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**Stephanie Cox; Valerie Greenslade; Mary Taylor; Erica Tinsley**

## Membership Secretary's Notes

It is now time to remind you all that the annual subscription will be due on 1st April. It remains the same at £10 per person.

You can pay by cheque payable to Anton U3A or alternatively cash is very acceptable. Please pay at the next meeting if possible.

We have had several new members this year which helps to keep your group vibrant. New ideas are always welcome.

If you are not able to attend the next meeting you can send a cheque to me at Swallows, Dunkirt Lane, Abbots Ann, SP11 7BB.

Please also let me know if you do not wish to renew your membership.

My email address is [barbara.dixon.37@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.dixon.37@gmail.com).

*Barbara Dixon*

## Questors

### U3A Skittles

This year's Skittles lunch took place on Friday, 20th January at the White Hart, Stoke and was attended by some 46 members. The White Hart once again did us



*Sue Parker above  
right*

*Vince Funnell  
below left*



proud with a very good meal which I believe the great majority enjoyed.

The ladies' competition was won by Sue Parker in a play-off against last year's winner, Anne Scott. The gents' competition was won by Vince Funnell, congratulations to both, enjoy your wine!

*Pete Duncan*

On Friday 17 February a group of 20 Questors visited the Fyffes Ripening Facility in Basingstoke. Who knew

bananas could be so interesting? We were shown a film relating to the history of Fyffes, which originally was a Scottish company founded by Mr Fyffe, then sold to an Irish company and as of 17 Feb is now Japanese owned.



We were given a comprehensive tour of the 'factory floor', including the huge 'refrigerators' and processing line. A few little known facts - banana plants are herbs,

not trees; the plant only produces one crop and is then replaced; there are no seeds as they have been

developed for commercial production and are grown from cuttings; when harvested they are not only green, but absolutely rock hard; they are

shipped to the UK in containers.

It was a good visit which included a light lunch.

*Diane Richards*

*Diane Richards*

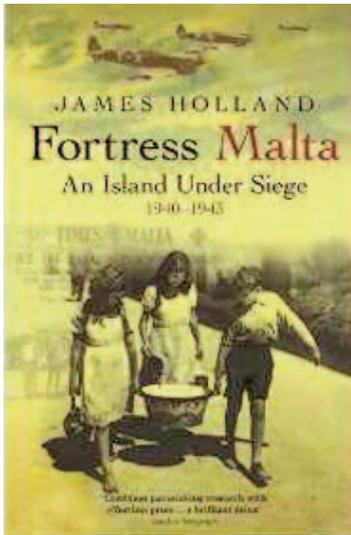
*Diane Richards*

*Diane Richards*

## Reading Group

**November 2016** *Fortress Malta* by James Holland

In March and April 1942, more explosives were dropped on the tiny Mediterranean island of Malta - smaller than the Isle of Wight - than on the whole of Britain during the first year of the Blitz. Malta had become one of the most strategically important places in the world. From there, the Allies could attack Axis supply lines to North Africa; without it, Rommel would be able to march unchecked into Egypt, Suez and the Middle East. For the Allies this would have been catastrophic. As Churchill said, Malta had to be held 'at all costs'.

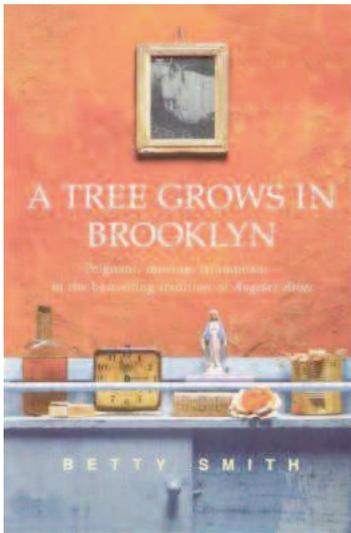


**FORTRESS MALTA** follows the story through the eyes of those who were there: young men such as twenty-year-old fighter pilot Raoul Daddo-Langlois, anti-aircraft gunner Ken Griffiths, American Art Roscoe and submariner Tubby Crawford - who served on the most successful Allied submarine of the Second World War; cabaret dancer-turned RAF plotter Christina

Ratcliffe, and her lover, the brilliant and irrepressible reconnaissance pilot, Adrian Warburton. Their stories and others provide extraordinary first-hand accounts of heroism, resilience, love, and loss, highlighting one of the most remarkable stories of World War II.

The reading group found this book to be one of those to be dipped into, rather than read cover to cover. Some interesting facts and photographs, but not an enthralling read.

**December 2016** *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*  
by Betty Smith

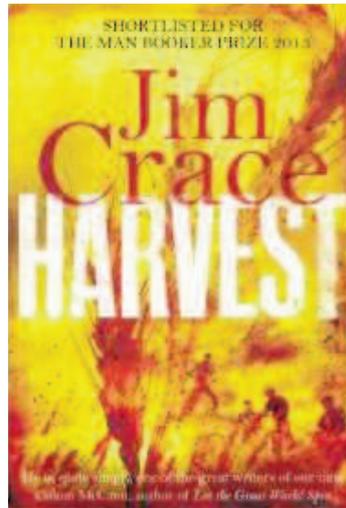


This is a 1943 novel which focuses on an impoverished but aspirational, second generation Irish-American adolescent girl and her family. The Nolans lived in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn from 1902 until 1919. Their daughter Francie and their son Neely knew more than their fair share of the privations and suffering that were the lot of New York's poor. A Tree Grows in

Brooklyn is the story of Francie, an imaginative, alert, resourceful child, and of her family.

A poignant tale, which many consider to be a classic. It is an interesting read, and provoked much discussion within the group relating to deprivations of childhood, poverty and drunkenness. The novel brings to life the world in which Francie lives, yet portrays experiences that children of any era can relate to -- navigating sibling relationships, making new friends, and discovering first love. It also deals with more serious subjects, such as Francie's father's alcoholism, the death of a loved one, an attempted molestation, and premarital sex causing a ruined reputation. Yet, these issues are seen through the eyes of an innocent young girl and presented in an emotionally authentic way.

**January 2017** *Harvest* by Jim Crace



On the morning after harvest, the inhabitants of a remote English village awaken, looking forward to a hard-earned day of rest and feasting at their landowner's table. But the sky is marred by two conspicuous columns of smoke, replacing pleasurable anticipation with alarm and suspicion.

One smoke column is the result of an overnight fire that has damaged the master's out-buildings. The second column rises from the wooded edge of the village, sent up by newcomers to announce their presence. In the minds of the wary villagers a mere coincidence of events appears to be unlikely, with violent confrontation looming as the unavoidable outcome. Meanwhile, another newcomer has recently been spotted taking careful notes and making drawings of the land. It is his presence more than any other that will threaten the village's entire way of life.

This is an evocative and realistic depiction of the Enclosure Act and it's effect on the labouring country classes. The narrator, an outsider in the village in which he lives, reports the terrifying ordeal of the villagers as their common land is parcelled up and they are driven from the hamlet. A mixture of Witchfinder General with a soupcon of moral guilt, and with the strangely haunting mixture of free indirect speech and first person narrative, makes this an interesting historical novel.

*Diane Richards*

**History**

Our December meeting was the usual enjoyable mix of things that had interested members over the course of the year, but on other mornings we have looked at particular topics.



Pete Duncan told us about the remarkable life of Mary Slessor who was a Scottish missionary to Nigeria. Born in 1848, she was the second of seven children and when she was 11 the family moved to Dundee in search of work. Pete painted a vivid picture of Victorian Dundee which was dominated by jute processing mills.

After treatment with whale oil, a byproduct of Dundee's whaling industry, the jute fibres imported from India could be spun and then woven for sacking, carpet backing etc. Conditions in the mills were terrible but the mills attracted poor people like the Slessors to the city where they lived in appalling slums. Illness killed Mary's father and brothers so by the age of 14 Mary was a skilled jute worker doing a 12-hour day.

She was 27 when she heard of David Livingstone's death and decided she wanted to be a missionary. After training, she was sent to Calabar in Nigeria arriving in September 1876.

Despite several bouts of serious illness and exposing herself to danger by insisting on lone stations, she lived with the native tribes, learning their language and traditions, establishing personal friendships and earning respect for her practical approach. One traditional belief in Calabar was that when twins were born one of them had to be a devil so both infants were left in the jungle in clay pots to die. She successfully ended this practice and adopted many children who had been left in this way.

Mary Slessor's death in 1915 at the age of 67 was marked by great mourning amongst the tribes with whom she had lived and she is buried in Calabar.

At the time of Mary Slessor's death, Britain was embroiled in the First World War and 1 July 1916 saw the start of the Battle of the Somme.

With 60,000 British casualties on the first day and 360,000 more before the battle ended in November 1916, the Somme has been viewed as an unmitigated British disaster. But in his talk Alan Evans argued that that lessons were learned which made it a turning point in the war towards eventual Allied victory in 1918.

Before 1914 the experience of the British Army and its commanders was limited to small colonial wars. Neither Haig, Rawlinson nor their officers had ever been involved in an offensive on the scale of the Somme. The command and control systems in use were not up to the job. The army was expanding rapidly and a large number of the troops deployed on the Somme were inexperienced and lacked adequate training. The army moved to standardise training and procedures, and placed a greater emphasis on the training of junior officers.

The creeping barrage became an essential part of battle tactics to neutralise defensive fire and with aerial reconnaissance demonstrated the benefits of greater co-operation between all arms of the services. Communications were improved and there was recognition that meticulous planning was essential for success.

Alan concluded his talk with mention of tanks which the British deployed for the first time on the Somme. Too slow and unreliable to hold their initial gains, they did demonstrate their potential so that many more were available to support the more efficient and effective British Army later in the war.

It was in the years after WW1 that Paul Leedham started his talk on the changes in British agriculture

during the 20th century. In the 1920s and 1930s agriculture was not prosperous and he spoke about the traditional methods of farming used in the West Country rural community where he grew up. Horses were used for every task, ricks were built to store hay, the harvest was a community undertaking and workers cottages were simple, often lacking basic amenities. He spoke about the sad occasions when a farmer could no longer manage to continue his tenancy and every single item he owned was displayed for auction.

During WW2 when conscription reduced the workforce, Land Girls and POWs worked on the farms. After the war mechanisation started with the innovative little 'Fergie tractor' which paved the way for the massive machines of today. The bigger fields needed and the focus on high yielding breeds of cattle has changed the face of farms. But the most worrying aspect of modern farming has been the vast increase in the use of agricultural chemicals which are used not only to increase yields but also as quick and easy, but imperfect, replacement for the good land management practiced in the past. Many of these chemicals are toxic and their long term use should be a concern for everyone.

We have had two mornings looking at aspects of US history. The first concerned Texas which is today is the 2nd largest state in the USA and synonymous with everything American but Stephanie Cox took us back to the 1830s when it was a province of Mexico.

Many Americans had settled in Texas but they rebelled when General Santa Anna took control of the country and they were soon fighting for an independent state of Texas. Santa Anna invaded. In his path was the old mission building of the Alamo where around 200 defenders decided to stand and fight. Stephanie looked in detail at the lives of three of those defenders - William B. Travis, James Bowie and Davy Crockett.



William B. Travis was their leader. He had grown up in Alabama and trained as lawyer. Heavily in debt, he moved to Mexico to escape arrest. He set up successful

legal practice, opposed Mexican rule and became a Lt Colonel in the new Texan Army.

James Bowie had spent most of his life in Louisiana where he was a land speculator. He moved to Texas in 1830 and married the daughter of the Mexican vice governor of the province.

Davy Crockett was from Tennessee but was not the backwoodsman of the films. He was elected to the US Congress in 1825 but his opposition to President Andrew Jackson's policies led to his defeat in 1831. After winning in 1833, he lost again in 1835 and left for Texas where he joined the cause for independence.

All three men were killed, along with all the other defenders, at the Battle of the Alamo on 6 March 1836. The second 'American morning' was devoted to the Kennedys. Barbara Dixon started with the patriarch of the family Joseph Patrick "Joe" Kennedy (1888-1969) who came from a comfortable Boston family and amassed a fortune in banking and securities trading as well as investing in film studios and alcohol distribution. There was a darker side to his activities including stock market manipulation and persistent rumours of links with organised crime. In 1937-40 he was US ambassador to Britain, a disastrous appointment as he was pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic.

Joe and his wife Rose had nine children. Joe was a very strict father and controlled every aspect of their lives even into adulthood. He used his money and his influence to achieve the huge ambitions he had for them.

Barbara took us through the lives of each one of them. There were the triumphs including John becoming President, Robert and Edward becoming Senators and Eunice receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her work for the intellectually disabled. But there were also the tragedies. Joe subjected his daughter Rosemary to a lobotomy which left her with the mental state of a 2-year old and unable to walk. She lived the remaining 64 years of her life in an institution with minimal contact from her family. Joe Jnr and Kathleen died in plane crashes, and John and Robert were both assassinated.

*Erica Tinsley*

## Bird and Natural History Group

### Langford Lakes - 5th January.



*Tufted Duck*

On a beautiful sunny morning a small party of members braved the minus 2 degree temperature and visited the Wiltshire WWT Nature Reserve in

Hanging Langford. All three lakes were partially frozen. Nearly all the waterfowl had gathered in the South Lake



*Pochard*

to get the benefit of the sunshine. There were hundreds of them. We counted 29 species during our visit. Most of these birds were in the water

feeding, but a few were standing on the ice apparently enjoying the sunshine. Look at Margaret's photos to see some of the birds we saw. The woodland birds too were very actively

feeding, possibly stimulated by the cold night and the lovely morning sunshine.

*Roger Beaumont*

### RSPB Arne - 24th January



*The atmosphere in the fog*

We arrived at the reserve to find it covered in thick, freezing fog. Over a

while come cup of coffee in their new Café we decided find out what we could see from one of the hides. The walk through the woods on the way, was eerie and very



*Nuthatch*

atmospheric. Sounds were muffled, small pieces of ice from the thawing branches were dropping all around us. There were no birds. At the hide, visibility was only a few yards and again, no birds. A few of our group went to Shipstal Point where they found a patch of better visibility and were lucky enough to be able to take a few photographs.

Our visit coincided with the BBC Winterwatch week from Arne. The BBC 'village' was hidden away on



*Martin Hughes-Games, the BBC wildlife presenter*

another part of the reserve and we saw very little of them. We did however see Hugh Whitingstall (?) being interviewed in the car park.

After a very nice lunch in the new Café, the group split up to investigate different parts of the site. The situation was the same everywhere - thick fog and no birds. Before we left, however, we were lucky enough to have a rare sighting of Firecrests flitting about in an evergreen bush in the carpark.

*Roger Beaumont*

### Titchfield Haven - 23rd February

Ten stalwart members braved Storm Doris (81mph gusts recorded at the Needles) to visit Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve at the mouth of the River Meon, on the east shore of the Solent. All the mallards, swans and an early pair of common terns in Hillhead Harbour were hunkered down behind the moored boats for shelter. The turnstones had fled from the edge of the sea to shelter behind the harbour wall. We expected to

see only a few birds inside the Reserve. After a welcome cup of coffee in the Visitors Centre we struck out for the nearest hide. We were pleasantly surprised to be able to record sight of no less than 23 different species, mainly water birds. The highlight of our visit was to see two marsh harriers quartering the reed beds, hunting for food. We've often seen them in the far distance but this time they were quite near. One of them flew to about 100yds from us allowing us to see all its beautiful markings.

*Roger Beaumont*

## Photo Club

Our meeting held on the third Monday of December was held at our usual venue attended by most of the group. The subject was **MUSIC** and it was agreed that



it was a most interesting topic to attempt. As usual the photos entered covered the subject most comprehensively from musical scores, street singers, choirs musicians and musical instruments. As the pictures were so varied and of such high quality we decided there would be a winner plus 2 seconds. First place went to Chris with his picture of a Street singer taken when on holiday in Padstow, seconds Pam with Street singers and Mike with a female drummer both taken on one of their holidays. For the remainder of the meeting we had a discussion on white balance settings in camera.

Our meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the start of a new year for the group was a great success with a lot of interaction and banter. Our competition subject was **NIGHTTIME** and showed in the prints a diverse range of ideas Voted the best picture was a sunset by



Brenda showing a bright pinkish and blue cloudy sky with silhouettes of bare trees in the foreground.

During the meeting it was realized that the third Monday of April is Easter Monday therefore that meeting would be put back to the 24<sup>th</sup> when the challenge will be metal.

A discussion followed regarding the possibility of getting an advanced photographer to come to a future meeting to show some of their work and talk about their techniques.

On our February meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> we had six members present. Our competition subject was **FOOD** and as expected the variety of interpretations was wide



and inspiring. The best picture was adjudged to be a shop display of pastries by Pam. We also chose two other prints as highly commended, tea party by Tris and fruit bowl by Ernie.

The meeting continued with a lively discussion on photographic and other topics.

*Chris Penney*

## French

We continue to meet fortnightly and conversation ranges from St. Valentine (we didn't know there had been so many of them) The Good Life and Memory. The next subject is the A303, which should be interesting, considering the book and TV programme.

*Gilly Roberts*

## Anton U3A Monthly Meetings

December 14th    Bonny Sartin            *An Alternative Christmas*  
 December 15th    Christmas Lunch            *The Abbots Mitre, Chilbolton*

### 2017

January 11th        Duncan Brown            *A Tale of Two Firemen*  
 February 8th        Prof. Jim Barber            *How Science May Alleviate Global Warming*  
 March 8th            Anthony Wood            *Pamela Digby Churchill*  
 April 12th            Paul Strickler            *The Murder of an English Actress*  
 May 10th            Janet Diamond            *From Nomads to Nation*  
 June 14th (AGM)    Jeremy Clutterbuck        *Excavation or Aldi Saxon Site in Andover*

## FirstAssist Commercial LawCare

The Third Age Trust has an arrangement with FirstAssist to provide legal advice to U3A members.  
 It is a free service, available 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. Just phone:

**01455 251 500** and quote the AntonU3A code number **70494**

### GROUP CO-ORDINATORS

SUBJECT	DAY & TIME	CO-ORDINATOR	E-MAIL
Art	Tuesdays 2-4pm	Ann Truss (01264 313 242)	aatruss@yahoo.co.uk
Art, History & Architecture	By arrangement	Glennis Dale (01264 323356)	glennis.dale@yahoo.co.uk
Birders & Natural History	4th Thursday at 10.30am	Rev Roger Bennett (01264 782 336)	revrogbenett@googlemail.com
Bridge	Thursdays 10am-12noon	Barbie Morrey-Stone (01264 335 597)	beesbubbles4@gmail.com
French Conversation	Wednesday 10am-12pm fortnightly	Gillian Roberts (01264 335 899)	pelhamhouse@gmail.com
Genealogy	Fourth Wednesday 2pm	Mary Taylor (01264 364 752)	roberttaylor@btconnect.com
History	2nd Friday	Erica Tinsley (01264 365 563)	erica.tinsley@btinternet.com
Mah Jong	1st Wednesday 1.45pm	Leslie Ward (01264 332789)	cliveandlesie@sky.com
MOTO	2nd Monday	Tricia Andrews (01264 736 227)	TriciaOnTheHill@btinternet.com
Petanque	1st Friday 6pm	Ian McFarling (01264 736 127)	ian@mcfarling789.plus.com
Photography	Third Monday 10am	Chris Penney	ccpenney@btinternet.com
Poetry	Third Friday 10.30am	Glennis Dale (01264 323356)	glennis.dale@yahoo.co.uk
Questers	By arrangement	Diane Richards (01264 392367)	georgeandedward@sky.com
Reading Group	1st Tuesday - 10am	Diane Richards (01264 392367)	georgeandedward@sky.com
Walkers	Third Tuesday 10.15am	Roger Beaumont (01264 710504) Anne Scott (01264 323011)	ardeebec@btinternet.com anne.scott@yahoo.co.uk
Webmaster	Contact webmaster to update website	Robert Smith	randc.smith@virginmedia.com

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