



Newsletter



Photograph by
David Garmont

December 2018



We wish all our members
A Merry Christmas
and
A Happy New Year



Chairman's report for December 2018 Newsletter
Management Committee News

(covering August, September 2018)

All Group Organisers had now been briefed on the General Data Protection Regulation/Finance and Insurance issues discussed at the Training Sessions arranged in June/July. As a result, it will not be necessary to hold a November GO's meeting, but the Groups Coordinator will keep in touch through an occasional newsletter. The Committee reviewed the September 1st Open Day and were pleased with the generally very positive feedback. Waiting lists remain an issue and the Committee agreed that extra table tennis and petanque sessions should be funded until the end of the year to absorb new members (if numbers reach 12 per session, funding will be continued). The Committee also agreed that members may attend an activity more than once where there is space to do so, but will have to stand aside if there are other members wishing to join. A budget of £200 was agreed to fund teachers' packs for language groups. Finally, it was decided to extend the funded U3A activity year to the end of July, leaving only August as a "holiday".

John Williams,
Chairman
2017-18

Chairman's Report for Newsletter November 2018

Since the last report the management committee have met at an awayday on October 27th and attended 3 regular Management committee meetings in August, September and October.

At our awayday it was noted that while we already have a large number of language groups and groups catering for physical activities, there are fewer groups which cater for people interested in different types of singing or enjoying films. The committee discussed ways this could be addressed. If you have any ideas on this please let us know!

Another topic discussed at the awayday was the need to look at succession planning as various MC members have notified their intention to step down in the near future after several years of sterling service. We are looking for people to take over the roles of publicity officer, vice chair and minute secretary and are in discussion with someone regarding the role of treasurer. Even if you have just recently joined Swindon U3A, please give some serious thought to whether you would be able to join the committee in these roles.

We have made a couple of changes to enable our U3A to operate more efficiently. From now on group organisers will no longer be sent forms to complete re information about their groups for the yearbook. Instead, group organisers are requested to keep the information about their group up to date on SUCAS and this information will be used to compile the yearbook entries in 2019.

In order to manage our membership more effectively and to keep waiting lists to a minimum it has been decided that the details of members who have not renewed their membership following contact by email or by phone will be removed and any group places freed up by this process will then be offered to those on the waiting list.

Avril Muirhead

Chair

2018-19

Your U3A Needs You!



At our "Awayday" in October we, as the Management Committee, discussed what we needed to do for the coming year to ensure that the Swindon U3A keeps running smoothly and it was realised that we need your help. Don't stop reading! It's not as bad as it sounds.

We have an "Events" sub-committee where we plan and organise future events that benefit all members. Sometimes these events are regular meetings like the "Open Day" and the "New Members Meeting". We also try to arrange one off events that might be of interest to members such as the recent "Singalong" which proved very popular and the talk on "How to Give a Presentation" earlier in the year. In order to continue this work, we need some new faces on the committee. The reason is twofold; we need new ideas for talks and we need help with the organisation. If you are willing to help with this vital work we would like to hear from you. You will be part of an existing team and will not be expected to give up lots of your time or work alone.

The Management Committee is usually made up of 12 members. At the moment we do not have a Vice Chairperson and we need one. The role is to assist the Chair (currently Avril Muirhead) with her duties. As a committee we are a friendly group who only put in as much time and effort as we can spare but we do ensure that Swindon U3A runs smoothly and continues to grow. We need you to be part of that team.

At the end of summer 2019 we will be losing 2 other committee members and we are planning for their succession now. By planning now, we can get people in place who become familiar with the role and who will have had time to work alongside the current role holders and the other committee members for when they are required to take over the role. The 2 roles we are looking to fill are "Minutes Secretary" and "Publicity Officer". Full training will be given for these roles by the present role holders and you will always have support from the other committee members.

If you feel that you would be interested in any of these roles please contact Avril Muirhead for an initial meeting about what the various roles involve. You will not be committing yourself at this stage so please get in touch and have a chat.

Contact: chairman@swindonu3a.org.uk

Are You A Passive Recipient?

The 3rd Age Trust recently published a report entitled "Learning Not Lonely". The research involved interviewing over 800 members located throughout the United Kingdom.

The conclusions were mainly very positive in terms of helping people make new friendships, learn new skills, feel healthier, build confidence and manage life changes caused by illness, bereavement or retirement.

One of the biggest negative findings concerned passive recipients. These people are those who join U3A but do not put anything in. A number of survey participants felt that many members do not offer time and support to the organisation. U3A was likened to a bank where people take things out on a regular basis. But to keep this bank solvent, it is necessary for account-holders to put something in from time to time.

Our U3A is no different. Without active participants the organisation will wither and die. One contributor said to the survey, "I started with serving the tea - people remember the guy who served the tea".

You can progress to helping organise a group, keep the records and register up to date, host meetings, deliver Newsletters, help in the office, maybe help one of the Management Committee in an area where you think you could contribute. Details of these roles are on the back page of the Year Book.

We all have skills from our pre-retirement lives which we could use for the benefit of our U3A. Skills do not necessarily have to be technical or come with a special qualification. Skills can be caring, innovative, enthusiastic, keen to help and thus feel valued. Whatever you have to offer will be welcomed and there will be plenty of support and assistance.

It is amazing how many people are enthusiastic about U3A, until they are invited to contribute.

To steal part of a speech by John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your U3A can do for you, but rather what can you do for your U3A".

If you feel you can put something into the U3A account, please contact your Group Organiser or a member of the Management Committee.

Martin Preston

Use It or Lose It – Living Longer, Living Well

We Need You!

This Swindon U3A course started off around 6 years ago as “The Memory Course” but has now developed into the “Use it or Lose It – Living Longer, Living Well”. This course is popular with our members every year and deals with ways in which we can help ourselves to stay physically and mentally active in older age.

Some of the current team of presenters are no longer able to help with this course and so we are looking for a new generation of presenters to continue developing this popular course which is run over three sessions. All those interested in joining the presenting team will be invited to shadow the existing presenters during the next course which will run in March 2019. Using feedback from this and previous courses, we will work together to update and adapt our course materials as necessary in preparation for a course to be run in Autumn 2019. You will never be expected to present on your own and full support will be given.

If you would like to be involved in planning and presenting “Use it or Lose It” please contact our administrator **Marla Carroll**, for further details and a chat by clicking on her name.

If you want to come to the next “Use It or Lose It” course look out for joining instructions in the January What’s On.

Sue Carvey

Badminton Group

The Wednesday morning U3A Badminton group is increasingly popular – it provides exercise in a social environment for players of mixed abilities – so we are hoping to start a new group on Friday afternoons between 2 and 4pm at the Haydon Centre.

If you are not already a playing member of U3A Badminton or on the waiting list we would love to hear from you if you would like to play on Fridays.

Please email the group organisers via the U3A web site or by clicking on Roger’s name.

Roger Williams

We Are Survivors (For those born Before 1940)

We were born before TV, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens, before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes...and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought "fast food" was what you ate in Lent, a "Big Mac" was an oversized raincoat and "crumpet" we had for tea. We existed before house husbands, computer dating and "sheltered accommodation" was where you waited for a bus.

We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors, or young men wearing earrings. For us "time sharing" meant togetherness, a "chip" was a piece of wood or fried potato, "hardware" meant nuts and bolts, and "software" wasn't a word.

Before 1940, "Made in Japan" meant junk, the term "making out" referred to how you did in your exams, "stud" was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and "going all the way" meant staying on a double decker bus to the terminus. In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, "grass" was mown, "coke" was kept in the coalhouse, a "joint" was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and "pot" was something you cooked it in. "Rock music" was a fond mother's lullaby, a "gay person" was the life and soul of the party, while "aids" was beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today, but by the Grace of God, we have survived!

ooooOoooo

Retrieved from the BBC archives dated back to 2005. There is an earlier incomplete reference in 2004 and this piece is currently available on tea towels.

This story is by Joyce Gibson and has been added to the site with their permission. The author fully understands the site's terms and conditions. The story was collected by Joyce Gibson, transcribed by Elizabeth Lamont and added to the site by Bruce Logan.

Contribution suggested by a member whose name we have sadly mislaid.

New Groups

Media Group

I am a new member of U3A and I am interested in setting up a new group to be called "Media Group". It will cover the following subjects:- Videography, Photography, and Audio.

The subject level will suit both starter and experienced members and a very comprehensive range of equipment will be available for participants to enjoy on the meeting days (at this stage it may be every two weeks on an afternoon, but not a Monday, at a venue on Cheney Manor Trading Estate).

A combination of the above skills will be used by the members to enable them to create material as a member or from the group for home use or to outlets and presentations such as YouTube, Vimeo, Film Competitions, Radio Stations and Blogs.

The total number of members will be limited to eleven people due to the venue and there may be a small cost for the rent of the facility. The facility has available an amazing amount of non-media equipment and tooling that members of the group may use under my supervision.

Members of the U3A who are interested in joining in the exciting new group are invited to contact me by clicking on my name below. Don't forget we are limited to eleven members.

John Flanagan

Topical Discussion Group

This group has started at the Eastcott Community Centre, Savernake Street, Swindon. We meet every 2 weeks on Mondays between 1:30pm and 3:00pm and the next meeting will be on 10th December. The objective of this Topical Discussion Group is to discuss current affairs, including those of a controversial nature, in an informed and open manner, The agenda is set by the group at each meeting. Members nominate topics. They are voted upon and this sets the running order. If interested then contact me by clicking on my name.

Barry Pugh

Monthly Meetings

Ellendune Centre, Wroughton
on the 2nd Monday of the month at 2.15pm

10 December 2018

Christmas Entertainment

Musical entertainment from U3A groups, with a seasonal flavour, tea and mince pies.

14 January 2019

Up on Nob Hill Andy Binks

An illustrated history of the Old Town.

11 February 2019

A Room with a View Gillian Monk

Gillian Monk, formerly of Havelock Street, will tell us all about your eyes, and how to look after them properly and why they need to be regularly checked.

11 March 2019

The Motor Trade 1950 -1980 Alan Nix

An illustrated talk on the way in which the development of cars altered our social habits, combining interesting local pictures of the 1950-80 period covered.

Swindon U3A Office closure over Christmas

The office will be closed on Monday 24th December, Wednesday 26th December, Friday 28th December and Monday 31st December.

U3A monthly meeting write up of talk. Oct 8th 2018

Dressability by Sharon Tombs

How to meet the challenge of dressing disabled and elderly people.

Sharon talked about the charity, its growth and development in 20 years from a very small set up, mainly altering and adapting shirts by adding Velcro squares behind buttons, to complex and innovative adaptations to clients' own clothing. All adaptations are discreet or invisible and aimed to enable ordinary clothes to be worn by people who do not have the dexterity or movement in joints to do up fastenings or put clothes on.

She showed many examples, some modelled by volunteer Rosemary Morgan.

These included:

Buttons now being backed by strong magnets allowing adults and children to wear a shirt for work or school.

Opening up the side seam of sweat shirts/ jumpers/ jackets and stitching a zip in. Suitable for a person with stiff joints to dress more easily.

Adding an invisible zip along the piping line of a Swindon Town Football shirt so that a supporter can put it on and wear at matches.

For a person who has had a stroke, trousers can be adapted to replace the zip with Velcro. The fly is also deepened. This makes going to the toilet easier.

For a wheel chair user, it is difficult to put a jacket on. The back can be cut up vertically and Velcro added to the nape of the neck to allow putting on from the front.

Many wheelchair users have a catheter. Emptying this is tricky. A zip can be stitched into the lower leg of trousers to allow easier access.

There is a need to adapt clothes by adding a diamond shape piece under the arm of jackets if someone has swollen lymph nodes e.g. breast cancer patients.

These adaptations are carried out by the 4 paid dressmakers who all work part time. There are also 6 trustees and 3 office staff.

Dressability also works in the wider community. The volunteers work on a variety of projects to support people of all ages and walks of life. They may sew, raise funds or promote the charity at talk and events.

Such sewing projects include:

Creating ski bags for the Pathfinders group to allow them to go on a ski trip. And keep warm!

Making painting aprons for children in wheel chairs to protect the child and electric workings of the chair.

85 blankets for homeless people.

Aprons for the Olive Tree café.

Dressing up clothes for children at Brimble Hill. Need to be easy to put on as children in wheelchairs. After much discussion waist coats and tabards have been designed and made such as The Three Kings, Police and Nurse/Doctor uniform.

A volunteer, Marla, spoke about her route to becoming a volunteer. She had seen the impact of clothing adaptations on children who she taught, how more independent children could be. One example she gave, using and adapting the front of a school sweat shirt for a child to wear at lunch time in place of a bib. Much more discreet.

Sharon ended her talk with funding. It costs £78,000 pa to run the charity. There is a small cost to clients for clothing adaptations. Many companies are generous in donating fabrics, zips and other items. And there is a great deal of fund raising.

Contributions of haberdashery and fabric from U3A members were welcomed at the meeting.

Jane Caudwell

The Future of Marriage – the first in Swindon U3A’s series of academic lectures

At 11am on a Saturday morning about 20 people gathered to hear Paul Archer, Chair of Swindon Philosophical Society, deliver this inaugural lecture. We were seated informally in a circle and invited to chip in with any questions or comments during Paul’s talk or to wait, if we preferred, for the discussion that would follow.

Paul began by explaining that we have lived through an extraordinary collapse in lifelong marriage over a very short period of time and currently almost half of all children are born outside of marriage. Paul talked us through various pieces of research/data demonstrating that the lifetime risk of divorce is 42%, cohabitation is even less stable and only 56% of all 11 year old children had continuously lived with two natural parents in 2000, compared to 90% of all 11 year old children in 1958. He went on to explore how and why this has happened, what the implications are for the welfare of children and adults and what, if anything, can be done.

Paul’s conclusion was that it is probably impossible to turn back the tide but that investment in supportive services such as Relate, mediation and parenting education would promote better relationships between separated parents and thereby help to reduce harm to children. Lively discussion followed where views on what we had heard were expressed, experiences shared and Paul was warmly thanked for guiding us through such an interesting and relevant topic.

The second lecture in this series will take place on 23rd February 2019, when Professor Peter Childs, Head of the Dyson School of Design Engineering, Imperial College, will speak about the use of robots in construction, healthcare and domestic applications.

Adele Merrison

Management Committee

U3A in Torrevieja, Spain

While visiting Torrevieja I joined the U3A there.

They are a small group compared to Swindon but are very active and have around 40 groups. It has been going for around 11 years now and since the beginning they have had 2420 members. Just a few more than our yearly membership!

I attended 5 Petanca sessions and was very warmly welcomed by all the members. I also attended their monthly meeting and was able to meet and talk to several other people, who were very friendly and helpful.

The membership is made of those living permanently in the area as well as those who spend part of the year there. Many of the groups close down during July and August, as here, but mainly because of the heat in Spain at this time!!

On returning to Torrevieja in September I attended the Open Day and signed up for 5 more groups, Singing for Fun, Current Affairs, Line Dancing, Ten Pin Bowling and Travel Group. The first three are weekly whilst the other two are monthly.

Having now attended the first session of three of them, the turnout was good, around 35 people, very enjoyable and the people here are friendly and helpful. Unfortunately, the Travel Group had to be cancelled until December as they were let down by the two speakers. The one thing I have found is that they, like Swindon, cannot get anyone to take a Beginners Spanish! I wonder why!!

The other thing is that most do not wear their name badges which makes it very difficult for those who are new or only come whilst here on holiday. I did comment on this!!



I return to UK in mid-October to attend a Handbell Ringers Rally with the Merribells in Fordingbridge and also to sort out a Chinese Visa for my trip next year. I am thoroughly enjoying the U3A in Torrevieja and look forward to participating in the groups on my return.

Sheila Walker

Singing for Fun

As members of U3A we are all aware of the benefits of socialising, learning new things etc, etc, and many of us will be aware of all the data from reliable sources which suggests, nay almost proves, that singing together is good for our health, our spirits and our general well-being. We have Folk Singing, The Merrifolk and Simply Singing – which has a regular attendance of over 60 members!

The SINGALONGAU3A day was attended by over 100 members, and the feedback was that it was thoroughly enjoyed by everybody.

Not all attendees completed the feedback forms, but of those who did, scarcely anybody put their names forward as possible helpers/organisers in setting up additional singing groups.

With 2000 members, do we have no-one prepared to help in developing new ways for us to sing together, socialise together and improve our well-being together. We are not seeking retired music teachers necessarily, or even skilled musicians, but simply enthusiastic folk who can contribute ideas and skills towards the concept of Singing for Fun.

Don't be shy, instead contact me by clicking on my name.

Martin Preston

Publicising Swindon U3A

I have been responsible for publicity for our U3A for 3 years. I would very much like to bring new ideas and a new perspective on to the important work of spreading the word about U3A and what membership can do for those no longer in full-time employment. It is especially important that we speak to those who are finding themselves suddenly wondering what to do with their time.

U3A members are nothing if not ready to suggest ways to improve things, so I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Please contact me by clicking on my name.

Martin Preston

Table Tennis

New group – Mondays 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Grange Leisure Centre

Following the U3A Open Day there has been a significant increase in interest in table tennis and as a result, new groups are planned and we are looking for more people to join them.

The first new group is on Mondays between 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. but it is hoped that if there is sufficient interest then an additional group will be set up on a Tuesday also between 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

It is now known that there are many health benefits from taking up the activity as it improves hand-eye coordination and it stimulates mental alertness, concentration and develops tactical strategy as well as improving balance and general physical fitness. It also improves reflexes. Due to the fast-paced, short-distance nature of the sport, it helps keep muscles fit and active. It is easy on joints which, if you have had knee surgery as I have recently is good. It's a great way to improve your leg, arm and core strength without overtaxing your joints.

Most of all it is fun. Many people who join a U3A table tennis group do so having not played since their teenage years and are worried that they will not be good enough to join in. That is definitely not the case. U3A table tennis is more about recreation than competitiveness and the intention is that however competitive you like to play you should always consider the experience of others and help them improve their game. Hopefully this will encourage you and if you would like to join the new Monday group please contact [Alan Kimber](#) by email at or [Keith Miller](#) by clicking on their names. If you are interested in a Tuesday group between 1:00-3:00 please contact [Jamie Edwards](#) by clicking on his name.

Jamie Edwards

New Short Mat Bowls Group

The U3A Open Day saw considerable interest in Short Mat Bowls (SMB) and not only have we been able to fill some vacancies in Group 5, it has been possible to start an additional Group (6) which has already played its first Monday morning session.

This new Group plays every Monday (except Christmas Eve!) at Haydon Wick Leisure Centre with each session starting at 9:30am for a 1½ hour playing period, finishing at 11:00am.

SMB is an absorbing indoor bowls session played at your pace. As competitive as you wish it to be but played in a friendly and convivial atmosphere. Experience not necessary, with equipment and coaching provided as needed. In addition, there are health benefits from taking up this activity, since it improves both hand-eye coordination and stimulates concentration.

But most of all it is fun. SMB in U3A is as much about recreation and social interaction as it is about competitiveness. However competitive you like to play the intention is to consider the experience (or lack of) of others and to offer help to improve their game and enjoyment.

If the above encourages you, and you would like to join the new Monday SMB Group 6, then please contact either **Jamie Edwards** by clicking on his name or contact the U3A Group co-ordinator at group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk in the first instance.

Tony Coleman

Writers Group - Chiseldon

The first meeting of this group went very well, and I have a possible further three members next month, making seven so far (plus myself).

Meetings will be on a Tuesday morning, usually the third of the month, but in December it will be the second (11th December) to avoid the busy period. Please click on my name to make contact.

Joy Wodhams

Travel Group J

Visit to Abergavenny - 18th October 2018

Travel Group J members, friends, and visitors set off for Abergavenny on a sunny autumnal day. Our morning was free for us to explore this pretty town, in its beautiful setting in the hills, with autumn colours in their full glory.

There were plenty of interesting places to see including the Castle and Museum, St Mary's Priory Church, the Tithe Barn and Linda Vista Gardens. Also a very impressive Market Hall, which is home to the annual Abergavenny Food Festival and many craft fairs and Farmers markets.

After a browse around the small streets with their quaint shops, followed by a good lunch, we all met at The Priory. We then enjoyed a guided tour by Trevor Morris, who is an absolute mine of information. This was followed by an interesting talk on the Tapestry in the nearby Tithe Barn. The Tapestry involved over sixty local volunteers, taking nearly four years to stitch! It measures 24 feet in width. A beautiful millennium tribute, showing many local features.

Other highlights were the wonderful newly completed stained glass window in the Priory, and the larger than life wooden carving of Jesse - the only one in the UK and possibly in the world! Carved from a single piece of oak, originally about ten metres tall, around the time that Columbus was setting out on his voyage of discovery!!



Fiona treated us to some useful information en-route, delivered with a nice comic touch!

Thank you to Fiona Meredith, Isabel and Bob Habgood, and Di and John Gibbs for a super, well planned day in a lovely location.

Carol Clarke

Highworth on a High!

The third annual U3A National Weekend of Pétanque was held at Mill Rythe Holiday Centre on Hayling Island on the weekend of 22-23 September. There were 48 teams representing 18 different U3As from as far afield as Devon and Northumberland, and included Swindon's sole representative, a team from the Highworth Pétanque Group.

The competition was in two parts, not unlike the football World Cup. Teams were divided into eight groups of six who competed all-play-all within their group on the Saturday. The weather was absolutely awful and afterwards there were a lot of soaked and bedraggled U3A members trailing back to their chalets in search of a hot shower. We had won three and lost two of our matches.

Sunday dawned much brighter. The start was delayed to let the water clear from the terrain. There should have been a further round-robin stage before the finals, but the delayed start prevented that. There were medals for the winners and runners-up in each group; Gold, Silver and Bronze, and Consolage sections for each level. We found ourselves in the main Silver group as a result of the previous day's efforts.

The team on Sunday consisted of Elspeth Lambert, Rita Baston and Jenny Walklate, who performed magnificently throughout the day. They had been ably assisted on Saturday by Gisele Marshall and Norman Lambert. They won their first three matches, not quite at a canter, but easily enough. In the final they played a very experienced Bournemouth team and there ensued a gargantuan struggle. When the dust had died down, our team emerged victors by 13-12!

The medal-giving in the Boathouse had to be postponed half an hour until both weary sets of protagonists entered. When they finally made it they received their medals. Gisele, unfortunately, was not able to be present on Sunday through no fault of her own, but in recognition of her sterling service to the cause the previous day, also received a medal. Norman acted as crowd and official scorer on Sunday.



Pétanque group
Silver section winners,
Elspeth, Rita and Jenny

A great performance by the Highworth ladies. It quite turned the clock back ten years to when Highworth played very enjoyable league matches in the Cotswold League and members played in competitions from Somerset to Buckinghamshire.

Norman Lambert

New Group - Day Trips

We are planning to set up a new travel group, which will be different to the existing Travel Study Groups. We will be offering days out by coach without previous study and these trips will be open to any Swindon U3A member.

We will have a small group of people who will organise the trips, publish them in the Monthly Newsletter and 'What's on' and take bookings on a 'first come first served basis'. We will try to organise trips that have been oversubscribed by the travel groups, on previous trips and we will avoid travelling to the same places as the travel groups in the same year. We will also look at destinations that haven't yet been offered.

We currently have 5 members who are willing to organise and lead the trips but would like to take on another 2 or 3 people to spread the workload. A knowledge of computers especially email and possibly spreadsheets would be an advantage.

The organisers would meet as necessary to agree destinations, sort out any problems and finalise trips. They would take bookings and finally lead the trip. If you are interested in becoming an organiser in this Group and to find out more information please contact me by clicking on my name below.

The new Group will not be organising trips until next year, so please do not get in touch to join the trips themselves.

Susan Grice

Aviation Group

The 26th Oct was a lovely bright, sunny but cold day when 57 members and guests of the Aviation Group set off from Swindon to visit the Helicopter Museum at Weston Super Mare and Aerospace Bristol at Filton. After an uneventful but pleasant journey to Weston we arrived at the museum at 10.20am and headed straight for the café and toilets. The museum is currently undergoing a major refurbishment and catering facilities are adequate but basic, but cakes, sausage rolls, pasties along with a variety of hot and cold drinks are available. The toilets, Portaloos located just outside the main hangar, are clean but are a bit of an endurance test on a cold day.

Following our refreshments we were split into 4 groups for a guided tour of the exhibits. One group consisting of 'Techies' who know about engines, gears and other noisy things were taken off by a guide who was a former RN artificer and in their words had a brilliant tour. The other three groups consisting of the less technical minded enjoyed equally enjoyable tours of the facility. The museum, which is the only aviation museum in the world dedicated to rotary wing aircraft, houses a huge selection of aircraft.

Exhibits include a Wessex from the RAF Queen's Flight in immaculate condition, the helicopter which holds the world speed record for achieving a speed in excess of 248mph, a former Belgian Air Force Aloutte which reached a height of over 41000ft (your holiday airliner usually flies at around 35000ft). Other exhibits include a number of former Soviet Bloc country helicopters including a Mi 24 Hind attack helicopter gunship formerly of the East German Air Force.

At 12.30pm we departed Weston for our next venue, Bristol Aerospace at Filton. On arrival at Filton most of the group headed for the café to refuel with a spot of lunch at the reasonably priced café where a selection of sandwiches, cakes and a limited hot food menu was available. A guided tour of the museum is available but at an additional cost. Deciding not to take up the option of a guided tour our group decided to explore the facility in their own time.

The museum tells the story of the Bristol Aircraft Company and the influence and impact the company had on the area employing at one time 19,000 people. A beautiful replica of a WW1 Bristol Fighter aeroplane is on display in the main hall along with masses of information on the number, type and variants of aircraft built at Bristol.

One detail records an incident involving a Bristol built Beaufighter aircraft flown by an RAF Flight Sergeant Pilot who shot down five Junkers 52 transport aircraft in under ten minutes.



The star of the show at Bristol is of course the majestic Concorde which is located in it's own purpose built hangar. Although it was a fairly quiet day at the museum the day of our visit there was a continuous queue to see inside Concorde.

At 4.00pm after a most enjoyable day spent at two excellent museums we boarded the coach for our return trip to Swindon.

Ken Ivie

Railway Memorabilia

Here in Swindon we have a thriving Railway Interest Group, which meets monthly at STEAM.

In December we have a quiz, festive nibbles and share unwanted railway books and magazines. Do you have any old magazines or books about railways, here and abroad, that you would like to get shot of? We will take them off your hands and find a good home for them. We sometimes come and collect them, if that's an issue!

Contact **Bob Pixton** or **Phil Eagles** by clicking on the names.

Bob Pixton

Travel Study Group C & G
Visit to National Space Centre, Leicester
Monday 14th January 2019

A day visit to the National Space Centre at Leicester

Departure times and pick-up points:-

8.00am Ashington Way, West Swindon

8.20am Ellendune Centre, Wroughton

8.40am Matalan, Greenbridge

On arrival there will be plenty of free time to explore the centre and in the afternoon a Planetarium show "We Are Stars" before we leave for Swindon at about 4 o'clock

Cost £26 pp includes: Space Centre entry, Planetarium show, coach & driver's gratuity.

All members welcome

Contact **Bill Mead** by clicking on his name.

Refunds are not made after 7 days prior to trip.

Calling all scribblers!

There are already two excellent U3A writing groups, one in Liden and the other in Chiseldon.

Would there be any interest in a third group at the opposite side of Swindon in the Haydon Wick area?

The venue and day/time are yet to be decided, dependent on the response, but it would be a monthly meeting. All would be welcome, whatever your writing interests and experience. If you are interested please contact me by clicking on my name.

Nicola Moon

Lecture on Robotics

Coleview Community Centre - Saturday 23rd February at 11.00

Professor Peter Childs from the Dyson School of Design Engineering, Imperial College London is giving a lecture to Swindon U3A members on Robotics and how it will change the way we live in the near future.

Topics he will address will include,

Do robots have to mean a reduction in jobs?

Can robots and humans work together?

Can robots enhance the energy efficiency of our homes?

How do robots support healthcare?

The lecture will last about 45 minutes and will be followed by an opportunity for discussion.

We hope to see you there.

Avril Muirhead

Thames Valley Network
The Drama Of Dunkirk Study Day

The River & Rowing Museum, Henley-On-Thames, RG9 1BF
Tuesday, 5th March 2019

Application Form

(Please complete in block capitals – one form per person)

I would like to attend the study day on Tuesday 5th March, 2019

Full Name

Email.....

Telephone number

Fee £15.00 to TVN members, £17.00 for non TVN members

The fee includes the use of the Thames Room all day for a full programme of talks; free parking on site; free entry to the Museum (normal entry fee £10) and refreshments on arrival. It does NOT include lunch. A long lunch hour is built into the programme to enable participants to explore the Museum, enjoy a picnic lunch by the river or take a meal in the Museum restaurant or in one of the local pubs.

I enclose a cheque for £.....made payable to: U3A Thames Valley Network

I certify that I belong toU3A

I would like to receive details of future TVN events by email YES / NO

(New data protection regulations require you to consent to your email address being held by TVN. Without it we cannot retain it or send you information for any event other than this one.)

Signed.....Date

Application should be sent to:

Mrs P A Thornton, 6 Highway, Crowthorne, Berks, RG45 6HE (Tel: 01344 774812)

Acknowledgement will be sent by email, unless a stamped self-addressed envelope is provided.

The Concert Goers' Group invites you to
The Anvil, Basingstoke
Wednesday, January 23rd 2019 at 7.45pm

Pre Concert talk at 6.30pm

Philharmonia Orchestra

Conductor: Santtu Matias Rouvali Piano: Alice Sara Ott

Sibelius Finlandia

Ravel Piano Concerto in G

Sibelius Valse Triste

Sibelius Symphony no. 1

Departure times and pickup points:

Around 4.30 – 5pm, from Downsvie Road/Marlborough Road Junction, the Bus Station, and Ashington Way (West Swindon). Details to be advised. Queries to:-

Nina Stimson by clicking on her name.

Maximum cost £53.00 (based on 30 seats sold) includes concert ticket, coach and driver's gratuity.

Please send a cheque, payable to Swindon U3A for £53.00 with your completed reply slip (below) or just the information if you don't have access to a printer, to Cindy Matthews by Friday 7th December. To find out where to send this please contact Cindy by clicking on her name below.

NB You will notice that we have not asked for contact details on the form below. This is because having these on paper is problematical for reasons of data protection. However we will need to contact you, so please send an email with a contact phone number to **Cindy Matthews** by clicking on her name. All contact details will be kept securely and deleted after the concert.

.....
The Anvil, Basingstoke 23rd January 2019 cost £53-00

Name(s):

No. of tickets: Cheque enclosed for:

Pick-up point:

Year Book Correction

Martin Preston, organiser for Simply Singing on the second Thursday in the month, advises that the Year Book entry has an error in his email address. It should be mjpreston@btinternet.com

Front Cover Photo

You will have noticed that I've been using David Garmont's bird photographs on the front cover. He sent me half a dozen at the beginning of the year. In October I used one of my own of Town Gardens and in April we used one from Martin Preston.

It would be nice to have pictures of Swindon places, and we would welcome submissions for future issues. They can be sent to me using the Newsletter contributions e-mail address shown opposite.

Geoff Bryan

Copy Dates

Items for the January 'What's On' must be received by

11th December 2018

Items for the February Newsletter must be received by

12th January 2019

Items for the February 'What's On' must be received by

17th January 2019

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter contributions e-mail address shown opposite.

Geoff Bryan

List of Email Addresses

General

General enquiries	enquiries@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office manager	office.manager@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office administration	office@swindonu3a.org.uk
Newsletter contributions	newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk
Webmaster	webmaster@swindonu3a.org.uk

Management Committee

All members of committee	committee@swindonu3a.org.uk
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Treasurer	treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk
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U3A publicity	publicity@swindonu3a.org.uk
Monthly meeting speaker organiser	speaker.organiser@swindonu3a.org.uk
Portable appliance testing (PAT)	pat@swindonu3a.org.uk

The Editor reserves the right to amend or abbreviate any entries submitted.

We should also like to point out that any views expressed are not necessarily those of the organisation or of the Editor.

Life President Norman Richards

Management Committee

Chair	Avril Muirhead	525315
Vice-chairman	vacant	
Treasurer	John Edgerton	642965
Secretary	Margaret Goldie	790546
Minutes Secretary	Victoria Fisher	320658
Assistant treasurer	Viv Dipper	322421
Office manager	Sylvia Alexander	614629
New members	Adele Merrison	480364
Accommodation	Viv Dipper	322421
Webmaster	Alex Cranswick	539529
Newsletter team	Bob Carvey	526746
Groups co-ordinator	Avril Muirhead	525315
Health and Safety	Dave Maggs	344614
Publicity and media liaison	Martin Preston	694148

Key Tasks (Non committee)

Equipment and resources	Tony Bettley	525523
Office manager (Assistant)	Glenys Bettley	525523
Newsletter distribution	David and Jackie Hewitt	976525
Administration adviser	Tony Hill	534148
E-news distribution	Bob Carvey	526746
Speakers organiser	Cheryll Yeowell	812708
assisted by	Beth Bailey	849898

Office

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(entry is by middle door on right hand side of building)

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Charity Number 298853