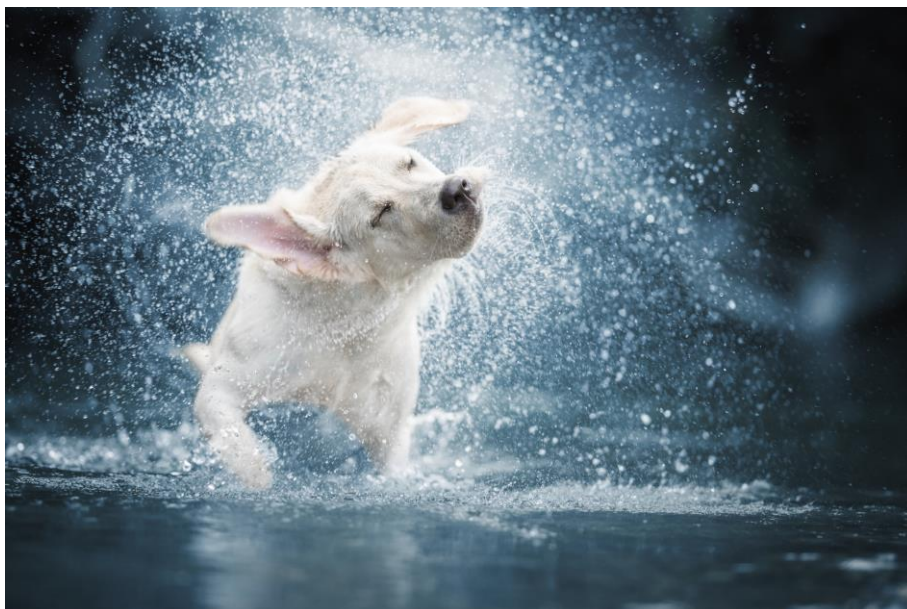


u3a Newsletter

Swindon

August 2025



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

Contents:

- Chair's Blog
- Current Vacancies
- Swindon u3a News
- Upcoming Meetings
- Group News
- Local News and Information
- Quiz Corner
- Life in a Poem
- Swindon u3a Contacts
- Quiz Answers

Chair's Blog August 2025



This month our team have been very busy finalising the venue for our annual Open Day. In recent years we've been very lucky and honoured to be able to have use of St Joseph's Catholic College in Swindon on a Saturday for no cost, but things have changed this year, and we have been informed that they can no longer host external events at the weekends due to increased staffing costs. Therefore, we have had to look around for alternate available venues in Swindon. So, this year's Open Day will now be held at **Gorse Hill Community Centre on Saturday 30 August.**

At our Monthly meeting the Trustees and I agreed to invite Gill Brain to join us as a new Trustee member on the Management Committee and to formally take up the role of Publicity Lead member. I'm pleased to announce that Gill agreed to accept our invitation and take up the role. This now brings us up to a total of 6 Trustees, one more than the bare minimum mandated by the board of the Third Age Trust. Of course, all Trustees will need to be formally ratified at our next AGM as is the usual practice.

However, we are still in a precarious position and we (the Management committee) all agree that we still need to strengthen our position further and continue to look for another willing volunteer from our membership to take up the vacant role of Vice Chair. Having a seventh Trustee on the Management Committee would give us a much needed buffer and better resilience as we move forward.

At our meeting we also reviewed our Exit Plan. This is an important document that allows us to set various trigger points that identify when we must take urgent actions and put measures in place to recover the situation if we can. One of those trigger events is not having enough Trustees (less than five) to effectively manage the charity, at this point the remaining trustees must take action to close down the charity, so I'm sure you can appreciate the urgency and need to increase the number of Trustees.

We now have a lot of experience of what works well and what doesn't regarding members subscription payments. We've taken into account what group organisers and members like and what they will do, and what is sustainable for our small teams of volunteers who make everything work behind the scenes. At the last AGM we were asked to consider letting more groups pay annually. In light of this experience and feedback we have reviewed our processes and have decided to simplify 2025/26 payments as follows:

- The annual membership fee will stay at £10.
- We will operate two terms: 1 September – 31 March and 1 April – 31 August.
- Groups will decide how many sessions they hold within those two terms and calculate the fees in the normal way, with support from the Groups team.

- Groups with an annual cost of £20 or less will pay once, due on 1 September. All other groups will pay twice a year, due on 1 September and 1 April.
- All payments, as now, will apply for the term, i.e. there are no part payments or refunds. So, if someone joins part way through a term, they pay the full fee, if they leave part way through, they do not get a refund. If there are exceptional circumstances e.g. serious illness, please contact systems@swindonu3a.org.uk and we can agree a fair approach.

We will send out renewal letters later this month which will confirm the payments due in September.

I'd like to say a big thank you and welcome to Rose Clarke who has now taken up her new role as Membership Liaison reporting to me. The remaining vacancies that we still need willing volunteers to fill are for Vice Chair and Events Member. If you think you can help, then please contact me or any of the committee@swindonu3a.org.uk. Well, that's all I have for this month, hope you all have a great August.

Vince Williams

chair@swindonu3a.org.uk

committee@swindonu3a.org.uk

Current Vacancies

Current Management committee vacancies include:

- Vice Chair
- Events Lead

There are also vacancies for volunteers within the Finance and Office Teams.

NB: There is a short Induction and mentoring process for new Trustees

HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in these roles, send an expression of interest as soon as possible to committee@swindonu3a.org.uk

Swindon u3a News

Open Day Saturday 30 August 2025



Photo courtesy SBC

This year our Swindon u3a Open Day will be on Saturday 30 August and will be held at the **Gorse Hill Community Centre**.

As explained in last month's newsletter, St Joseph's College can no longer host our Open Day, therefore, after an extensive search, we will be hosting our event at Gorse Hill Community Centre this year.

We will have the use of the entire centre which includes the main hall, 2 adjoining rooms, kitchen, and lobby and furniture. It also offers free local parking (much more than the small parking patch by our u3a Office) furniture and accessibility for those with mobility issues.

I hope you will continue to support our Open Day. It is much more than just a publicity event though we do recruit many new members there. But it is also the one time in the year when we can come together to celebrate our wonderful and unique organisation. It's a showpiece for the public, a place to display and talk about our group activities, but also a time for each of us to recognize that we are a part of, and contribute to, a special whole Swindon u3a.

I hope you will give your support by:

1. Showcasing your Group: there will be a place for all who can attend.
2. Dropping in as a member to see the scope of our interest/activity groups and reinforcing a sense of belonging to the Swindon u3a 'family'.
3. Encouraging people you know who may enjoy joining us to come along and find out more.

I look forward to seeing you on 30 August.

Gill Brain

Office Reopens

The Swindon u3a office in Gorse Hill will reopen at 10:00 on **Monday 4 August**.

Promoting Swindon u3a near you

Come visit us at our stand at Asda Orbital Centre on 15 August. We will also have exhibition stands in Swindon Hub (New Town) and Old Town Co-op **from 18 – 30 August**.

In the week of 25 August, we will also have a spot promoting our Open Day on Swindon 105.5.

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

Please note, there will be no monthly meetings during August.

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

Book now for September – the start of the 2025/26 academic year:

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

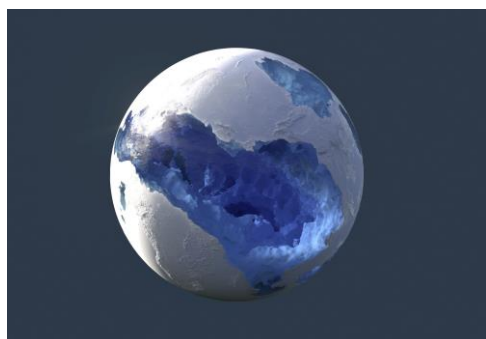
Bookings can be taken up to 11.30 am on the morning of the meeting.

Group News

Climate Change Group

Submitted by Nina Stimson and Bill Hughes

At the end of June we completed the 6th and final meeting of the Climate Change group.



In the 6 sessions we covered :

- Terms and Definitions
- History of Climate Science
- Effects of Climate Change
- Measures to counter the effects of Climate Change
- Climate breakdown and its consequences
- Climate collapse – prevention or adaptation?

Bill Hughes provided some very informative notes to go with each session with references and suggested further reading.

We didn't solve the problem but lively discussions ensued and we are certainly better informed. We are to run this informal discussion group again from September 2025.

We cover the subject in 6 sessions with brief notes on each session issued before each meeting:

1. Introduction. Basic definitions, science and vocabulary/jargon such as greenhouse effect, carbon footprint, sustainability, net zero, IPCC, COP 26, peak oil, overshoot, transition, mitigation, adaptation, ecology etc. etc.
2. Brief history of climate science and the development of theories and official responses at the international/UN level, UK and local and individual responses.
3. Effects of climate change – extreme weather events, more detailed look at corporate and political responses – first denial, then grudging acknowledgment, then slow development of policies to deal with what is now a crisis.
4. Mitigation and adaptation.
5. Climate Breakdown.
6. Collapse – the end of life on Earth as we know it?

Autumn Term meetings are scheduled for Tuesday mornings from 10.30 to 12 noon on the following dates: 9 September, 23 September, 7 October, 21 October, 25 November, 9 December. Venue: Friends Meeting House 79 Eastcott Hill Swindon SN1 3JF

If you are interested please contact Bill Hughes, Coordinator Climate Change Group: email bill.hughes1@btinternet.com or text 07933157419. I look forward to hearing from you.

Art Appreciation

Submitted by Louise MacDonald



'40 Shades of Purple', was the theme of one of our **Art Appreciation** fortnightly meetings, presented by Hilary Strange on the origins and use in Art of the colour purple. We were requested to wear something purple and, as the photo illustrates, the variety of shades spoken of by Hilary were on display.

Hilary spoke of and showed examples of purple in art and its early acquisition by rulers as a 'royal' colour. We learned of the accidental discovery of the first ever synthetic dye by William Henry Perkin, initially called 'mauveine'; accidentally as Perkin was actually looking to find a treatment for malaria (in this, he failed!).

Art History, covers a wide scope of talks, which members research and prepare themselves. The talks include the 'major' arts of painting, sculpture and architecture as well as the arts of ceramics, furniture and other decorative objects and photography. During the autumn term we have talks on photography, Weddings in Art, the colour ochre in art and Swindon Street Art.

We meet fortnightly on Tuesday 2.00pm till 4.00pm at the Gorse Hill Community Centre. If you would like to join, please get in touch with a Group Organiser (louise330macdonald@btinternet.com).

U3Ukes

Submitted by Gill Brain



A couple of weeks ago I was invited to join the U3Ukes Group for their morning session at Eastcott Community Hall. I was given a warm welcome by the Group Leader, Cheryll Yeoman, and by the whole friendly group. What a lovely morning I had listening and humming along to some favourite tunes. I went home still singing away in my head!

Thank you so much for entertaining me and long may you PLAY ON....

Local News and Information

Swindon Town Centre Transport Hub to open



Photo courtesy of SBC

The new Fleming Way local transport hub is set to open in late August. Fencing around the site will begin to come down from Friday 15 August with bus companies starting to run services from Fleming Way from Sunday 31 August.

The new area will provide new bus shelters with more space to allow for better accessibility for those in wheelchairs, there will also be wireless charging, digital screens (with Real Time Information for departures) and solar panels.

The new road has been designed to create a better space for bus services around Swindon and the surrounding areas, as well as national and inter-city routes. New cycle lanes have also been added, connecting the town's two main cycle routes and providing a sustainable way for cyclists to travel through Swindon or to the town centre.

All bus services will be moved to Fleming Way and the bus station located just off Manchester Road, will be demolished.

Devizes Road Closure – June to September 2025

The roadworks have now begun on Devizes Road which will be closed in four phases over the summer for the replacement of an ageing gas main by Wales & West Utilities. Diversions are in place.

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

63	÷ 9	× 8	- 50% of it	+ 30	- 49	Square root of it	× 13	Answer
----	-----	-----	-------------	------	------	-------------------	------	--------

Anagrams

Can you find the summer fruit and vegetables:

- Cutest ogre
- Sea motto
- Warmest Noel

General Knowledge

1. How many bones are there in the adult human skeleton?
2. Which UK steam locomotive was the first to reach 100 mph on its return trip between Leeds and Kings Cross, having failed to do it on its outward journey?
3. Who directed The Bridge On the River Kwai, Lawrence of Arabia, and Doctor Zhivago?

Who Said it?

Which of the following people said: "If I see so far, it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants."

- Sir Issac Newton
- Stephen Hawking
- Jane Goodall

Novels

Which two of the following books are **not** written by Frederick Forsyth?

- The Day of the Jackal
- Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy
- The Fourth Protocol
- The Ipcress File

Music

Which former member of the Rolling Stones went on to form the Pretty Things in 1963?

Name these summer songs from the opening lyrics:

- The taxman has taken all my dough.....
- I used to think maybe you loved me, now baby I'm sure.....
- Sun is shinin' in the sky, there ain't a cloud in sight.....
- Well, I'm gonna raise a fuss, I'm gonna raise a holler.....
- I love the colourful clothes she wears and the way the sunlight plays on her hair.....

Word of the Month

- **Psephology:** the study of elections and voting, it attempts to both forecast and explain election results. The term is more common in Britain and English speaking communities.

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

Did you know?

We all need to be scam aware when it comes to telephone calls, emails and texts.

Did you know that Stop Scams UK has launched 159 as a telephone number to help you contact your bank if you receive a phone call about a financial matter and believe it might be a scam.

This number cannot be impersonated or spoofed by any would be scammers. The number connects with 99% of the UK's banks.

Always remain alert and wary of unsolicited calls, emails or texts asking for your personal information. If you're not sure about a call, hang up immediately and contact your bank directly either via a trusted number or by calling 159.

You can also report suspected fraud and cyber crime to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

Life in a poem

Submitted by Lesley Basu

This month, unusually, a sweet poem by a performance poet from Essex: Luke Wright. Wright is an alumnus of the Colchester Sixth Form College where he began writing and performing poetry back in 2006, aged 17. By 2015, he had created nine solo shows. He is the author of several books and pamphlets. Wright tours as a support act for John Cooper Clarke and curated the Poetry Arena at Latitude Festival from 2006 until 2015.

In 2007 Wright also hosted and programmed "*Luke Wright's Poetry Party*" in The Meadows In Edinburgh: it was the Fringe Festival's first dedicated poetry venue in its sixty-year history.

Fish n Chips

You're taller than me now. Six four
and not yet fifteen. A dab hand
at spending your pocket money,
tapping your card on the machine
at the Co-op. On tour I watch you
order fish n chips with a please
and a smile and I'm back
at the yard door of the kindergarten
where I'd stop to pick you out amongst
the other toddlers as you stumble-swaggered
like a pheasant past the steps of the slide
to fill your pot with mud, tongue curled
on your top lip. I loved to watch you
out there in the world on your own
before you'd spot me and tear across
the yard into my arms. Tonight,
in the vinegar air of the chip shop
you scoop up your warm white bundle
and we step into the night,
shoulder to shoulder.

By Luke Wright



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
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@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)

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 22 August**.

Quiz Answers:

Mental maths:

The answer is 39

Anagrams:

- Cutest ogre = Courgettes
- Sea motto = Tomatoes
- Warmest Noel = Watermelon

General Knowledge:

- There are 206 bones in the adult human skeleton. Babies are born with around 270 bones some of which fuse together as they grow.
- The Flying Scotsman was the first steam locomotive to reach 100 mph on 30 November 1934
- David Lean directed the three films. Doctor Zhivago was his biggest box office success.

Who Said It?

Sir Isaac Newton said: "If I see so far, it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants."

Novels:

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy was written by John Le Carre

The Ipcress File was written by Len Deighton

Music:

Dick Taylor is one of the founding members of the Rolling Stones playing guitar and bass. He left to resume his studies and went on to form the Pretty Things in September 1963. He played with the Pretty Things until retiring in 2018.

The summer songs are:

- Sunny Afternoon, The Kinks
- Walking on Sunshine, Katrina & the Waves
- Mr Blue Sky, ELO
- Summertime Blues, Eddie Cochran
- Good Vibrations, The Beach Boys