

# **u3a** Newsletter

Swindon

## **October 2025**



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

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# **NOTICE of the Swindon u3a AGM**

**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 11<sup>th</sup> 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**

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

For more info on each contact:

[group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk) for the Group Buddy

[treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk) for finance

[office@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:office@swindonu3a.org.uk) for the office volunteer

We are also seeking a Newsletter Co-ordinator, for more information please contact:

[madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com](mailto:madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com)

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](mailto:vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk)

## **HOW TO APPLY**

If you are interested in these roles, send an expression of interest as soon as possible to [committee@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:committee@swindonu3a.org.uk)

# Swindon u3a News

## Open Day 2025

Many thanks all our members who supported Open Day. GO's, Office staff, volunteers, the Refreshments team, Committee members, turned up with full commitment to help Swindon u3a 'showoff' its wonderful range of activities. In spite of the constraints of space you all created what someone described as a 'delightful buzz'.

Thank you for the wealth of feedback which I will use to help forward planning for next year. Gill Brain

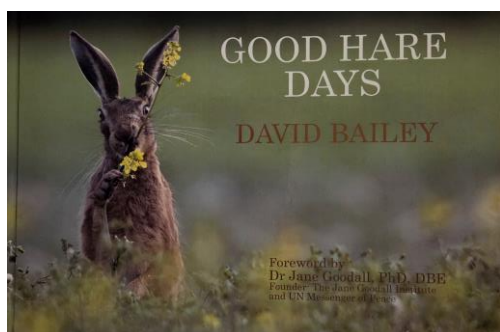
## Promoting Swindon u3a near you

There will be a u3a stand at Swindon Cineworld on Seniors Day on 8 October.

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](mailto:madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com)

## Monthly Meetings

### Report on 'Good Hare Days'



The first meeting of the new term saw wildlife photographer David Bailey making a return visit. He promised we would be mesmerised and we were!

Self-taught in photography, David has gained the Brand Laureate Award (equivalent to a Grammy) for his work.

Chance meetings with Dr Rhys Jones of Cardiff University and star of the BBC series 'Rhys Jones Wildlife Patrol' led to David being asked to film some owls – after which he was told he was joining the production team. BBC's Springwatch and ITV's Coast and Country programmes followed.

For years David has had a fascination with hares. Their moods can reflect ours; bad tempered, funny, relaxed, perplexed, determined or just plain lazy.

As David photographs on a working farm, the yearly planting of crops in different fields dictates where he will find the most hares. Tractors don't seem to bother them, but harvest time must be a real shock, imagine going to work in the morning and returning in the evening, only to find your home gone!

David's photographs were stunning and included a sequence of boxing hares photographed with a camera that can take twenty images a second. That took three years of intensive work to capture.

While waiting for hares, other wildlife makes the occasional appearance including deer, hen harriers, barn owls, kestrels and stoats, all of which can make the day extra special.

But capturing such beautiful images really comes down to getting out of bed at 3.00 am to lay flat on the ground with a good supply of food and drink!

## Upcoming events

### 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.

### New Members Meeting – 25 October

A blue poster for a New Members Meeting. On the left is the u3a Swindon logo with the tagline 'learn, laugh, live'. In the center, the text reads 'New Members Meeting', 'Towcester Suite', 'Coleview Community Centre', 'Saturday 25th October', '10:00 - 12:00'. Below this, it says 'An informal get together where you can meet the committee, get an overview of the member website, and ask questions.' and 'And, of course, tea, coffee and biscuits!'. On the right is a photograph of a woman standing at a podium addressing a group of people seated in a room. A yellow circular button in the bottom left corner says 'Login and click here to register'.

### Book your place

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

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

You can book by telephone and leave a voicemail anytime before Monday.

# Group News

## Merrifolk

We are a group of 'musicians' who enjoy playing music together once a fortnight. We are quite a jolly bunch and not all of us are note perfect so don't let that worry anyone who is thinking about joining the group.

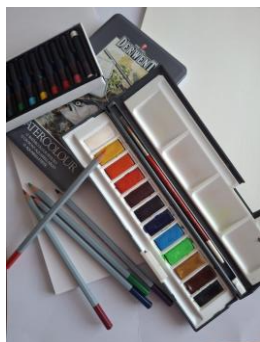
We ideally need a bass guitarist also melody instruments, so dust off those instruments, come and join us. Remember practice makes perfect so if you are not perfect now after a few sessions with us you could notice quite a difference. We do not play from difficult music, some pieces are old standards and others have a more folky tone but all are very enjoyable to play.

## Ukulele For Fun

We are looking for a few more experienced players, only 8 years ago we were all beginners but as we play once a fortnight we have gradually improved.

If you feel you would like to join us please make contact with us through U3a. We play a wide variety of enjoyable music. It is always an enjoyable session and the accent is on FUN.

## Painting Together 2



There is space for new members in the Painting Together 2 Group. We are a friendly group and meet at the Western Community Centre on the second and fourth Friday of the month at 2pm. Members paint in watercolours, acrylics and pastels. Drawing and charcoals are also welcomed.

If you are interested in joining us please contact our Joint Organisers: Anne Hembery tel: 07791 183199 or Caroline Towers tel: 07809 206308.

## Travel Group J

Travel Group J is 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.

## 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](mailto:M.Theobald1@sky.com)

### Climate Change Group

The Swindon u3a Climate change group has got off to a flying start this term. With the very hot summer and drought we have just experienced which the UK Met. Office report of 28/8/25 described is “the hottest summer ever”, plus the world-wide extreme weather events which have continued apace with wild fires and floods increasing, it's no wonder that people are now beginning to realise the seriousness of the situation.

Our first session looked at the basic science and the terminology and jargon used in climatology with lively discussion accompanying this.

In future sessions we will be looking at the effects of climate change, mitigation and adaptation, as well as the UN IPCC programmes such as the 2015 Paris Agreement (COP 26) and the forthcoming COP 30 in November 2025 in Brazil. Finally climate breakdown and collapse (unless measures are taken to prevent this).

There are still places left for people to join the group, contact Bill Hughes email [bill.hughes1@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.hughes1@btinternet.com) or text 07933157419

### Broome Manor Pétanque (BMP)

Graham Perry



The Broome Manor Pétanque Autumn Mêlée was held on Friday the 19th September. A dozen entrants enjoyed a glorious autumn day's play. Six rounds were played, where every player had a different partner for each game. The winner was the person with the highest aggregate score after all the rounds had been played. The order of play was arranged prior to the competition, and players were assigned to their initial teams at random.

After four rounds, at the break for lunch, Keith Stenning was in a clear lead having only dropped four points with a total of 48. However, in the first game after lunch, Keith only managed to add 4 points to his total. This allowed Roger O'Carroll to catch up with him, so that both players now had a total of 52 points.

The draw placed Keith and Roger in opposite teams resulting in an interesting final game. Play was close and continued to the time limit. The result was not decided until the final end which gave Roger one more point than Keith.

Congratulations go to Roger for winning a close competition. His final score was 61 points, and the next 6 best scores were 54 or above.

Thanks are due to Peter Latham who, although unable to play, came along and helped with adjudicating play and scoring. All in all we had a very good day.

## **Travel Group G Report on Visit to Newcastle**

Jane Caudwell



We had a really memorable and busy trip to Newcastle in September 2025, visiting many different venues during our stay.

On the way we visited Wollaton Hall, owned by Nottingham City Estate, originally a family country house with a deer park, now Nottinghamshire's Natural History Museum set in a huge parkland area.

Beamish was our first full day in the area. A living museum set in huge grounds. Many of us had been before, but each time you visit there are different things. Some of the highlights included, seeing the vacuum shoot work to send cash from shop to cashier in the Co-op, fish and chips, ride on a vintage tram or bus and going down the drift mine, bent double! One of our group realised when she visited the school that it was the one that her mum attended! There was a photo opportunity of The Angel of the North on the way back to the hotel.

Bamburgh Castle was another fascinating place to visit. It has amazing sea views and the day was clear. Our tour guide gave us some of the history of the many people who had lived there, explaining that it wasn't always good to be a monarch in past times – usually killed!!

Then we moved on to Lindisfarne. people visited the castle, Priory, local church, the beach or just sat and enjoyed an ice cream and the views back over the causeway to Bamburgh. Seals basked as we left, apparently, they are females waiting to pup at this time of year.

Next morning was atmospheric to say the least. Our visit to Housesteads was in the rain! It did not deter many of us. Later we visited Hexham, a small market town full of charm. Lunch and visits to the Abbey, shops, a Sci FI exhibition were enjoyed. On our return to Newcastle, we met a tour guide who gave us a fascinating insight into Newcastle, its history, important buildings including the castle, cathedrals, iconic bridges, football ground and people. Some of us stayed with her for a walking tour. This whetted our appetite for the following day, a free day.

Free day included: train to Durham Cathedral, Metro to the coast, Laing art gallery, Hancock Museum and mooching round the shops – there is an original M&S Penny Bazaar in Grainger Market!

For our last day, we visited Alnwick Castle. So much to see and do. The Castle, the ornate gardens, including the Poison Garden; a fascinating place to have a guided tour. Some plants are so toxic they are in cages. We also saw the water features, three museums and enjoyed coffee and ice creams.

On our way home, we had a food stop at Wetherby service station then on to Kedleston Hall, now owned by the National Trust. It is vast and very ornate! It was built to outdo Chatsworth House, another local county estate home. As we boarded the coach for the last time, I asked a passerby to take a group photo. He was very personable and attentive. As he left, he told us he's a wedding photographer!!

In the evenings we had time to walk around Newcastle before we dined. Later we had a few quizzes to challenge our brains, organised by Phil!

One comment made by all of us, the hospitality of the local people was amazing, they were all very proud to showcase their venues. Several of the group planned to meet family and friends whilst in the area. They missed some of the trips, but had a good time.

Many thanks to all of our group! And special thanks to Scott, our driver and the team at Barnes. Also, to the U3A team. Val Dickens the u3a treasurer for our trip, Linda Young and Dave Todd our group buddy for their advice and support. We certainly followed u3a principles of Learn, Laugh and Live!

## 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 few months:

- 8 October Superman (2025)
- 15 October The Life of Chuck
- 22 October Materialists



No film on 29 October as it is school half term

## 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

41	+ 43	÷ 2	- 18	third of it	+ 48	quarter of it	Answer =
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### October themed anagrams

Reckons – an autumnal playground game?

Late Mauve Sun – creates plenty of garden work!

Helana Owl – might be scary

### Downton Abbey Quiz

Which of the following actors played Stowell, Lord Sinderby's butler?

Dennis Waterman	Nicholas Lyndhurst	Alun Armstrong
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Which of the following actors created the series and wrote the screenplay for the film?

Nigel Havers	Julian Fellowes	Nathaniel Parker
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Which of the following Oxfordshire villages was used in the series?

Alvescot	Broadwell	Bampton
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Which of the following Wiltshire villages was used to recreate a 1920's livestock market in series six and featured in the movie?

Lacock	Marlborough	Aldbourn
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### Novels

Which of the following Ray Bradbury book features the line: "First of all, it was October, a rare month for boys."

Something Wicked This Way Comes	The Halloween Tree	Long After Midnight
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### Music

Which of the following singers had a hit with a song Forever Autumn?

Gilbert O'Sullivan	Justin Haywood	Billie Piper
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### Word of the Month

**Mumpsimus** – the satisfaction of being determinedly and wonderfully wrong!

The word emerged from a medieval tale of a monk who had been saying mumpsimus instead of sumpsimus during Mass for decades. When told of his mistake, he said: "I will not change my mumpsimus for your new sumpsimus."

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

## Did you know?

A few interesting things that have taken place in October over the years:

- October 12 1492 – Columbus landed in the New World
- October 16 1923 – the Disney Brothers Studio was founded
- October 31 1940 – the Battle of Britain ended
- October 4 1957 – Sputnik 1 was launched

## Life in a poem

Submitted by Lesley Basu

Sara Trevor Teasdale (1884 – 1933) was an American lyrical poet. Born in St. Louis Missouri, she suffered ill health in her childhood years and had to be home-schooled. In her adult years, she refused a marriage to Vachel Lindsay, the poet, who felt he could not provide her with financial stability. In 1914, she chose to marry Ernst Filsinger, a longtime admirer of her poetry. This proved a lonely union. She filed for divorce which, along with the earlier suicide of Lindsey, partly contributed to her own death by overdose. In 1917, she won a Pulitzer Prize for her poetry collection Love Songs. This beautiful example of her work is an anti-war poem which sadly, is still relevant in current times.

### There Will Come Soft Rains

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,

Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree  
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

By Sara Teasdale



## Swindon u3a Contacts

<b>Chair</b>	Vince Williams	<a href="mailto:chair@swindonu3a.org.uk">chair@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Linda Young	<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>Treasury Team</b>		<a href="mailto:treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk">treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Membership</b>	Rose Clarke	<a href="mailto:membership@swindonu3a.org.uk">membership@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Liaison</b>		
<b>Group</b>	Linda Young	
<b>Coordinator</b>		<a href="mailto:group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk">group.coord@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>Web Manager</b>	Dave Todd	<a href="mailto:itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk">itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Systems Manager</b>	Linda Young	<a href="mailto:systems@swindonu3a.org.uk">systems@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Accommodation</b>	Chris Ockwell	<a href="mailto:accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk">accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Newsletter</b>	Lynda Feeley	<a href="mailto:newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk">newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Office</b>	<b>General enquiries</b>	<a href="mailto:office@swindonu3a.org.uk">office@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>		<a href="mailto:secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk">secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>All committee members</b>		<a href="mailto:committee@swindonu3a.org.uk">committee@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*)

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](mailto:office@swindonu3a.org.uk)

**Web:** [www.swindonu3a.org.uk](http://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](mailto:newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk) - deadline for the November newsletter is **Friday 19 October**.

### Quiz Answers:

#### Mental maths:

The answer is 14

#### Anagrams:

Conkers

Autumn Leaves

Halloween

**Downton Abbey**

Alun Armstrong

Julian Fellowes

Bampton

Lacock

**Who Said It?**

Something Wicked This Way Comes

**Music:**

Justin Hayward