



Newsletter



Christ Church, Old Town

Photograph by Janet French

December 2019

Chair Report December 2019/January 2020

The following items were discussed by the management committee at our recent awayday and regular management committee meeting in October.

Open Day.

It was agreed to keep the format for this as it is for the present. It was noted that as well as being a recruitment opportunity for groups, it also offers members the opportunity to meet and socialise with each other. It was also noted however that the issue of waiting lists continues to be one that needs careful managing. Several new groups have been set up following Open Day and this is a trend which we need to continue to avoid having any more waiting lists than necessary.

Roles of MC members.

During a review of this it was noted that there is no requirement from the Third Age Trust to have a role attached to every committee member, other than the requirement to have a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. With this in mind, it was agreed that for the present, we will not have a publicity officer until such time as we feel we are able to meet the needs of all existing members. Martin Preston has kindly agreed to continue to help with organising publicity for Open Day and we will review the need to advertise Swindon U3A within local media on an ongoing basis.

Short term help.

We are aware that various roles have heavy demands on them at certain times of the year, such as the group co-ordinator role after Open Day. We therefore decided that we would like to set up a group of people who would be willing to assist the group co-ordinator for a short period of time in helping to set up new groups, monitoring waiting lists, etc. If you feel you could offer some time on an occasional basis and would like to know more about helping in this way, please contact me at [Avril](#) or through the chair email address on SUCAS.

Phased stand down of MC members.

We had a preliminary discussion at our Away day about this and several members have indicated their intention to stand down in 2021 & 2022. For the sake of continuity it would be extremely desirable for members who are willing to serve on the MC in the long term to shadow existing members while the current MC members are still in post. We are very grateful to the one person who has stepped forward to do this but we need more. Please be reassured that you do not need to understand what Swindon U3A is all about before you join the MC. Coming along to the meetings of the committee will enable you to learn

how Swindon U3A operates in a way that is not possible just from being a group member. We are very willing to provide as much support as you need, to help you ease gradually into the role of MC member. If you would like to have a chat to find out more about joining the MC, please get in touch with me at the above email address or through the SUCAS website.

Newsletter distribution.

As no-one has come forward to help with the above, the MC is currently exploring other ways of distributing the newsletter and What's On after January.

Treasury matters.

We now have a reserves strategy in place as required by the Third Age Trust and Charity Commission and are in the process of setting up a working group to draw up a Risk Review Process.

Code of Conduct and Complaints/Discipline Policy.

The MC is in the process of reviewing these and when complete, these will be communicated to all members.

Communication to members.

We agreed that due to the cost and time involved in preparing paper copies of the AGM paperwork, from 2020 this will be available electronically to all members. The minutes will be available on our SUCAS website. Those who wish a paper copy of this paperwork can obtain it from the office. The yearbook will continue to be available in printed form.

The MC are aware that due to an unfortunate set of circumstances, Group Organisers were subjected to a number of fairly lengthy emails within a very short space of time requiring them to take action re updating their information in the yearbook and booking for Open Day etc. The committee is currently working on ways to make communication to members as short and succinct as possible in the future.

Avril Muirhead

Monthly Meetings

Ellendune Centre, Wroughton

on the 2nd Monday of the month at 2.15pm

9th December 2019

A seasonal play reading by Swindon U3A play reading group.

Followed by entertainment by 'End of The Track'

'End of The Track' was formed ten years ago; they perform songs from the 1960s era to raise funds for local charities. They have raised more than £20,000 for charities through concerts and CD sales. The singers are based around the town of Chippenham and are accompanied by electric and rhythm guitars as well as light percussion. They encourage audiences to join in the songs of artists such as Elvis, The Beatles, Everly Brothers, etc.

13th January 2020

Across the Tropic of Capricorn Pam and Eddy Lane

A voyage across the Pacific Ocean featuring the Wildlife of the Beautiful South Sea Islands from Norfolk Island to Papua New Guinea.

10th February 2020

Handwriting and Forgeries John Jameson-Davis

A fascinating look at what handwriting can tell you about the writer and how an expert identifies forged signatures.

9th March 2020

Gloucester Docks Then and Now Tony Condor

Gloucester Docks were linked to the sea by the widest and deepest waterway the world had ever seen. A financial disaster, it was a triumph for Gloucester and now adds considerable tourist interest to a midlands city.

Aviation Group

On the 27th Sep the Aviation Group held their Annual General Meeting at the Gorse hill Community centre where they hold their regular fortnightly meetings. A turnout of over 60% of members attended the meeting, which is probably a record attendance for an AGM. Graham Price the outgoing leader handed over the baton to Ken Ivie and Clynt Perrott took over as Deputy Leader.

A bottle of Graham's favourite malt whisky and an engraved crystal glass was presented to him in gratitude for all his hard work over the last two years.

As our AGM is usually a very brief affair, most of the meeting was taken up with our annual aircraft recognition quiz in which the David Glazer trophy is awarded to the winner. The trophy, a silver model of a Spitfire mounted on a wooden plinth is in memory of Dave Glazer. Flt Lt Glazer, a friend of one of our members, Alan Smith, was shot down over the south coast in his spitfire by our own Royal Navy! Fortunately Dave Glazer survived the downing and the war to go on to fly post war with civilian airlines.

This year's quiz was compiled by Clynt, last year's winner, who did not make it an easy contest, but the winner this year by a country mile was Adrian Balch. However, the downside of winning the quiz is that the winner, although not set in stone, has traditionally compiled the following year's quiz. I'm delighted to say Adrian has already agreed to do the honours next year.

A very entertaining and amusing morning was had by all and a big thanks to Clynt for all his hard work in putting the quiz together. Also, many thanks to Alan Smith for organising the catering which we all thoroughly enjoy.

Ken Ivie



Ken Ivie congratulating Adrian Balch on winning the Dave Glazer trophy.



Graham Price handing over group leadership to Ken Ivie

Historic Houses and Heritage Of Yorkshire

On Sunday 8th September 36 members and friends from the Aviation Group and Travel Group J headed north by coach from Swindon to commence a tour of Yorkshire. En-route to our destination, we visited the Crich Tramway village. This nestles high up in the heart of Derbyshire, overlooking the famous Derwent Valley and contains the National Tramway Museum together with its world renowned archives. We then continued to the Mercure Leeds Parkway Hotel, where we were to be accommodated for four nights. On the morning of 9th September, we were met by our Blue Badge guide, Mike, who was to accompany us for three days. Our first visit was to the Yorkshire Air Museum & Allied Air Forces Memorial, which is located on the site of the former WW2 airfield of RAF Elvington. After enjoying some refreshment in the former NAAFI, we headed off for Castle Howard, which is located in a beautiful 1,000 acre park adorned with rose gardens, lakes and fountains. The facility, which was built in the 18th century, is the home of the Howard family and is richly furnished throughout.

On 10th September, we travelled to the magnificent City of York, where we had a guided tour of points of interest, together with visits to York Minster & the Merchant Adventurers' Hall. This was built between 1357 and 1361 and is one of the best preserved guild halls in the world. A number of NT members also took the opportunity to visit the Treasurers House, which is located behind the Minster.

On 11th September, we departed our hotel for an interesting, and sometimes stomach churning climb across the North York Moors, via 'Heartbeat' country and RAF Fylingdales to Grosmont, where we boarded a steam-train for Pickering. This journey was a wonderful



experience, and appeared to be greatly enjoyed by all. After exploring the lovely little town of Pickering, we headed off to Eden Camp, which is an ex Italian POW facility, that now contains a fantastic collection of WW2 memorabilia. Moreover, and more importantly, it also has a NAAFI.

On 12th September, we visited the home of the Queen's cousin, the Earl of Harewood, which is located just outside Leeds. Harewood House is renowned for its stunning architecture, exquisite Adam interiors and Chippendale furniture. Moreover, it is set in a 1,000 acre estate designed by Capability Brown. Unfortunately, we then had to start our journey south, and arrived back in Swindon, tired, but with many happy memories of a fantastic trip away.

Thanks again Ken & Ann Ivie for organising yet another brilliant outing.

Ivan Carey



We wish all our members

A Merry Christmas

and

A Happy New Year



Life in a Poem

Submitted by Lesley Basu

Pessimism is for lightweights

Think of those that marched this road before
And those that will march here in years to come
The road in shadow and the road in the sun
The road before us and the road all done
History is watching us and what will we become

There is power and strength in optimism
To have faith and to stay true to you
Because if you can look in the mirror
And have belief and promise you
Will share wonder in living things
Beauty, dreams, books and art
Love your neighbour and be kind
And have an open heart

Then you're already winning at living
You speak up, you show up and stand tall
It's silence that is complicit
It's apathy that hurts us all
Pessimism is for lightweights

There is no straight white line
It's the bumps and curves and obstacles
That make this time yours and mine
Pessimism is for lightweights
Pessimism is for lightweights
This road is never easy and straight
And living is all about living alive and lively
And love will conquer hate

Salena Godden

Salena Godden is a British poet, performer and author living in London. As well as her poetry, her fiction has also received acclaim and she appears regularly on BBC radio. In 2017 Godden was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award for new work in poetry with her live spoken word album LIVEwire. The judges agreed that :

"This album captures the best of a live presence – at turns moving, powerful and unflinching – which is hard for an award to recognise. It provides a gateway to poetry that is too easily dismissed as 'spoken word', but is an essential part of our poetry culture."

New Reading Group

“Bookworms” reading group now has a waiting list of three people and we are looking for new members in order to start a new group. Another three people would make the new group viable. The joint Organisers, Delyth and Wendy will help set up Bookworms 2. We will talk the group through the model that we use each year. For instance, we collectively choose what to read for our booklist, but always have one classic a year, and choose one author each year where we read any book by that author. One of us also gets books from the library each month. The new group can then decide whether to adopt, or amend this model, but it will get the group started. The new group will also choose the day and time that suits them. We all enjoy our Bookworms and we hope that the new group will also have some fascinating discussions, learn lots and have fun. If you are interested we are aiming to hold a first meeting in mid November.

Please contact by clicking on [Delyth Barrett](#) or [Wendy Hall](#)

Wendy Hall MBE

New Singing Group

A new singing group for the U3A has been started. It will take place from 10am to 12 noon on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. The venue will be:

Toothill Church, Dunwich Drive, Toothill, Swindon, SN5 8SX

This group is very suitable for beginners, or those who may have been told that they cannot sing. We will use the ethos of the Natural Voice Network. “Singing creates a sense of wellbeing, brings communities together and gives us the opportunity to create sounds of power and beauty.” (www.naturalvoice.net/)

For more information, please contact me by clicking on

[Margaret Boyd](#)

Friday Walking Group October Coach Trip

The weather forecast was gloomy, warning of heavy rain, but it was mild and dry, but cloudy, when we set off to meet the coach to take us across the Severn and over the border into Wales.

On arrival in Chepstow we split into two, walkers and visitors. Visitors would enjoy the shops, museum, and cafés, and perhaps have a tour of the castle, then be taken after lunch by coach to Tintern where the walkers would meet up with them in the teashop or a beer in the pub, and a tour of the Abbey. It was all planned .

It started well. Thirty walkers skirted the imposing castle and braced themselves for the climb to extensive views across the Wye valley. Information boards promised sights of past industry and gave historical notes on the area, local plants and animals. A lot had been written by Victorian romanticists on the outstanding beauty we could expect to see. Then it started to rain - just a little at first but became a downpour. We were having to take care on the rocky path and avoid tripping or sliding on the tree roots. We did have a couple of stops to where we could admire the scenery and the muddy Wye snaking lazily below us. The photographers amongst us were busy, but as we climbed higher the countryside disappeared in the mist and torrents of rain, so we could only imagine what we might have seen at the bottom of the cliffs.

The way down to Tintern was steep. The ground was already saturated from the deluges of previous days and the paths were now streambeds of running water, loose stones and slick roots for the unwary to stumble over. Several people slipped, but fortunately no-one was hurt, and it was with considerable relief that we eventually descended to soggy lush fields. Here was the opportunity to roll in the long grass to remove the mud from backsides which had slid down the treacherous track. We were already drenched. What did a bit more matter!

We were delighted to see the coach waiting in the car park and, having changed from our boots, even more pleased to be welcomed into the pub and cafe by those who had spent the morning in Chepstow. Throughout, the upbeat banter and general good spirits had not faltered. It was a memorable day but not for the reason we had hoped. Please go again when the weather is clear. It really is a challenging but beautiful walk - and you need time to take in the magnificence of both the castle and abbey.

Jackie Hewitt

Winter Film programme 2020

Thursday 30th January "A Song for Marion"
2.00pm – 5.00pm Coleview Community Centre

Friday 28th February "The Mikado"
2.00pm – 5.00pm Western Community Centre

Tuesday 24th March "Mamma Mia 2" singalong
2.00pm – 5.00pm Coleview Community Centre

Booking: Via the Home page of the Swindon U3A website – top blue bar:

1. Click Activities/Swindon Courses and Events.
2. Add your name and membership number at the top of the page.
3. Click the circle by the film you want to see.
4. Click Register at the bottom of the page.

E-mail: click on [Martin Preston](#)

Ring: Margaret Goldie (01793) 790546

FILM FOR JANUARY 2020

'Song for Marion'

THURSDAY 30TH JANUARY

2.00pm – 5.00pm

Coleview Community Centre, Towcester Road,
SN3 4AS

Register: Swindon U3A website

Click on [Martin Preston](#)

Ring: Margaret Goldie on
(01793) 790546



Military History

Visit To Aldbourne

On 23 Sep on a beautiful sunny morning 25 members and friends of the Military History group gathered at the village pond in Aldbourne before starting out on a guided walking tour of this historic and picture postcard village.

Our guide for the morning, Don Greaves, a resident of Aldbourne and a member and former leader of our group was already waiting to greet us. On arrival Don gave us an introductory talk on the military and social history of the village. We were told that the Romans in 1 AD were the first troops to occupy the area and how in the English Civil War a unit of Parliamentarian Dragoons occupied the village and captured the garrison of 11 Royalist troops. Having nowhere to keep prisoners they were immediately ordered, still in their nightclothes and without boots, to make their way on foot to Wantage.

Following our introductory talk we made our way to the village Heritage Centre, a former public toilet! The centre is not unsurprisingly small but is packed with exhibits from pre historic times to the present day including items on Dr Who. An episode of Dr Who, 'The Daemons' with John Pertwee as the Dr was filmed in the village in April 1971 with the Blue Boar pub being renamed the Cloven Hoof.

Various army units were stationed around the area during WW1 and WW2 but what really brought the village to world attention was when the classic war time series Band of Brothers came to our screens in the 1990s. The 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the famous US 101st Airborne Division, the Screaming Eagles, were stationed in Aldbourne training in preparation for the D Day landings.

As the morning progressed Don with his customary humour pointed out the various locations where the officers and men of the regiment were billeted.

The US equivalent to the Nissan huts where most of the junior ranks were billeted are long gone but the former Officer's Mess, Regt HQ and the stables where some of the men were billeted are still in situ. The actual billet of Lt Richard (Dick) Winters, played by Damian Lewis in the TV series is now a village shop and café.



Outside Church of St Michael Albourne



On guided tour of Aldbourne



Gerry, it's behind you

Exercise to Music

Get Fit For Christmas (& Beyond...!)

Tuesdays: 2.30 – 3.30 pm Gorse Hill, Chapel Street SN2 8DA

Due to the success of this class a second class is now running on a Saturday morning at Coleview Community Centre, Towcester Road SN3 4AS

Places currently available. Please contact by clicking on

[Gillian Hayes](#)

Day Trips Group

Royal Mint and National Museum of Wales

Tuesday 14th January 2020

Royal Mint: Here you'll learn about the history at one of the top-rated tourist attractions in South Wales, and you will be able to see the special coins and rare historical memorabilia that their exhibition holds. You will be taken on a guided tour where you will be able to witness, first-hand, the workforce producing coins and following the measures they abide by; you will learn more about the machinery that is used, the state-of-the-art equipment that helps and the processes of creating a coin.

National Museum of Wales: This Museum holds World class art and natural history. It houses Wales' national art, geology and natural history collections as well as major touring and temporary exhibitions. See five hundred years of magnificent paintings, drawings, sculpture, silver and ceramics from Wales and across the world, including one of Europe's best collections of Impressionist art. There will be a tour here looking at some of the highlights of the art collection.

Departure times and pick-up points:-

8.00am Sainsbury's, Royal Wootton Bassett,

8.15am Swindon Bus Station

8.30am Ashington Way, West Swindon

4.30pm Depart for Swindon

The cost is £21 per person which includes the tours, coach and drivers gratuity. All members welcome. Please visit Group Visits Diary on Swindon U3A site for full details.

Contact by clicking on [Susan Grice](#).

Travel Study Group C & G

Visit to The Silverstone Experience

Monday 27th January 2020

This recently opened museum provides an exciting journey through the past, present and future of Silverstone and racing. It combines history, interactive experiences and amazing memorabilia from over 70 years of motorsport.

There is a Café serving a selection of hot and cold food and drinks and a Shop selling souvenirs.

Pick up:

09:00 Ellendune Centre, Wroughton

09:15 Ashington Way.

09:30 Matalan, Greenbridge

15:30 Leave Silverstone

Cost: £28 pp to include coach, admission and driver's gratuity.

If interested, please contact: by clicking on [Bill Mead](#)

Refunds are not made after 7 days prior to trip.

Swindon Film Society

Swindon Film Society will be showing the following film at the Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Swindon starting at 19.45 on:

11.12.19 Faces Places (France)

followed by the Christmas party and quiz.

Further details can be viewed on swindonfilm.org.uk.

Day Trips Group

Bletchley Park

Wednesday 12th February

Bletchley Park is a place of exceptional historical importance.

It remains highly relevant to our lives today and for the future. It is the home of British codebreaking and a birthplace of modern information technology. It played a major role in World War Two, producing secret intelligence which had a direct and profound influence on the outcome of the conflict.

Over the past twenty years Bletchley Park has become an internationally renowned heritage attraction, visited by people from around the world, which acknowledges the successes from the War and the people responsible for them. It celebrates their values: broad-minded patriotism; commitment; discipline; technological excellence. By presenting and explaining these achievements and these values, in the very place where they occurred, Bletchley Park brings together the dramatic history of the twentieth century with the challenges we face in the twenty first in our rapidly changing and technologically complex society.

To find out more and to plan your day visit <https://bletchleypark.org.uk>

Departure times and pick-up points:-

8.00am Royal Wootton Bassett

Borough Fields car park, behind Sainsburys

8.15am Ashington Way, West Swindon

8.30am Swindon Bus Station

The cost is £26 per person which includes the entrance, coach and drivers gratuity. All members welcome

Contact by clicking on [Kathrina Fairgrieve](#)

Travel Group J

Visit to St Fagans

Thursday 2nd April 2020

A visit to St Fagans National Museum of History near Cardiff.

Included is a "Meet the Curator" talk given by a member of the Curatorial and Conservation team which will give you an introduction to the site and top tips for highlights to look out for during your visit.

You will also get a 10% discount in the cafe and restaurant subject to a minimum spend of £5 per person. A similar discount applies in the museum shop.

Departure times and pick-up points:

8.30am Ellendune Health Centre, Wroughton

8.45am Coate Water

4.00pm Depart for Swindon

Cost £27.00 per person which includes the entry to the museum, coach and gratuities

All members and friends welcome.

Contact by clicking on

[Jayne Bellamy](#)

or

[Mike Carvell](#)

Quote, Unquote

"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends. They are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors and the most patient of teachers "

Charles William Eliot - American academic

" It is only lately that the pursuit of distraction has been embraced as the meaning of life "

John Gray - English political philosopher

Copy Dates

Items for the January 'What's On' must be received by

9th December 2019

Items for the February Newsletter must be received by

11th January 2020

Items for the February 'What's On' must be received by

16th January 2020

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter contributions e-mail address shown opposite.

Geoff Bryan

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The Editor reserves the right to amend or abbreviate any entries submitted.

We should also like to point out that any views expressed are not necessarily those of the organisation or of the Editor.

Life President Norman Richards

Management Committee

Chair	Avril Muirhead
Vice-chairman	vacant
Treasurer	Viv Dipper
Secretary	Margaret Goldie
Minutes Secretary	Patricia Scaplehorn
Office manager	Sylvia Alexander
New members	Sandie Mulcahy
Accommodation	Chris Ockwell
Webmaster	Alex Cranswick
Groups co-ordinator	Gill McKinnon
Health and Safety	Dave Maggs

Key Tasks (Non committee)

Office manager (Assistant)	Glenys Bettley
Newsletter distribution	David and Jackie Hewitt
Administration adviser	Tony Hill
Speakers organiser	Cheryll Yeowell
assisted by	Beth Bailey

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