

Newsletter

Welcome to the August newsletter.



August is the eighth month of the year in today's Gregorian calendar, but it was the sixth month (Sextilis) of the year in Roman times. The month of Sextilis was renamed after Augustus in 8 B.C. This was the month of some of his greatest military victories.

"August is the slow, gentle month that stretches out the longest across the span of a year. It yawns and lingers on with the light in its palms." — Victoria Erickson

"Live in the sunshine. Swim in the sea. Drink in the wild air." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Living

Laughing

Learning

From the Chair

If you have not already received it, you will soon have an email from the Membership Secretary to give you details on how to renew your membership. Our membership continues to be at record levels, and I hope this will be the case in the year ahead.

Although we prefer people to renew online, paper renewal forms will be available at monthly meetings for those who do not have internet access.

After remaining at £15 ever since the Dawlish & District u3a was founded over a decade ago, the committee decided earlier this year that we needed to increase our subscription for the year ahead to £20. This will cover increased costs for room hire, fees for visiting speakers, charges from the national u3a and other expenses. We believe that this is a reasonable change after so many years, and will ensure that our finances remain stable for the foreseeable future.

Our AGM will be held on **Monday 21st September** at our monthly meeting. The main business is to report back to members on our activities in the past year and to elect the committee for the year ahead. Two members of the committee will be standing down, but as things stand, no new members have put themselves forward for election. This means that we will be rather 'light' on numbers, adding to the workload for the remaining committee members. It is not too late to consider joining the committee, and I hope you will consider offering your services. If you want to know more, please get in touch with any committee member who will be happy to speak to you about what is involved. All the papers associated with the AGM (agenda, minutes of last meeting, nomination forms, reports etc) will be circulated by the Secretary soon.

John Vick

Monthly meeting report

July Monthly Meeting

Upstairs, Downstairs

We had a good audience at our July meeting to hear Jane Urquhart give a highly entertaining talk on life 'Upstairs, Downstairs'. For most of us our only knowledge of large houses with the privileged 'upstairs' world of and wealthy people being served by legions of staff 'downstairs', is gleaned from novels, TV dramas and films. Jane has personal experience of both sides of this divide, and was able to show that this way of life remains active and is a significant source of employment offering good salaries and prospects.

Jane told us a little about her life story. She was born in the 'upstairs' world, but various mischances and bad romantic decisions left her at one point destitute. This led her to seek employment 'downstairs' - from an advert in *The Lady*, needless to say. After some years' experience of housekeeping, she went on to run her own agency for domestic staff and then a training school for aspiring butlers and housekeepers.



Of course, this world today is not entirely as we see it in *Downton Abbey*. Jane described four categories of employer:

- Old money – often in a large house but with insufficient money to stop the roof leaking
- New money – a wealthy entrepreneur or celebrity who buys a fabulous property and needs an army of staff to run it
- Corporate money – a business which has prestige property for hospitality purposes
- Foreign money – fabulously wealthy, and often from Russia or the Middle East. In addition to the normal requirements, there is a high emphasis on security.

Life in each sort of household will be very different with all sorts of different 'rules'.

Jane covered a lot of ground and gave us numerous tips which you may (or may not) find useful as you plan your domestic arrangements in the future. The value of uniforms (you mustn't confuse staff and visitors); how you should address your employer (formality works

best); how to give a female guest a cup of coffee (a silver tray and flower in a small vase come in useful); how you should turn back a bed.

Particularly useful was the technique on how to avoid being kissed by a visitor (offer your hand to shake but keep your arm firmly out in front of you to ward off encroachment). When you need to deal with someone who is drunk, your butler should tell the offender that there is a call for him – or her - in the next room and then offer a cup of black coffee. We might all find advice on how to deal with misbehaving teenagers: tell them they are not bad people but their behaviour is unacceptable, and that there will be consequences later. Don't give details: leave the room, and leave them wondering.

Jane brought along an intriguing array of visual aids for which she invited members to suggest a use for a housekeeper.

- Cat litter – not for your feline friend but it is excellent for de-odorising sweaty shoes;
- Soap – not for washing your hands but if you scrape your nails along the soap so that it accumulates under the nails, you can then do your gardening and easily clean your nails afterwards;
- Soft toothbrush – ideal for getting into crevices when cleaning your silver;
- Shaving brush – perfect for dusting your ornate picture frames;
- Furniture polish – if you haven't really done the job, spray it on the door frame so that a visitor will experience a lovely smell to give the impression that you have cleaned the whole room.
- A walnut – use it to renovate scratches on furniture.

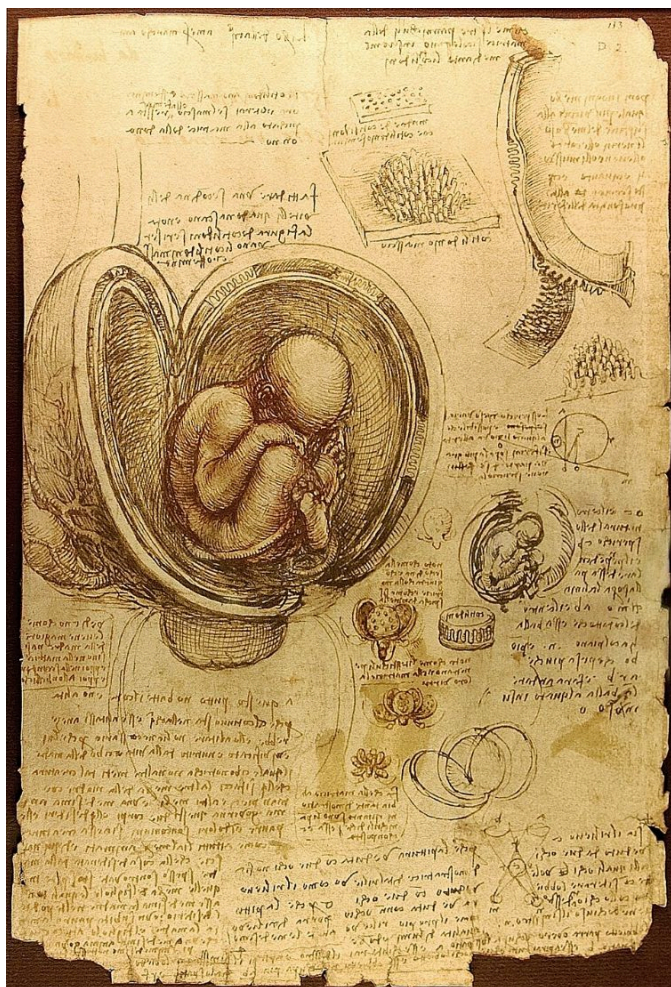
All useful advice for us as we navigate our way in society.

Monthly Meeting, 3.45pm Monday 18th August – The Strand Centre

Our guest speaker for August will take us to a very different place from the July meeting. Paul Lentle will be talking to us about a very important institution at the heart of Dawlish: The Strand Centre. Many of us pop into the Strand Centre for coffee or some of their excellent food, or attend events there throughout the year. The Centre offers a range of services to the community, to charities and social groups of all kinds, and offers a warm welcome to anyone who needs company and support. Paul has been very helpful to our u3a over the years and is a well-known figure in Dawlish. I am sure he will be pleased to tell us more about what happens there.

John Vick

scientific knowledge. Leonardo da Vinci used this to create some of the most extraordinary images, including an unborn foetus.



Our knowledge of how the foetus develops evolved over many years as it depended on the procurement of bodies of women at all the stages of pregnancy.

More recently, artists and scientists have been able to use new technologies such as photography and X-rays to extend their understanding of anatomy. We saw images produced by time lapse photography which showed for the first time in detail how the body moved during complicated actions such as swinging a golf club or jumping.

Some artists have also combined photography with sculpture to create some extraordinary and intriguing images. Microscopes have given artists another tool to explore our anatomy.

While many artists have focussed on portraying physical beauty, many modern artists such as Francis Bacon, are more interested in showing us how we really appear - with no compromise. Many of the pictures could not be described as beautiful but were nonetheless compelling.

The presentation raised questions about what constitutes 'art', the boundaries between art and science, and what art is for.

At our next meeting on Tuesday 11th August members are invited to select a work of art on the theme of 'Journeys and Travel'.

Lynne Vick, Convener

Beer and Skittles

Starts again in September, watch this space.

French Conversation

We had our two meetings this month and heard a little about the Twinning visit to Carhaix . It seems to have been a very busy occasion with late nights and dinners. All in the heat!

We then talked about the heat and how we're coping with it. Some manage it better than others though none of us are sun worshippers .

How the tennis players survive at Wimbledon is amazing!



At our next meeting we still didn't talk about our chosen topic and article which is about regulating social media.

Next time!

We heard about other activities in U3A and some are involved in quite a few.

And then we just rabbitted about anything and everything!

It was lovely sitting outside at Annie's - under the parasol of course!

Here's a photo taken at Wimbledon



Great Lives



Hertha Ayrton **1854-1923**

At this month's Great Lives group meeting, the spotlight was turned onto the life of Hertha Ayrton, inventor, mathematician and pioneer of women's suffrage. She was born

the third child of a Polish, Jewish émigré and the daughter of a Jewish glassmaker in Portsea, Hampshire. Her real name was Phoebe Sarah Marks, but adopted the name Hertha at the instigation of her lifelong, close friend Ottilie Hancock. Educated at a School run by her Aunt in London following the death of her Father, she learnt the fundamentals of Maths, Science and Latin from her cousins, subjects not normally taught to girls.

She began her working life at 16 working as a live-in governess. Here she was introduced to a wide circle of intellectual friends including novelist George Eliot and founder of all female Girton college Cambridge, Barbara Bodichon. Although passing all the entrance exams, Hertha failed to win a scholarship to Girton college, and because of her impoverished family background she

was sponsored through University studying experiments on a fan to disperse noxious gases important mathematics by grants from her friends. Although only achieving a 3rd class degree equivalent, she managed to distinguish herself in other ways at University. She invented and patented a line divider, a mathematical instrument, built a sphygmomanometer and founded the Girton Fire brigade. At this time women were not permitted to graduate and so in order to obtain a degree she sat the external BSc exam of the University of London and was finally awarded her degree in 1881. She began teaching at Notting Hill high school. She began studying Electro-Technics at evening classes at Finsbury City and Guilds Technical college where she met and later married her tutor, William Edward Ayrton in 1886.

During her working career she carried out extensive research work on electric arc lighting resulting in an improved cinema projector and military searchlights. She also conducted in mines and sewers. She was the

first female to be elected to the Institute of Electrical Engineers and was nominated for fellowship of the Royal Society, but was thwarted by a legal decision that barred married women, but in 1906 was awarded the organisation's prestigious annual Hughes Award. She still found time to holiday with Marie Curie and her daughters in 1912 & 1913.

She was a lifelong contributor of mathematical puzzles and supporter of women's suffrage. Following her death in 1923 resulting from an insect bite, she was commemorated by the endowment of the Hertha Ayrton Research Fellowship at Girton College and in 2010 she was recognised by a panel of female fellows of the Royal Society as one of the ten most influential British Women in the history of science.

Mary Mansfield

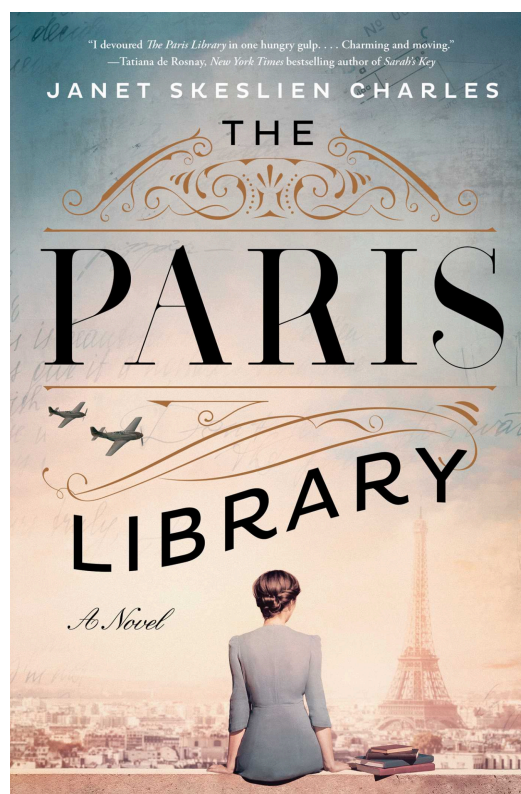
Literature

The Paris Library by Janet Charles Skeslien

This is a work of historical fiction and, although the main protagonist, Odile, is fictional, her colleagues at the American Library in Paris during the Nazi occupation are based on real people, as is their unlikely protector Dr. Hermann Fuchs.

Her story unfolds in two alternating time-lines and places: wartime Paris and in Montana forty years later, a lonely reclusive widow whose only son died in Vietnam. Her solitude is partly due to being an outsider but she also seems to be troubled and has turned in on herself. We reflected on the impact on someone unable to use their native language.

At the Paris Library the staff continued their work of supplying allied troops with much appreciated books and they smuggled reading



materials to their Jewish subscribers who were forbidden to use the library. This put them in grave danger and Odile showed great courage and defiance but was quite naive when it came to her policeman father's and her policeman fiancé's collusion, however reluctantly, with the persecution of the Jewish people.

In Montana, Odile befriends teenage Lily, sensing a kindred spirit. She teaches her French, shares her love of reading and tries to guide her away from making the same mistakes she made as a young woman.

We discover what became of Odile's first love, how she came to marry someone else and how a thoughtless remark about a friend had disastrous consequences.

This novel examines both sides of the power of words, written and spoken.

They can entertain, provide escape from harsh reality, teach and heal.

Unfortunately, they can also do untold harm. We were shocked to learn of the extent of so-called Crow letters that were written to denounce fellow citizens to the Nazis.

This was a well-researched novel and the appendix told us what became of the non-fictional characters, although there was a suggestion that they didn't really leap off the page in the book.

Most of us felt that the first part was a bit slow but it picked up later.

It was thought-provoking and we considered the destructive power of jealousy and envy.

We enjoyed the literary quotes and references and the use of recommended reading as therapy by one of the characters.

The American Library is still in Paris and its motto remains:

Atrum Post Bellum Ex Libris Lux.

After the war, the light of books.

4/5

Lunch Club

An afternoon tea in July was enjoyed by 12 members at the Wild Swan in Dawlish. The occasion was warm, welcoming and thoroughly enjoyable, with a selection of delicious sandwiches, savouries, cakes, scone, cream and jam, accompanied by tea and coffee.

The friendly service and relaxed atmosphere made it a memorable afternoon for everyone.



Khim Sim Tan- Convenor

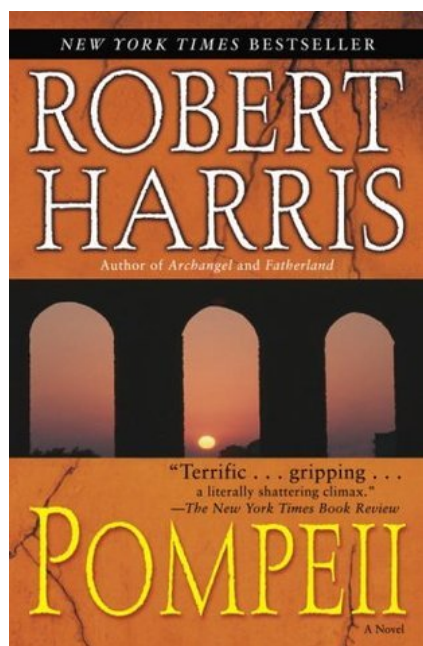
Page Turners

In July the Page Turners read 'Pompeii' by Robert Harris. This is not the first book by Robert Harris that we have read - we previously enjoyed 'Conclave'. 'Pompeii' was published in 2003 and its fictional story is set in August 79 AD against the backdrop of the impending volcanic eruption.

The book follows the story of a young engineer, Attilius, who is sent to take charge of the aqueduct that supplies water to the towns around the Bay of Naples. As he investigates the reasons why the water supply is contaminated and then fails altogether, he becomes embroiled in the

secrets of the wealthy of Pompeii - a tale of political intrigue, corruption, theft and murder. The reader wills the workmen on to effect repairs to the aqueduct and restore the water supply, even though we all know that it will be in vain as disaster is inevitable.

Some of us found the book difficult initially - there were several characters with unfamiliar names all beginning with 'A' and



the layout of the aqueduct was confusing. However perseverance paid off and soon we were enjoying the pace of the story. Along the way we learnt about Roman culture - the daily life of rich and poor, the relations between men

and women, technology and engineering and so on. In chapter headings outside of the story we were also given some information about the science of volcanoes. Overall this gave the impression of being a well-researched book.

We particularly enjoyed the rich descriptive writing. We felt as if we could see, feel and smell the scenes and all agreed that this author's writing is most enjoyable.

If you would like to read this book for yourself, do get in touch and see if one of us is able to swap our page turner for one of yours. Deborah Wallis

Quiz Group

We covered a wide variety of subjects in July. From, it's a mystery, to TV programmes, from Classified to Elections, from 1066 to What would they do with it, from Political numbers to What a way to go, from Singers and groups to Food and Drink. We mustn't forget the General Knowledge rounds either.

The results of the first quiz saw two teams come joint top. With the jokers played, 1066 and so on came out as the best score. The group members also did well in answering the questions about TV programmes.

The 'Classified' round was one where the answer had to be either MI5, MI6 or GCHQ. Unfortunately even the guess work didn't help out!

As the quiz master, I was found to have given false information. I asked how many marmite sandwiches does



Paddington Bear carry under his hat in case of emergencies? Of course marmite should have been

marmalade. I will never live that one down.

Have a bash at the following questions...

What did Winston Churchill define as a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma?

Was it MI5, MI6 or GCHQ that relocated to Wormwood Scrubs during WW2?

How often do elections in the European Parliament usually take place?

Where did the Normans land in England?

In which part of the body is the CAROTID artery found?

Who were the two prison officers in Slade Prison?

On the second evening the quizzers found the Food and Drink round the easiest.

Would you have got the following questions right?

What would a medieval knight have done with an open arse?

The UN Security Council has how many permanent members?

How did Stephen Irwin die in 2006?

In what year did Top of the Pops come off the air?

What type of food are Bear's foot and Black Trumpet?

Who said 'The lamps are going out all over Europe?'

So there we have it and on to August we go with our quizzes scheduled to take place two Mondays on the trot; on **Mondays 10th and the 17th.**

Graham Carey

Scrabble

Last Monday, the 27th of July we had a gathering of six people to play Scrabble. We split into two groups of three and play commenced. In our group, the person who started scored 40 to start and subsequently ran away to win comfortably and in a tight tussle for third place I just lost out, mainly because one player became exasperated with his rack of vowels and opted to change some letters mid game.

After a refreshing break of assorted teas, coffees and biscuits we continued.

The second game, however, was completely different; I had all the right letters and managed to fit them into all the right places scoring highly and was the runaway leader. I looked certain to achieve my first victory, until it transpired that we had overrun our allotted time and the person whose Scrabble set we were using had to depart and so we had to curtail our game, so near and yet so far.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **Monday 24th August.**

George Mansfield

Strollers Social Walking Group

I have chosen a shorter walk for our monthly Dawlish & District u3a Strollers August walk due to recent high temperatures and the possibility of yet another heatwave!

New Strollers are always welcome to join us on our walks on the second Thursday of every month.

We'll be catching the number 2 Exeter bus from Teignmouth at 13.09pm or Dawlish at 13.25pm to Port Road.

From there we'll walk up the lane by St Mary's Cottages i.e. to the left of Dawlish Country Park. At the top we take the left uphill lane then go along the footpath on the left overlooking Cofton holiday park.

Next, we will walk downhill via the pine tree woods to St Mary's churchyard. From the church we walk along the level lane to our end of walk refreshment stop at The Anchor Inn, Cockwood .

Buses back are at 14.40pm, 15.21pm and 15.50pm

Jean Gitsham, convenor

Wine Appreciation

The July WAG meeting was focused on the FIFA World Cup, with wines coming from 6 of the participating countries.



The first tie saw a Chenin Blanc from

Stellenrust in South Africa up against a Viognier, the Arrogant Frog, from the Languedoc region of France. The tie was won by the Stellenrust wine, putting it into the White final against the winner of the second tie. This was between a Pinot Grigio from the Marlborough region of New Zealand up against a wine from Chapel Down, in Tenterden, representing England. The English wine won, taking it into the White final, where it comfortably beat the Chenin Blanc from South Africa, taking it into the overall final.

The Red final was between a Shiraz from Western Australia versus a Dark Horse Cabernet Sauvignon from California, USA. The Shiraz won taking it into the overall final.

In the final it was an overwhelming win for the Bacchus wine from England.



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