

u3a Newsletter

Swindon

September 2025



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

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Open Day 2025

By Gill Brain



Saturday 30 August saw one of the highlights of our Swindon u3a year as we celebrated our 2025 Open Day. I want to thank everyone who contributed to making this such a success. In spite of the constraints which necessitated our holding the event in a smaller venue this year, everyone threw themselves wholeheartedly into both celebrating our u3a, in welcoming the public and in showing what a range of fascinating activities we have to offer.



By our 10.00am opening time, Group Organisers and members of their teams had set up their Group 'stalls' many with intriguing props such as ukeleles, guitars, paintings, handbells, crafts, photographs, books, maps, poems, and a host of other items of interest which illustrated their particular group activities.

Soon after 10.00am the building was filling rapidly with visitors chatting, asking questions, exploring possibilities, many adding their names to group lists, and joining the queue to become members. We also welcomed many existing members who had popped in to renew their membership and find out what else was going on!



Our Open Day is not just about recruiting new members, however, it is also a celebration of our very special and unique organisation. There was certainly a vibrant air of celebration – welcoming smiles, friendly chatter, laughter, catching up with old friends, making new acquaintances.

Of course, there will always be things we can improve on and I will shortly be sending around a questionnaire to get your feedback. It was my first time of organising the event and I very much want to use your views to build improvements into future events. I will also pay attention to the reasons why some GOs chose not to attend so please send me your responses whether you were there or not.

I want to thank everyone who contributed in so many different ways to this year's Open Day. This is your u3a and I hope you got a real sense of being part of the Swindon u3a 'family'. Thank you.

Swindon u3a News

Vacancies

We are looking for volunteers within the Finance, Office and Groups Teams, including a Group Buddy.

For more info on each contact:

group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk for the Group Buddy

treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk for finance

office@swindonu3a.org.uk for the office volunteer

Trustee positions, including that of Vice Chair, will be re-elected at our November AGM. If you are interested in stepping forward, please contact vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk

Promoting Swindon u3a near you

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

October's Monthly Meeting - "u3a Past, Present, Future" Monday 13 October



How much do you know about the organisation that you belong to? Looking ahead to October's Monthly meeting, Gill Brain will be talking about u3a's development, current situation and will pose some interesting and searching questions about its future. Come along and join in the discussion.

Upcoming events

David Bailey - 'Good Hare Day'

Monday 8 September, 2.00 pm at Ellendune Community Centre

Multi award-winning wildlife photographer David Bailey will be making a return visit, this time with his 'Good Hare Day' presentation. Recognised as one of the UK's foremost brown hare photographers, David will weave a captivating narrative through his stunning imagery. His intimate connection with these remarkable creatures is evident in every shot, showcasing their elegance and playful nature in the wild. Prepare to be mesmerised!

Book your place

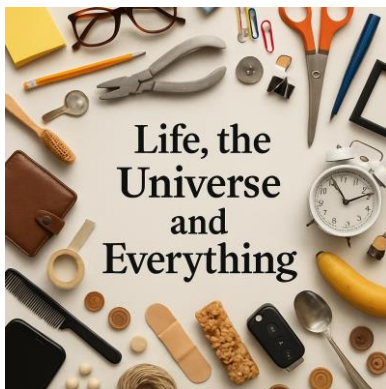
As always, please be sure to book a place by:

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

Life the Universe and Everything



Our group has a couple of vacancies, and we welcome anyone who is curious about life, the universe and everything.

Each month we invite a speaker to present a talk on almost any subject. Previous talks have included bee keeping, Swindon theatres, the UK Space Agency, Extreme weather in the USA, Swindon Photographic Society, and the Crystal Palace.

We aim to keep talks accessible to all, to engage everyone whatever their background and knowledge. If interested please contact Chris Brooks at wttmh1@gmail.com.

Travel Group J

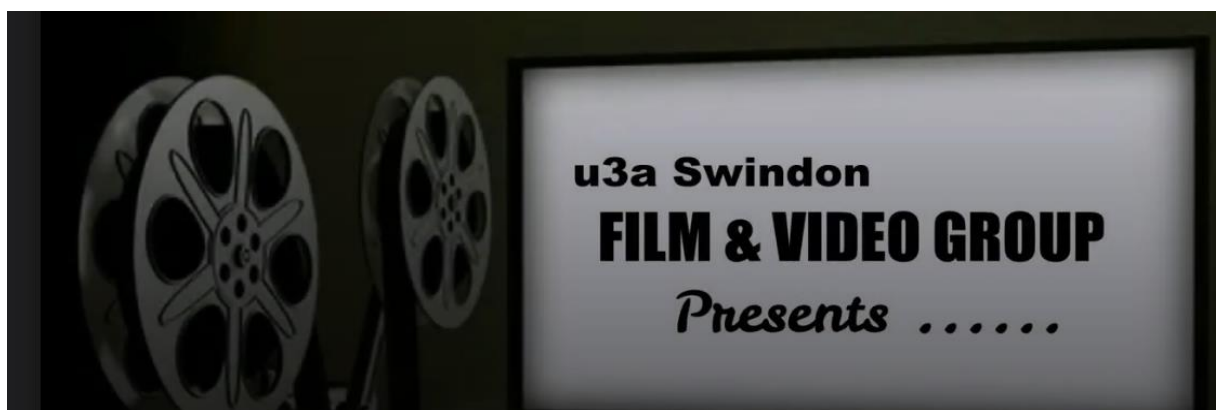


Travel Group J are organising a coach trip to the Natural History Museum in London on Thursday 23rd October 2025.

The price is currently £22.00 per person, coach picking up in Royal Wootton Bassett, Wroughton Ellendune Centre and Coate Water (by Petrol Station).

If you are interested, please contact: Mrs Ann Everden 01793 812650 or Mrs D Maxwell 01793 637817.

FAV – Film and Video Club



Our film and video club is open to anyone who is interested in making and sharing video and film projects. You don't need to have experience or expensive equipment. We share our knowledge and learn together. Current members include a creative writer who is happy to help with any scripts, plus several members with expertise in editing software packages who can help get newcomers started.

We meet the first Monday of each month from 2.30 – 4.15pm in Wroughton.

Our aims are:

1. To meet regularly to share our individual video and film projects and receive constructive criticism and encouragement.
2. To collaborate as a team to make larger scope videos.
3. To learn more about the art and craft of film and video making.
4. To provide a video creation facility to Swindon U3A and other worthy charities and causes.

Contact Peter Dore: dorepeter96@gmail.com

Broome Manor Pétanque (BMP) Triples Competition

By Graham Perry



A total of six teams participated in our triples competition on Friday 15 August.



Winning team

The competition was won decisively by Vince Osgood, Edwina Turk and Lou Crowden who amassed a total of 53 points from the five games. They won Gold medals and the Les Brian Trophy.

In second place with 40 points and receiving Silver medals were Keith Stenning, Sandra Allen and Monica Brian.



2nd place team



3rd place team

After five games there was a tie for third place with three teams gaining 39 points. Based on the games, where those three teams met, third place and Bronze medals were awarded to Roger Hughes, Karen Everden and Lynn Fox.

Local News and Information

Explore Local Heritage

Every September, across the UK English Heritage offers free events including talks, crafts, trails etc.

This year the events run between 12-21 September. Local events range from the Ellendune 1200 celebrating the 1200th anniversary of the Battle of Ellendune, an Open Day at Heelis, Swindon's Railway Village, to Heritage Apple Day at Lydiard Park and many more. All events are free, some require pre-booking, others do not need to be booked. Find out more at www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Swindon College Restaurant

If you haven't discovered it yet, Swindon College has a restaurant managed and run by catering students. It offers two course (£12) or three course (£13) meals. On Thursday, there is also an evening 3 course dinner option at £20. The restaurant will open for the new term on 7 October.

Tuesday	12-12:30pm seating lunch
Wednesday	12-12:30pm seating lunch
Thursday	12-12.30pm seating lunch 6:30-7.00pm seating dinner
Friday	12-12:30pm seating lunch

For further details and booking information visit:

<https://www.newcollege.ac.uk/information/about-the-college/commercial-services/the-restaurant/>

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

6	x 8	50% of it	3/6 of it	x 12	+ 35	- 53	÷ 6	Answer
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Anagrams

Can you unscramble these u3a Swindon groups?

- Manor Toys – Clue: with this group you might see the Clangers
- Enlarging Far Row – Clue: with this group you will enjoy a blooming experience
- Bat Sentinel – Clue: with this group you will be ping ponging around

Who Said it?

Which of the following writers said: "Time and tide wait for no man."

- William Shakespeare

- Geoffrey Chaucer
- Charles Dickens

Films

Name the actor who played eight characters of the D'Ascoyne family in Kind Hearts and Coronets, he's also famous for his role in Star Wars in later life.

Which of the following films connect Faye Dunaway, Sting and Noel Harrison:

- Three Days of the Condor
- The Thomas Crown Affair
- Bonnie and Clyde

Miscellaneous

How many nations are taking part in the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup in the UK?

What connects the following food items: Kit Kats, custard creams, and cream crackers?

Which of the following is credited with being the first to calculate the circumference of the earth?

- Eratosthenes
- Galileo Galilei
- Leonardo Da Vinci

Word of the Month

Boketto (boh-KEHT-toh): a Japanese noun which means that soft faraway stare that drifts beyond doing. It is the space between thoughts and a quiet place to rest your mind.

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

Did you know?

During WWII actress and inventor Hedy Lemarr developed a frequency hopping theory to prevent torpedoes from having their signals jammed. The theory is often said to be the basis of our wi-fi, Bluetooth and GPS today.

Her theory was based on varying radio frequencies (frequency hopping) at irregular intervals to prevent interception or jamming of transmissions. Hedy patented the invention in 1942 and offered it to the US Navy. Unfortunately, it was never used and remained classified until 1980.

Life in a poem

Submitted by Lesley Basu

I did not know that the writer : Margaret Atwood (she of "Handmaid's Tale" fame ..) was also a poet! Well, you learn something new every day so they say. I love the sensuous appeal of the imagery she uses here; reminded me a little of Keats.

Late Autumn by Magaret Atwood

This is the plum season
blue and distended, the moon
hazed, this is the season of peaches

with their lush lobed bulbs
that glow in the dusk, apples
that drop and rot
sweetly, their brown skins veined as glands

No more the shrill voices
that cried Need Need
from the cold pond, bladed and urgent as new grass

Now it is the crickets
that say Ripe Ripe
slurred in the darkness, while the plums

dripping on the lawn outside
our window, burst
with a sound like thick syrup
muffled and slow

The air is still
warm, flesh moves over
flesh, there is no hurry.



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
Newsletter	Lynda Feeley
Office	General enquiries
Health & Safety	
All committee members	

chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
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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)

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. We will feature as many as we can over the coming months.
Send submissions to: newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk - deadline for the September newsletter is **Friday 19 September**.

Quiz Answers:

Mental maths:

The answer is 21

Anagrams:

Manor Toys = Astronomy

Enlarging Far Row = Flower Arranging

Bat Sentinel = Table Tennis

Who Said It?

"Let's get on with the voting; time and tide won't wait, you know." This first appeared in Chaucer's Prologue to the Clerk's Tale and has since been shortened to encourage us to live in the present and take advantage of every opportunity that comes along.

Films

- Alec Guinness played the D'Ascoynes in Kind Hearts and Coronets and also played Obi Wan Kenobi in Star Wars in 1977.
- The Thomas Crown Affair connects actress Faye Dunaway, singer and songwriter Sting, and actor and singer Noel Harrison. Noel Harrison sang the theme tune to the 1968 version of the film. Dunaway played Vicki Anderson in the 1968 version of the film and returned to play Thomas Crown's therapist in the 1999 remake. Sting sang the theme tune to the 1999 remake.

Miscellaneous

- 16 nations will compete in the 10th Women's Rugby World Cup. The quadrennial championship is organised by World Rugby and will be played from 22 August until 27 September across 8 UK cities.
- All the of named foods have their names printed on them.
- Eratosthenes, Ancient Greek philosopher who died 194 BC. His calculation was remarkably accurate, even by modern standards.