

## **Spanish Conversation May**

4 of us had a Zoom meeting in May, plus one member sent their contribution digitally, on the topic of a book that had inspired us.

We all confessed to being avid readers and found it hard to just pick one book from the many we had read.

One person had recently read a book about pirates and corsairs in the 1500's after meeting its author on a cruise but had not been inspired enough to actually become a pirate. But reading *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* and other books about WW2 had been a salutary reminder that we should learn from and never forget past tragedies.

Another member remembered her father reading Patrick Campbell's short stories and laughing out loud, which inspired her to read and enjoy his well-written and humorous books. Like her father, Campbell had a stutter which he overcame, but made fun of his own struggles to do so. Another recommendation for fans of Ian Rankin was the Glasgow based Laidlaw series by William McIlvanney.

Enid Blyton's Famous Five were childhood favourites of a few, despite being considered politically incorrect today, but had inspired us with their adventures and theme of righting wrongs, by working together with friends. even if it meant breaking a few rules to do so.

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* was felt to have challenged the imagination and was considered just as relevant today as in 1945.

Another remembered finding a book in the architecturally amazing Low Hill library in Wolverhampton (see photo) with terrible photographs of emaciated people in striped suits and piles of corpses. He took it home to show his family as he just couldn't believe the photos were real. Until then, like the other children, he had enjoyed playing at war in the playground and being very gung-ho about it. But the more he read about WW2 and the holocaust, the more horrified he became, eventually becoming an atheist.

A brooding Gothic epic written by Carlos Ruiz Zafon, *The Shadow of the Wind* series, set in 1945 against the backdrop of the winding labyrinth of streets of old town Barcelona, had inspired another member to go back and revisit Barcelona. The tale is an exciting exploration of obsession in literature and love and the places that obsession can lead.

June topic is our favourite form of transport and will hopefully be outdoors, weather permitting.

Stay safe

Lusia McAnna

