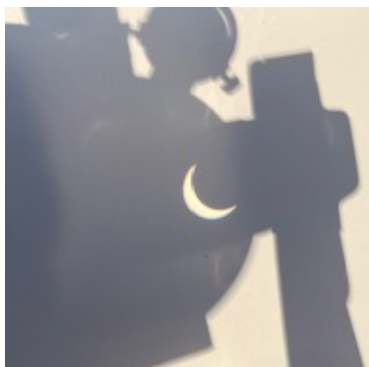




Exe Valley u3a Website <https://exevalley.u3asite.uk> Facebook [Exe Valley u3a](#)

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Newsletter 223 – August 2026

... this month ...

Wednesday 19th August

2pm Cherith Hall

People4Ponies

Faye Stacey



People4Ponies is a pony sanctuary based in Devon specialising in helping wild and traumatised ponies.

As well as being home to ponies that are too traumatised by their experiences of people to find “normal homes”, they are very proactive and successful with campaigning work.

... next month...

Wednesday 16th September

2pm Cherith Hall

Altevette Project in Nepal

Linda Ambrose



Linda founded the Altevette Project that provides a home and education for disadvantaged girls in high altitude regions such as the Upper Mustang.

The talk is about the region and the experience of building and supporting the operations of a school in Nepal.

News from the Committee

Included here is information for you from the 5 August 2026 meeting of your u3a Committee – written by Karyl Huntley-Sadler, vice-chair.

First, The Third Age Trust AGM will be held on Wednesday 14 October in Manchester. All u3a members are invited to attend in-person or online. It is a great way to find out more about the work the Trust is doing and our future plans and strategy. Details on how to join will be shared on the AGM page of the u3a website in the coming weeks.

Next, our lovely team in charge of books-for-sale at each monthly meeting have a new request for you based on a recent decision. The books that we would love to take off your hands and re-sell at our meetings are light weight paperbacks or small and light hardbacks. The team will no longer accept big, heavy, hardback books. Jigsaw puzzles are also happily accepted.

Do you have a suggestion for our Social Director about a trip, outing, event, or special meeting that you think would be fabulous for our membership? Please do contact Anne Bush at aelizbush@aol.com.

As many of you already know, I am the new Volunteer Coordinator for our u3a. Already, you will begin to see some new faces serving you tea at our monthly meetings and welcoming you at the door. It is a fun and much needed activity that could use several more willing members. We would also love to have new folks visit our monthly Committee Meetings, as well, to get to know the current committee members and to see if there might be a spot on the committee for you in the future. Want to talk? Contact me! karyl.huntley@gmail.com

Lastly, if you are a new member, within the last year, you are cordially invited to attend a Coffee Morning in your honour. It is at 11:00am to 12:30pm at the Tiverton Golf Club on Tuesday the 8th of September. See you there!

New members

There are no new members this last month.

Welfare Officer

Marilyn Dawson

Marilyn prefers to be contacted by email. If you know of anyone who is ill or has been admitted to hospital, or anyone who has a special anniversary to celebrate, please email Marilyn with details and she will send a card on our behalf. We will also add an item to the monthly committee agenda so that Marilyn can let the committee know via the secretary if she has sent anyone a card. It would also be helpful if group leaders could keep Marilyn informed of anyone in their group who they think should receive such a card.

Newsletter

September's Newsletter will be compiled by Lynne Lyddon. Please send your reports to Lynne by **9am Friday 11th September**. Thank you.

Farm Visit Report

Exe Valley u3a and Tiverton u3a joined forces to meet with farmer Amy Hamlett, winner of the Best Woman in Agriculture award at the 2026 Devon Farm Business Awards, on her

tenanted farm behind and above Knightshayes - named Firebeacon Farm. It was an enjoyable and interesting insight into regenerative farming with her award-winning Dexter cattle and Ryland sheep plus the odd goat and chickens.



For those unable to join us check out the Firebeacon Farm Facebook page as she sells the beef and lamb locally at reasonable prices for quality grass fed meet and will even deliver it or it can be collected. Eggs also usually available but not during this very hot weather.



News from the Interest Groups

Art Appreciation – Gina Brown, Keith Bush, John Massey

At our July meeting we shared images on the theme ‘Faces’. Portraits naturally figured prominently. There was van Gogh’s *Portrait of Dr Gachet*; Vermeer’s *Girl with a Pearl Earring*; two Vietnam War-period photos by Don McCullin, one of a shell-shocked US Marine and one of a war-weary old Vietnamese man; studies by Holbein of Thomas More and John

Poyntz; Raphael's drawing of the heads of three poets; two examples from a series of self-portraits made by Frank Auerbach during the Covid lockdown (one is shown here); the four ex-presidents carved into Mount Rushmore; a death-mask woodcut of Beethoven by August Becker; and several examples of Fayum mummy portraits from the Egypt of the early centuries AD.



But there were also some more inventive interpretations of the theme. There was Munch's *The Scream*, in which the face is a small but powerful part; two more pictures by Becker, one of a dog with an almost human face, and one showing the north face of the Eiger; the Testament Sculptures by Devon artist Kenneth Carter, made for Exeter Cathedral but now at Exeter College; and another photo by McCullin, featuring the huge displaced heads of gods from an ancient tomb-sanctuary on Mount Nemrut in Turkey.

We also watched two short videos. One was on Botticelli's *Portrait of a Young Man*. The other was about Anthony van Dyck's *Triple Portrait of Charles I*, showing the King from three angles. It was sent to Bernini, in Rome, so he could sculpt a marble bust. The bust was made, but later destroyed in a fire. The portrait eventually found its way back to the British Royal Collection.

Our next formal meeting will be at the **OHSCC on Thursday 17 September at 2pm**. We don't hold a meeting in August, but usually meet for an informal get-together. This year we are doing so at Ashley Court where, along with a cream tea and the freedom of the gardens, we will be treated to a tour of the artworks in the house.

New group members are always welcome.

Boules

Tuesday Boules – Janet Phythian

Thursday Boules – Jill Riddiford

We continue to start playing at 9.30am and it is certainly more comfortable playing in the shade for most of the time.

Bridge

Tuesday Bridge – Doreen Burton

The Tuesday Bridge group play online at 7.30pm most weeks. We also meet to play on Wednesday afternoons to include those in the group that prefer not to play online. Our Wednesday session is now full but we would welcome anyone that would like to play online on a Tuesday evening. We play 'Bridge Base Online'.

Thursday Social Bridge – Tricia Summers

The group continues to play on Thursday afternoons. We play bridge in a friendly social setting while trying to improve our skills. Each week the cards provide varying challenges both in bidding and play.

Canasta – Sue Dark

This Group meets on the **2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month** in each other's homes.

Craft – Elaine Wright

Thanks go to Lynne for hosting and organising a substitute session after the planned topic was postponed. We revisited tea bag folding, a form of origami which uses colourful tea bag size paper which can be folded to make patterns or shapes like butterflies and we also did prick and stitch cards which many of us hadn't done before or didn't finish the first time. Precision work that improves with practice.

Thanks again to Lynne for the refreshments and hosting.

Our August session was the summer 'Bring and Share lunch at Steph's at the earlier time of 12.30pm.

Our next meeting is on **Monday September 14th** when we will be making ceramic Christmas ornaments.



Cribbage – Keith Dawson

Our normal routine is to play on the **2nd and 4th Monday afternoon each month**.

Discussion – Marilyn Dawson

We met outside again on another beautiful day. Slightly less members than usual. Instead of one main topic we talked about items currently in the news, including, the Cambridge University professor who may or may not have embellished his research and sporting achievements! This led onto reverse discrimination, education changes for 14 year olds and TV series which go on for too long! As always, an enjoyable time.

Our next meeting is on **Friday 4 September at 10:15am** at the usual venue.

Folk Dancing – John & Hazel Ridd (Tiverton u3a)

This group meets on the **2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month, 2pm – 4pm in Halberton Village Hall**. All are welcome. The dances are walked through and explained well, and everyone is very friendly and helpful to ensure we all have a lovely time.

French Conversation – Deborah Lal

Gardening – Joan Kelly, Jo Jeffrey, Carol Powney

Next month we visit Cadhay House and Gardens, Ottery St Mary EX11 1QT. Meeting there **Friday 11th September 1.30pm**.

Local History – David Meredith

On possibly the hottest day of the year, 28 members of the group met at the West Middlewick Farm Shop cafe, near Nomansland, to hear a talk on the history of the farm and how it produces grass fed organic beef, lamb and pork also raw milk, increasingly popular for helping

osteoporosis. The Hayloft cafe was a recent addition on the former milking shed site with plans well advanced to add an Events Room. We were all impressed with the family's commitment to produce locally sourced food. Following a welcome drink and cake in the cafe, we looked around the shop with its large collection of milk bottles, and variety of farm fresh and frozen goods. We will soon be tasting the beef burgers we bought, knowing their truly local origin.

Farmer John Gibson was warmly thanked for the visit. Many of us I feel will be returning.

On **Thursday September 10th 2026 at 2pm** we return to the Cherith Hall for a members' special production -

"Back in the day of bobs and tanners - Growing up in the 1950's and 1960's."

People talk about the 'lucky' baby boomers but what was life really like for this post war generation?

Come along to the meeting, take a trip down memory lane and hear a mix of members' personal stories and readings. Find out which member upset his father returning home in hippy clothing and who in their teens joined a CND Rally in Trafalgar Square. Who remembers queuing for the cinema and standing to sing the national anthem? These and many other memories should come flooding back with laughs and astonishment on how we lived, loved, worked and played. We might even discover whether we were in fact the so-called lucky generation.

Doors open 1.30pm. Admission £2

All u3a members are welcome to attend.

Lunch Club – Wendy Cook

The July lunch was at the Butterleigh Inn for 8 of us which enabled us to share one table - and the dining room to be all ours also! Preordering meant no waiting for the food, which to be honest was a bit hit and miss with some being well satisfied but the battered fish not so well received. The few desserts were unusual, so it's recommended that you check out the online menu before making a booking. The surroundings are very pleasant with a nice garden area, and a helpful staff.

The **August lunch** will be on **Thursday 20th** with venue to be announced.

Mah Jong – Heather Edwards

We meet on the **first Friday of the month**, playing simple Mah Jong i.e. clean and dirty hands. Currently our list is full but you're welcome to join our waiting list.

MOTO (Members On Their Own) – Wendy Cook

If you are on your own and would like to meet up with other in the same situation, then come along to our coffee morning. We meet once a month on the fourth Saturday at the Flying Pickle in Tiverton, where the chat is lively and the coffee hot. We also arrange lunches and other outings to the cinema or walks in our lovely countryside. If you are interested in coming along, please contact Wendy Cook.

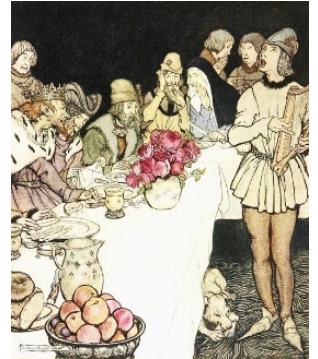
Our next coffee morning will be on **Saturday 22nd August at 10.30 at the Flying Pickle, Tiverton.**

Poetry – Tim Dyke

Our topic for July, Food, stimulated a delightful smorgasbord that was even more eclectic than usual. We enjoyed some classics – Eve eating the apple from Paradise Lost, Sir Gawaine being feasted by the Green Knight's lady, Ben Jonson Inviting a Friend to Supper (promising a feast that even included larks, teal and godwit), and Auden asserting in Tonight At 7.30 that for a truly stimulating dinner party the children should be securely in bed.



Then we were intrigued and baffled by Chinese and Texan recipes, (Chen Jun and Laurie Ann Guerrero) though enjoying Joy Tong's The proper way to make tea (Chai) and Brownjohn's sensual Breaking Eggs.



But most effective and moving turned out to be the least exotic: Divorced Fathers and Pizza Crusts by Mark Halliday, If you love me you'll buy Bluff oysters and cook asparagus, Even though I don't like either by Geoff Cochrane, The Children Open Their Lunch Boxes by Diane Brown (they will always swap your carefully selected healthy options for something more exciting!) and Peach by Jennifer Tonge, emphasising the vulnerability of a young backpacker.



And as always there was some nostalgic music – the Banana Boat Song, I Like Bread and Butter and Grocer Jack.

We are **not meeting in August**, so reconvene on **Thursday September 24th** when our theme will be The Law. 2pm at Tim's. Sorry, no vacancies.

Rambling – Pat McGee

The August walk and delightful commentary was led by Keith Dawson.

The August walk was a 2hour circuit of about 4miles from the Beambridge Inn near Wellington in weather which was mercifully less extreme than the past months. Obstacles that were safely overcome were 5 stiles, (somebody was counting,) and a couple of fields with cows in (ones with sheep in don't count), and the chance to wave at the passing express trains. We had lunch at The Cleve in Rockwell Green - as the



Beambridge Inn couldn't turn away the opportunity of hosting a very big wake, they suggested we go to The Cleve. It was very busy there, usual drinks ordering procedure and an interesting menu (or odd according to taste...) -but in the end nobody came down with heatstroke, the Somerset views were grand and eight of us enjoyed the day out.

Our **next walk is September 3**. Route to be sent out later to group members.

Reading

Reading Group 1 – Alison Rice

P D James is known by many of the group as a writer of detective novels but this month's book by her, *'The Children of Men'*, is something very different.

Published in 1992 it's set in a not-far-off dystopian future of 2021. The human race is infertile, the last children having been born in 1995. There are no schools, no playgrounds, no future for the Omegas - children born in that year. The aging population is despised and ridiculed; everyone is without hope.

The novel opens with the diary entries of Theo, an Oxford don who lives a cloistered life in the decaying city. His cousin Xan is the supreme, despotic leader of the country. Theo is approached by a group of 4 individuals who ask him to intercede with Xan and get him to stop at least some of his atrocities.

Switching to the third person, James tells the story of Theo's involvement with the group, their actions and their attempted flight from the cruel regime. To say any more would give the plot away but there is violence, plenty of graphic detail and the ending is abrupt leaving some even wanting a sequel.

P. D James was a committed Roman Catholic and there is plenty of interesting religious symbolism in the book which we were able to tease out.

While one or two of the group found the foundation of the plot weak and the violence gratuitous the majority thought it was an excellently written, gripping story with good descriptive detail and a well-constructed and delivered plot. 'One of the best books we've read'.

How opinions can differ - two members, finding the plot uninteresting and the text 'turgid', hadn't got past the first two chapters. Unfortunately they weren't at the meeting to have their opinions energetically challenged!

We meet next on **31st August at 2.30 at Alison's house** to discuss *'Wilding'* by Isabella Tree.

Reading Group 2 – Heather Peters

Wendy was once again our host and we enjoyed the lovely breeze in her garden, sheltered from the hot sun by a large parasol, while comparing our reactions *'A Ladder To The Sky'* by John Boyne.

Ten feisty women are bound to have differing viewpoints but this book stimulated even more discussion than usual, some of which grew quite heated and not from the hot afternoon! With one exception, however, we enjoyed the book - some liked it, some loved it. Although Part 1 was slow to develop (at least two of us questioned whether we wanted to read on) the plot

suddenly gained pace and intrigue, drawing us in. The book's structure was masterful, and the author teased us throughout with the plot developments by giving hints of what was to occur, so we could feel smug when we'd correctly predicted the next twist, but then were completely surprised by what the characters did about it!

Most of the characters were entertainingly unpleasant, several of the peripheral cast were described with a highly comical irony, and the main protagonist was gradually revealed to be utterly psychotic. However, this was satisfactorily offset by four important characters who were very likeable, three of whom failed to survive to the end of the book ...

Our next read is '*Out of Bounds*' by Val McDermid, which we will be talking about at Vicky's house.

Reading Group 3 – Vicki Bristow

Our book for July was '*The thirteenth tale*' by Diane Setterfield

This is a gothic suspense story set in the early 2000's with the back story taking place in the 1890's.

The story centres around Vida Winter. Vida is a well-known author who for 50 years has fiercely guarded all information about her past. Knowing that she is dying she asks a young woman amateur biographer to come to stay with her to record the true story of her life and to thereby unravel all the mysteries surrounding her past.

Everyone in the group agreed that this was a very complicated book requiring persistence and a real desire to see the mystery finally unravelled. Not everyone had enjoyed it but it had certainly made everyone think and it generated a great deal of discussion.

Our next meeting is on **August 27th at Vicki's.**

Tuesday Skittles – Kathy Senior Thursday Skittles – Jill Riddiford

In hibernation until the autumn.

What We Have Noticed – Chris & Gina Brown

July

We met in the middle of a heatwave but thankfully the wind was blowing and we managed to stay cool.

5 conversational topics were presented:-

- *The journey on the steam train from Paignton to Kingswear in the wonderful Pullman Observation coach. It was built in 1911 and really took you back to when train travel was luxurious.
- *The book 'A Gull on the Roof' by Derek Tangye describing how he and his wife moved from London to a small cottage in Lamorna. A delightful read.
- *The Duxford Air Show, Cambridgeshire, complete with a Russian Mig fighter plane, the Red Baron's triplane and 'wing walkers'. Some amazing photographs to illustrate the day.
- *The story of Kenneth Clark's Testament sculptures which were removed from Exeter cathedral and installed in Exeter College.

*The story of a young sport and drama student at Exeter University and his subsequent career including playing 'Bobby' in 'Happy Days'.

August

Lots of talk this month about the heatwave!

But our planned topics were:-

- *Torre Abbey and how problematic the website and the layout off the exhibitions were, so much so that it felt like it was having an identity problem.
- *Local hospitality businesses having an upgrade and how this felt like a vote of confidence in the town.
- *The follow on to a previous month's news of an ex-Exeter University student's television success in America.
- *News that young people are going in to actual shops to buy CDs and Pokemon cards and to socialise. Is this a move away from on screen activities?
- *Pamela Vass's new book about the Lynton and Lynmouth floods. She is a Cornish author who did a book signing at the Mid Devon Show. The idea behind '*Seeds of Doubt*' being that the weather event had been started by scientists.

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 8th September at 10.30.**

Wine Appreciation Group – Helen White, Deborah Lal

We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm. Our next official meeting will be on **Wednesday 9th September**, venue to be confirmed.

Please speak to Helen or Deborah if you would like to know more about this friendly group or if you'd like to come along for a taster session.

World History – Helen Booth

At our July meeting we heard from Jill Aldrich about the life of Harriet Tubman, 1822–1913. Born into slavery in Maryland, Harriet managed to escape to a free state and later made many missions to help others escape using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known collectively as the 'Underground Railway'. Because she led so many people to freedom, people began calling her 'Moses'. When the Civil War began, Harriet worked for the Union Army, first as a cook and nurse and then as a scout and spy. In her later years she was an activist in the women's suffrage movement. Today she is one of American history's most revered figures, featuring on coins and postage stamps, while museums and national monuments record her life.



Our **August meeting is on the 17th, as usual 2pm, Room 2 at OHSCC** when the topic for the talk is The History of the Suez Canal. It will come as no surprise to learn that the Ancient Egyptians started the first canal in that region. All are welcome to attend.

Did you watch the Solar Eclipse?



Bickleigh u3a members preparing for the solar eclipse.



The result!

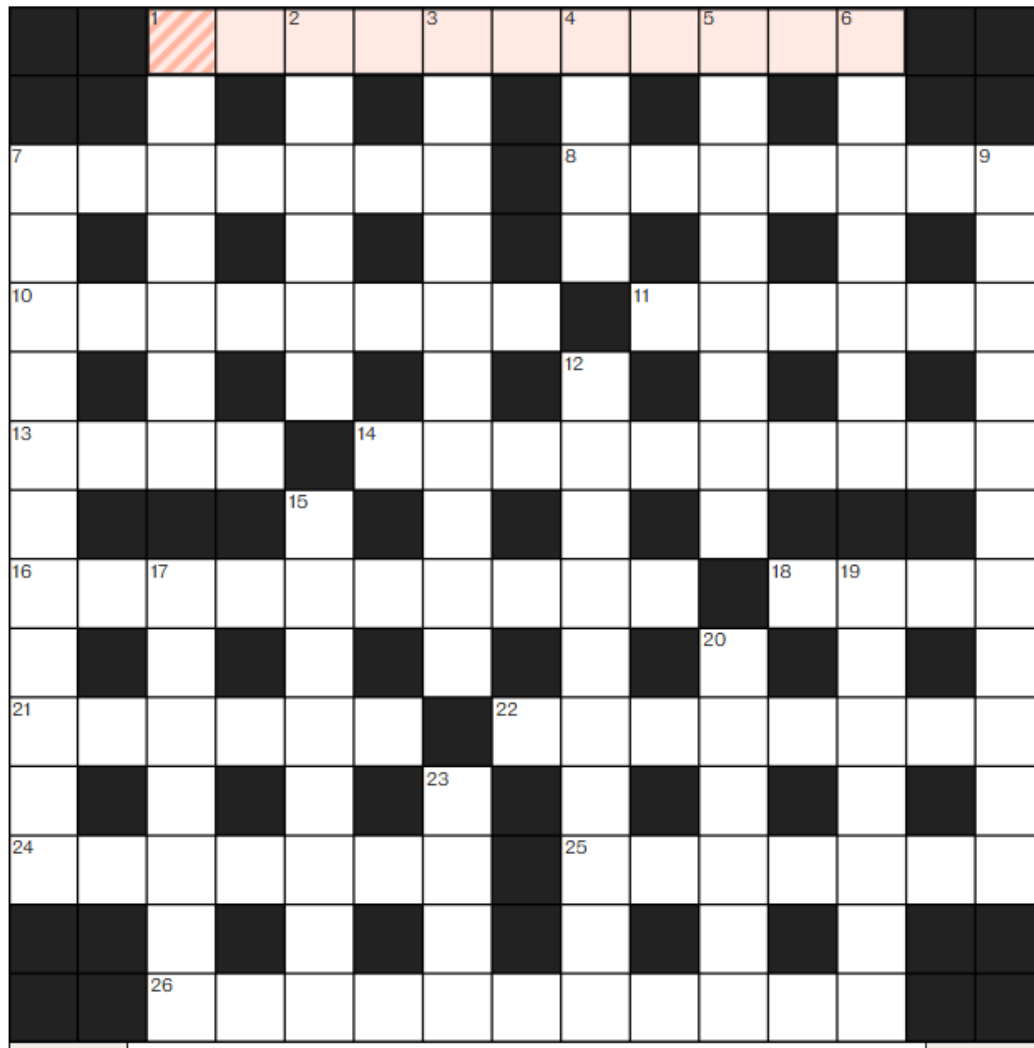
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Minutes Secretary	Jo Jeffrey	
Social Organiser	Anne Bush	
Monthly Meeting Organiser	Anne Bush	
Website Manager	Paul Sadler	
Deputy Treasurer	Karyl Huntley-Sadler	
Committee member	Deborah Lal	

NON-COMMITTEE

Printer / IT	Carol Boote and Ray McIntosh
Newsletter Editor	Lynne Lyddon
Welfare Officer	Marilyn Dawson
PA / Technician	Tim Dyke

Cryptic Crossword



Across

- 1 A Eucharist get together? (4,7)
- 7 Minstrels and Melodies, and furry, purry animals on stage are this (7)
- 8 Head of Secret Service went fishing - what a muddle! (7)
- 10 Rant from tribe after backing aid (8)
- 11 A number and Romeo make a flower (6)
- 13 Behold! Leave a symbol (4)
- 14 Netta reversed ball - what presence (10)
- 16 On stage performers sprayed us with chlorine! (6,4)
- 18 In Stowe edition of the Gardener's Weekly find this nuisance plant (4)
- 21 Fisherman sang Lerwick composition (6)
- 22 A bit of spleen and a bit of chatter makes a mess (8)
- 24 Una slid and mixed up an old-fashioned timepiece (7)
- 25 Get the better of someone in open air theatre (7)
- 26 AA mirror organisation offers a tyre for general public here (3,4,4)

Down

- 1 Must Angolan include a horse or car? (7)
- 2 A kind of rescue will make you this (6)
- 3 Left on the doorstep, liquid courage (4,6)
- 4 In the morning, I object turning to Austen's book (4)
- 5 Ian almost undone by indirect critical remarks (8)
- 6 Parasitic growth provides power for ship (7)
- 7 Betwixt and between in life and at school (6,5)
- 9 What are these brayers doing at Epsom? (6,5)
- 12 Evidence that peaking in infancy is the way for some (10)
- 15 Mother better (8)
- 17 Natural instrument with one in charge initially (7)
- 19 No love from this fictional criminal's daughter (7)
- 20 Sacred utterance from the human train (6)
- 23 Just as well. Going up to a capital, change Alpha for Omega (4)

