

# **u3a** Newsletter Swindon **May 2026**



**Welcome to our May newsletter keeping you connected with the Swindon u3a community**

## **Contents:**

- Current Vacancies
- Swindon u3a News
- Upcoming Meetings
- Group News
- Local News and Information
- Quiz Corner
- Life in a Poem
- Swindon u3a Contacts
- Quiz Answers

## A message from our Chair

### Time Dilation.

Albert Einstein never wore socks. I see his point!

A friend of mine came back from his early morning walk around Coate Water Lake, excited that he's seen the first swallows of the year, and not just one, lots of them! I have to say I was less impressed than I might have been and asked if any of them were carrying coconuts (which as he isn't a Monty Python fan fell on stony ground).

The return of the swallows after their amazing journey from Africa, like the blooming of the first daffodils, is one of those things that people always say is earlier every year. I know that global warming has a part to play in this, and in the longer term it might be true, but the date stamps on my photos of snowdrops don't show that much of a difference (especially when varieties are being bred to bloom earlier). But I think there is something else going on and here is where Einstein's socks come in.

He is famous for his theories about "time-dilation", the faster you go the slower your time passes relative to others. But is the converse true? I know I'm slowing up and maybe this is why I think time is going faster and faster. Einstein didn't wear socks because he found them uncomfortable, but also because he felt they were a waste of time – time is short and if you want to waste time putting on socks, then that's up to you. For me, May marks the beginning of summer, a time of sunshine and warmth (such is selective memory), and how can it possibly be that time of year again?

I am intrigued by all the ukelele groups we have and the wonderfully joyful film *Marvelous*, comes to mind with all those people playing "Enjoy yourself it's later than you think". Maybe that's the message of May; it's a reminder to "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may". *Carpe Deum* - Seize the day while you have the chance. Have a look at the list of all groups we have and try something new (don't be put off by waiting lists, send them an email and see what happens). Maybe it's not just a new month, but a new season for you.

## Current Vacancies

### General Secretary Role

Main tasks cover overseeing the governance of Swindon u3a to include  
Ensuring Policies are reviewed (& updated if necessary) on a regular basis.  
Organising the AGM

Liaising with the Charities Commission and the Third Age Trust.  
Attending the Management Committee monthly meeting.

## Treasurer

A new treasurer is needed.

They do not need to be a qualified accountant but must:

- Be very numerate
- Computer literate

There is a small skilled team to provide support for reconciliations and outgoing payments. I will continue in post until the AGM in November 2026 to ensure everything runs smoothly, and I'm committed to supporting a thorough and well-organised handover to whoever takes on the role next. If anyone would like to discuss the transition or has any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me via the Treasury email address.: treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk

## Swindon u3a News

OPEN DAY

2026

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> August

**Time:** 10am – 1.00pm

**Place:** Deanery School, Peglars Way, Swindon SN17DA

I am delighted to inform you that arrangements have now been finalised to hold this year's Open Day at the Deanery School as above.

I hope as many groups as possible will be able to attend. Open Day is not just about recruiting new members – it is our annual celebration of the wonderful work that our charity does – our fantastic array of groups, our friendships formed, our continued learning and development as older (slightly!) people. We must be one of the largest charities in the Swindon area which many people have never heard of. Let's take this opportunity to tell them!

Thank you to all who attended Open Day last year and sent me important and informative feedback. In spite of the difficulties of the venue we used last year, many of you still felt 'positive' about the camaraderie, the opportunity to meet and chat with people from other groups and the 'buzzy' atmosphere with lots of visitors. I feel sure we can build further on the positives this year. The Deanery offers larger and brighter facilities, is accessible, is on a bus route, and has a large, adjoining car park.

I now need your support in the following ways please:

**Group Organisers** - Please let me know if you would like a table at Open Day so that I can begin to prepare a plan of layout, Group Labels, signage etc.

**Volunteers** - If you can offer any help with support roles such as - Setting up of the room and tables, Meet and greet visitors, car parking guidance, first aid cover.

**Let's make this a great success. Thank you.**

Contact me on [publicity@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:publicity@swindonu3a.org.uk) or on [madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com](mailto:madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com)

## Volunteers meeting 2026

We held an interesting meeting for our Swindon u3a volunteers on Saturday morning 18<sup>th</sup> April. This annual meeting is mainly held to thank those wonderful volunteers who go the extra mile to do all the jobs that need doing to keep Swindon u3a running smoothly such as finance, the office, administration, publicity, special events. But an invitation is also extended to those who might be interested in volunteering and would like to know more. We started with a fun quiz of facts and figures about our u3a. It's surprising what you can learn and, most importantly, because we were working in teams we got to know each other better. Linda Young gave an introduction to the structure of our u3a and how volunteers fit into and contribute to that and after coffee and biscuits we had a question and answer/ discussion about various aspects of u3a.

Thank you to our Membership secretary, Rose Clarke, who organized the morning. We all learned something, enjoyed ourselves and gained a few new volunteers to the-force. What could be better?



## Monthly Meetings

### **The History of Ice Cream - Monday 11 May at 2.00 pm at Ellendune Community Centre - Ali Warren**

They say you are what you eat - which means that culinary history is a good way in to learning about social history. Certain ingredients lend themselves to a really interesting perspective on the lives of our ancestors and ice cream is surprisingly one of them. In this talk, you'll learn about the origins of ice cream, how it came to be made and how it became popular. You'll learn something about some important and interesting women along the way too!

The talk will be presented by Ali Warren, whose interest in culinary history stems from her long-term involvement in re-enactment, where she has reproduced meals from the past from the Romans to the Victorians.

### **Morris Minors in the Media - Monday 8 June at 2.00 pm at Ellendune Community Centre - John and Ann Ford** **It is NOT about engines and gearboxes and is suitable for mixed audiences!**

It will be a pro-active, informative, light-hearted and often amusing presentation covering a period of 25 years when they hired their collection of Morris Minors to film, TV and publishing companies, plus charity work involving MPs and pop stars, and also some unusual weddings. Their comprehensive photographic and memorabilia display will be available to view. They even dress in the period - and are decidedly different!

There will be no Monthly Meetings in July and August.

### **Book your place**

If you plan to attend, please be sure to book a place by either:

1. Going onto the website [swindonu3a.org.uk](http://swindonu3a.org.uk) (just log in, click on u3a-wide events and under Swindon u3a events find the event you want to attend), or
2. Telephoning the office on 07345 162117 or 07823 722812 and leaving a message. When leaving a message, please remember to state your name and membership number and, if possible, not to leave it until Monday morning as the office team cannot always pick up all the messages in time and sometimes names get missed.

*If you're a new member of Swindon u3a and you're coming along to your first Monthly meeting, please let the people on the welcome desk know, so that you can be introduced to the u3a Volunteers Team.*

1. Go to the website [www.swindonu3a.org.uk](http://www.swindonu3a.org.uk) (just log in and click on u3a-wide events).
- Or, 2. Telephone the office on 07345 162117 or 07823 722812.

## Are you a Canva user....?"

.... or would like to start using this comprehensive online graphic design tool?  
Swindon u3a has been given access to a number of Canva Pro licences for use by members.  
For more information, please contact the IT team at [itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk)."

## Group News

### Aviation group

Visit to the Shuttleworth Collection - Wednesday 27th May 2026

A year-round visitor attraction in the heart of Bedfordshire, Old Warden aerodrome is a working grass airfield. Home to The Shuttleworth Collection, Swiss Garden, and Shuttleworth House. Whether you're an aircraft aficionado, horticulturalist, family, or simply looking for a unique experience, Shuttleworth has something for everyone to enjoy. Honouring the legacy of our patron, Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth – a keen aviator, racing driver and horse racer – The Shuttleworth Collection is a treasure trove of airworthy vintage aircraft from 1909-1950, agricultural and steam exhibits, veteran vehicles, classic motorcycles, bicycles, carriages, and buses. Come and visit our engineering workshop to see the live work taking place on some of these stunning aircraft, before exploring six hangars full of aeronautic and vehicular history.

Departure times and pick up points:

8.00 am      Ellendune Health Centre, Wroughton  
8.45 am      Coate Water, opposite Sun Public House  
4.00 pm      Depart for Swindon

Cost £40 per person which includes, entry to museum, coach, gratuities and hot drink on arrival.

All members and friends are welcome - Contact Ken Ivie on 01793 845483 or email [kenivie@uwclub.net](mailto:kenivie@uwclub.net)

### British History Group

#### British History Group Leaders Make History

Our British History Group meets fortnightly on Friday mornings at Central Community Centre. We're a jolly band of 38 Members kept in check for some two decades by illustrious Leaders David Bailey and Jean Batten. Together they have formed a formidable partnership steering us through the perils and triumphs of British History from the Romans onwards. Never phased by new admin. or techie set-ups, their zeal and zesty enthusiasm in leading and also giving talks has caused us BHers to revere them for their

magnificent record. This being the case, we decided a presentation should be made on their decision to relinquish the leadership. A collection was organised and on Fri. 10th April our very own history makers were each presented with a National Garden Gift Card, bone china mug and thank-you card.

The pic. shows David Bailey and Jean Batten with new Leaders Keith Parsons and Eileen Jones plus Admin. bods, Martin Savage and Edwina Turk.

### **The British History Group**



### **Swindon U3a Field Archery Group.**

We meet at Roves Farm Sevenhampton every Monday 14.00 - 16.00 and Friday 10.00 - 12.00. Members are welcome to shoot on both days or either day of choice. We are a social group, made up of roughly 50% male, female. We enjoy a cuppa and a biscuit and a good natter in our half way break and are partial to a BBQ a couple of times during the year, Halloween and early spring being very popular.

We have indoor and outdoor practice areas, where newcomers are given instruction on site safety and Archery etiquette and the proper and safe ways of shooting and retrieving Arrows.

When the instructor and budding Archer feel they are ready, they move onto shooting in the woods. The older hands are quite happy to help newcomers find their feet and get use to and join in the banter.

Just held our Spring Bbq enjoyed by the Monday and Friday groups.  
Contact name Jim Roberts Email [jimbob45.roberts@gmail.com](mailto:jimbob45.roberts@gmail.com)



## Travel Group J

Group J coach trip to Windsor on 25th June 2026.

U3A members and friends are welcome to join us.

Beautiful Windsor has many Royal connections. Large choice of things to see. Windsor Castle, River trips, Bus to Eton College, Restaurants, and Shopping.

Cost to include driver's gratuity £24.

Pick up points

8.30am Crown Royal Wootton Bassett.

8.45am Ellendune

9.00am Coate Water.

If you are interested

Telephone

June Jones 07814 131814 or Jean Davis 07757 601036

## Concertgoers Group

Our next trip is to a wonderful **matinee concert on Thursday June 18th** in Birmingham Symphony Hall, with time to explore the area nearby with the outstanding new City Library, galleries and museum, and the canal walks with cafes and restaurants.

### City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

- **Martinu:** Memorial to Lidice (1943) - the Czech village annihilated in WWII
- **Tchaikovsky:** Violin Concerto, with soloist Inmo Yang. Written in 1878, it is one of best-known violin concertos.
- **Prokofiev:** Symphony No 6, movements Allegro Moderato, Largo, Vivace.

**Details:** Concert at 2:15pm, with arrival at the Hall (the only stop) around 12 noon. Concert ends around 4:15pm.

Pick-up points:

Ashington Way West Swindon 9:30am

Downsview Road 9:45am

Highworth Brewery St Car Park 10:00am

**Maximum cost for 32 people coming** £63 including good seats, coach and driver's gratuity, but if 40 people come, the cost is only £57 and you will get approx. £6 *refund* pp cash on the coach.

### HOW TO BOOK:

**Please book and pay by 30 April.** To book, send to Anne Nolan ( [afnolan@yahoo.com](mailto:afnolan@yahoo.com), Tel 07742 834457), an email with the following information: (NB – it's vital that we have your mobile phone no and desired pickup point):-

Name(s)

Address

**Mobile Phone No**

Email address

No of tickets

Amount paid (£63pp) and method of payment

**Pickup Point desired**

### HOW TO PAY:

Please pay £63 by BACS Bank Transfer (*preferred*) to Swindon u3a Trips account, sort code 40-52-40, account no 00022106. Please use reference 'Yourname Concert' e.g. 'Smith Concert'. Alternatively, you can post a cheque made out to Swindon u3a to Anne Nolan, 7 Tenby Close, Swindon SN3 1LN

## Local News and Information

### Cine Seniors



Sometimes there is nothing like seeing a film on the big screen. Cineworld at Shaw Ridge show regular films for 'Seniors' on Wednesday mornings. Tickets are only £4.50, free tea and coffee is available just before hand in the foyer Performances begin at about 11.30am. Here's what's coming in the next month:

6<sup>th</sup> May If I Had Legs I'd Kick You  
13<sup>th</sup> May Is This Thing On?  
20<sup>th</sup> May Hamnet

U3a will be holding an exhibition stand there on 20<sup>th</sup> May so come and say hello!

## Let's get quizzical

Take a moment with our quiz. Answers at the end of the newsletter – no cheating

### Mental Maths

Follow the instructions to find the answer

60	÷5	×6	-23	Square root of it	+183	50% of it	-19	Quarter of it	=
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### Anagrams

Thinking about a holiday, try these tourist sights to get you in the mood for adventure:

- Fool won rodent - London
- Built to stay free – New York City
- Two flee fire – Paris
- Invent our Fiat - Rome

### You May know this!

- What is the birthstone for May?
- Which film fans celebrate 4<sup>th</sup> May?
- When and by whom was the official May day bank holiday introduced in the UK?

### Animal quiz:

What is the collective noun for a group of pandas?

An embarrassment	A rarity	A hug
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Which of the following is the fastest bird in the world?

Swift	Peregrine falcon	Golden eagle
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What is a group of zebras most commonly known as?

A confusion	A parliament	A dazzle
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Which of the following are known collectively as a conspiracy?

Owls	Lemurs	Hippos
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### Missing Vowels

Name the classic books whose vowels have been removed:

- VNT YFR
- HWR DSND
- RB CC
- TLF TWC TS

### Who said it?

In celebration of the many football trophies that will be played in May, name the manager of these quotes:

"I've never played for a draw in my life."

Arsene Wenger	Alex Ferguson	Kenny Dalglish
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"Some people think football is a matter of life and death... I can assure them it is much more serious than that."

Bill Shankly	Walter Winterbottom	Bill Nicholson
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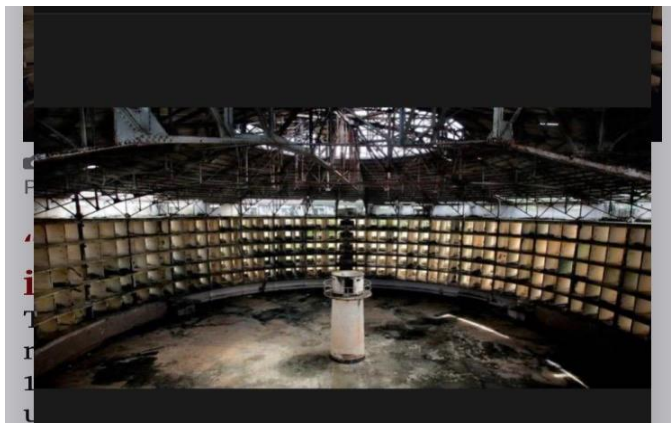
"I'm not one out of the bottle, I think I'm a special one."

Harry Redknapp	David Moyes	José Mourinho
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### Word of the Month

If you see an unusual word, please do share it and its meaning with us and we will feature it.

**Panopticon** is an institutional building (originally designed by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham) allowing a single guard to watch all inmates from a central tower without them knowing if they were being watched. Possibly a useful way to think about constant surveillance in the modern world.? 'Big brother is watching you'



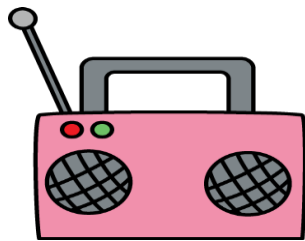
## Life in a poem

**Life in a Poem- May 2026** - submitted by Lesley Basu

I was reminded of this month's poem when I turned on my kitchen radio the other day, something I hadn't done for a while, and suddenly the following song blared out at full blast:

"You can bring Pearl, she's a darn nice girl,  
But don't bring Lulu!  
You can bring Rose with the turned-up nose,  
But don't bring Lulu !.....  
..... She's the kind of smarty breaks up every party,  
Hullabaloo loo, don't bring Lulu,  
I'll bring her myself !.."

Ah! the Andrews sisters ! It was an almost surreal experience : I hadn't heard that song since childhood. Then I realised the grandchildren had been twiddling the dials..!!



**Tuning the Dial** by **BRIAN BILSTON**

We're lost in music,.....caught at second slip,  
lowdown, by the outstretched hand of.....  
The Deputy Prime Minister, Dominic Raab, who was  
.....working as a waitress in a cocktail bar  
when.....Shostakovich's symphony No7  
was premiered in the .....Forties, South  
or south-west 5 to7, occasionally gale.....  
from Croydon is on the line, who wants to talk to us  
about..... why Aviva life insurance is  
right for you.....and offers me  
protection, a lot of love and affection whether I'm  
right or.....left wing but there's nobody  
in the centre and the ball gets cleared to.....  
Oscar Wilde, who famously announced.....  
" I've nothing to declare except.....  
.....I can boogie, boogie woogie all night long.

## Swindon u3a Contacts

<b>Chair</b>	Pete Cook	<a href="mailto:chair@swindonu3a.org.uk">chair@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Sue Wigmore Bond	<a href="mailto:vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk">vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>General Secretary</b>	Monica King	<a href="mailto:secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk">secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Eric Hewitt	<a href="mailto:treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk">treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Membership Liaison</b>	Rose Clarke	<a href="mailto:membership@swindonu3a.org.uk">membership@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Group Coordinator</b>	Linda Young	<a href="mailto:group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk">group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Payment Manager</b>	Linda Young	<a href="mailto:systems@swindonu3a.org.uk">systems@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Speaker organiser</b>	Sue Cook	<a href="mailto:speaker.organiser@swindonu3a.org.uk">speaker.organiser@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>IT Support</b>	Dave Todd	<a href="mailto:itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk">itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Publicity Lead</b>	Gill Brain	<a href="mailto:publicity@swindonu3a.org.uk">publicity@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Newsletter</b>	Philip Baylay	<a href="mailto:newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk">newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Venues</b>	Mike Clarke	<a href="mailto:accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk">accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Office General Enquiries</b>		<a href="mailto:office@swindonu3a.org.uk">office@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>

### Office

Swindon u3a Office, Gorse Hill Community Centre, Chapel Street, Swindon, SN2 8DA  
(*entry is by the middle door on the right-hand side of the building*)

The u3a office is currently open on Monday 10am to 12pm until March 2026.

Tel: 07823 722812 or 07345 162117. Out of office hours there is an answering machine. Our Office Managers and volunteers will endeavour to answer your questions or point you in the direction of someone who can help.

**Email:** [office@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:office@swindonu3a.org.uk)

**Web:** [www.swindonu3a.org.uk](http://www.swindonu3a.org.uk)

Swindon u3a Charity Number 298853

Due to May bank holiday the Swindon U3A Gorse Hill office will open 10-12 on **Weds 6th May**. Following this the usual Monday opening times will apply

**Send us your news and more:** We would love to hear from you. Share your news and photos from your groups. Send submissions to: [newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk) - deadline for the June newsletter is May 19<sup>th</sup>.

### Quiz Answers

#### Mental maths

19

#### Anagrams:

- Tower of London
- Statue of Liberty
- Eiffel Tower
- Trevi Fountain

#### You May know this!

- Emerald is the birthstone for May
- 4<sup>th</sup> May is known as Star Wars day – “May the 4<sup>th</sup> be with you!”
- Labour Employment Secretary Michael Foot introduced the first official May day bank holiday on 1 May 1978 to mark international workers’ day.

**Animal quiz:**

- A group of pandas is an embarrassment. They can also be known as a bamboo or a cupboard.
- The peregrine falcon is the fastest bird in the world; it can exceed speeds of 200mph.
- A group of zebras is commonly known as a dazzle. They can also be called a herd and a zeal.
- A conspiracy is the collective noun for a group of lemurs.

**Missing Vowels**

- VANITY FAIR
- HOWARDS END
- REBECCA
- TALE OF TWO CITIES

**Who Said It?**

Alex Ferguson

Bill Shankly

José Mourinho