

From the Chair

Monthly Meeting, 3.45pm on Monday 16th February

I am sorry I was not able to be at the January monthly meeting but I look forward to reading about it in this month's newsletter.

I missed it because at this time of the year, I am usually away for a few days in an east European country interviewing 16 year olds who have applied for scholarships to study in the UK for A-levels or International Baccalaureate. This year I was in Serbia, and previously I have been to places as diverse as Armenia, Georgia, Bosnia, North Macedonia and Ukraine. In Serbia this year I met 32 extraordinary young people. In truth, it was verging on impossible to select the few who could go through to the next stage of the process but I did my best. It is humbling to meet these hugely talented teenagers, to find out how dedicated they are to their education, and to learn about their own experiences, often facing considerable challenges.

Our next monthly meeting will be on Monday 16th February when our guest speaker will be Peter Lewis who has had a career in various fields of education and research, especially in Earth Sciences. [About Peter Lewis – Dawlish & District U3A](#) His topic will be Ice Ages and Climate Change. **Please remember, our meetings now begin at 3.45pm.**

Annual Subscriptions and other matters

At its January meeting, the committee agreed to make changes to the renewal annual renewal date and subscription for next year. I recently emailed all members with the details of what was decided, and this information is all on our u3a website. Many thanks to George Mansfield as Treasurer, our two Membership Secretaries Charles Greenleas and Deborah Wallis, for sorting out all the details and matters arising, and also to Kate McCarthy who had all sorts of issues to sort out on Beacon, and Miggie for updating the website. We are all very lucky (the Chair is especially grateful!) to have so many good people working on our behalf.

Policies Reviews

Continuing our cycle of reviewing policies, the committee looked at our Diversity, Equality and Inclusion and Data Protection Policies. Both of these have everyday

significance for members, so it is worth reminding yourselves of some of the important issues.

With regard to 'Data Protection', I can reassure members that we protect the information you give us and only use it for essential matters related to the running of u3a. As far as members are concerned, can I remind everyone that no-one should share information about other members without their consent. This often means contact details. We are all occasionally asked if we can give someone a person's email or phone details, and we really should not do so without their consent. This can include being careful not to 'cc' third parties in emails unless we are sure that that person is happy for their email address to be known by someone else. The 'bcc' facility is very helpful in keeping people's information private. This reminder might especially apply to conveners and committee members who have access to other members' details.

'Diversity, Equality and Inclusion' should matter to all of us as at the very heart of the u3a's principles is that it is an organisation which offers opportunities to 'Live, Laugh and Learn' to everyone in their third age. It is important that everyone in their third age feels comfortable and welcome, and I have little doubt that this is the case. However, where we might inadvertently not include can relate to access to meetings because of where or when they are held. Especially for conveners, but all of us, please try to be aware of those who might wish to take part in our activities but are not able to, or reluctant to, perhaps because of difficulty of access because of steps or distance. Timing can also be an issue. We are asked to make 'reasonable adjustments' to address matters of this sort, rather than completely change our arrangements.

John Vick

Monthly meeting report



We had an excellent talk from Sally Preston telling us about Dawlish Community Transport.

She is very keen to promote the services of our local transport charity which we are very lucky to have here in Dawlish.

Several members remarked that they hadn't realised just how many aspects to this wonderful local service there are. Several questions were asked and Sally was able to devote time after the talk to speak to members with specific requests.

Fund raising is a large part of their work in order to keep all of their commitments going. Without the many volunteers, who undertake various roles, not just driving, they would be unable to offer so many services.

Dawlish Community Transport

Dawlish Community Transport is based in the Barton Hill Car Park in Dawlish, a registered charity. It offers accessible and affordable transport services for people who may be unable to use public transport or need support in getting out and about (they are proud to be specialising in wheelchair transportation) helping to access shops, health appointments, services and leisure activities. They have a team of mostly volunteers and a small team of staff.

They promote and support independence and social contact. All their vehicles are adapted to take wheelchairs and have lowered steps and tail lifts.

What do they do?

They operate several services using their minibuses and cars, transporting people of all ages; children from as young as 5 years to the not so young, the most mature passenger at present is just 106.

A ring and ride service Monday to Friday.

Contracted bus services, private hire of minibuses and cars, community car service and shopping mobility aids for hire.

On Tuesdays they operate a social day out to various places including Dartmouth, Ikea and various garden centres.

If you are interested in finding out more do ring the office on: 01626 888890

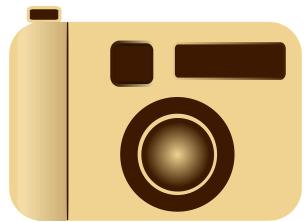
Office Opening Hours – Monday to Friday 9.00am to 3.00pm for visitors and telephone calls.

Ideas for new groups

It would be lovely to start some new groups.

If anyone has any ideas please contact a committee member and tell us your thoughts.

Equally if anyone has a talent that they are willing to share such as singing, painting/drawing, or photography, please let us know.



Interest Group news

Adventure Group

The adventure group met in January to decide on the year's adventures. From a long list of possibles, the activities receiving the most votes were:

- Line dancing
- Drumming
- Laser tag
- Metal detecting
- Dartmoor explore day
- Bell boating (or dragon boating)
- Navigating on Dartmoor
- Tea gardens
- Bushcraft and survival skills
- Sea cave kayak safari
- Gong bath
- ... and our residential trip to the Manor House at Okehampton

If you'd like to know more about any of these, please see Adventure group news here:

<https://u3a.dawlish.info/adventure-group-in-2026>

All of our adventures are open to all members of Dawlish & District u3a and full details are always given on our website.

Maggie Pickton, co-convenor

Art Appreciation

For our January meeting, Michael Heyden gave a presentation on Camille Pissarro (1830-1903). Though often thought of as a French artist, Pissarro was in fact born in 1830 the Caribbean on the island of St Thomas in the Danish West Indies, now the U.S. Virgin Islands. His father was of Portuguese Jewish descent but held French nationality. He had come to the island from

France to deal with the estate of his uncle who had died and whose widow he later married.

At the age of twelve Camille was sent to school near Paris where he developed an appreciation of art and gained a grounding in drawing and painting. After his schooling at around the age of sixteen, he returned to St Thomas to work with his father, but continued to draw in his spare time. Eventually, at the age of twenty one he decided to pursue a career as an artist. His early works show landscapes and scenes of everyday life on St Thomas and in Venezuela where he lived for two years.



A plaza in Caracas

In 1855 he moved back to France and was tutored by Corot. Both shared a love of nature and Corot encouraged him to work in 'plein air'. Whilst initially Pissarro worked in the traditional style required by the Paris Salon, he increasingly worked outdoors, completing pictures in one session rather than finishing them in the studio as was Corot's way of working. The result was a more spontaneous style which was considered to be 'unfinished' by critics at the time.

In 1859, he came into contact with younger artists, Claude Monet and Paul Cezanne, who shared his dissatisfaction with the constraints of the Salon's requirements. Their friendship led to the staging of the

exhibition of the 'Salon des Refuses', and later to the Impressionist exhibitions. He is credited as being a father figure of the Impressionists. He also associated with Post Impressionists such as Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat and Signac and experimented briefly with Post Impressionist techniques, notably pointillism.



Gelee blanche (hoar frost)

We only had time to look at relatively few of his works as his output was prolific. Most were beautiful rural landscapes in France, some showing the life of agricultural workers, similar to subjects of works by Courbet and Van Gogh. However, in common with Monet, he spent the duration of the Franco-Prussian War in London, producing many paintings of the London area. Whilst I was familiar with his landscapes, we also saw examples of portraits and still life.

Many thanks to Michael for showing us what an important and versatile artist Pissarro was

Beer and Skittles

The Beer and Skittles Group cannot meet as programmed in February, because the room is booked for a different event. As convener of this group, I am going to take this break in the program to resign from the position.

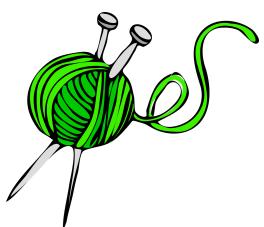
Although the Beer and Skittles group has been reasonably well attended, it will not be able to continue without a replacement convener. As groups go this is one of the easiest to organise, as it's just a matter of booking and confirming a venue, reminding members of dates, making any necessary changes, and keeping our website and newsletter up to date on what's going on.

I hope someone can come forward and take over this group in the future, until such time it is on hold.

Barry Baker - convener.

Craft Group

On the first Wednesday of the month, **January 7th**, the Craft Group met in The Manor House for an afternoon of companionable crafting and conversation. Whilst continuing our current projects we chatted about how we'd enjoyed and survived the festive period, and discussed the merits of some of our newly acquired domestic appliances such as bread makers and Air fryers, very new technologies to several of us.



We are a small friendly group willing to share our skills and help each other, and although we primarily Knit, Crochet and Sew, anyone with other interests are most welcome to join us. Indeed speaking for myself, it's fascinating to meet people with other crafting skills as I'm always open to new hobbies and ventures.

So, why not dig out that long forgotten project from the back of the cupboard, the sweater pattern that proved to be too

confusing, or rekindle some of the skills that got tossed to the side when life was too busy, and come along to the **Manor House, 2pm on the first Wednesday** of the month for a taster session to find out more about us, we'd love to see you.

Mary Mansfield, convener.

Dog Walking

We have not been too successful for meeting up for our group walks this month

owing to the weather. We have tended to stay local to each of us, nipping out when the rain stopped.

We did manage a walk from Dawlish playing fields through the woods and coming out opposite Forest Fungi for a much needed coffee and piece of cake!

Last Wednesday those of us available met at Dawlish Countryside Park and we walked through the woods at the back and down to Cofton.

We are excited to plan our first Dog Walkers two night break in March. Hopefully the weather will be kinder to us as believe it or not, dogs generally do not like going out in the rain, although when they are with their friends they don't seem to mind so much.

As for us humans, kitted out in our waterproofs as long as there is coffee and cake somewhere along the way, we don't mind so much!

French Conversation

We met just once in January as everyone was so busy.

And, of course, the main topic was Christmas and what everyone did.

Most of us spent it with family, either travelling to them or entertaining them.

One of the group had their family staying for three weeks!

One of the group went on a five day trip to Andalusia.

This was a trip organised by u3a. There were 80 people at the hotel all receiving a lovely Christmas dinner and being taken to Seville, Granada and Cordoba.

There was some discussion about the complications of family life for example having to tiptoe around because of a baby sleeping and parents on a night shift trying to sleep in the day and having divorced in-laws to stay.

I'm not sure if we are all relieved it's all over and we're back to normal!

We will be meeting as usual the first Thursday of next month and reading an article on "procrastination"

Bridie

Great Lives

ANNIE OAKLEY (1860-1926) American sharp-shooter and folk hero.



Annie was born Phoebe Ann Mosey into a poor Quaker family, one of seven children.

Her father died of pneumonia when she was five and though her mother remarried, her second husband died in an accident when Annie was about seven.

Annie started working when very young. She began trapping before she was seven and hunting by age eight to support her siblings and widowed mother. She sold game to shopkeepers in Greenville Ohio, the largest town in Darke County, who shipped it to hotels and restaurants in Cincinnati.

Her show business career started by chance when a Cincinnati hotel keeper, who had bought some of Annie's game, thought it a good idea to match Annie with a professional sharp-shooter, Frank Butler, who was appearing at a local theatre. He thought the competition would provide good Thanksgiving afternoon entertainment.

Frank Butler had placed a \$100 bet that he could beat any local fancy shooter. He was surprised to find his opponent was a small young country girl. Annie won the contest and as it was held in an area called Oakley she took that as her stage name.

Annie and Frank married around 1880 and stayed happily married for over 40 years. The couple started a speciality act with their two dogs. Slowly their fame spread as rifle experts and bookings became more regular.

They then joined Sells Circus touring the Mid-West.

While in New Orleans the couple visited the grounds of a competing show – "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" led by the famed scout and guide Buffalo Bill (aka William Frank Cody).

When a vacancy occurred in 1885 Annie was taken on (her husband Frank became the manager). The company, comprising Native Americans (including Sitting Bull), gauchos, Cowboys, Turks, Arabs, Mongols and Georgians toured the States, Canada and Europe.



Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill

Annie Oakley played a leading role and when in London was presented to Queen Victoria.

Annie also appeared in plays and in one of Thomas Edison's earliest very short Kinetoscope films.

Her last major appearance was in 1903, after which she took part in smaller shows, gave exhibitions of her shooting skills and instructed women in the use of firearms for self-defence and confidence.

Annie Oakley died of pernicious anemia in November 1926 aged 66. It was said that on her death Frank stopped eating and he died three weeks later.

Annie's name lived on in a play "Annie Oakley" and the musical "Annie get your Gun".

A statue of Annie was erected in Greenville Ohio and Annie Oakley Day is celebrated there each year in July with a parade, shooting contests and various cowboy themed events.

In Our Own Write

Our topic was (The clock struck twelve) and all five writers had a totally different story, and in fact one was a poem about the

various stages of a person's life from birth to death. The others were:-

1. Two young boys waiting for a family ghost to appear as the clock struck 12.



2. A desperate homeless woman who was squatting in a freezing derelict house and had decided that suicide was her only option. A "Good Samaritan" continually knocked on the door offering to help which she ignored but as the clock struck 12 she stepped outside to view a firework display for the last time and into the embrace of the stranger.

3. For the sci-fi enthusiasts we had a professor's assistant enthusiastically explaining that he had conquered the art of time travel although at the present time could only manage a five minute leap backwards. This he demonstrated to his disbelieving boss with the clock on the desk being proof.

4. A female member of the aristocracy was happily divorced after being regarded as a trophy wife. Her husband refused to relinquish her inherited jewellery but she took advantage of his honeymoon with his new wife to break into her former home in the middle of the night to reclaim them.

Our next meeting will be on the **9th February** with a choice of topics of The Proposal or The Accident.

Travina

Literature

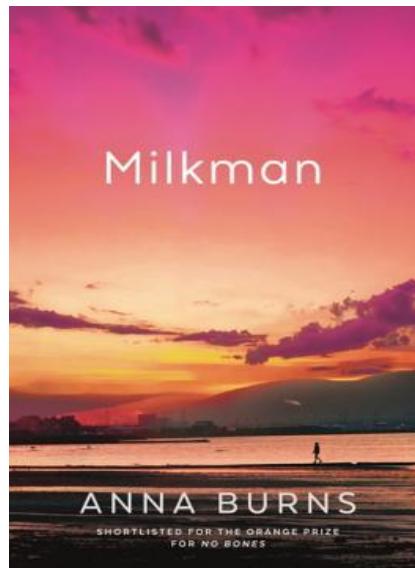
Milkman by Anna Burns

Anna Burns was born in Belfast in 1962 so, like the protagonist in her novel, she was a teenager during the Troubles in the late 1970's.

The unnamed eighteen year old relates her story in a stream of consciousness style and we learn of the effects of living under unbearable pressure and danger from all sides.

She is being stalked by an older, married, paramilitary man who knows every detail of her movements. She is from a catholic family and is expected to conform and get married. She is, as is everyone else, under constant surveillance in this tight-knit community with gossipy women telling her mother that she is having an affair with the stalker, cameras click, and young children are employed to help keep a close watch and inform the paramilitary of any supposedly suspicious behaviour. Any activity could be misconstrued as a betrayal and anyone seen as an informant is punished by a severe beating or murder.

This constant danger and vigilance takes its toll and her hobbies and interests, running, reading, friendships, and evening class that are part of the normal life she craves become impossible.



At one point it seems that she is about to have a complete breakdown.

Although Milkman is obviously set in Belfast, the time and place is not named so it could stand in for anywhere or any time where the population is living under a form of totalitarian tyranny with a closed society under unremitting intrusion where all behaviour is politicised, any display of individuality is suspect and violence and murder are so commonplace that people are injured to it.

With nobody to trust and confide in, the thoughts of the protagonist churn over and over in a stream of consciousness and this is a visceral work with the reader feeling her growing despair which we found exhausting. We felt for her and we were touched by her and her relationships with her mother and her younger vivacious sisters.

This book was a difficult read and we thought it was over long. Even the Literary Review described it as "evasive" and "challenging" and other reviewers agreed.

A cleverly written book with a deep insight into how conflict and tyranny can impact on the lives of innocent people but, I'm sorry to say, it was such a struggle to read that we awarded it 2.5/5.

Lunch Club

The January lunch was at the Ten Tors Inn, Newton Abbot. Eight members attended and everyone said that they enjoyed their meal.

It was a lovely venue and everyone would go again.

For the February luncheon club venue we are going to Sticky Rice in Dawlish on **February 20th 2026**.

Gail Scrase will host the lunch.

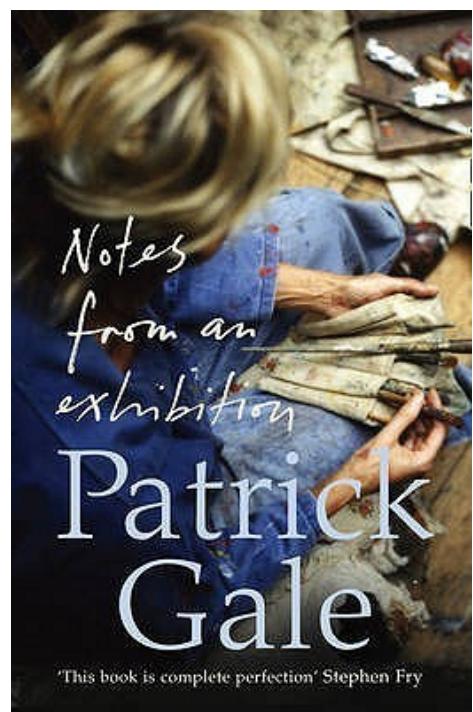
In March we are going to Cockhaven Arms, 16 Cockhaven Rd, Bishopsteignton, Teignmouth, TQ14 9RF on Friday **March 6th 2026.**

Kate McCarthy will host the lunch while I am away in Singapore.

Page Turners

In January the Page Turners read 'Notes From an Exhibition' by Patrick Gale. This book was published in 2007.

The book is about Rachel Kelly - a talented artist who suffers from bi-polar disorder. She dies at the start of the book and her family are left to make sense of the chaos that her talent and her condition have wreaked in their own lives.



The book takes its title from the information cards displayed beside works of art in a gallery or museum. Each chapter begins with a description of a possession

or work of Rachel's and goes on to tell us a related episode of her life. The episodes are not in chronological order but we gradually build up a picture of Rachel and her husband and four children and the lives they have

led. Some of us found this made it rather disjointed whilst others enjoyed the way the author revealed things gradually.

One of us had read the book before and definitely found that knowing what was coming next spoiled the enjoyment the second time around. The lack of chronology meant that the ending of the book came as a surprise to some (especially if reading on a kindle) and left us wanting more.

The majority of us enjoyed reading the book, although the subject matter meant that it was not necessarily uplifting. We felt it was very well written and engaging. We were all interested in what we learned about the effects of Rachel's illness and also about the Quaker faith which was practiced by Rachel's family.

We talked about the different characters of Rachel's children and in particular how the way they were parented impacted on their adult behaviours. We would have liked to have learned more about her husband and how he coped with the turbulent lifestyle of his talented but troubled wife.

We have definitely classed this book as a page turner. If you would like to read it for yourself do get in touch as some of us have copies that we can swap for one of your page turners. In the meantime several of us are intending to look for more books by the same author, including one with early scenes set in Teignmouth!

Deborah Wallis

Quiz Group

What a quiz to start off 2026; Remember 2025, More or Less, Last things, AV, Blue songs and the ever present General Knowledge round.

Looking at the scores, a couple of teams got a ten out of ten score but never played their joker in the appropriate round. Whereas one team got maximum points and played their joker in that round. There were a couple of 9s doubled up with the joker. So overall not a bad evening.

Blue songs was a great round but the group members struggled to get points on the board when it came to Last things.

So, which city hosted the 2025 Global Climate leaders conference?

Does a pint of Heineken beer have more or less calories than a Gregg's sausage roll?

Who was the last Kaiser of Germany?

What name do Audi give to their Estate cars?

Who had a 1984 hit with the song ' Blue Jean?'

What costing 37 pence was abolished in 1987?

For the second quiz we turned our attention to General Knowledge, USA States, DA TV shows, Numbers within words, That's juicy and Spotty. A mixed bag of goodies!

Would you have known the following answers?...

'I'll have what she's having is a famous line from the film ' When Harry met Sally'

Tulsa is in the state of Oklahoma

Danger Mouse was an animated TV series featuring the voices of David Jason and Terry Scott

Halle Berry, Eartha Kitt and Michelle Pfeiffer have all played the role of 'Cat Woman'

Between 1998 and 2021 Tropicana was a popular fruit juice brand of Pepsi Co

Spotty Muldoon was a fictional character created by Peter Cook

We had two, ten out of ten scores and without the jokers played the DA TV shows would have been the best scoring round.

However, realising the score of the 'It's juicy round', I just hope the group members are drinking the right sort of juice for any ailment they might have.

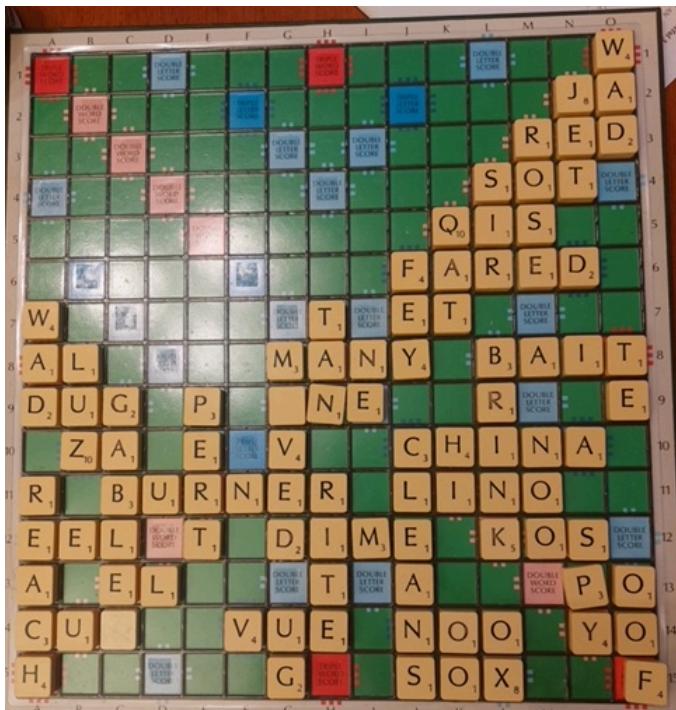
So the group has got off to a good start and the February quizzes will be on **Mondays 8th and the 23rd.**

Graham Carey

Scrabble

Our first meeting for 2026 took place on Monday 26th Jan.

A good attendance of six people led to us splitting into two groups of three. Our resident experts were split between the two groups. This was the board of my group following our first game. The letters I had



led me to sacrifice my points in favour of stalling the resident expert, and in putting down, Rite successfully blocked the triple score only for a low point score myself, and was met with pained cries from the opposition. Nevertheless he went on to win by a considerable margin.

Meanwhile on the second table, the word Quora led to some consternation, earning many points, but later proving to be illegal.

Our next meeting will be on

Monday 23rd February

George Mansfield

Strollers Social Walking Group

Our next Dawlish & District u3a Strollers walk is on **Thursday February 12th**.

We'll be catching the number 11, Dawlish Warren bus from Teignmouth at 12.29pm and Dawlish at 12.46pm to Marine Stores (the bus stop before the road down into Dawlish Warren).

We are walking down the lane to Dawlish Warren then on footpaths to our end of walk refreshment stop at The Anchor Inn at Cockwood - a downhill and level walk approximately an hour long. Hopefully we can plan the next few monthly walks before catching our bus home!

Our January walk was cancelled due to wet weather so we are hoping that the weather on February 12th will be OK for us to walk.

Jean Gitsham, convenor

Wine Appreciation



If there is enough interest it may be possible to start a second wine appreciation group.

Please let us know by contacting

newsletter@u3a.dawlish.info

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 Maggie Pickton via webmaster@u3a.dawlish.info

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