



Northern Hemisphere: Meteorological autumn begins on September 1, bringing cooler weather, changing leaves, and the autumn equinox around September 22 or 23.

Interesting Facts

September isn't mentioned anywhere in the works of Shakespeare.

Being born in September increases your chance of getting into Oxbridge by 12 per cent.

There are more pop songs with September in the title than any other month.

19th September is International Talk Like a Pirate Day.

Living

Laughing

Learning

From the Chair

Our next meeting on **Monday 21st September will be our AGM.**

I would like to correct an error in the agenda which went to members earlier this month. **Please note that the AGM will begin at 3.45pm** and not at 2.45pm as stated. Please make a note of this in your diary.

Also, please be aware that our meetings for the rest of 2026 will continue to begin at 3.45pm as they have done for the past year or more, but from January 2027, we will be moving to a regular starting time of 2.45pm. This earlier time seems to suit most members, and we were very sorry when we were forced to move to a later time. I am sure that future communications on this will remind everyone of these starting times but it is a good idea to make a note of this in advance. After all, we don't want any more diary confusion!

While the AGM is in mind, it is important that members do come to this important event in the life of the u3a. You have the chance to learn about the work of the committee, elect members for the year ahead, and especially the officers. Remember, it is the members who are the life blood of the u3a, and without your participation and contributions, nothing will happen.

I am pleased to say that we have one nomination from a member to join the committee for the first time, but it is not too late for others to put themselves forward. As I have said on many occasions (I must sound like a cracked record) we need more members to offer their services and talents to the committee. This also applies to the vital role of convener and other parts of the u3a community's activities. I fear we are rather stretched at the moment, and there appears to be a real reluctance by members to volunteer. Unless more of us are prepared to get involved and show some initiative and enterprise, your u3a will fade and ultimately collapse. If that happens, we will all be the losers. Our overall membership remains strong, indeed at record levels, so it really ought to be possible to find more volunteers.

As you may be aware, I will be stepping down as Chair at the AGM as I will be 'expired' after serving for the maximum term allowed. I have served on the committee for almost ten years, and been your Chair for about six years. I have genuinely enjoyed being involved in this way, and I thank you for your support – and even for your appreciation – during this time. Knowing your efforts are appreciated really does make a difference to everyone who takes on a role on the committee, or as a convener.

I fully intend to remain active in the u3a, and perhaps even have more time to get involved in new interest groups which are the heart of the u3a movement and the reason why so many of us join in the first place.

John Vick

Monthly meeting report

Diary Problems!

Our monthly meeting in August was not quite the occasion which was planned. Unfortunately, there was a mishap with our guest speaker's diary; Paul Lentle from the Strand Centre had thought he was due to speak to us on Tuesday but of course he should have had us down for Monday. As anyone who knows Paul would expect, he was very embarrassed and apologetic about this, and hopes he will be able to come to speak to us about the work of the Strand Centre on another occasion. As our calendar is full for about a year ahead, this won't be possible for some time, but we will look at what is possible.

Membership Renewal

You should all be aware that your subscription of £20 for full members or £15 for those who already belong to another u3a, is due from 1st September. Almost a half of our members have renewed in the weeks leading up to this date and we hope the rest of you will do so shortly.

Please click on the link - [Renew your membership - Dawlish & District U3A](#) - and complete the form, making sure you go all the way to the bottom and press send. You should then pay your subscription, preferably by bank transfer but cash or cheque are also options.

If you do not receive your new membership card within a few days of renewal please contact membershipsecretary@u3a.dawlish.info and we can resolve any issues. I already have some forms without money and some money without forms and neither can be processed.

I am aware that a few members do not use a computer so cannot complete a form - please ask for a paper form at the next monthly meeting.

Thank you everyone.

Deborah Wallis - Membership Secretary

Christmas Lunch

Khim Sim has sent out reminders for people to sign up for the **Christmas Lunch on Monday 7th December**. It has been very enjoyable in recent years, and I am sure this year will be equally so. All the details are on our website



[lunch club Archives - Dawlish & District U3A.](#)

The Langstone Cliff hotel has now extended the deadline for payment of deposits until 15th September, so please don't leave it much longer before going ahead. It will be Khim Sim's last event as she is moving back to Singapore in the next few months, so I hope this will be a well-supported event.

Interest Group news

Art Appreciation

The theme for the August meeting was 'Journeys and Travel' which seemed appropriate for the holiday season. This prompted another fascinating range of art works chosen by members of the group.



We began with an image of *The Meeting of the Three Magi* from a French 15th century 'Book of Hours'. We learned how these sumptuous books were made and how their wealthy owners used them, for religious devotion but also as a sign of status. The selected picture shows in fantastic detail and jewel like colours the meeting of Melchior, Balthazar and Caspar. The location is supposedly in the Holy Land, but in the background are buildings which contemporaries would recognise clearly as Notre Dame and the church of Sainte Chappelle in Paris.

Theodore Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819) is a vast, dramatic painting of an ill-fated journey which ends in a shipwreck. The event attracted great public attention in France. The small number of desperate survivors are shown frantically trying to signal to a ship on the far off horizon while a wave threatens to swamp their raft.

The choice of the American artist Robert Duncanson's *The Land of the Lotus Eaters* (1861) was prompted by the recent release of the film 'The Odyssey'. The painting shows Odysseus and his sailors being seduced into remaining in this beautiful landscape rather than continuing on their mission to return home.

Stanhope Forbes is one of the best loved painters of the Newlyn Group. For an earlier generation, holidays in this part of the world would often include a railway journey on the GWR. Forbes' evocative paintings of the busy platform of *The Terminus (Penzance Station)* and *Through the Marshes* recall the heyday of the age of steam.

A somewhat less enjoyable form of transport was the unexpected subject of several pictures. The 'tumbrel' was notorious as the cart which took condemned men and women on a one way journey to the guillotine in revolutionary France. We saw portrayals of one of the most famous 'passengers' on a tumbrel, Marie Antoinette, a number of engravings and paintings, and a drawing by Jacques-Louis David.

The late 19th century Ukrainian painter Ilya Repin focused on portraying the reality of life in the Russian Empire. His large, dramatic



canvas of the *Religious Procession in Kursk Province*, (1880-1883) shows thousands of pilgrims from all social classes, walking through dusty and sweltering conditions following a revered icon.

A complete contrast was provided by the paintings of Maud Lewis. She was a self-taught artist born in the early 1900s in rural Canada. 'Maudie' was born with a number of birth defects which restricted her mobility. She was introduced to art by her mother, who encouraged her to paint Christmas cards. Her work in naïve style

gained interest and today attracts high prices. She enjoyed painting scenes of everyday life in her rural community, often including vehicles such as lorries, sleighs and horse drawn carriages.

The final group of pictures are all related to the development of air transport. *Landscape with the fall of Icarus* (1590-95) is often attributed to Peter Bruegel the Elder, although that is now in doubt. Nonetheless, it is a popular image, showing the consequence of Icarus's failure to follow his father's advice. Flying too close to the sun, the heat melted the wax in his wings, and he plunged into the sea, largely unnoticed by fishermen, farmworkers and others who are just getting on with their lives.

Prompted by recent television coverage of the spectacular balloon festival in Bristol, we saw some paintings of balloons, from the early 19th century as well as more recently.

In the 1920s, the 'futurists' were excited by a less leisurely means of air transport: the aeroplane, and especially its possibilities for warfare. Tullio Crali produced dramatic, dynamic paintings of combat, bombardment of cities, and a freefall parachutist.

At the next meeting on Tuesday 8th September, there will be a presentation on Peter Paul Rubens.

Lynne Vick, Convener

Board Games

Rummikub has restarted and those of us taking part so far have very much enjoyed it. Getting rid of that last tile can be a real challenge.



Anyone interested in joining in can just come along to the Methodist Church on the **last Tuesday of the month from 10am to about 11.30.**

You can bring a friend or family member. Free to enter with tea, coffee and cake all at £1.00 each.

French Conversation

At our first meeting this month we read an article "L'interdiction des réseaux sociaux pour les mineurs"

There's a lot of concern about the effects on youngsters of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram , etc and several countries are banning the use of social media.

Generally, we were in favour of limiting the use of these platforms and are glad to know

that often mobile phones are banned from schools.

We feel that children are still vulnerable and they are having all sorts of "information" crammed into their heads.

How to enforce a ban isn't easy of course.

For our second meeting of the month, we were invited to talk about a comedian who makes us laugh or a comedy programme that we enjoy. One of our members grew up in France and told us about a number of French comedians who were not familiar to most of us, Fernand Reynaud, Louis de Funès, Bourvil and Fernandel. We have been promised a viewing of a performance by one of them at a future meeting so that we can sample their humour. No doubt it will test our language skills to the full!

Amongst the favourite British comedians were Ken Dodd, Dave Allen, Michael MacIntyre, Morecambe and Wise, and the two Ronnies, Barker and Corbett, but none of us was very up to date with our choices. Few of us watch stand-up comedians in the same way that we did in the days when such comedians featured regularly in variety shows on the television. Now we are more likely to see or hear them on panel shows such as Have I Got News for You, or the long running I'm Sorry I haven't a Clue!

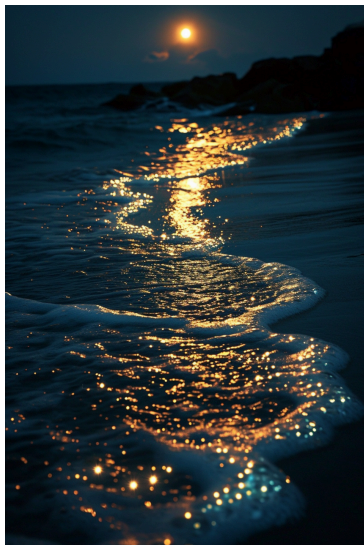
Likewise, when choosing our favourite comedy shows, we tended to hark back to yesteryear. We are lucky to have enjoyed the golden age of British sitcoms when we were entertained by Dad's Army, Only Fools and Horses, Steptoe and Son, Allo, Allo!, Black Adder, Porridge, Mrs Brown's Boys and the like.

Amongst the more recent comedy series on television, Gavin and Stacey, Outnumbered and Upstart Crow were picked out. Needless to say, we weren't all tickled equally by the shows mentioned, indeed some had never

watched particular ones so may have to check them out on catch up TV.

Generally speaking, the verdict was that "They don't make 'em like that anymore!" Nonetheless, we enjoyed sharing our memories of laughter and entertainment together.

In Our Own Write



Our topic for August was 'Full Moon'. For centuries, people have claimed that a full moon triggers **strange behaviour, heightened emotional outbursts, and an influx of chaos** in emergency

services. This widespread cultural belief, often called the "lunar effect", suggests that everything from criminal activity to medical emergencies peaks during this phase.

Our creative writers took it upon themselves to write quite emotive stories with and without happy endings. Our first story started when an unintentional killing led to the concealment of the body down an old mineshaft which eventually was permanently hidden after a blast blew up the shaft.

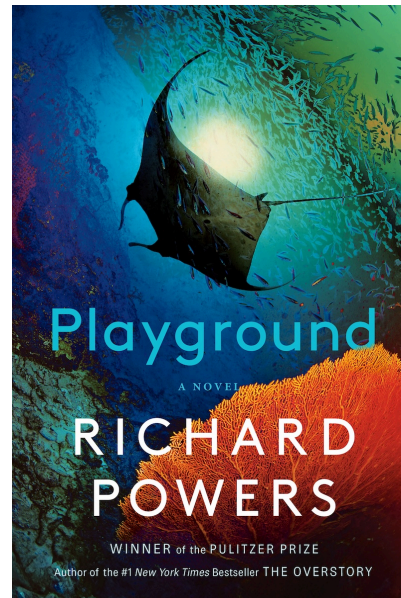
Two other stories, although set in a different time and place, mirrored each other with people buried under buildings as the result of disasters. Another was a personal story of a search and rescue mission which had actually occurred at the time of a full moon.

Our topic for next month is '*It just happened*'. Let's see what inspiration that provides for our writers.

Teresa Wynn-Clarke

Literature

Playground by Richard Powers



This multi-layered novel has two connected narratives with alternative chapters and is set in the very near future.

One is related in the first person and concerns Todd Keane, a tech billionaire

recently diagnosed with dementia who recalls his life in Illinois, his childhood friend, Rafi and Ina, Rafi's partner, a sculptor who they met at college.

Todd and Rafi had bonded over their mutual passion for Go but they fell out and were estranged because of a perceived betrayal when Todd was setting up his gamified social media site, Playground.

The other part of the story takes place on the Polynesian island of Makatea where Rafi and Ina live with their two adopted children. Also on Makatea and connected to Todd is Evie Beaulieu (based on Dr. Sylvia Earl) a Canadian marine biologist and aqualung pioneer, who wrote a book about underwater exploration for children that Todd had loved as a small boy.

The people of Makatea are offered a chance to become a base for the manufacturing of artificial floating islands and are torn between the opportunity of jobs and wealth creation and wanting to maintain a simple life which preserves nature. Their land is still scarred from phosphorus mining, and pollution, particularly plastic pollution, is an increasing problem.

Island life is vividly portrayed and we sympathised with all the characters, in particular Evie who we felt deserved a standalone novel.

Playground ends with a twist that provoked mixed reactions. Some found it fascinating while others were irritated and needed to go through the book again to make sense of it.

This work covers many topics: the environment, marine life, childhood trauma, guilt, dealing with death and the rapid growth of AI. This was thought-provoking and we discussed its probable impact on employment and the nature of human creativity versus the extrapolation of data.

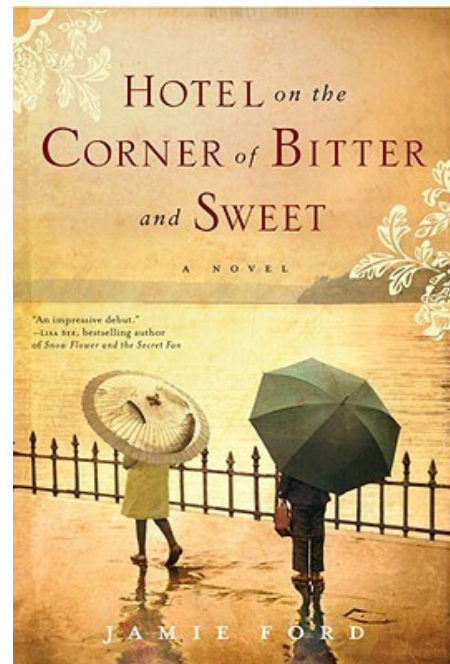
Some enjoyed the book much more than others in our group and felt that it would stay with them.

We gave it 3.5/5

Page Turners

'The Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet' by Jamie Ford was Page Turner's book for August. This debut novel was published in 2012.

The book has a dual timeline. In 1940s Seattle Henry, a Chinese American teenager and his Japanese sweetheart Keiko are separated by the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans



to internment camps. In 1986 the basement of a derelict hotel was opened and the owners found belongings that were stored there by Japanese families who hoped to return after the war. Henry searches the basement for precious memories of Keiko. He was a devoted husband to Ethel but now he is widowed and he finally feels able to tell his son about his first love.

Through this story we learn of the history of the Japanese in America during and after the Second World War - a story that most of us were not very familiar with. We learn not just about community relations in Seattle but also about the wider relationship between the Chinese and Japanese and we see the tensions between Henry's father's nationalist feelings and his desire for his son to make a new life in America.

Some of us were initially put off by the title of the book which did not give us much clue as to what to expect. However, all of us really enjoyed the book. We found the characters to be engaging and they drew us into the story. Whilst the plot may have been slightly formulaic it was engrossing, especially as it

was set in a context that we had not encountered before.

This was a definite page turner. If you would like to read it for yourself, please get in touch and swap it for one of your recommendations.

Quiz Group

We met two Mondays on the trot and despite being the holiday season, we were able to continue as normal.

As usual we covered a wide range of subjects and the first zoom saw us tackling questions, Football related, Lanes, British military, Musicals. Raining cats and dogs. Added to those was the regular General Knowledge round.

Musicals topped the scores with General Knowledge lagging far behind.

Here is a taster from each round and would you have known that...

Norway topped the medal table at the 2026 Winter Olympics

The Bantams is the nickname of Bradford FC

The Kirstall Lane End is found in the Headingley Cricket stadium

SBS (Special boat service) is the naval equivalent of the SAS

The line 'When you're chewing on life's gristle, don't grumble, give a whistle' is from the musical Spamalot

The whiskers of a cat are scientifically known as Vibrissae

So how about these questions from the second quiz..

What is the name of the metal strip found at the bottom of the front wall in squash called?

Carson City is the capital of which American state?

In the Roman Empire what specifically was a Scutum?

What is the longest river in Northern Ireland?

Which Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale shares its name with a Harry Potter Book?

Hoi Polloi meaning 'the masses' comes from which language?

You may have guessed that the round themes were - What a racquet, General Knowledge, The Roman Empire, Around the UK, Hans Christian Andersen and Mind your language.

For the first time ever, four jokers were played in the same round; Around the UK. That said because of the joker points it reached the number 1 spot. However poor Mr Andersen. Perhaps the quizzers need to read a few more of his fairy tales?

So on to **September** when the two quizzes are pencilled in for **Mondays the 7th and the 14th.**

Graham Carey

Scrabble

On Monday 24th we had seven players attend our monthly challenge. Initially we split into one group of three and two two's. I was paired with one of our resident experts and after some ill judged moves allowing him access to two triple letter scores he beat me convincingly.

For the second game the four experts played together and the person who had earlier beaten me ran out a seven letter word and again won convincingly. I then played a very close match see image, but unfortunately let the word Moquet pass unchallenged, as it allowed me access to a triple letter score, and after a very close game ended by losing by one point. Who knew Scrabble could be so exciting!



Our next meeting is scheduled for **Monday September 28th**.

George Mansfield

Strollers Social Walking Group

Due to very high temperatures it was decided to cancel the planned Dawlish U3A Strollers walk for August.

Our Dawlish & District u3a Strollers **September 10th walk** will be the postponed

planned August walk - hopefully we won't get another heatwave in September!

NB the new Stagecoach bus timetable starts August 30th so be aware that the bus times have changed.

We're catching the number 2 Exeter bus from Teignmouth at 13.20pm or the same bus from Dawlish at 13.35pm to Port Road.

From there, we're walking up the lane to the left of Dawlish Countryside Park then continuing uphill along the left lane before joining the off road footpath which overlooks Cofton Holiday Park. Next, we walk down via the conifer wood to St Mary's Church, Cofton. From there we continue along the lane to our end of walk refreshment stop at the Anchor Inn in Cockwood. During our break we'll discuss and make arrangements for our October to December monthly Strollers walks.

Other u3a members are always welcome to join us on our monthly walks.

Wine Appreciation

At the August meeting members were invited on a tour of Italy. From the hills south of Lake Garda in the north to the heat of Sicily, with detours to Emilia Romana, Abruzzo and Puglia, we rose to the challenge of sampling three whites and three red wines. In the vote for the favourite white and the favourite red, the white wine *Custoza* 2025 (Sainsbury's Taste the Difference) was a narrow winner, while in the red category *Via Vincini Appassimento* (ASDA) won support from nearly all WAGgers.



The other wines, which were all enjoyed, were:

- Pignoletto Brut (Sainsbury's Taste the Difference, an interesting alternative to Prosecco when choosing a sparkling wine)
- Fiano Terre Siciliane (ASDA)
- Primitivo de Maduria (Lidl)

All wines we sampled are available from local supermarkets.

In this competitive market, prices (like the contents of the bottles) are fluid with lots of deals for multi-purchases, loyalty points etc but generally speaking, the 'up front price' for all the wines was in the region of £7-9.

John and Lynne Vick

Other news:

Feeling Quizzical?

There are two different u3a quiz competitions being organised in Devon in the next few weeks. It is a little surprising that they are so close together but that seems to be the case, so let's just enjoy them.

An inter-u3a Quiz, at the White Hart Hotel in Moretonhampstead, Wednesday 30th September.

Each u3a is invited to put forward a team of up to six members for what should be a fun, entertaining and competitive afternoon. There will be a charge of £2.50 per person, with tea/coffee, biscuits and cake available all afternoon. The Quiz will start at 2.30pm. The Quiz Master will be James, owner of the Hotel at which he runs quizzes on a regular basis.

We need to let the organiser know by Friday 11th September if we would like to enter a team.

Devon u3a Big Quiz, Thursday 22nd October 2026 at Awliscombe Village Hall, Greenway Lane, Honiton, EX14 3PJ

Honiton u3a were the winners of the Devon u3a Big Quiz last autumn, and would like to start the process for this year. The Quiz will be held on Thursday 22nd October 2026 at Awliscombe Village Hall, Greenway Lane, Honiton, EX14 3PJ

Each u3a is able to enter two teams of four people each. Teams are asked to arrive at 1.30pm and the Quiz itself will be from 2-5pm. We are promised that the main quiz will include an intriguing photo challenge with a trophy for the winning team and a few extra surprises! Tea, coffee etc will be available all afternoon, and there is car parking at the venue.

I would be very happy to organise a team (or two) for the quiz at Honiton on 22nd October. If anyone would like to organise a team for the 30th September event in Moretonhampstead, that would be very helpful.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in getting involved. It would be a pity if our u3a were to be unrepresented.

John Vick

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