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1 Chairs Blog October 2024

Well, the Summer has now certainly finished and quickly turned into Autumn, all the leaves are turning brown on the trees and as usual its wet! Halloween will soon be here and I for one will be busy turning our house into a “Spooky House” with help from all my grandchildren. Why not send us some pics of your house all decorated up for the next newsletter?

At our last monthly Management Meeting we discussed the upcoming vacancies within our Swindon u3a Management Committee/Trustee positions. Just in case you didn't know, our constitution requires us to refresh or change our individual Trustees a maximum of every six years. This is a Third Age Trust requirement to ensure that all our u3a members get a chance to volunteer for management committee / Trustee positions annually and that the same old management team don't just stay put and become stale. Therefore, we are always looking out for new volunteers to become part of the Management Team to share new ideas with us and help with the core management responsibilities.

Current vacancies include Membership Liaison member and Publicity Officer, but other roles and positions are also likely to become vacant too in the not-too-distant future. If you want to volunteer for any of these roles (or any other) then please let us know soonest so that we can include your submission for voting at our AGM in November. Without volunteers for these roles then they will likely remain unfilled. In addition to Trustee positions, we're also keen to hear from you if you want to volunteer to help in any other way, be it in our office or part of our group co-ordinators etc, or just helping out in general at events; you'll always be welcome!

As reported last time, we had a great turn out at our recent Open Day; the feedback from our office teams reported a steady flow of new members wishing to join us and a good number of members renewing their annual membership too. It really does help us out a great deal if we can get annual renewals done on time each year as this reduces or eliminates the need for our office staff to send out reminders and chase up members to see if they want to stay with us.

We are also trying to find ways of tackling the transport problem we get at some of our events. Some members may travel alone in a car to a particular meeting or event, whilst others have to rely on a bus or taxi to get them there. Then there's always the inevitable parking problems we get at some of the larger events that we hold, I for one couldn't find anywhere to park in Wroughton for our last AGM and missed the meeting completely. So, we are looking at ways we could promote car sharing schemes or something similar. If you have any ideas or suggestions on this then feel free to start up your own scheme within your group or just get in touch with any ideas you may have and we will see what we can do.

Looking forward to seeing you at the AGM next month.
Vince Williams

Monthly Meetings October to December 2024

Report of September Meeting: Henry VIII and the Field of Cloth of Gold

Popular u3a speaker and renowned historian Dr Gill White entertained us at the September meeting. As a teacher in the Department of Continuing Education at Oxford University, Gill certainly knew how to bring history to life – if only History lessons at school had been more like this!

The Field of Cloth of Gold was a chance to compete for honour and glory between King Henry VIII of England and King Francois I of France, both very similar, young kings in their twenties. It was the most expensive, luxurious but ultimately futile event in history. The famous Hampton Court Palace painting was painted between 1545 and 1550, a generation after the event.

Following the signing of the Treaty of London, the Kings of England and France had promised peace and friendship between the two countries forever and their heirs were betrothed – the Dauphin was aged just 8 months and Princess Mary was definitely the older woman at the age of one year and 8 months!

Gill outlined how in the Summer of 1520, the ‘Mary Rose’ was sent ahead to clear the channel of pirates in advance of 5995 English people travelling to support the King at this great occasion. Cardinal Wolsey, at the height of his power, acted as the chief party planner on the English side. In total, some 12,000 people were camping in the fields outside Calais.

They were camping in very luxurious tents, decorated in blue velvets and thousands of gold embroidered fleur-de-lys on the French side, and on the English the green and white stripes of the Tudor ‘logo’ with lots of scarlet and gold. We learned how ‘cloth of gold’ is made by weaving gold thread (the weft) with silk (the warp). There were jousting tournaments and discussions, and above all it was a gastronomic marathon that lasted three weeks. All this and yet by 1521 England and France formally went to war – again!

Future meetings

**Monday 14 October 2024 – 2.00 pm – Ellendune Community Centre
THE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION**



Radnor Street Swindon

Hear about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and how it manages and cares for the memorials, cemeteries and headstones in 23,000 locations across 150 countries. Their heritage estate covers horticulture too – looking at the cemeteries, monuments and all the gardens and landscape together – and taking a conservation-based approach to how best to look after these in the future.

Monday 11 November 2024 – AGM (Formal Notice on page 10 below)

**Monday 9 December 2024 – 2.00-4.30 pm – Ellendune Community Centre
CHRISTMAS PARTY**



Doesn't time fly? It might seem rather early to be thinking about Christmas but it will be upon us in no time! Can you remember where you put that Christmas jumper?

So put the date of our annual Christmas Party into your diaries now. There will be a Christmas Quiz, music, fun and games. Oh, and tea and cakes of course. We would love you to come and join us on:

Going to monthly meetings?

If you plan to attend Monthly Meetings, 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. Telephoning the office on 01793 614629**

New Members' Meeting

Saturday 12th October 10.00 a.m.- 12.00. Coleview Community Centre SN3 4AS

This will be an opportunity for newer members to meet each other as well as some of the Trustees and other volunteers.

The programme will include:

- short presentations about our u3a and how it works
- light-hearted 'getting to know you' activities
- tea and biscuits
- an opportunity to give feedback, share ideas and ask questions
- an opportunity to learn about potential volunteer roles

This meeting is primarily designed for anyone who has joined us since the last New Members' meeting in November. Anyone who joined earlier but was unable to attend the previous meeting would also be welcome.

Welcome Booklet

For the last 3 years, all new members have received an e-version of our Welcome booklet which includes information about our u3a and how it operates.

The latest edition is now available for all members to access via the Homepage. To find it, click on the Documents tab then on Policies. Then on Welcome Booklet.

Group News

Please Note: Revised Date for Aviation Group Visit to Army Museum of Flying

Middle Wallop

Friday 25th October 2024

Tucked away just a few miles northeast of Salisbury lies the Museum of Army Flying adjacent to the Army Air Corps Airfield at Middle Wallop.

Devoted to telling the history of British Army Flying, two large hangars house the impressive journey of British soldiers in the air from the pioneering days of balloons and kites to the Glider Pilot Regiments dropping At Arnhem right through to the modern chapter of helicopter operations.

Overlooking the active airfield is the Apache Cafe, this is an excellent spot to enjoy a bite to eat or a drink whilst admiring all manner of AAC aircraft.

Departure times and pick-up points:

9.00 am Ellendune Centre Wroughton

9.10 am Downs View/ Marlborough Rd

9.15 am Coate Water, bus stop opposite The Sun PH

4.00 pm Depart for Swindon

Cost £31 per person which includes entry to museum, coach and driver's gratuity. All members and friends are welcome.

Contact:

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

Reading Shakespeare Group

There is a world elsewhere. (Coriolanus)

The Reading Shakespeare Group had a successful morning at Open Day, attracting at least four to five prospective members and had one definite new member sign up and turn up to the meeting on Tues 3 Sept.



Charles and Susan 'manning' the desk on Open Day 31 Aug 2024

We would love to see more of you (dig out that old Shakespeare compendium!) and come along on the First and Third Tuesday of the month, 10.30-12noon.

We meet at the **Des Moffat Western Community Centre, Somerset Rd, Rodbourne Cheney, SN2 1NF**; there is plenty of parking space behind the building.

Or take the No.5 bus from town going in the direction of the Orbital Park (bus stop Churchward Avenue).

For more information contact Charles on linfield245@btinternet.com

Thought is free (the Tempest)

**Travel Group J:
Visit to Tredegar House & Newport
Thursday 31st October 2024**

Tredegar House is one of the architectural wonders of Wales and one of the most significant late 17th-century houses in the whole of the British Isles. Set in a beautiful 90-acre park and 3 walled gardens this red-brick National Trust property provides an ideal setting for a wonderful day out.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/wales/tredegar-house>

Cost:

Non-members of NT £ 32.50 per person which includes entry to house coach and driver gratuity

Members of NT £21.50

Departure Times and pick-up points to be advised when booking seats.

Contact: **Peter & Barbara Davidson on 01793 520595**

Potential New Group

John Turner is seeking members for a TOPICAL DISCUSSION GROUP.

I am looking at starting a new group, hopefully in January of next year. This will be a discussion group, with a bit of a difference.

Based around the idea of a Coffee Morning or Afternoon Social.

Getting together to discuss a wide range of subjects, relevant to what is going on today.

Normally we meet socially, catch up with members' news etc and that's it.

I want to make it more interesting by adding the discussion element. Topics will be chosen by members. Also, rather than have a large discussion group. I am looking at having smaller groups of 3 or 4 people. There will be a need to respect members' views. Some might find it intimidating to express views in a large group, whereas in a smaller group, they may feel more comfortable.

There will be a mediator on hand.

I am looking at holding this once a month, in Swindon on a Tuesday.

If there is sufficient interest I will look to find a venue, which has free parking, also if I manage to find a suitable pub, a chance maybe to have lunch.

Ideally looking **for 14 members to start off with.**

Please get in touch if interested. John Turner. eastleaze@aol.com

Life in a Poem - submitted by Lesley Basu



Autumn is fast approaching and on 15th October we celebrate the Day of the Tree ! So, this month, a commemorative poem by another writer dedicated to celebrating language and nature; **Robert Macfarlane**. Caroline Mellor made use of his quotes to introduce her own poems published in previous newsletters, so this month we have one of his own poems.

Originally written for the people of Sheffield, during their battle to avert the felling of more than 17,000 trees in the city, "**Heartwood**" was turned into a beautiful linocut by the illustrator Nick Hayes and later featured on the album: "Spell Songs".

Robert Macfarlane: born 15th August 1976 in Halam, Nottinghamshire is a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He is best known for his books on landscape, nature, people and language, which include ***The Old Ways***, ***Landmarks*** and ***The Lost Words***.

In 2017 he received the E. M. Forster award for Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

HEARTWOOD

WOULD YOU HEW ME
TO THE HEARTWOOD, CUTTER?
WOULD YOU LEAVE ME OPEN-HEARTED?

PUT AN EAR TO MY BARK, CUTTER,
HEAR MY SAP'S MUTTER,
MARK MY HEARTWOOD'S BEAT,
MY LEAVES' FLUTTER.

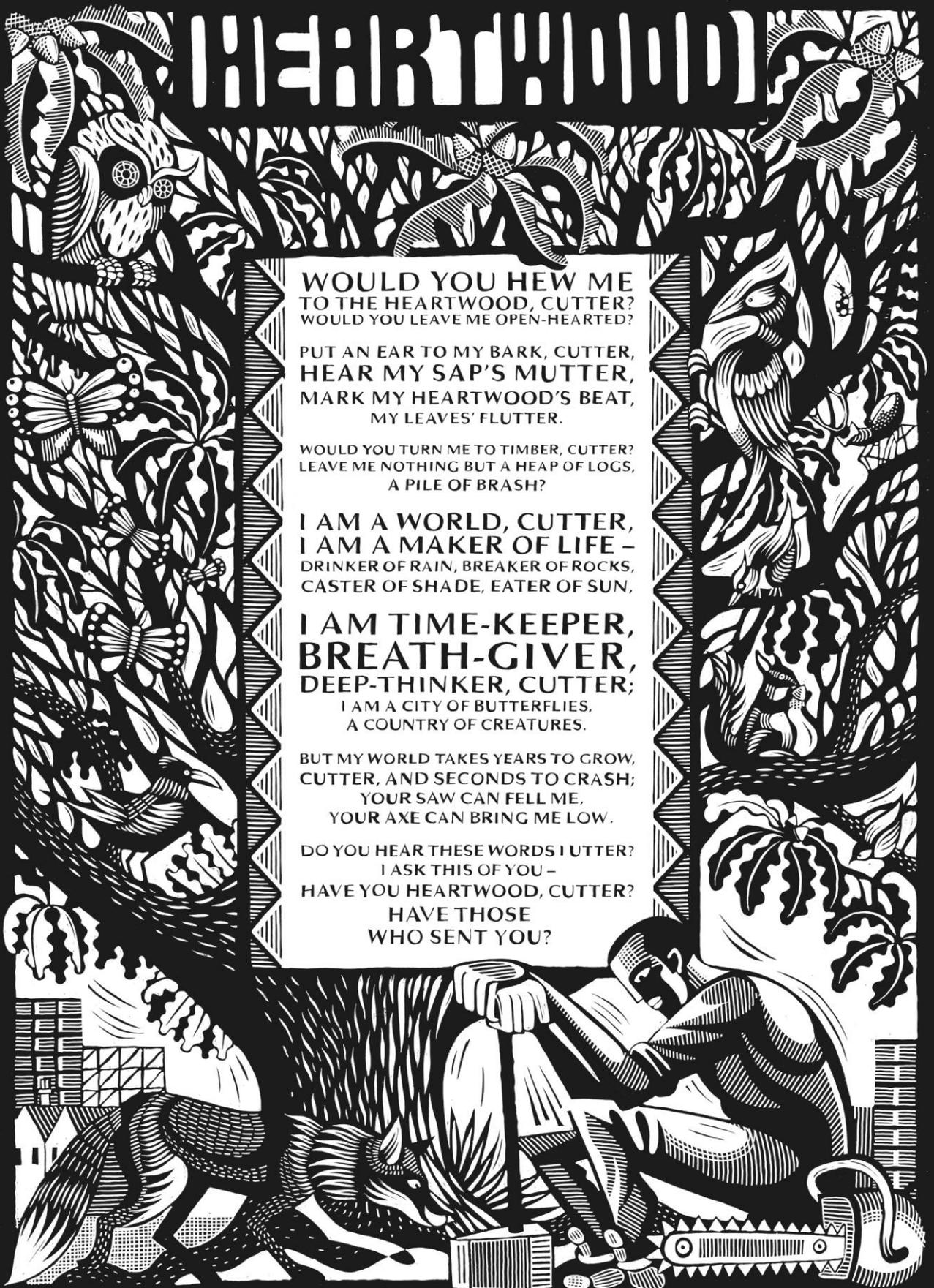
WOULD YOU TURN ME TO TIMBER, CUTTER?
LEAVE ME NOTHING BUT A HEAP OF LOGS,
A PILE OF BRASH?

I AM A WORLD, CUTTER,
I AM A MAKER OF LIFE -
DRINKER OF RAIN, BREAKER OF ROCKS,
CASTER OF SHADE, EATER OF SUN,

I AM TIME-KEEPER,
BREATH-GIVER,
DEEP-THINKER, CUTTER;
I AM A CITY OF BUTTERFLIES,
A COUNTRY OF CREATURES.

BUT MY WORLD TAKES YEARS TO GROW,
CUTTER, AND SECONDS TO CRASH;
YOUR SAW CAN FELL ME,
YOUR AXE CAN BRING ME LOW.

DO YOU HEAR THESE WORDS I UTTER?
I ASK THIS OF YOU -
HAVE YOU HEARTWOOD, CUTTER?
HAVE THOSE
WHO SENT YOU?



Notice of Swindon u3a Annual General Meeting

Dear Members

Notice is hereby given of the Swindon u3a AGM, to be held at Ellendune Centre, Wroughton on 11th November 2024 at 2.15 pm (Entry from 2 pm).

It is essential if you are planning to attend, that you register your place via the website or ask the Office to do so for you (01793 614629).

We are obliged to meet a quorate for the AGM attendance, so we need to know the numbers.

Monica King
Honorary Secretary

AGENDA

- 1 Chair's Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the AGM held on 13th November 2023
- 4 Matters Arising
- 5 Chair's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts 2023/24
- 7 Election of Committee
- 8 Any Other Business

Nomination forms for election to the Committee can be obtained from the Secretary, as below.

The closing date for these and for any questions to be put to the Committee is 28th October 2024.

Please send any completed forms to: secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk

Swindon u3a Contacts

Chair	Vince Williams	chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
Vice Chair	Chris Birch	vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
General Secretary	Monica King	secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
Treasury Team		treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk
Membership Liaison	Jill Kelly	membership@swindonu3a.org.uk
Group Coordinator	Sharon Finch	group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk
Speaker organiser	Sue Cook	speaker.organiser@swindonu3a.org.uk
Web Manager	Dave Todd	itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk
Systems Manager	Linda Young	systems@swindonu3a.org.uk
Accommodation	Chris Ockwell	accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk
Newsletter	Chris Firth	newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk
General enquiries		office@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office Manager	Sylvia Alexander	office.manager@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office administration		office@swindonu3a.org.uk
Health & Safety		secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
All committee members		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

Telephone: 01793 614629 (Answerphone operates when the office is closed)

Email: office@swindonu3a.org.uk

Web: www.swindonu3a.org.uk

Swindon u3a Charity Number 2988533

Dates for your Diary

(If you have anything you think would be of member-wide interest, contact me and I will include it here. Editor)

12 October New Members Meeting: details above

14 October 2024: Monthly Meeting 2 pm – Ellendune Hall Wroughton
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission details above

11 November 2024: Annual General Meeting

9 December 2024: Christmas Party

20-28 September 2025 U3a Week national celebration

Last Word

Thank you for letting me know about group activities. It's always good to hear what groups are doing and what events or visits are planned. Keep them coming, please.

Send me a report on the event and I will include it in future newsletters.

Membership is still very positive with 1753 members when I looked today.

As promised a little more on u3a central.

The **Annual u3a Week** happens at the end of September each year and has just finished for 2024. It's an opportunity to find out what other local u3as are doing and get ideas for the future. next year u3a week is 20-28 September 2025. Go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/u3a-week> for a taster.

One thing which caught my eye in the Newsletter was a report that confirmed the benefit of lifelong learning for all "Learn to Live: A blueprint for better health and well-being," <https://www.u3a.org.uk/latest-news/new-report-learn-to-live> well worth a read.

A team from u3a competed in Only Connect on BBC2 on Monday, 23 September in a fiercely competitive round. It is available on iPlayer.

Please send Copy for the October newsletter to me please by 21st October. As usual send to me as a docx and images as jpegs. It makes it easier to compile the newsletter.

Chris Firth
Editor