Dawlish & District u3a

November 2026

Newsletter



Learning • Laughing • Living

November: The name comes from the Latin **novem,** meaning nine. It was the ninth month of the early roman calendar before January and February were added.

Movember: A term used to raise awareness of men's health by people growing a moustache in November.

World origami day is celebrated on November 11th.

World kindness day takes place on November 13th.

Fun Facts

The first space dog, Laika, was launched into orbit on Sputnik 2 by the Soviet Union on the 3rd of November, 1957.

Studies show that November born babies can grow up with superior cardio/respiratory fitness and handgrip strength.

People born in November statistically have a higher likelihood of living to be 100 years old.

Chair’s report

I hope you enjoyed last month’s meeting and the guest speaker.

We welcome this month’s speaker who John will be introducing to you. Marcus Paul

It’s been a very busy October for Charles and myself as we went to Cambodia/Vietnam on an organised trip. We were extremely lucky as we only had five of us on the tour. So we were named the Sticky rice VIP’s. The name means sticky rice together across roads. It is an extremely challenging thing to do!!

We were picked up at the airport in Siem Reap, Cambodia where we had three nights at Tara Angkor Hotel. The weather was mixed with rain that seemed to drown anyone out in it. We saw the sunrise at Angkor Wat. As the dawn showed herself over this incredible site we were in awe.
We were also taken to fortified cities of Angkor Thorn, Baphoun, Phimeanakas, Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King.
We saw the Ta Prohm where we were so excited it was like something out of a film set where trees stood intertwined with rocks and old fortified palaces, only discovered by accident.
It had been covered in trees, and now clearly the site. Uncovered carvings steeped in History.
We saw light ants in the giant trees. Our favourite place to take in all the history.

Seeing the Phnom Penh Royal Palace with its splendid construction was very inspiring.

We went to the Toul Sleng Prison and the Killing fields of Choeung was not for the faint hearted due to the cruelty that went on there in 1975. It was where everyday people were just slaughtered with no regards to human lives.

We still haven’t learned anything from that!
It touched so many nerves it was very hard to take it in!

The people of Cambodia have a determination to put their country up there to let all that they went through never happen again! Lovely people who fight for freedom and justice in their country.

We travelled together to the Vietnam border Tinh Bein border.

We were on the Muong river where we saw the floating market, explored the Charcoal workshop, bee garden, with local music.

Saigon, the old Saigon Post office, Ben Thanh Market. A place where there were hundreds of stalls selling food, fish, clothes, anything you may want. Watching the constant flow of water in Saigon and the length of the river is amazing.

Our favourite place was Hoi An where the sights, smells of the foods and watching

People floating candles down the Mekong, the beautiful paper lanterns were a memory we will remember, Tuk Tuk's carrying people along busy roads and enjoying a bamboo man circus display.

We then took a flight to Hanoi where more delights awaited us. The Train Street had a train of 29 carriages and went between two rows of cafes where you could sit and watch the train proceed through Hanoi. Incredible sight!

We also enjoyed a boat trip overnight cruise in Halong Bay. We were delighted also as the sticky rice VIP's were upgraded to the top deck of sheer luxury accommodation. Amazing trip and food.

As our trip came to an end what have we brought away with us??

The incredible hospitality, the thousands of mopeds all competing for an inch on the roads, the people who are determined to make better lives, their talents and the various dishes we were fortunate to try.

Thank you Vietnam/ Cambodia for showing us your resilience, culture and friendship.

Would we go back? Yes, one day after we have explored other countries and cultures.

So have a good November and please support our Dawlish U3A.

Kerry Good

Monthly meeting report

Avoiding Scams.

There was a good attendance at October's monthly meeting to learn more about one of the most concerning subjects facing us day by day: scams, and most importantly, how to avoid becoming victims.



Natalie Fellows from ageUK Devon introduced her talk by telling us that 40% of all crimes in the UK are scams and they cost the country £5-10 billion pounds every year. Significantly, 95% of these crimes involve human error, so the good news is that there is something we can do to help ourselves and everyone else.

She told us that scammers use some very clear tactics, whether they are on the doorstep, telephone, text or online. They use pretence and play on your Hope, Fear, Anxiety, Time pressure. Whatever the situation, Natalie said we must never be rushed into making any decision, but scammers will invariably try to put you under pressure. If we are unsure, pause and seek advice. Her favourite catchphrase in all of these situations is, 'If it's out of the blue, it's not for you.'

She examined some specific types of scam, starting with 'doorstep scams'. These are not quite so common as they used to be but are nonetheless an issue. In these, and in other scams, she urged us to share information about scams with other people so they are on the alert and won't fall victim themselves.

As always, **DO NOT give your personal details, especially bank details, on the door step**, and always ask for ID – and check it. As we all know, telephone scams are all too frequent. Be aware of uninvited calls, even if they appear to come from the bank or the police. If you have any doubts, end the call and ring them back using a number you can verify, perhaps from a business card you already have or from a website you trust. Doing this will give you time to think, check, take advice and enable you to make a good decision.

If you do call back, do it after a period of time – perhaps 15 minutes – and use a different device with a different number.

When it comes to online, social media or text messages you are unsure about, never click on a link. A common scam is 'Dear Mum…' This might be an email, WhatsApp or text, and seems to come from a member of your family who needs some help or favour perhaps because they have lost a card or their wallet, and they need some money immediately. Be aware of the risk that your family member has had their account hacked and a scammer has access to all the contacts.

Natalie gave very good advice to **ensure that you have strong passwords**, especially for your email account. It takes a frighteningly short period of time for a scammer to work out your password so you need to have something secure. She suggested choosing **three random, unconnected words linked together, and including a number and a symbol, ideally a £ sign** as not all keyboards will have these. Some organisations ask for a minimum of **eight letters but this is no longer adequate**. Needless to say, remembering passwords is a challenge, so the advice is to use the password managers which appear on your screen: they are secure.

Also, **it is safe to write them down and keep them somewhere out of sight in your own home**. A scammer is not likely to get into your house to find a piece of paper. There was

so much more that could have been covered but time did not allow more than a brief mention of romance scams, AI and voice cloning – all real issues.

Natalie reassured us that she is available to provide one to one support, including in your own home, if you have a problem, and she can be contacted through **ageUK Devon on 0333 241 2340.**

The information and advice section of their website is information and advice for older people and their loved ones.

If you are concerned about a possible fraud and you want to contact the bank, ring **159** as this will provide a link to any of the main banks, so you don't need to remember each number. And finally, if you fear you have been a victim of fraud, you can contact ReportFraud (formerly Action Fraud) on 0300 123 2040.

Remember, 'If it's out of the blue, it's not for you.' John Vick

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NEW Groups



A new ukulele group will be starting on **Monday 2nd November**. This will be a beginners group, for those with little, or no, musical experience, although everyone will be welcome to come along.The emphasis will be on having fun whilst learning to play some well known songs.

The first meeting will be to discuss the plans for the group, and to enable you to decide if it's something you would like to do. I aim to hold the meetings weekly, on **Monday mornings,from 11.30 am – 1pm**. For anyone who doesn't yet have a ukulele, there will be one available for you to try, before you decide whether to acquire one for yourself. If you are interested in this group, please contact Caroline via

Enquiries @ u3a.dawlish.info

Mahjong



Have you ever wondered how to play Mahjong? Michael Heyden and Pat Ferns will be holding a meeting on **Wednesday 11th November** in the Strand Hall (entrance on Lawn Hill) starting at 2 pm for 2 hours to show the basics of how to play, and with the intention of forming a u3a group if there is enough interest.

You can contact me on heydenmichael@yahoo.co.uk if you have any queries.

Interest Group news

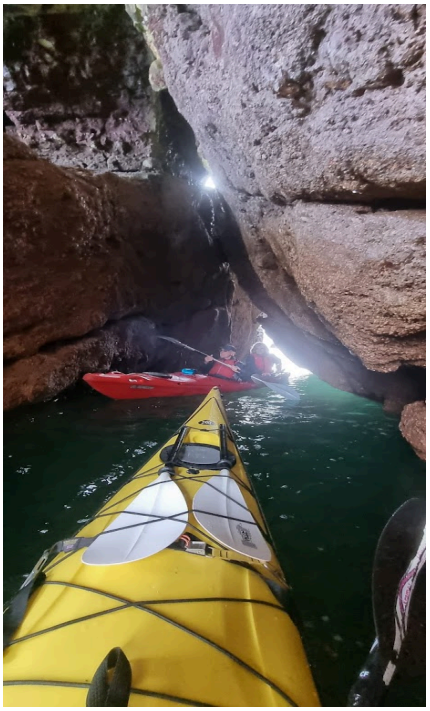
Adventure Group

This month the u3a Adventure Group went sea kayaking. Our starting point was along the coast at Oddicombe Beach which is at the foot of the Babbacombe Cliff Railway. We opted to walk down the cliff pathway and soon we were assembled on the beach with our instructor. We were lent life jackets, waterproof phone cases and waterproof coats and, after some instruction about paddling and steering, we paired up and clambered into the kayaks.



I took the back seat with my partner in front of me. Her job would be to keep paddling and I needed to paddle in time with her but also use my paddle as a rudder when necessary to manage the steering. We were shown how to fix the skirt of the waterproof coat around the edge of the seat hole in the kayak so that there was no danger of us getting wet. Soon we were ready to go and were pushed down the beach into the water – a bit like setting off down a water slide. We paddled out and practiced steering round in circles before our voyage began.

We set off following the coastline and soon came to the entrance to a cave. One kayak at a time we paddled right into the cave with the instructor. There was a seal lurking in there but he did not seem too perturbed by us. We continued along our way passing several different beaches and we kept stopping so that we could learn about the cliff formations and the various places along the way. There were two places where we passed one by one through very narrow gaps between the rocks which were quite challenging. Eventually we reached the beach that would be the furthest point on our journey. We hoped to see seals sunbathing there but a heavy shower at that point put paid to that! However, on the way back we spotted several seals swimming alongside us.



About a third of the way back we landed our kayaks on a beach for a rest. The skirts of the waterproof coats had done a good job and, provided we were careful with the puddles that had formed in our laps, we were still dry. On the beach there were lots of fossils to be found and we all pocketed rocks which contained evidence of ancient sea sponges. We also had a taste of two

different types of seaweed that our instructor foraged on the beach.



Finally, he lit a small fire and we toasted marshmallows to give us some energy for the final part of our journey. An inquisitive seal hovered around, watching what was going on and posing for photographs.

After this we made our way back to the starting point and after a coffee in the café and a ride back up on the hundred year old funicular railway, we made our way home. We were in the first group to go; there was a second group later in the month. I hope they had an equally exciting morning, although with different weather and tide conditions their experience may have been a bit different to ours.

Deborah

Despite warnings of wind, rain and storms, intrepid Adventure Group members much enjoyed their sea cave kayaking adventures in October and are looking forward to our trip to the Manor Resort in November.

The Manor Resort offers upwards of 60 different craft and sporting activities and a full board stay so there really is something for everyone. Although Adventure Group is coordinating our visit (thanks Phil), **any Dawlish & District u3a member is welcome to join us**. Details are available on the website here: https://u3a.dawlish.info/manor-resort-2026-invitation-to-book or contact Phil via adventure@u3a.dawlish.info if you have any questions.

In December we'll be slowing the pace with a relaxing gong bath, then it'll be time to start thinking of new adventures for 2027. The fun never stops!

Miggie Pickton

Art Appreciation

The theme of the October meeting was 'Cityscapes'. Members were asked to choose a work of art on this topic and lead a short discussion about it. The choices ranged from the 17th century and to somewhere in the future, but also with a detour into a world which was a mix of fantasy and powerful reality.

Vermeer is best known for his beautiful interiors portraying everyday domestic scenes. He did, however, produce a very small number of exteriors including a view over his home city of Delft, painted in 1661.



It is an extraordinarily realistic view of the city. It portrays the city as one of remarkable calm and serenity, but on reflection this is rather unlikely given the central role that trade and shipping played in its life. Proust thought it was the most

beautiful painting in the world, while the verdict of the art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon, seems entirely appropriate: "He took a turbulent reality, and made it look like Heaven on earth."

Canaletto was the choice of two members. One painting was set in his most accustomed location of Venice, but this was not of canals and gondolas but of a Stonemason's Yard. It is full of details of everyday life and work, with many of the city's famous landmarks in the background. Canaletto also spent a lot of time in England. His view of The River Thames with St Paul's on Lord Mayor's Day, 1746-7, has many features which remind the viewer of Venice.



There is a grand procession on the water with a number of impressive barges which might have been influenced by Venetian designs. The city is shown just a few decades after it was devastated by the Great Fire, and the skyline is now punctuated by scores of spires, many of which would have been designed by Christopher Wren as, of course, was St Paul's Cathedral which dominates the skyline.

Camille Pissarro was one of the leading Impressionists. Monet is famous for producing a series of paintings of Rouen Cathedral in different lights. Pissarro did something similar for the Boulevard Montmartre in 1897.



We saw just five of a much larger number of paintings, where Pissarro observes the Boulevard from the same vantage point but at different times of the day and in different seasons. He skilfully portrays a great range of colours, weather conditions, light effects – both natural and artificial, and the busy life of the street.

The beauty and broadly positive views of city life in these earlier works were in sharp contrast to the grim view of industrial cities by Hans Balusheck. Working in the Germany of the first decades of the 20th century, he focused on the brutal reality of overcrowded apartment blocks, industrial buildings and railways alongside people's everyday struggle to cope with work and bitter winter weather.

At the same time and in similar unromantic fashion, the American George Bellows portrayed the reality of life in the rapidly growing New York.



Unprecedented economic growth and technological change alongside phenomenal

population growth produced a cityscape which was dynamic, dramatic and hectic. His painting of New York in 1911 shows a tumult of people, transport of all kinds with remarkable skyscrapers on all sides. His focus was on the lives of ordinary people living in this new world, many of them recent migrants forced to live in overcrowded, insanitary tenements.

One of the most popular British artists who specialised in cityscapes and urban life was LS Lowry. Living and working for the most part in Salford and industrial Lancashire, his paintings of factories, usually with tall chimneys belching smoke, are instantly recognisable. They are populated by his famous matchstick men and matchstick cats and dogs. It was particularly interesting to have an interpretation of the Street Scene in Pendlebury which, on closer examination, shows the result of war time bomb damage and shored up walls where some individual houses in the middle of a terrace have been destroyed.

Our final cityscape was something very different, although closely related in theme to the work of Bellows in New York. The Australian artist Shaun Tan produced a book 'The Arrival' which tells its story entirely through beautiful, mysterious pictures. The theme is of family separation, migration, journeys to an alien and frightening world of towering buildings and overcrowded living. The book is a work of art in itself, and its moving story appeals to people of all ages, and has considerable resonance in today's world.

As something of a detour from the main theme, we had a look at what might be possible in the world of art produced by AI. It started with a view of Rome and then the project had a life of its own! We saw some intriguing works of art which resulted from an instruction to produce a picture of a given subject in the style of a well-known artist. We looked at a photograph of the colosseum in ancient Rome interpreted in the style of the surrealist Magritte. Also generated by AI were a cubist cityscape, and the Eiffel Tower with a crowd of unmistakably Beryl Cook tourists having fun.

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 10th November** when Michael Heyden will give a presentation on the American artist James McNeill Whistler.

Lynne Vick, Convener

Boules



Taking advantage of another dry day the members of the boules group shivered their way through our last meeting this year on the Lawn, before taking ourselves off for coffee, and for some, cake. You know who you are, so I won't mention names, except for Barry.

Dawlish Rules Indoor Boules will take place in the Methodist Hall twice a month now, on the second Friday and last Wednesday of each month. We meet in the cafe in the church at any time after 10 a m for a 10.30 a.m. start for the very reasonable price of £2 each. Everyone is welcome, no equipment or skill required, although a

talent for laughing both at yourself and other people helps.

Michael Heyden, Convenor

In Our Own Write

Five of us met to share our latest literary masterpieces, all with the title " Looking back"

1. Some experiences you never forget and one member shared the horror of being followed as a fourteen year old by a man. To this day she can remember looking back to find that he was gaining on her and her sprinting to escape him. Who knows what would have happened if her screams hadn't been heard by a school caretaker who came out to investigate the noise scaring away the man.

2. A woman looking back on her progress as an ice skater from being taken by her father as a young child, learning how to skate, to participating in ice dancing competitions.



She and her partner seemed destined for greatness until a skating accident finished her career. Her skating partner did however become her husband and the father of their six month old baby.

3. A disillusioned doctor was returning home from work in a severe winter storm, reflecting on how life was grinding him down. He spotted a lone figure huddled against a tree visibly upset and stopped the car to give him a lift. The young man reluctantly accepted and the doctor who was a psychiatrist realised that he had seen an older version of the boy recently.

It transpired that the boy's father had lost his job and had suffered a breakdown, ending the boy's hopes of training to become a doctor as the family could no longer afford to support him. The doctor decided that he would retire and utilise a pot of money that he had inherited from various patients over the years and fund the boy's medical training.

4. This piece was about looking back on what childhood was like for those of us who won't see 70 again. Remembering the joys of playing conkers and hula hoops and the freedom to roam. The memory of the tiny bottles of school milk often sour in the summer and the fact that in rain or snow schools stayed open.

Houses had single glazed windows with frost on the inside in winter and clothes were hung out on the washing line often freezing like cardboard.

What will the children of today remember when they look back on their childhood? A disposable society; worries about global warming or AI or whether the world will be destroyed by war or virus?

5. A lonely widow is contacted on Facebook by a widowed doctor who lived in America and they begin to exchange messages. He

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told her that as he was volunteering at a remote hospital and was unable to get a phone connection although could email.

Watching Scam Interceptors on TV Nick Stapleton was talking about Romance Scams being on the increase and out of curiosity she followed his instructions as to how to do a reverse image search. It turned out that the photo of "her" doctor belonged to a married doctor in Swindon who warned in his profile that scammers kept using his photo.

Looking back she realised that her doctor was gradually trying to reel her in and was probably sitting in a call centre in Nigeria waiting for the right moment to rid her of her savings. He was in for a surprise!

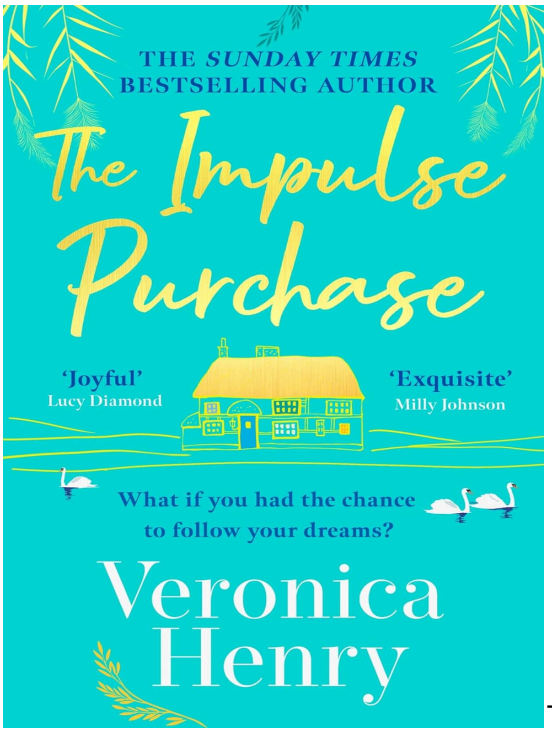
Our next meeting is on the **9th November** when the topic will be "The panic in his face".

Literature

The Impulse Purchase by Veronica Henry

The Impulse Purchase made is The Swan, a pub in the village where Cherry grew up. She has, reluctantly, sold her late widowed mother's house and feels that she is severing her links with her past when she discovers that The Swan is going to be sold for redevelopment into flats.

The pub was always at the heart of village life and she has previously, skilfully restored properties for pleasure and financial gain. She has money from the sale of the family home that her mother instructed her to spend on herself so it does seem to be a sound idea, but Cherry presents her recently retired partner, Mike, with a fait accompli which, given all their plans for their future together, was rather startling.



There was an incident at his retirement party that caused Cherry to have fears about their relationship but they have been happy for fifty years and he is a loving, committed, partner, father, grandfather and great-grandfather so we wondered why she didn't simply ask him if her insecurities were justified?

Mike is left on his own while Cherry is joined by her widowed daughter, her granddaughter and great granddaughter who are ready to undertake the project and the daughter has a marketing company so has relevant skills to contribute.

The usual building company Cherry employs is available, so work begins and the pub is given its makeover in an astonishingly short period of time.

It was good to have three generations of women pooling their talents and resources, four generations counting the

great-granddaughter, and other characters are introduced who play their own parts.

The Swan is now very stylish but maintains the qualities of a friendly local pub.

This is a warm, feel-good novel, easy to read and full of descriptions of nature, lovely interiors, food and chic clothes, oh, and a handsome pig farmer!

The family at the centre are enviably gorgeous, talented and clever although there has been a bereavement with the quite recent death of Cherry's son-in-law and the grief and conflict of considering the possibility of a new relationship is sensitively portrayed.

There are other difficult issues covered, such as the worn-out teenage girl who is a carer for her mother and has responsibility for her siblings. However, we felt that there could have been more grit in the novel and there were occasions when we thought the plot or characters were going to take a dark turn but didn't.

We are obviously not used to uplifting stories where people are helped through great difficulties with loving support from friends and family.

This is well-written and warm and there is definitely a place for heart-warming books.

3/5

Lunch Club

We are going to the Beachwood cafe, 2 Park Road, EX7 9LQ on **November 24th Tuesday at 1pm** for lunch.

I will book 25-30 places. This will be our last 2026 lunch event before Christmas.

Hoping to get a good turnout. Send me an email when you have paid your £10 deposit.

I will then send you the menu so I can get your lunch order.

Please pay £10 deposit to

Dawlish & District u3a,

Nat West Bank,

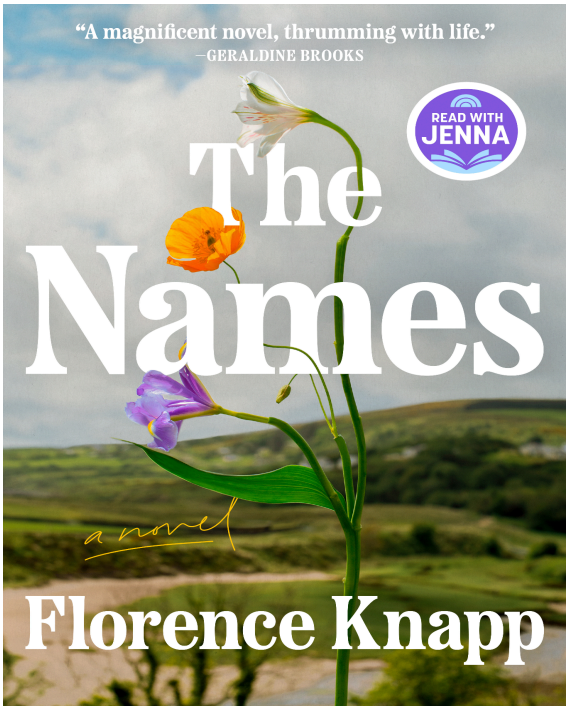
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Account number 34078967

Khim Sim

Page Turners

In October the Page Turners read 'The Names' by Florence Knapp. This book was the winner of the British Book Awards Debut Novel of the Year in 2026.



The book begins in 1987 when a mother sets out to register her new baby son. Should she follow family tradition and name him after his domineering father and grandfather; should she choose the name suggested by his young sister; or should she use her own choice? The book follows all three possible versions of the boy's life and we see the impact of each of the choices.

We were all fascinated by the concept and spent some time thinking about the way a person's name might affect the way in which their personality develops and the way in which other people react to them and all of us had stories to tell about this. However we tried to concentrate on the stories in the book.

The book is very powerfully written and we were all engrossed in the different ways the family's life played out but there is domestic violence in all three scenarios with a long lasting effect on the characters and some of us found this very difficult to read.

The chapters of the book alternate between the three different stories. We needed to concentrate and had to keep turning back to remind ourselves of where we were but on the whole we felt this structure was worth the extra work to enable us to contrast the characters at different times in their lives. It was fascinating to see how a change to a child's name might impact so many different people and the final sentences of the book open up so many more possibilities.

Despite containing some upsetting scenes, on the whole we felt this was an extremely good read and would recommend it as a Page Turner.

Deborah, convenor

Quiz Group

The group met on the Alpha and Omega Mondays of October and there was a good turn out for both quizzes.

The first evening centred round the subjects of All at Sea, Acronyms, It happened in May, General Knowledge,Thoroughfares and Animal Spies!



Jokers were played in four of the rounds but no one wanted to chance their bonus points on the Animal Spies. Five points separated the top three teams and the best round points wise showed that the quizzers were not 'All at Sea!'. However the animal spies proved to be the hardest. No idea as to why as I am sure you would have known that in 2007 the Iranian Army detained 14 spy squirrels!

You may have also known that….

Ernest Hemingway wrote 'The old man and the sea.'

ROM means Read only memory

On the 14th May 1787 delegates gathered in Philadelphia to draw up the constitution of the USA.

Cardamom is the Indian small seed pod and spice which is often referred to as the Queen of the spices

Margaret Thatcher described the M25 as a road we can all be proud of.

The 26th October quiz had another mixed bag. As well as the main stay General Knowledge round, the subjects covered, a little bit of culture, Myths and Legends, what Mother used to say, Money related and how many?

So …

How many times did Stephen Hendry play in a world snooker championship final?

In which country was Osama Bin Laden killed by American troops?

Mother used to say you will get what if you sit too close to the TV?

Whose face was said to have launched a 1,000 ships?

The Reina Sofia Museum is found in which city?

What was the title of Jeffrey Archer's first published novel?

We reminisced correctly about what our mother used to say to us as that was by far the biggest score on the board. Shame the same couldn't be said about How Many? subject, which was a fun round with a lot of guessing involved.

Our quizzes in **November** will take place on **Mondays the 9th and 23rd.**

Graham Carey, convenor

Scrabble

At this month's meeting we had three members and welcomed a new member to make up a quorum. The first game passed without incident and as usual I failed to make a significant impact.

This is the board following our second game and I am proud to say that one of those seven letter words was my own contribution, namely Raincoat, adding to the existing T.



Unfortunately it did not lead me to win, but finished in a creditable second place behind the player with the other seven letter word, Breeders, which technically should not have been there as Imans is not allowed as it should have been spelt with two M's, Imams. Pathe is the second illegal word that escaped challenge.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **November 23rd.**

George Mansfield, convenor

Strollers

There were 6 walkers on our October Strollers Exeter city walk, led by David A.

Our next Strollers walk is on **November 12th** again with leader David A.

Please catch the 13.46, number 11 bus from Dawlish to Dawlish Warren. The group will be walking alongside the Shutterton brook then along and up Secmaton Lane before heading back down to Dawlish town centre for end of walk refreshments .

NB Due to showery weather forecast please try to join walk at the start i.e. Dawlish town centre bus stop, otherwise if no one else is at the bus stop the leader will not be getting on the bus.

However regular Strollers if you plan to join the bus at another stop do please email Jean asap. She can then let David know you'll be joining the walk.

Jean Gitsham, convenor

Dawlish news:

Could you decorate a Christmas tree for our church Festival? 🎄

We would love to invite your community group or organisation — or you as an individual — to take part in **St Gregory's Christmas Tree Festival 2026**, taking place at St Gregory's Church, Dawlish, from **Wednesday 9 to Sunday 20 December 2026**.

Whether you've taken part before or would be joining us for the first time, we'd be delighted to welcome you!

If any members would like us to participate and are willing to help, would you please contact Roz Summerton at - newsletter@u3a.dawlish.info.

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.
