

Report from Book Group 2 for next U3A Forum

If you want a book with a real life scenario, that will surprise (if not shock) you, then we recommend “Precipice” by Robert Harris, published in 2024. It describes the affair between Asquith, aged 62, Prime Minister of the last Liberal Government, from 1908-1916, and the 26-year old Venetia Stanley. It is based on the actual 560 letters Asquith wrote to Venetia. Venetia’s letters to Asquith do not survive. Letters from Asquith, often passionate, were written 3 times a day and during the First World War. They frequently included classified information and were written during meetings. Read in the back of a taxi, Asquith would screw up some letters and throw them out of the back of the car. Found by members of the public, a young intelligence officer, Deemer, was charged with finding out their source. Who could have believed they were from the Prime Minister himself?

The plot twists and turns and reveals the absolute belief of some of the aristocratic class in political power that they were above the law and that nothing could touch them.

As with all Harris’s novels, the book was meticulously researched. It is well written and moves at a pace.

I, for one, could not put it down!

Our next meeting is our Christmas lunch when we will be bringing a poem of our choice – and we resume our book-reading at our meeting on 12th January. Do come and join us by contacting our Convenor.

Ruth Stables