to be amazed as she also reveals the intricate details of the clothing worn by affluent women in the sixteenth century.

John Vick

Interest Group news

Adventure Group

Go Ape

Seven members of the Adventure Group met at 11:30 am for our check in and safety briefing at the Go Ape Cabin.

Some had been to Go Ape before but others were complete newbies!



Once we had received our safety briefing from one of the trained instructors and given our clips and harnesses we had a couple of trial run crossings before we headed off to our Treetop Challenge.



The course was full of interesting challenges climbing up rope ladders onto the platforms and crossing over wobbly bridges or stepping platforms.

It was absolutely essential to keep focused and stay clipped on all the way round for our safety. I am happy to report no mishaps whilst we were there though some of us

needed a little help from our friendly instructor Tobin once or twice to get us on our way.

The zip wires were super exciting with wonderful views of the treetops and forest. This was an amazing experience which pushed everyone out of their comfort zone. It certainly did for me!

Carolyn Hartley

Other Adventure group news

As you can see, Adventure group is as active as ever, with a tour of Exeter cathedral roof planned for July and a Nordic walking experience in August. Looking ahead, we have also booked a murder mystery dinner on the South Devon Railway in October. All adventures are advertised on the Adventure group news (<https://u3a.dawlish.info/tag/adventure>) when full information is available.

All members of Dawlish & District u3a are welcome to join in our adventures. If you want to know more please check out the website or contact us via adventure@u3a.dawlish.info.

Miggie Pickton

Art Appreciation

Female Artists

For the June meeting, members were invited to choose a work of art by a female artist. Over many meetings, we have been learning about more female artists whose work and reputation has often been overlooked. This was an opportunity to extend our range further.

Of course, there are many highly regarded and much loved works of art produced by

women, perhaps none more so than the Impressionist painter Berthe Morisot's



The Cradle which beautifully and sensitively portrays a mother watching over her baby asleep in a cradle. Many of us will have seen it often on a greetings card.

Another impressionist who was able to achieve acclaim in her lifetime was the American Mary Cassat. She struggled to become an established painter but eventually was supported by Degas and other impressionists. Her work is notable for her exploration of women's role in society, and her campaigns for women's rights including the right to vote.

Perhaps the most famous female artist of the past century is Frida Kahlo. Her artwork expressing the pain she suffered as a result of an accident in her early life, as well as her experience of miscarriage and emotional trauma, have made her a powerful symbol for feminists. Also well-known to millions of people – but at the other end of the spectrum – is the work of Beryl Cooke, a self-taught artist whose career began well into her life. Her hilarious, often saucy and well-observed paintings make her one of the nation's favourite artists.

Less well-known to most of us is the 17th century Flemish artist Clara Peeters.



Little is known of her life but her work deserves more attention. Her skill in painting interiors was extraordinary in its detail.

The 19th century French painter Rosa Bonheur is similarly unfamiliar. In her lifetime she had a considerable reputation for her portrayal of animals, having studied animal anatomy by spending time in abattoirs and the Paris veterinary college. Her work was much loved by Queen Victoria bringing her popularity in this country. Bonheur clearly understood her market, and included many scenes of the Scottish countryside which was much in vogue.

Two American photographers were selected, reminding us that art is not confined to painting and drawing. We saw two of the most famous images of the 20th century but of very different subject matter. In her career, Annie Leibowitz has photographed some of the most famous people in popular culture, and many have appeared in glossy magazines around the world. She has the ability to create striking and memorable images. Perhaps her most remarkable 'coup' was to photograph John Lennon and Yoko Ono just hours before John was shot dead in 1980. By contrast, the moving image of a migrant mother with her children taken in 1936 by Dorothea Lange, for many

people it is the supreme encapsulation of the human misery of the Great Depression.

Included in our list of works by female artists was a sculpture by Maggi Hambling, one of the most distinguished British artists practising today. Her large sculpture *The Scallop* is situated on the beach at Aldeburgh. It is a tribute to the composer Benjamin Britten whose home was in Aldeburgh. On the shell is some of the text from his most famous opera *Peter Grimes* which is set on the Suffolk coast.

At the July meeting, there will be a presentation on the Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser.

Lynne Vick, Convener

Beer and Skittles

We had a good turnout for Beer and Skittles in June. We will meet again at the Brunswick on the 17th July before taking a break in August (due to school holiday crowds).

Anyone who fancies joining us for a drink and a not too serious game of skittles, please just come along at 7pm and have a go.

French Conversation

We met once in June to be greeted by a wonderful chocolate cake, baked by Lynne, to celebrate June's special birthday.

Our topic was "What would you like to do as a celebration?"

Most of us talked about dining out, where and what we'd like to eat and with whom though there were some who didn't care for celebrations. That led to discussions about

what we did when we were younger and what ways different countries celebrate. A lot of nostalgia!

Some of us talked about going to the theatre and a few liked musicals and others dramas.



Here's me having my favourite meal though it's in Spain, not France!

Our topic in July will be "a household chore that you hate"

Bridie

Gardens and Gateaux

What a fabulous day. We took the scenic routes - we are so blessed in Devon to have such beautiful countryside!



The Garden House at Buckland Monachorum did not disappoint. What a kaleidoscope of colours around every corner. It all looked so natural. A beautiful display of acers, hydrangeas, astrantias of every colour - the list goes on.

And when we needed a rest, some food and drink, the cafe provided a good choice of both.

A wonderful day out, and a great driver.

Thanks Lynn.

Diane Boyle

Great Lives



SAKE DEAN MAHOMET (1759-1851)

Dean Mahomet was an Indian traveller, soldier, surgeon and entrepreneur. He was one of the most notable early non-European immigrants to

the Western World.

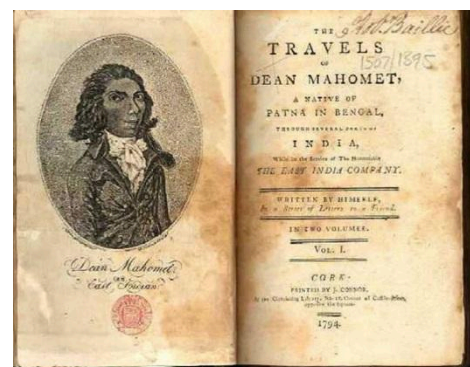
He was born into an elite Shia Muslim family in Northern India. They had served largely Muslim rulers for generations before the British East Indian Company arrived. Although it started as a commercial company it was not long before it assertively ruled over vast Indian territories and initiated the beginning of the British Raj.

Muslim families, such as Dean Mahomet's, had difficult and potentially dangerous

choices about their future and their allegiances. Dean Mahomet's father and older brother joined the English company's army. His father died in 1769, when he was 11 years old, and his brother inherited his father's position. Mahomet attached himself as a camp follower to Protestant Anglo-Irish Officer Godfrey Evan Baker who was about 8 years his senior. Dean Mahomet's life as a soldier was not always easy due to ambivalence among other Indians. His Muslim relatives accepted him as an honoured guest but others saw him as an outsider because of his attachment to the British. Over the years he rose to become a subaltern officer and Baker rose from cadet to captain.

In 1782 Baker resigned and so did Mahomet who accompanied him back to his home in Cork. Under Baker's sponsorship he studied at a local school to advance his education and improve his English. He met a fellow student Jane Daly whose family were opposed to the relationship. The couple eloped and Mahomed later converted to Christianity.

It was while living in Ireland he published his memoir "The Travels of Dean Mahomet". This was the first book ever written and published by an Indian in English.



In 1807, some time after Godfrey Baker's death in 1786, Dean Mahomet moved to London. He was almost 50 by this time, quite late to start afresh in a new country.

He later stated that he had moved from India straight to London with his wife and children (he eventually had seven).

Dean Mahomet lived in the fashionable Portman Square and adopted the title Sake – meaning venerable one. This was a title often used by upwardly mobile Muslims in India. He first found employment with a wealthy Scottish nobleman who had recently opened the Cochrane Bathhouse where he introduced vapour baths. Dean Mohamed was instrumental in fitting out the baths and introduced the Indian therapeutic massage treatment of “champi” – which he called shampooing. However, he got little credit for this.



In 1809 Dean Mahomet changed career and established the Hindoostanee Coffee House which was said to be the first Indian restaurant in Britain. Although popular, the start-up costs for the restaurant exceeded Mahomet’s limited capital and by 1812 he had become bankrupt.

At age 54, Dean Mahomet moved to Brighton, by this time a fashionable seaside spa. In 1814 he opened one of the first commercial indoor “shampooing” vapour baths in England, known as “Mohamed’s Baths”. The business flourished and he was appointed shampooing surgeon to both King George IV and William IV and became known as Dr Brighton. Unfortunately, by the late 1830s his connection to the royal family faded (King William changed to other baths and Queen Victoria never visited them and in fact disliked Brighton). The business was eventually sold in 1843 and Mahomet’s

family was forced to move to a more modest address. However, Dean and his wife Jane continued to trade until just before his death in 1851 aged 92. His wife Jane died just two months before him aged 64. By this time they had largely fallen from public attention. However, over more recent years there has been renewed interest in Dean Mahomed and a blue plaque has been placed on the site of Mahomed’s Baths (now occupied by the Queen’s Hotel).



In Our Own Write

Five of us attended our usual monthly meeting and this time our topic was “Fire”.

Naturally we had five very different versions including a poem. Our imaginations ran riot and we had a fascinating ghost story; a prehistoric cave dweller; a child helping his grandfather to celebrate the king’s coronation, and an elderly former female spy burning (unfortunately prematurely) her diaries and a manuscript she had written about her life.

The red shoes, is to be our next topic for our meeting on the **14th July**.



Travina White

Literature

Bright Shadow by Jan Middleton

This is the story of Katherine Plantagenet, one of the seven children of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville. She is a lesser-known historical character but the daughter, niece, sister, sister-in-law and aunt of kings who comes across very much as a three-dimensional, warm and intelligent woman in this novelised historical account.

Upon the early death of Edward IV and the disappearance of her brothers, the Princes in the Tower, Richard usurps the throne. The family is now in jeopardy and the marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville is declared to be illegal.

However, the sisters are resilient and resourceful with Elizabeth marrying Henry VII after the victory at Bosworth and Katherine becoming the wife of William Courtney, heir to the Earl of Devon. This is depicted as a happy union and Katherine is loving and protective of her husband and children.

The claims to the throne are tenuous and Henry VII is, rightly, concerned about possible rebellion and treachery, resulting in

the placing of spies in all households with links to royalty.

There is constant fear of accusations of treason which could lead to imprisonment, torture and execution.

Early death through illness, during childbirth and infant mortality is rife and, by relating this in the form of a novel, from the viewpoint of one woman gives the reader a real sense of the personal tragedies that have to be endured.

The book was daunting at over 560 pages but we found that we became engrossed in this well-researched novel and enjoyed the local connection to the Courtneys and Tiverton Castle where Katherine died in 1527.

We witnessed the early life of her nephew, Henry VIII who had her son executed in 1529.

There was one slightly jarring note towards the end with a fictional romance that Katherine had after she had taken a pragmatic vow of celibacy to guard her independence following the death of her husband.

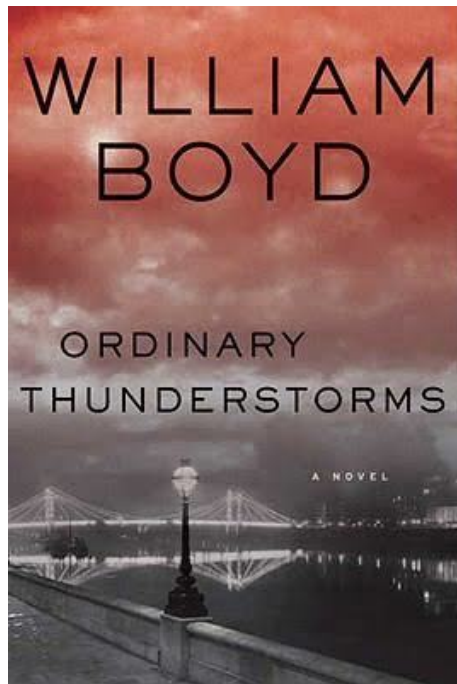
The book is very long but it does encompass a fascinating and complicated period of history with the introduction of many different characters and it was an engaging and entertaining read.

4.5/5

Page Turners

The Page Turner's book for May was 'Ordinary Thunderstorms' by William Boyd. This was first published in 2009.

The hero of the book is Adam Kindred who, after a chance encounter, finds himself in the wrong place at the wrong time and makes some split-second decisions that led to his whole life unravelling.



With the police and a hired killer searching for him he joins the homeless on the streets of London. His journey takes him along the Thames from Chelsea to the sink estates of the East End. On the way he encounters a range of other people also trying to reinvent themselves and we explore the reasons why some people may find themselves in such difficult circumstances and the lengths they may go to in order to make a new life.

At the same time we are treated to a tale of corruption in big business and Adam must find a way to do the right thing without compromising his own safety.

Most of us found this well written and intelligent thriller to be a real page turner, although one of us would prefer not to read such depressingly realistic stories. We liked the short chapters which focussed on different characters and aspects of the narrative and allowed the story to move forward on different fronts without confusion. This was a book by a man and about a man and that is perhaps why the

descriptions of the hero did not include enough emotions for some, but overall we enjoyed the cast of characters and the familiar location.

We questioned the wisdom of the decisions Adam made early in the book but recognised that they were necessary to the story - this didn't stop us wondering how things would have unfolded if he had made different choices! He disappointed us again towards the end, showing a degree of moral corruption but on the whole we were satisfied with the ending. We could envisage David Tennant in the lead role of a six part television series!

Most of us are keen to try other books by William Boyd. If you would like to start with this one, do get in touch as some of us have copies to share.

Deborah

Quiz Group

We were able to meet twice in June with another challenging set of 120 questions.

Our first Monday quiz covered the topics of Zoo time, At sixes and sevens, Off to the Opera house, Just a second, General knowledge and Peerage Titles.

It was a low scoring quiz and at times the quizzers may have felt at sixes and sevens. However, because of the jokers played, that subject scored the most points. However the overall knowledge of opera music could be bettered with a few visits to the Opera House..

So...

The Amazon World Zoo is situated in which part of the UK?

Who was Henry VIII's sixth wife?

Don Alfonso was the name of a character in which Mozart opera?

Pall Mall is the first purple coloured square on a Monopoly board, with Northumberland Park the third. What is the second?

Barry is a variety of which fruit?

Edmund Blackadder was Duke of where?

Our second encounter revolved around the themes of It's June, Casino time, Good afternoon, A European tour, Fingers and General Knowledge.

We were unusually few in number but went ahead and the results revealed some excellent scores.

Those who took part must have travelled a lot around Europe as 'A European tour' gained the most points. On the bottom of the pile was the 'Casino time' topic. Here is a snippet from each round and would you have realised that...

June is named after the Roman goddess Juno

The highest number that can be called in bingo is 90

Ernest Hemingway wrote a book about bullfighting called 'Death in the afternoon'

The Franz Liszt Academy of Music is located in Budapest

Sean Connery played the role of James Bond in the film 'GoldFinger'

The last Queen Elizabeth II had eight grandchildren

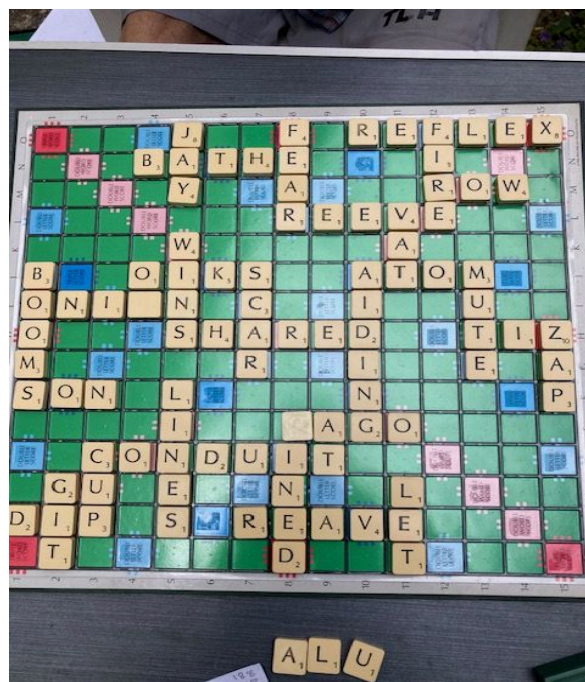
So another month of quizzes has come and gone and now we get ready for the **July encounters on Monday 7th and Monday 21st.**

Graham Carey

Scrabble

Three members met for this month's challenge. It being such a fine day we retired to the great outdoors for our games.

Shortly into our first game, I was able to produce a seven letter word, conduit, and was sure that the game was mine for the taking. Alas, one of my opponents managed to score the letters Z and X on a triple letter score and the game was lost on the final addition of leftover letters, foiled again.



The second game was less remarkable, I was nowhere near as successful, finishing in my traditional last place, and the time passed quickly until the session ended.

George Mansfield

Strollers Social Walking Group

There were only two of us on our June u3a Strollers walk led by David A. There had been torrential rain earlier in the morning, nevertheless, a couple of us trusted the weather forecast so we caught the train to Topsham and had a lovely hour's long walk around the marshes area, followed by a refreshing drink at a quayside pub in beautiful warm sunshine, before catching our train back home!

Our next Dawlish & District u3a Strollers walk is on **Thursday July 10th**.

We decided on a local Teignmouth walk, with hopefully some shade and sea breezes, in case the present heat wave continues into early July.

The walk starts at 1.30pm from the bus shelter opposite the Minidab on Dawlish/Teignmouth Road. From Dawlish, catch the number 2 Newton Abbot bus at 13.11pm.

We'll walk down Love Lane, Mules Park & Eastcliff and on down to Teignmouth, then on along the seafront to The Point, then Back Beach area with refreshments at a riverside pub.

New u3a walkers are always welcome to join us on our monthly walks; the July walk is mainly downhill and level ground.

Jean Gitsham, convenor



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.