

Newsletter



Central Library
Photograph by
Stella Allen

September 2021

Hello from the Chair

Well, the summer is almost over and for the second year running it has been a 'not quite normal' summer. I hope some of you have managed to take a break from lockdowns and routines, perhaps a staycation or a visit to family and friends. Some may even have ventured abroad in spite of the reams of paperwork and threats of quarantine. But as summer fades we have much to look forward to. Autumn, after all, can be a lovely season with or without an Indian summer. And then, of course, there is the welcome restarting of our much-missed u3a classes.

I know from the messages many of you have sent me how much you are looking forward to resuming your groups and meeting up with your friends again. Some lucky ones have already restarted where it has been possible to keep safe, well ventilated and distanced. We read in the last couple of Newsletters about Pétanque, Line Dancing, Easy Art and others who have got together again. All the signs seem to suggest that over the next few months life may return to something like normal, that Covid is receding and the majority of us are double vaccinated. You can renew your membership at any time now either by going to our website (swindonu3a.org.uk) or through our office at Gorse Hill (office@swindonu3a.org.uk) which is now open. Group Organisers – would you please let the Groups Coordinator know when you are planning to restart your groups (group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk) so we can begin to see the bigger picture and collate correct data for membership and our Open Day.

There are also some plans afoot to start up new groups. Jill Kelly, our new Membership Liaison Secretary, started us all thinking with her article on the subject in the last Newsletter. Ideas already mooted are for a new Discussion Group in Royal Wootton Bassett and a new Archaeology Group (see articles in the last Newsletter for more information). Let me know if you have ideas for any other new groups and I can put you in touch with the relevant people. I, personally, would love to start a new u3a drama group – are there any would be thespians out there ready to give it a go?

You will all know by now that we have introduced a system of supplements that those in higher cost venues will need to pay in addition to their subscription. Inevitably this has caused some concern amongst those most affected but I am pleased to say that the majority of members have understood and accepted the need to do this. Most members are not affected and will be paying their basic subscription. In September, when we have a better idea of how many members have renewed and groups restarted, we will review our financial situation and the supplements being charged.

The Committee is planning to recommence our general social events. There are plans for a New Members Coffee meeting, a resumption of our monthly get-togethers, open to all members, with speakers or other entertainment and we have plans afoot for a Christmas Party – more details to follow. In addition, we have our Open Day, now scheduled for 23rd October at St Joseph's College, and our AGM on the 8th November.

There will be lots going on in the autumn and, if you think you can spare a little time, we still have a vacancy for another member of the Events Team to help out.

We move into the Autumn in a positive way with much to look forward to. Look out for activity from our Publicity Team with a full page on Swindon u3a in the Swindon Advertiser in September and regular interviews with members on Swindon 105.5. Join our Facebook page (Swindon u3a) and interact with other members. Get ready for our Climate Change policy being developed by Bryan Neaves our Health and Safety Officer (just in time for COP 26).

Let's get this show on the road.....to learn, laugh, live once again.

Best wishes

Gill Brain

Chair

Swindon u3a Open Day

Saturday 23rd October

St Joseph's College

Ocotal Way

off Drakes Way

SN3 3LR

10.00 am to 12.30 pm

**Come and talk to members of the groups
and discover what's on offer.**



Notice of Annual General Meeting

“**Not another one?**”, you might be asking. “We only had one in February!”
“Yes, but that was for the year 2019-20 and was delayed due to you know what.”
Joking aside, we are trying to get back to the usual pattern of holding the AGM shortly after the beginning of the Swindon u3a year.

The Management Committee discussed three options for this year’s AGM: a Zoom meeting, a hybrid meeting (where members can attend online or in person), and an in person meeting.

The Zoom meeting in February was very well received but the functions which would allow members to participate were not enabled. There was general agreement that although hybrid meetings might well be the best way forward, it was felt that there would not be sufficient time to trial the technology in situ in time to ensure the smooth running of this year’s AGM.

The MC voted to hold an in person meeting so that all members will have the opportunity to attend and join in. Having said that, at least 100 people will be needed for the AGM to be valid and maybe more, depending on the total membership at the end of September. Please put the AGM on the 8th November in your diary now. Swindon u3a needs you!

Sue Carvey



Notice is hereby given that the
AGM of Swindon u3a will be held at 2.15pm
on Monday, 8th November 2021
At The Ellendune Centre Wroughton (proposed)

Draft Agenda

- 1 Chair's welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the AGM held on 8th Feb. 2021
- 4 Matters Arising
- 5 Chair's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts for 2020 - 21
- 7 Proposed adoption of Third Age Trust Model Constitution
- 8 Election of the Committee
- 9 Resolutions to the AGM
- 10 Any Other Business

Nominations for the Management Committee

Anyone elected to the Management committee will become a Trustee of Swindon u3a

If you would like to nominate anyone for election to the Management Committee or would like to put forward a resolution, please telephone the u3a office (01793 614629) for the forms. These will come with instructions for filling them in together with the office address. Completed forms must be received in the office by Friday 8th October 2021.

Sue Carvey
General Secretary

New Group

A new Pétanque group will be starting on Wednesday 1st September, 2:00 pm at Broome Manor, we will meet weekly and welcome beginners and those who want to play socially. As we are using the Terrain at Broome Manor for free we expect all players to buy a refreshment from the cafe after approx. one hour of play and then we will continue until 4:00pm.

To register for this group or for more details please contact the group organiser, as below.

[John Emmins](#)

Contact John by clicking on his name

Life in a poem

I came across the work of Australian poet, Erin Hanson, quite by accident and I am so glad I did! She began writing aged just eleven; now in her mid twenties she has a huge following on Facebook, Instagram and the like. Amongst other things, she is credited with helping young girls improve their self-esteem. Never has this been more sorely needed than in our current image obsessed times, I'm sure you'll agree. This is an example of her work.

Lesley Basu

Not

You are not your age, nor the size of clothes you wear,
You are not a weight, or the colour of your hair.
You are not your name, or the dimples in your cheeks.
You are all the books you read, and all the words you speak.
You are your croaky morning voice, and the smiles you try to hide.
You're the sweetness in your laughter, and every tear you've cried.
You're the songs you sing so loudly when you know you're all alone.
You're the places that you've been to, and the one that you call home.
You're the things that you believe in, and the people whom you love.
You're the photos in your bedroom, and the future you dream of.
You're made of so much beauty, but it seems that you forgot
When you decided that you were defined by all the things you're not.

By Erin Hanson

Act Your Age!

So what exactly is the 'Third Age'? Google tells me that the 'threescore years and ten' reference to a lifespan comes from the Bible: Psalm 90 to be precise. It was clearly still seen as an acceptable yardstick in Shakespeare's time – he used it in 'Macbeth'. He also had his theories on the 'Seven Ages of Man' in 'As You Like It.' You might be surprised to find how he categorised the third age!

However, in 2021, statistics tell us that an average lifespan is at least a decade more. So when does the 'Third Age' start? The calculator tells me we could argue the case for mid-50's but then we are told that 70 is the new 60, 60 is the new 50 etc. High profile figures such as Sir David Attenborough, The Queen, Captain Sir Tom Moore are shining examples of lives lived to the full at 90 and beyond. When did their 'third ages' start?

So perhaps our 'Third Age' is not about a number but about a time in life – a phase in which our circumstances may change, our responsibilities alter; sometimes for the better, sometimes maybe not. As I get to know more and more u3a members it is clear that there is no such thing as an average u3a member; we are a diverse lot with a wide range of interests and a variety of reasons for joining.

What we seem to have in common is an understanding that 'Learn, Laugh, Live' is a useful mantra even if at present it has to be done in tandem with that all too familiar triplet: Hands, Face, Space. We have certainly learned a great deal from the pandemic, particularly how much we need human contact and interaction. Hands up those who have had enough of Zoom! Laughter has been in short supply and as we tentatively feel our way back into u3a activities we need to maximise the opportunities to enjoy what is on offer. So perhaps now is the time to help ourselves in re-establishing some kind of normal lives, getting groups and activities going again, with every regard to safety and respect for people's natural apprehension.

(cont.)



If we are spared another lockdown then the Open Day on October 23rd will be a chance to explore new possibilities. My thanks to the people who responded to last month's newsletter appeal about new group and activity ideas; some kind of monthly pub lunch group looks like it may attract enough interest to be worthwhile. Feel free to let me know if you might be interested. Contact me, or come along and chat at the Open Day.

[Jill Kelly](#)

Membership Liaison Secretary

Contact Jill by clicking on her name

Front Cover Photos

Back in December 2018 I made an appeal for photographs of Swindon places (land-marks) for use on the front page of the Newsletter. I won't say I was inundated, but several of you did send them in, but now I have almost exhausted the supply. If any of you have suitable photographs I would appreciate it if you could send them to me using the Newsletter contributions email address, shown on the inside of the back cover.

[Geoff Bryan](#)

Editor

Copy Dates

Items for the October Newsletter must be received by

5th September 2021

Items for the November Newsletter must be received by

10th October 2021

'What's On' has been suspended for the time being.

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter email

newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk

[Geoff Bryan](#)

Try Orienteering

Come along to our two introductory sessions in September and October and find out what orienteering is all about.

Where is this lake? What will you find at circle A or circle B? What is the best way of getting from A to B? Come along to two Swindon parks and learn about orienteering maps and try some simple orienteering courses (routes). Most of the u3a orienteering group will follow routes, walking at a comfortable pace with a partner so that they can learn from each other. A few like to jog or run by themselves once they have learned the basics. You will be most welcome to join us.

For further information and to register an interest please contact Ken by clicking on his name below.

[Ken Stimson](#)



Short Mat Bowls

We have a few vacancies in our Short Mat Bowls Group on a Monday morning 9:30 to 11:00 at Haydon Wick Community Centre. Please contact me for further details by clicking on my name below.

[Bridget Lovegrove](#)



All change for the Jazz Appreciation Group

We meet monthly on the 4th Friday afternoon at Liden Community Centre to enjoy and explore all the varied genres of Jazz and associated music such as Blues. We welcome new members, not just those who have followed this music for years, but those for whom it's a new adventure.

Regrettably, during the Lockdown we have lost both of our organisers and our Blues expert, so it's "All Change" forced on us.

Alan Bushell founded the group close to 20 years ago. He passed away in 2020, 24 years after major heart surgery gave him a great new lease of active life.

David Dale became joint organiser in 2015 to assist Alan and increasingly became the lead at meetings, manning the desk with Alan and handling the admin. and programme issues. Unfortunately, David became ill in March 2021 so he sought new organisers with whom he was working on a handover. Sadly, he died on 30th June. Graham Arrondelle was the Bluesman, contributing monthly to our own Len Morphey's Sunday evening Jazz programme on Swindon 105.5. Graham was also an expert Bass Guitarist who played with many of the UK's top artists. In 2019 we became aware that he had some health issues, and unfortunately, we lost him too. All will be much missed.

So we needed and now have a new team. The new organisers are Ed Sexton and Alan Rothwell, plus David Day as a key member, and luckily, we have the help, advice, and great resources of information and music provided by Len Morphey, who is also the Leader of The Mid-West Big Band. Most importantly, 3 of the ladies have volunteered to look after the refreshments to keep the wheels, and us moving. Hopefully, ladies will also contribute to the organisation team and men will help with the refreshments and other tasks.

We have agreed the Autumn Programme:

September 24th, A Tribute to Alan, David and Graham, each of whom had diverse interests within the Jazz and Blues areas, so it will be an eclectic mix!

October 22nd, David Day will lead on "The Clarinet in Jazz"

November 26th, Ed Sexton presents "British Big Bands"

December 17th (not 24th), is a light-hearted invitation to members to bring and discuss a favourite CD, DVD or download. Previously, this has been very successful and produced a lot of new and unexpected music.

David Dale had put a lot of effort into ideas for 2022 and beyond. These are being built on and added to. We are especially looking at new areas and upcoming artists, as well as the old masters and hopefully, we will be able to get some live music too.

Please wish us luck with our big leap into the unknown.

[The JAG Leadership Team](#)

Contact the organisers by clicking above

List of Email Addresses

Chair	chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
All members of committee	committee@swindonu3a.org.uk
Accommodation	accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk
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Treasury Team for Accommodation Banking Visits	treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk
Webmaster	webmaster@swindonu3a.org.uk

Office

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Charity Number 298853

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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.