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from the Trustees

Following the appeal in last month's Newsletter, some people did come forward to enquire about the roles advertised.

We are very pleased to be able to report that Denise Bloomer has agreed to take over the role of Minutes Secretary. Welcome Denise! She will work with Brenda Lammin, our outgoing Minutes Secretary, to ensure a smooth transition. Many thanks are due to Brenda for doing an excellent job for several years. We are grateful for her offer to continue to deputise occasionally if needed and wish her well as she takes the opportunity to have a little more time for herself and her family.

We also welcome Chris Firth as our new Publicity Officer. Gill Brain has remained actively involved in all aspects of publicity and will be looking to ensure that Chris has the information and support he needs as he takes on and develops the role.

Discussions have been held with interested parties regarding the post of Chairperson and the process is ongoing. We hope to be able to update members in the April newsletter.

We continue to register new members and in recent weeks, some returning members. With over 300 people joining this academic year, our total membership is now over 1600. Thanks are due, as ever, to our Group Organisers who ensure that we can continue to offer over 130 activities. Without them there would be no Swindon u3a.

We also have a small group of 'core volunteers' who between them ensure that finances, admin, publicity and I.T. functions are managed, groups are supported and events can take place. From time to time there is a need for additional support in these areas. We are grateful to those who have expressed a willingness to help out on an occasional basis and are always happy to add to the list.

Having seen a good deal of change in recent times, it is hoped that the coming months can see some consolidation take place. With the support of members and the understanding that our organisation is based on a culture of active participation, we hope that Swindon u3a can look forward to a settled and successful future.

The Trustees

What's On



Monthly Meetings for March and April

Monday 11 March 2024 – 2.00 pm – Ellendune Community Centre, Barrett Way, Wroughton, Swindon SN4 9LW

5 of the 50 – BASED ON HERSWINDON IN 50 BUILDINGS BOOK – ANGELA ATKINSON

Swindon-based, Angela Atkinson is well-known as a champion of the town via her Born Again Swindonian blog. She's also a published author of five Swindon-related books – the most recent, a collaborative project about West Swindon came out shortly before Christmas 2023.

A small business owner, with a focus on writing or proof-editing business blogs, Angela is also currently the volunteer area lead for the Federation of Small Businesses.

She also sits on the committee of the Friends of Swindon museum and art gallery and the Mechanics' Institution Trust.

Monday 8 April 2024 – 2.00 pm – Ellendune Community Centre, Barrett Way, Wroughton, Swindon SN4 9LW

THE GOLDEN AGE OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

Join author and TV historian Jeff Evans on a journey through your childhood as he tells the fascinating story of children's television in the UK.

Jeff's colourful talk covers the period from the start of television to the 1970s, truly a golden age for those of us who grew up glued to the small screen when we returned home from school. Some people will remember the earliest TV stars such as Muffin the Mule and Andy Pandy; others will recall with great fondness series such as Crackerjack, Ivor the Engine, Thunderbirds, The Magic Roundabout and the rather spooky The Singing Ringing Tree. This talk features them all, and much more besides

This fully illustrated talk will bring back a wealth of happy memories and Jeff will ensure that there are plenty of surprises along the way.

P.S. We have put the information from January's Monthly meeting about **Scams and Frauds** on the website under 'Documents' if you'd like to look at it.

If you plan to attend a Monthly meeting, please remember to book by either:

- 1. Going onto the website swindonu3a.org.uk (just log in and click on the event you want to attend listed on the page) or**
- 2. Telephone the office on 01793 614629**

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

Visit to Gosport

Travel Group J
Visit to Gosport
Thursday 28th March 2024

Our visit to Gosport with its long connection with the Royal Navy will include a guided tour by a member of the Haslar Heritage Group of the former site of the historic Royal Naval Hospital Haslar (exterior as the site is currently being developed into apartments)

The first patients were first admitted to Haslar in 1753 with the final patients in 2009. Once the largest brick building in Europe, Haslar was one of the most advanced hospitals in the world during its 256 year history.

Also, included will be a guided tour by coach of Gosport by the chairman of the Gosport Society.



Departure time and pick up points:

08.30am Crown Hotel Royal Wotton Bassett

08.45am Ellendune Centre Wroughton

08.55am Coate Water, Bus stop by garage.

04.00pm Depart for Swindon

Cost: £23.00 per person which includes coach and drivers gratuity, and guided tours.

All members and friends are welcome

Contact:

Ken Ivie on 01793 845483 or email kenivie@uwclub.net



Visit to Glasgow



Glasgow with Swindon U3A

7 Days - Tue 4th - Mon 10th June 2024

An exciting opportunity for Swindon U3A members!
Please do get in touch if interested.

Price based on 20 people is: £875 per person

Price based on 25 people is: £795 per person

Price based on 30 people is: £740 per person

Single Room Supplement: +£210 per person

In addition, there will be some admission charges.
The final price depends on take up of places.

Itinerary: We will visit Leighton Hall on our journey to Scotland. A privately owned estate advertised as "no stuffy museum". Well known for its collection of objet d'arts, gardens and Woodson's walks. We will now visit Levens Hall on the homeward journey. During our stay there will be five days of visits, Robbie Burns' place of birth, Transport Museum, Falkirk Wheel for the worlds one & only rotating boat lift, Kelpies for its magnificent equine sculptures that stand proudly at 30 metres tall, Kelvin Museum, Glasgow Botanic Gardens, Loch Lomond – an optional boat trip, local whisky distillery visit and a guided coach tour of Glasgow.



Our hotel:

Westerwood Golf & Country Club, Cumbernauld
near Glasgow prides itself on more than just its location, the grounds are second to none without even touching on the 18-hole championship golf course & the spectacular surrounding Campsie Hills. With the 148 sumptuous bedrooms, Swimming pool, Jacuzzi, Leisure club and a range of lavish spa treatments available you will not find yourself short of space to relax.

Holiday Inclusions:

- Price to include all coach travel
- 6 nights Bed and Breakfast and Evening Meal at the hotel



To Book:

If you are interested, please contact Group Organiser
Jane Caudwell.

Email: philipbaylay@virginmedia.com

Mobile: 07471 202507

A deposit of £40 per person due by 12th Feb 2024.
Final balances will be payable by 8th April 2024.

Cheques made payable to SWINDON U3A

Insurance: Barnes Coaches Ltd feel it is important that you are covered by adequate travel Insurance on your holiday) it is optional, and you are welcome to arrange your own. Barnes Coaches Ltd are acting as an Appointed Representative and can arrange Travel Insurance through Wightsure Insurance Group who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Insurance is by Great Lakes Insurance UK as underwritten by Ergo Travel Insurance Service Ltd. If you would like more details please let your group leader know your home and email address so we can contact you about this. Travel Insurance for this 7 day holiday if required is £40 each.

February Monthly Meeting - useful Information

DRIVING SAFELY, FOR LONGER, IN WINTER

Our meeting in February was a presentation by our own Chris Firth and Alexandra Lloyd-Jones from the Older Drivers Forum for Gloucestershire (www.olderdriversforum.com).

The Older Drivers Forum is the leading national organisation focused on mature driver safety and they presented us with a wealth of information. Despite the experience that mature drivers have, a decline in driving skills can be quite subtle. Winter driving involves driving in low light conditions and at age 75 we may require 32 times more light to see effectively than we did at the age of 25, so regular eyesight tests, at least every two years, are essential. By the age of 65, our reactions can be 22 times slower than those of a 30 year old. On wet roads allow even more time to react, at least double the stopping distance than in the dry. In icy conditions it can be 10 times longer.

When did you last look at the Highway Code? Keep up to date with the latest changes. Remember that one of the recent changes is that at junctions, traffic must give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross the road. The 'Dutch Reach' to open your car door safely is also recommended, eg using your left hand to open a door on your right-hand side. The Code can be downloaded free of charge at www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk

It is important to keep driving regularly and, if a couple, to share the driving to ensure you both maintain your driving skills.

If you have a smartphone, download the What3Words app which can identify your location anywhere in the world by three words. This can be given to the emergency services and is particularly helpful on roads with few obvious landmarks. Let someone know if you are going on a long journey. The Find My Friends tracker can be useful to know where people are. Keep a Lions Club 'message in a bottle' with personal and medical details in the glove compartment to assist emergency services.

Plan your journey to minimise demanding roads and avoid crash hotspots - that most fatal collisions take place within 5 miles of home. Use motorways or dual carriageways as much as possible as these are the safest classification of roads. Minimise routes with difficult junctions – the most frequent setting for older driver collisions is turning right at T-junctions. Also, avoid rush hours, which are statistically the riskiest times for mature drivers. Minimise driving into low sun. At age 65, the iris of our eyes can take seven seconds longer to recover than a 15-year old.

As we get older, it is important to think about retiring from driving, Start planning and make a list of regular journeys to form a plan of how to make those trips without driving, eg by joining a private sharing scheme, public transport or a taxi. If you drive fewer than 2,000 miles a year, it is probably cheaper to take a taxi. Finally, remember that driving safely in Winter requires preparation, preparation and preparation! If driving has become a worry, you can take a confidence-building assessment offered by organisations such as IAM RoadSmart – www.iamroadsmart.com After all, our cars get an MoT check, so why shouldn't we?



Group News

Bridge Group



The new Swindon u3a Bridge Group started play in October 2023 and, under the guidance of our excellent leader, Carol Smith, we have been taxing our brains with the rules of Bridge, the meaning of 'One No Trump', 'Double' and 'Dummy'! It certainly keeps the old brain cells working. The group is open to anyone who would like to learn or re-learn

the fascinating game. As you can see a much needed cuppa and biscuit keeps us on our toes.

We meet on Tuesday afternoons at the McCarthy and Stone apartment complex in Old Town Swindon. For further details contact: Gill Brain (madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com)



Painting Together 2 group



There is space for new members within the Painting Together 2 group which meets in the Des Moffat Western Community Centre, Somerset Road, Rodbourne Cheney every second and fourth Friday of the month between 2pm and 4pm. We are a small friendly group meeting in an ideal room with plenty of daylight, adult size tables and chairs. We use any medium and members bring their own materials.

If you are interested in joining us please get in touch by emailing group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk

CONCERTGOERS GO ROMANTIC ON VALENTINE'S DAY



The Concertgoers' Group returned to the excellent Anvil concert hall in Basingstoke on February 14th. The principal works from the Strasbourg Symphony Orchestra were the 'lyrical, romantic' Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 2, beautifully played by soloist Nikolai Lugansky, and two works by

Maurice Ravel - his Mother Goose Suite, and 'La Valse' (his take on the Waltz). These were complemented by two Gallic treats- a 'rollicking' Berlioz Roman Carnival Overture and a depiction of a 'devilish' chase by César Franck.

We were able to get some tickets for a pre-concert talk which included some key extracts from the works and was very enlightening about the music.

Contact
Robin Clegg
07841 347377

Life in a Poem - submitted by Lesley Basu

One more poem from our American poet of last month's newsletter that caught my eye. I found it beautiful and moving (poetic in fact !!) and wanted to share it with you.



Insha'Allah by Danusha Lameris

I don't know when it slipped into my speech
that soft word meaning, "if God wills it."
Insha'Allah I will see you next summer.
The baby will come in spring, Insha'Allah.
Insha'Allah this year we will have enough rain.

So many plans I've laid have unravelled
easily as braids beneath my mother's quick fingers.

Every language must have a word for this. A word
our grandmothers uttered under their breath
as they pinned the whites, soaked in lemon,
hung them to dry in the sun, or peeled potatoes,
dropping the discarded skins into a bowl.

*Our sons will return next month, Insha'Allah.
Insha'Allah this war will end, soon. Insha'Allah
the rice will be enough to last through winter.*

How lightly we learn to hold hope,
as if it were an animal that could turn around
and bite your hand. And still we carry it
the way a mother would, carefully,
from one day to the next.

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

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Copy Dates

Items for the Newsletter must be received by the Editor
by the 18th of the preceding month

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter contributions e-mail address: newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk The Editor reserves the right to amend or abbreviate any entries submitted