

Welcome to the October newsletter.



Old Roman Roots: The ancient Roman calendar had 10 months, making October the eighth month. When January and Februarius were added later, October shifted to the 10th spot, but the old name stayed.

Animal Mascot: Aside from spooky Halloween bats and black cats, the owl is a major symbol of October; the month is sometimes called "hooting season" because owls become very vocal about establishing their winter territory.

October 24 is United Nations Day, which aims to bring awareness to the work of the United Nations worldwide.

Sputnik 1 (The Soviet Union) the first manmade satellite to orbit Earth was launched on October 4, 1957.

Living

Laughing

Learning

From the Chair

To all at the U3A Dawlish

Thank you so much for the warm reception I received at the AGM after being elected as your Chair.

Also a big thanks to all those who have held positions John, George, for all your expertise and the smooth running of the Dawlish U3A

I am very much looking forward to seeing you all and sharing ideas for our group. This is your U3A and I am open to new ideas. We can all support each other and make the Dawlish U3A welcoming to others. Have fun, be creative and enjoy the various groups that we have and increase on them with your ideas!

As I said at the meeting Charles and myself are away for the next two meetings but look forward to sharing the Christmas meal together.

Enjoy the month ahead and we will enjoy the U3A together.

Monthly Meeting

This is my first newsletter to you all to let you know that our monthly meeting will be held at 3.45pm in the Council Chamber of the Manor House on **Monday 19th October 2026**.

Sadly I am unable to attend this meeting as I had already booked a holiday before being elected as your Chair.

We would like to welcome Natalie and I hope you all enjoy her talk. This will be followed by tea, coffee and biscuits and the raffle. I would like to thank George and Caroline for volunteering to do the tea which is a great help.

The guest speaker will be Natalie Follows from Age UK (Devon)

I work for **Age UK Devon** as part of the **Information and Advice** team and more specifically delivering our scam awareness project. The project is funded by Lloyds bank and the aim is to give people the knowledge to avoid being scammed, but also if they have been scammed what to do next and support them going forward. I do group talks/presentations, drop-in sessions and 1:1 advice sessions in people's homes.

I also advise on benefits for people over state pension age, social care & housing. The other side of my role is training and currently delivering Dementia training and Seated Exercise training.

Enjoy the occasion - Kerry Good

Interest Group news

Art Appreciation

In our September meeting, John gave a presentation on Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640). He introduced the presentation by reading some extracts from an article on Rubens by the art historian and broadcaster Waldemar Januszczak, entitled 'Lust, violence, power, compassion and poetry'. Many people today mainly associate Rubens with 'flesh' – especially female nudes but also highly muscled, heroic males. Modern observers might regard a Rubenesque woman as unfashionably overweight. Januszczak, however, challenges the idea that all Rubens could paint were fleshy nudes and argues that Rubens could do it all, not just in his painting of women, but in subject matter. Indeed, he rates him as the greatest painter of physical action.

Rubens was born in Antwerp to wealthy parents, and despite his mother's hopes that he would be a courtier, in his teens he followed his own desires and was apprenticed as an artist. His early upbringing and training in the finer things of life and ease in fashionable, courtly circles served him well throughout his life, as he was able to combine his career as an artist with having close relationships with the rulers of Spain, the Netherlands, France, England and the Holy Roman Empire. Indeed, on many occasions his role in addition to being a court painter, could best be described as a diplomat and, at times, even a spy.

His early training took him to Italy to study the great artists of his age, such as Caravaggio, Titian and Tintoretto. He travelled widely throughout his career, was well versed in the classics and religious subjects, and was able to speak Latin,

Greek, French, and Italian as well as the Flemish and Spanish of his native home.

He soon established a reputation as a portrait painter. He clearly enjoyed showing off his skills in painting luxurious fabrics of the fashionable costumes of his wealthy subjects. He also was commissioned to paint large numbers of paintings of religious and mythological subjects. Most of his paintings were on a grand scale, and intended to impress and move his audiences – and often in all likelihood, to titillate. Works such as *Prometheus Bound*, *The Lamentation of Christ*, *The Descent from the Cross*, *Tiger*, *Lion and Leopard Hunt* are all full of drama and emotion. He also produced many works which were more intimate and personal, including many of his children and both of his wives.



Venus and Adonis

In later life he also painted a number of landscapes close to his home which he clearly loved.

At the beginning of the meeting, most members would have admitted they did not really know Rubens' work very well, but as they saw more, the group was clearly persuaded by the view of Waldemar Januszczak. He really could do it all.

At the next meeting on **Tuesday 13th October**, members are invited to choose a work of art on the theme of 'City Scapes' to discuss with the group.

Lynne Vick, Convener

Beer and Skittles

The next beer and skittles is on **Thursday 15th October** at The Brunswick Arms, 7pm.

Come and join us for a fun evening, no experience necessary.

Bridge



The Bridge group continues to grow and prosper, but above all remains a social and friendly group. We

would welcome any new members who would like to join us including anyone who has never played bridge.

We invariably have one of two tables every Friday afternoon 2.30 to 4.30 at a member's house though if all the group turned up we could even manage 3 tables. Instruction and advice is always on hand when I am in Dawlish.

On those occasions when I am away, sessions are hosted by others. We use a what's app group to check who is able to play each week.

Charles Greenlees
Convenor

French Conversation

We had two lively discussions this month.

The first was to talk about a favourite city.

We had some fascinating offerings with photos of trips taken.

They included St Petersburg which one of the group had visited on a river cruise, Honolulu (where South Pacific was filmed) where the people were very welcoming, Dublin which included a trip to the Guinness factory and Trinity as well as the historical landmarks and Barcelona which houses the



famous Sagrada Família and many other Gaudi creations.

Our next discussion was about an article on reading and its benefits.

"La lecture, un moyen de vivre plus longtemps?"

We learned that it has health benefits : it reduces stress, helps the memory, reduces the risk of dementia and increases the length of life.

Yale School of Public Health studied the effects of reading by following 3,600 adults aged over 50 and concluded that they lived about 2 years more than those who didn't.

Food for thought ?

Most of us in the group read for pleasure, one was in a Book club and one has kept a record of books read since 2023.

Our next meeting is Thursday October 1st.

As yet we have no topic.

Fancy joining us?

Bridie Cushion

Gardens and Gateaux

Fourteen of us travelled by minibus to Saltram House, a trip arranged by the Gardens and Gateaux group. It is a National



Trust property close to Plymouth set in extensive parkland with areas of more formal planting, and a lovely pond. with water lilies. The interior is open, and I found the kitchens and assorted pantries and larders particularly fascinating.. The collection of porcelain, an interest of mine, is

well worth looking at, but they have the cabinets locked and I wasn't able to bring anything home with me.

Several of our group are National Trust members, delighting in the fact that they didn't have to pay an entrance fee. I was as surprised as anyone else to find that it was National Heritage Week, and that entry was free to all anyway. Not being a National Trust member myself, I tried hard not to smirk. Judging by the amount of business the cafe and shops were doing, I can't imagine they lost much revenue.

The weather was rather misty and damp, but I'm sure that didn't spoil anyone's day.

Michael Heyden, trip organiser

In Our Own Write

Our topic today was "It just happened " and we had a diverse interpretation of the phrase.

1. A semi- biographical account of a 17 year old girl invited to attend her boyfriend's sister's wedding in the days of miniskirts. Her mother vetoed the contents of her wardrobe as being inappropriate and treated her to a new outfit. Unfortunately, this was obtained from a shop more suited to more mature ladies and although the material was a Laura Ashley print it was floor length with an abundance of frills and lace (we were shown a photo!). Thoughts of hiding some of the frills under her long hair came to nothing when her well- meaning mother arranged for her to have an elaborate upswept hairstyle with curls.

The wedding went well and they were given a large piece of Black Forest gateau to take home. It just so happened that she tripped

and fell face down whilst entering her home



smearing cake and cream all over the dress rendering it unwearable ever again, although she was not exactly heartbroken about it.

2. Two friends dressed up for an outing to a tearoom and after their Prosecco and afternoon tea left to explore the nearby shops. A sudden shower of rain sent them running into the nearest shop which they had never been into before. It was an old-fashioned emporium stocking everything from mothballs to pieces of china. Annie, one of the ladies, spotted a bottle of castor oil that she had found difficult to find elsewhere. En route to collect it the strap of a shoulder bag got tangled up with a display of china which proceeded to smash to the floor also knocking over a display of cleaning products.

The noise brought the elderly Indian owner out from the rear of the shop closely followed by his wife. They were evidently horrified at the mess and his wife, ever practical, put the Closed sign up and returned to start clearing up the mess. The two friends with abject apologies insisted on helping to clean up the mess (although they managed to damage their silk dresses. The elderly Indian lady then produced cups of tea for the four of them. Offers by the friends to pay for all the damage caused were met with a refusal as it was an accident and "it just happened".

3. A four year old girl went to stay with her grandmother for the weekend. She loved baking with her gran although the chocolate cake became rather diminished in size by all the sampling of the mixture. The jammy biscuits had to be squished by hand and were of varying shapes and who cared if half the strawberry jam got in her hair. She was so happy to be with her most favourite person in the whole wide world.

When it was time to do the washing up whilst her gran popped to the loo the little girl thought that she would be very helpful and wash her gran's favourite bowl that her recently deceased grandpa had bought many years ago. A very tearful child sobbed that "It just happened" as she showed her gran the two broken pieces of the bowl.

A quick-thinking gran hugged the trembling child and told her that the Japanese do something called Kintsugi which says that mended china can be more beautiful than the original. She just didn't mention that this method usually involved gold leaf.

So, replete with chocolate cake and jammy biscuits they carried out the repair with superglue and lots of love with the little girl declaring that it was the most 'bootiful' bowl ever.

4. A mother recollects her daughter aged 13 forecasting that she would become a doctor, get married and have three children, even giving them names. She instead becomes a paramedic on board a cruise ship and whilst Face Timing her mother it became obvious that she had met that special someone who would indeed become her husband.

They do not have three children as yet but welcomed their first child two weeks ago, and no, they haven't used one of the names. She may not have planned to meet someone

on board but sometimes these things just happen.

5. It just happened. She didn't mean to become a collector but her childhood love of pebbles, milk bottle tops and marbles started a lifetime of collecting. She did not however repeat her decision to collect mice when the two rapidly turned into 64 and she had to beg the local pet shop to find them homes.

Adulthood saw cigarette cards, Wade whimsies, powder compacts and chocolate boxes joining the collections. You name it, she collected it. A decision to collect 20p coins necessitated buying a glass pig money box which wasn't suitable to remove any coins from. The only way was to smash the pig but even though times were occasionally lean the pig remained intact. However, it made good its escape whilst moving house to Devon and was never seen again.

Most of the collections remain intact but what will happen when their owner is up in Heaven no doubt collecting clouds, who knows?

6. This story was called The Full Moon.



A young woman was sitting cross-legged on the beach staring up at the moon. She had always had an affinity with the moon and now she felt that she knew why. Her training

as a psychotherapist had required her to undergo regression therapy and took her back in time to 1850s Nebraska.

She saw herself as a young child, a member of the Lakota tribe. Her father used to hold her up to venerate the moon. Her current love of the great outdoors and camping could be due to the way she had had to live off the land. Her life had been cut short by a fever at the age of 13.

Other instances in her life now compounded her affinity with the moon and in particular, the Native American people. She had never forgotten the profound effect a poster of Sitting Bull had had on her some years ago. Was it all down to her past life?

Our next meeting is on the **12th October**. The topic is "When I look back".

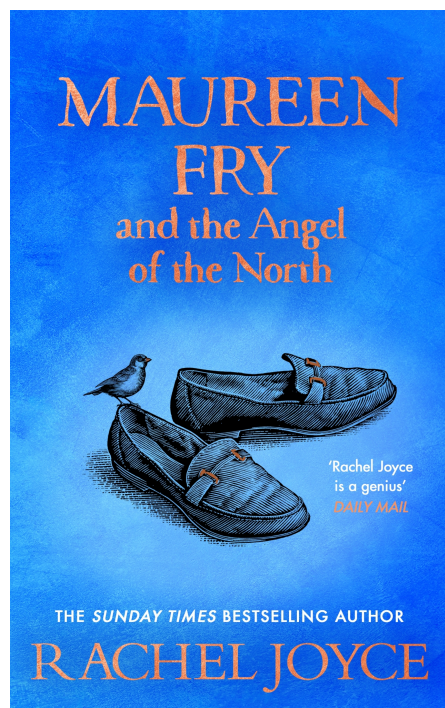
Travina White - convenor

Literature

Maureen Fry and the Angel of the North by Rachel Joyce

This novella is a follow up from The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, Maureen's husband, in which he walks from Devon to Northumberland to hand deliver a letter to his dying friend Queenie Hennessy. In its companion piece, The Love Song of Queenie Hennessy, she tells of her love for Harold and her attempt to support troubled David, Harold and Maureen's only son who committed suicide in his early twenties. She bought a ramshackle beach house in Embleton Bay and created a garden in the dunes out of driftwood and rocks representing her life and people she cared for.

This has become a tourist attraction and place of contemplation where visitors leave their own momentos.



We avoid books that are part of a series but, unusually, the normally efficient Central Library sent us the wrong Rachel Joyce on our choices list. The background was,

however, quite well covered for readers unfamiliar with the first two books.

Maureen's story takes place ten years after Harold's epic walk when they receive a postcard from Kate, one of the many people who befriended Harold, which mentions that Queenie included a monument to David in her garden. This intrigues and disturbs Maureen who had felt jealous and resentful towards Queenie for her relationships with her husband and son, so she feels compelled to drive up and see it for herself.

Maureen has led an isolated life, even as a child she never fitted in, and lacks or has not learnt any social skills, unlike Harold who is good with people and makes friends easily. She is prickly and gauche to the point of rudeness but on her journey she starts to learn to accept help from strangers and exchanges affectionate calls and messages from Harold and their neighbour, Reg.

We learn more about her life and the depth of her grief for David. She describes his suicide as the rock against which she is forever shattered and the book asks "how can we accept the unacceptable?"

After a bad fall at Queenie's garden, Maureen has no choice but to return to stay with Kate. Her first visit on the way did not go well.

She is given rest and support and the chance to bond with Kate's granddaughter which touches her and breaks down her armour sufficiently to enable her to start to reconcile her loss.

This book explores bereavement and how especially difficult it can be for someone with whom it is hard to sympathise. Maureen has had no friends to turn to before. Thankfully, Maureen and Harold's marriage survived as many do not.

We liked Rachel Joyce's writing and we have a copy of the actual book we ordered, Miss Benson's Beetle, which we are passing around.

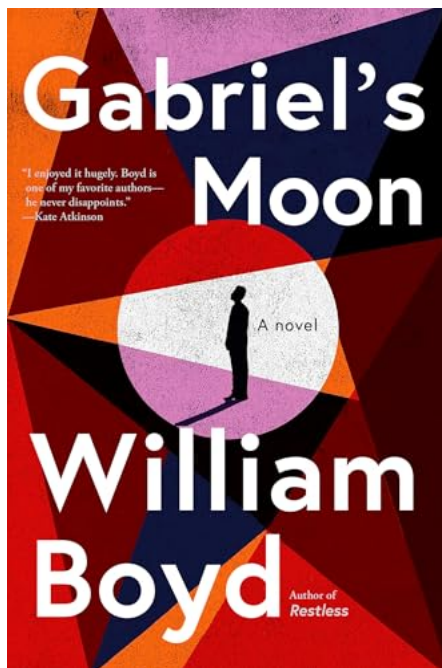
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Page Turners

In September the Page Turners read 'Gabriels Moon' by William Boyd. This book, Boyd's eighteenth, was published in 2024 and is the first in a trilogy, although it can be read without feeling the need to move on to the others.

The book is about Gabriel Dax and is set in the early sixties. Gabriel is a travel writer but when he has the opportunity to interview a political figure, he gets inadvertently drawn into the world of international espionage. He embarks on a

series of missions for his MI6 handler at the same time as embarking on therapy to resolve the fact that he is haunted by traumas in his childhood. There are many different strands to the book; Gabriel himself is bewildered as to how everything links together and the reader can be equally confused.



The book is one that we could easily imagine being made into a film and we likened it to James Bond. The author has worked as a screenwriter and has also written an authorised James Bond

novel so the comparison seems justified.

We all enjoyed reading the book and romped through it and therefore have decided it was definitely a page turner. However, it failed to stand up to scrutiny. We felt there were many implausibilities within the story and that many events depicted did not reflect life as it would have been in the intended time period. Also, the more we looked at the lead character's behaviour, the less we liked him. Perhaps this is one best enjoyed for the escapism and not analysed too much.

If you would like to try this book for yourself, do get in touch and see if one of us will swap our page turner for one of yours.

Poetry Appreciation

I would like to introduce a Poetry Appreciation group, possibly starting in the next 4 - 6 weeks. I have run this group in the Midlands starting up two groups one in Coventry and another in Warwickshire. One group is still running after 20 years and the other after 15 years. They now have 16 members and have had to make a waiting list.

I am hoping I can find others who might be interested in joining me in a group in Dawlish. The aims are simple, choosing a topic each month and finding a few poems each month around that theme. Can be a loose connection. We then share the poems we have chosen, adding a few comments or sharing any memories the poem may bring back to you.

(It is not a group to make up your own poems, I believe there is a group at the Methodist church who cover that.)

Paul at the Strand centre is willing for us to use a small room upstairs (access is possible from the lane next door.) The cost for the room would be £10 and there is tea and coffee making equipment there for our use. To date I have 4 people so far who are willing to give it a go and I am looking for further interest.

Update

Our first meeting is on **Friday 9th October**. Meet in the foyer at the Strand centre at 2pm

Please feel free to contact me directly.

Janet Wright janetjwright23@gmail.com

Quiz Group

We held one quiz this month with a good turnout of quizzers.

The six themes centred round BOT, Flags, General Knowledge, Organisations, Regional languages and Horses. A mixed bag !!

There was a record breaker as 3 jokers had never been played before in the General Knowledge round. Three out of the five jokers were played in the right round.

If only the teams had realised what the BOT round entailed..(every answer had to include the letters BOT)

The BOT round gained the most points and the weakest link was Organisations.

It was a very tight call regarding the scores and only a point and a half between the top three teams.

Have a bash at the following...

Which company produced the Horizon, the 1979 car of the year?



Which European country has a flag featuring the Pillars of Hercules?

What two counties is Hadrian's wall located in?

Interpol is the largest international police communications network based out of which French city?

West Frisian is a regional language spoken in which country?



Red Rum won three Grand Nationals.

How many times did he come twice?

The October quizzes will hopefully go ahead on the **first and last Mondays of October; the 5th and 26th.**

Graham Carey

Scrabble

On Monday the 28th Sept we had five people meeting for our monthly challenge. We split into a group of three and two. I opted to take on the person who narrowly beat me by one point last month and this time was victorious by a margin of six points. For the second round after refreshments, we agreed to keep the same combinations, but this time lost by a considerable margin.

I was unable to keep track of the second group but was aware of a significant word being successfully challenged to sounds of disbelief and euphoria. Our next meeting will take place on **Monday 26th October**

George Mansfield



Our October Exeter walk, chosen by one of our Strollers group members, is on **Thursday October 8th.**

We're catching the train from Teignmouth at 13.19pm or the same train from Dawlish at 13.24pm to Exeter Central station.

The walk takes us to St David's station via the city wall, Exeter basin and the riverside footpath, calling in for refreshments at the Mill on the Exe.

New walkers are always welcome to join our monthly U3A Strollers walks.

Jean Gitsham



Strollers Social Walking Group

Our September monthly Strollers walk was a bit of an adventure - just two of us and we managed to get a bit lost in the conifer woods above Cofton church -where there are so many paths to investigate!

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.