

BOOK CLUB 1

Report on 2024

Once again, in 2024, we read a very wide variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction. We began the year with *Flight Behaviour* by Barbara Kingsolver which received a mixed reception from our members! We were fortunate to have a personal visit from Sohail Husain to our April monthly meeting after we had read his book *Beyond Beliefs*, which those of you who attended the January U3a Monthly Meeting will now know all about. We replaced our October meeting with a group outing to the Russell Cotes Museum at Bournemouth, and finished the year with *The Last Runaway* by Tracy Chevalier.

This last book became one of the contenders for Book of the Year. Unusually we did not have a clear front runner this time, as we have in the past. Two possible books were in the running. The first which we read in July, was *The Keeper of Stories* by Sally Page. This was the amusing but also poignant story about a cleaning lady and the various people who she cleaned for, and the stories she gathered from them. We particularly enjoyed the swearing dog who commented on events from time to time!

The Last Runaway is about a close-knit Quaker community in America, who are involved in helping slaves escape from the South to the North through the underground "railway". As usual with her books, Tracy Chevalier has done meticulous research and paints an evocative picture of the hard life and environment as well as reflecting the various Quaker traditions such as Quilting, and introducing us to some well-drawn characters.

In the end, by one vote, *The Keeper of Stories* became our Book of the Year!

Whether you are in one of our 3 Book groups or not, we would like to wish all U3a members Happy Reading in 2025!