



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

Contents:

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

NOTICE of the Swindon u3a AGM

Our AGM is fast approaching and we are still very short on numbers of attendees to meet our legal obligation of a quorate.

PLEASE support your u3a by attending the AGM, full details of time, location and agenda are below.

If attending, you will need to register on the website or, alternatively, phone the Office on 01793 614629 and ask one of the team to register you.

2.15pm Monday, 10th November 2025

**The Ellendune Community Centre
Wroughton**

AGENDA

1. Chair's Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the AGM held on 11th November 2024
4. Matters Arising
5. Chair's Report
6. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts 2024/25
7. Resolutions
8. Election of Committee
9. Any Other Business

Current Vacancies

Following our AGM on November 10, we will need a new **Vice Chair** and **Chair**, as we don't currently have proposed candidates for these mandatory roles. If you are interested in stepping forward, please contact vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk. We have job descriptions for these roles but in summary:

- The Chair runs the monthly Management Committee meetings of Trustees. They also lead the Annual General Meeting, delivering a summary annual report in person to the membership and writing the monthly Chair's Blog for the monthly Newsletter.
- The Vice Chair supports the Chair, with a focus on the operational running of Swindon u3a. The office and events teams report to the Vice Chair.

All the trustees are collectively responsible for all decisions made and the actions that follow.

In addition, we are looking for volunteers within the Finance team and Groups Teams. For more info on each contact:

- group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk if you are interested in becoming a **Group Buddy**, to help support the Group Organisers with payment and system queries
- treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk for the **finance volunteer** roles, which are to do with reconciling our financial records and checking transactions made.

Interested?

Swindon u3a is run by volunteers and can only operate if members share the tasks that make it run smoothly. If you are interested in any of these roles, even if you can only spare a small amount of time each month, please get in touch as soon as possible using the contact details above.

Newsletter Co-ordinator – Volunteer needed

From Jan 2026 we have a vacancy for someone to help with the co-ordination of our Newsletter. The task is not overly demanding as almost all the information included in the Newsletter is supplied by others: Committee members, Group Organisers or members with interesting information/stories to share. The basic format is already in place and the task is largely to drop the items into the framework in an interesting and attractive fashion. Some basic IT skills are necessary and there is a lot of support provided. The Newsletter Co-ordinator is a member of the Publicity Team and works closely with Gill Brain, the Publicity Officer.

Please consider volunteering for this role. The Newsletter is an important aspect of our Swindon u3a internal communication system where we can share information, celebrate our activities and have some fun! Contact Gill Brain madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com or Lynda Feeley newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk for further information and a chat about the role.

Swindon u3a News

The contact number for the office is changing!

To increase the number of ways to contact the office and to enable the volunteers to work more flexibly, we are replacing the current landline with two new mobile numbers. The current number, 01793 614629, will be phased out by the end of the year.

From Monday 3rd Nov you can contact the office on either 07823 722812 or 07345 162117. During busy periods you will be able to leave a message, and because these are mobile phones you can also send a text.

Seniors Cineworld promotion



By Gill Brain

Kerrie Stone and I hosted a publicity stand at **Seniors Cineworld** in early October. We host a stand there about every 2 months or so as the age group attending the films is our u3a age group.

If you would like to get involved and help out promoting our groups, please do let us know and we can keep you informed of Opportunities, please contact: Gill Brain, Publicity Officer:

madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com

Monthly Meetings

Our programme of Monthly meetings continued in October with Gill Brain posing the question **‘u3a Past, Present Future – how much do you know about the organisation you belong to?’**

Launched in 1982 with very little money, the three founding fathers (Peter Laslett, Eric Midwinter and Michael Young) were committed to establishing a movement that encouraged groups of people in their third age to come together to enjoy learning in subjects of interest to them, without the constraints of a curriculum, classroom or exams. By 1995, 266 University of the Third Age groups had been set up around the country. More recently, the word University has been dropped in favour of the name u3a.

The founders were determined not to create a bureaucracy but wanted a balance between local groups operating independently and a supportive national framework. So, the Third Age Trust came into being, providing services such as IT support, insurance cover, a magazine, branded items and guidance and training to local group Trustees and Officers.

The guiding principles still remain – no age limits, no qualifications required to join, fees to be kept as low as possible, no paid teachers but everyone in the group learning from everyone else. Groups should be member-led, with members deciding what happens in their groups.

Swindon u3a was formed in 1988 and is amongst the largest in the country with around 1600 members and 120 activity groups. The age of members used to be between 60 and 80, but now includes people in their 40s and 90s.

So what does the future hold? Despite u3a being a hugely successful organisation, Gill emphasised how important it is for us all to be aware of the bigger issues and threats that we are likely to face in the future. These include the financial climate (costs for premises continue to rise), demographic changes (people living longer and retirement age rising), changes to working patterns with more people working from home, increased family commitments, technology and AI (will people still want to meet socially in person or prefer to be online). In the past, membership of activity groups was fairly stable but is now more fluid as members miss group meetings due to family/carer responsibilities, frequent holidays or simply other life choices.

Perhaps the biggest threat is a reluctance to volunteer. Many people want to just enjoy their group activities without any other responsibilities at Committee or Group Organiser level taking up their precious time. This could lead to enormous changes over the next 10 years or so in how u3a is managed. But Gill stressed that in no way is this a gloomy picture – just a wake-up call to look into the future and be aware of how society is changing, the effect that may have on u3a, and what we need to do over the coming years to continue to be a successful organisation that is enjoyed by so many people.

Upcoming events

Christmas Party

Monday 8 December - 2.00 pm at Ellendune Community Centre, Wroughton SN4 9LW

Come along and celebrate! There will be Christmas-themed games and quizzes, plus of course tea and cake.

Book your place

As always, please be sure to book a place by:

1. Visiting the website www.swindonu3a.org.uk (login, click on Swindon u3a events, then select the event)
or
2. Telephoning the office on 01793 614629

Bookings can be taken up to 11.30 am on the morning of the meeting.

Group News

RWB Scrabble



RWB Scrabble group are looking for new members. We meet at the Council Offices in Royal Wootton Bassett in one of their Community Rooms. Meeting on the first Monday of each month from 2pm - 4pm. This is a group of mixed abilities, but, above all this is a very sociable/friendly group. There is parking on site, if the car park is full we can park on a side road. The number 55 bus also stops by the the Council Offices. You can always come to a taster session, just to see if this group is right for you. There is a cost to pay for using the venue. Please

contact John Turner at eastleaze@aol.com for more details.

Travel Group J

Visit to Greenwich on Thursday 4th December 2025.

Royal Observatory Greenwich is famous around the world as the home of:

- The Historic Prime Meridian
- Home of the Cutty Sark
- The National Maritime Museum
- The Old Royal Naval College

Departure Times & Pick Up Points:

- 8.00am The Crown – Royal Wootton Bassett
- 8.15am Ellendune Community Centre
- 8.30am Coate Water by the petrol station
- 4.00pm Depart from Greenwich for Swindon

Cost is £30.00 per person which includes coach and driver's gratuity.

All members and friends welcome. Contact: Jackie Theobald 01793 815262 or Jill Stephens 01792 813256, Email M.Theobald1@sky.com

Archery

Submitted by Jim Roberts and John Needle, new Group Leaders

Sadly our U3a Archery leader Terry Horton passed away on 27 September after a long illness. He was our Group Leader for many years, he taught many of our members the correct and safe way to enjoy Archery with humour and in some cases patience. He was well regarded by all who knew him and he will be remembered with fondness and is sorely missed by all. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Are you interested in 3D Printing?

Submitted by Lorraine Holland

I am interested in starting a group dealing with 3D printing which is becoming very popular. The group would meet to discuss methods, materials, etc., share successes and problems and generally aim to build on each other's knowledge. If anyone is interested, please contact leholland888@gmail.com

Monday Pub Lunch Group



The Monday Pub Lunch Group enjoy a lunch on the first Monday of every month. We try different venues and for October we met at The Fox and Hounds in Wroughton.

We could choose a pasta or pizza dish for £2.50 which was excellent value for money. Some members chose desserts too, which were pronounced delicious.

There were 12 of us this time and we all enjoyed a good chat and catch up. Thanks to Isobel Jenner for organising the lunches.

Buen Camino

Submitted by David Hewitt

In December 2000 Swindon U3A organised a supper at Urchfont Manor which we attended. The guest speaker was Judy Foot who talked about her experiences walking the Camino Frances across Northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela. She had walked it several times and had also worked as a volunteer at various hostels along the route.

Having recently joined the Friday walking group I was captivated by the idea of walking this ancient route.

My first trip along the Camino Frances was in 2003 when I walked part of the way with Peter Morgans, also a U3A member. We covered the western third to Santiago de Compostela - the final 155 miles.

It was a memorable experience and one I wanted to repeat, so In 2012 I walked the eastern third, Pamplona to Burgos, with my wife Jackie - about 125 miles.

Just after Covid Kerry Croasdell (who is also in the Friday walking group) and I started walking together on Tuesdays to recce future Friday walks. We often discussed the longer walks we would like to do, and the Camino was regularly mentioned. Kerry had previously walked the Camino, in his case it was Camino Ingles, from Ferrol to Santiago.

This September, in temperatures ranging from 2 degrees at night to 35 degrees during the day, we set off to walk the middle section of the Camino Frances between Burgos and Leon called 'The Meseta', about 120 miles.

There are many pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, and I am very pleased to have completed the trail across northern Spain.

Over the years I have experienced many memorable moments on the Camino, a few mishaps and have met a lot of interesting people. These include a family of 2 adults, 2 children, a dog and a donkey who were walking from Paris to Santiago, a troop of jugglers who were making their way across Spain, entertaining all and sundry, and a young mother with a toddler and a baby in a pushchair.

All this was inspired by a talk at the Swindon U3A supper at Urchfont Manor at Christmastime 25 years ago.

Post script: "David, I too was at that talk and still remember it vividly all these years later. What a coincidence! I so wish I had the time and energy to do the pilgrimage but I fear it's too late. Well done." Gill Brain

Local News and Information

Old Town Christmas Festival Sunday

This year's Old Town Christmas Festival, which includes the switching on of the Christmas lights will take place on 23 November. The event is from 12.00 – 6.00pm. Tickets are £1.85. For more information: <https://www.thisisoldtown.com/support-us/p/christmas-festival-2025>

Swindon Museum and Art Collection

The Swindon Museum and Art Collection, which is now in the Civic Offices in Euclid Street, has a rich collection of free art exhibitions and provides an interesting insight into Swindon's history. Entry is free. The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday 10.30am – 4.30pm.

Please note their website is stating that their lift is currently out of order and they are working to resolve it as quickly as possible.

Current exhibitions include:

- The Origins - the permanent collection
- Swindon born Leslie Cole – an official war artist
- Unlocking Swindon's Jurassic Past – fossil hunters and fossils
- Surreal Impulses – 2 surreal exhibitions, one with a focus on female artists
- The Lost surrealist – Henry Orlik's Quantum Revolution

For further information: <https://www.museumartswindon.com/visit/plan-your-visit/>

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 few months:

5th Nov	Eddington (TBC)
12th Nov	The Roses (TBC)
19th Nov	A Big Bold Beautiful Journey (TBC)
26th Nov	No Cine Seniors scheduled this week
3rd Dec	One Battle After Another
10th Dec	Downton Abbey
17th Dec	The Smashing Machine
24th Dec	Christmas Holidays
31st Dec	Christmas Holidays

The line-up and start time may be subject to late change, please check website/app the week before the scheduled performance for exact information

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:

68	-59	Square root of it	×10	+19	÷7	+103	×2/5	Answer
----	-----	-------------------	-----	-----	----	------	------	--------

Anagrams

This month's anagrams are well-known landmarks in Wiltshire, can you spot them?

- Seen then go – one of the wonders of the world
- Outdo maniac grub – you could find yourself going round and round

- Hereto the wish – one of many

General Knowledge

Which Patron Saint's Day is on 30 November?

Which author, born on 13 November 1850, wrote 'Kidnapped'?

Which Henry was crowned King of England on 6 November 1429?

Who Said it?

Who said: "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

Nelson Mandela	Winston Churchill	Mahatma Gandhi
----------------	-------------------	----------------

Leading Ladies

Match the leading ladies to the Hitchcock films they starred in:

Grace Kelly	The Lady Vanishes
Tippi Hedren	Rear Window
Kim Novak	Marnie
Janet Leigh	Rebecca
Joan Fontaine	Pyscho
Margaret Lockwood	Vertigo

Bonus question: who wrote 'The Birds and Other Stories' that inspired Hitchcock's film?

Music

Match the bands to the albums:

Kind of Blue	Frank Sinatra
Animals	Abba
The Visitors	Yes!
Fragile	Pink Floyd
Songs for Swingin' Lovers!	Steeleye Span
Now We Are Six	Miles Davis

Word of the Month

Vexillology - the study of flags, their history, symbolism, and design.

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

Did you know?



As we enjoy the Autumnal colours of our trees, it is interesting to consider that a single mature oak can shed around 700,000 leaves in Autumn! Leaf dropping is part of a tree's preparation for winter as they enter dormancy and conserve energy. While there is no exact figure on the number of leaves that fall in the UK annually, it's estimated to run into the trillions.

Life in a poem

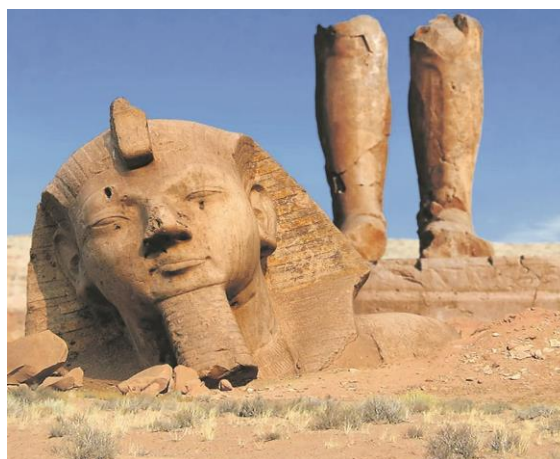
Submitted by Lesley Basu

Listening to the seemingly endless accounts of the power struggles in the world today, I was reminded of Shelley's timeless poem: "Ozymandias " (who had been more commonly known as Rameses 11) and the lesson it holds for all modern day tyrants.

While Shelley's friend, the banker Horace Smith, was staying with the poet and his wife over Christmas 1817 they began to discuss recent discoveries in the Near East. In the wake of Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798, the archaeological treasures found there stimulated the European imagination. The power of pharaonic Egypt had seemed eternal, but now this once-great empire was (and had long been) in ruins, a feeble shadow.

Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of
stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless
things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that
fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.



Swindon u3a Contacts

Chair	Vince Williams
Vice Chair	Linda Young
General Secretary	Monica King
Treasury Team	
Membership	Rose Clarke
Liaison	
Group	Linda Young
Coordinator	
Speaker organiser	Sue Cook
Web Manager	Dave Todd
Systems Manager	Linda Young
Accommodation	Chris Ockwell

chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk
membership@swindonu3a.org.uk

group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk
speaker.organiser@swindonu3a.org.uk
itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk
systems@swindonu3a.org.uk
accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk

**Newsletter
Office
Health & Safety
All committee
members**

Lynda Feeley
General enquiries

newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk
office@swindonu3a.org.uk
secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
committee@swindonu3a.org.uk

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*)

Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10 am until 12 noon (office will be closed during July, see note above).

Telephone: 01793 614629 (Answerphone operates when the office is closed) . This number will be phased out at the end of the year.

From 3 November, you can use the following mobile numbers: 07823 722812 or 07345 162117

Email: office@swindonu3a.org.uk

Web: www.swindonu3a.org.uk

Swindon u3a Charity Number 298853

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 - deadline for the December newsletter is **Friday 21 November**.

Quiz Answers

Mental maths:

The answer is 44

Anagrams:

Stonehenge

Magic Roundabout

The White Horse

General Knowledge:

St Andrew

Robert Louis Stevenson

Henry VI

Who Said It?

Nelson Mandela

Leading Ladies

Grace Kelly	Rear Window
Tippi Hedren	Marnie
Kim Novak	Vertigo
Janet Leigh	Pyscho
Joan Fontaine	Rebecca
Margaret Lockwood	The Lady Vanishes

Bonus question: Daphne Du Maurier wrote 'The Birds and Other Stories'.

Music:

Kind of Blue	Miles Davis
Animals	Pink Floyd
The Visitors	Abba
Fragile	Yes!
Songs for Swingin' Lovers!	Frank Sinatra
Now We Are Six	Steeleye Span