

Our latest read was "**Pure**" by **Andrew Miller**. The author chose an unusual subject for this novel but the story is a deceptively simple one. Set in Paris in 1785, shortly before the French revolution, a young engineer, Jean-Baptiste Baratte from Normandy, is charged with the task of overseeing the cleansing of the site of the cemetery and the demolition of the church of Les Innocents in Paris. During the year of the project, Baratte recruits and manages a team of highly skilled ex-miners engaged in clearing the dangerously overfilled cemetery that is poisoning the earth and polluting the air around it, following nearly a thousand years of burials. Much of the interest is derived following the progress of the work of this engineering task, achieved using hand tools, ladders and horses and carts but also from the many unusual characters whose lives interact with Baratte, inside and outside the workplace. The views of our group were fully positive: the book was an enjoyable read despite the subject matter. We felt it had considerable historical and literary merit and it held our interest. We happily recommend this novel as a worthwhile read.