

Enchanted Town Gardens



Newsletter

January 2022



Chair's "Hello"

I had hoped to be sending jolly Christmas and New Year good wishes but now feel that, in the light of the rampant Omicron variant, I need to temper these with messages of keep safe and well over the festive season. I do, of course, send you warmest wishes from all on the Committee and hope that you enjoy the holiday period as best you can.

Perhaps a little unusually for the time of year the Committee has remained extraordinarily busy. We managed to hold our AGM at last, by Zoom, after having to postpone the one originally scheduled. It went well thanks to those behind the scenes managing the organisation and technology (Alex Cranswick, Linda Young and Sue Carvey) and to you for turning up on screen to cast your votes and listen to the reports. We have also put a good deal of thought and energy into the planned review of the supplements which we introduced earlier in the year. We will be continuing to run this model of supplements through to the end of the year in an effort to help reset our finances.

You all know by now that the issue of our finances has been a constant theme throughout most of this year and the Committee is looking longer term at how to introduce a financial model which is robust and sustainable for the future. I mentioned in my Chair's report at the AGM that we are looking at a number of models (there are 5 currently being examined) each of which have advantages and disadvantages. To enable us to examine each fully, in addition to our usual more operational monthly meetings, we have put aside several meetings just to concentrate on this subject, .

On 19th January we have a full Strategy Day when we will hopefully emerge with some preferred financial models which we are proposing to put to members.

At the beginning of February, we will communicate the models to you all and seek feedback by various means during February.

In early to mid March we will review the feedback from members and any further information which has come to light.

At the Management Committee meeting on 29th March, we will agree the final Trustee proposal and communicate this to members on 31st March.

On 1st April we will begin to plan the changes necessary to implement the new model in time for the 2022/23 subscription year.

As you can see we are hoping to move forward fairly rapidly now with a long-term solution which will allow us to enter 2023 and beyond in a secure and stable manner.

I was hoping to end on a lighter and brighter note with a report on our Christmas Party which so many of us were looking forward to. Alas, even with extra safety precautions, it became clear from the news a few days beforehand that it was not really going to be safe enough and cancellation was necessary. I want to say a big thank you to all those u3a members who were ready and willing to perform for us. What a talented lot you are. I am sure there will be a time soon when we can organise another similar social event – perhaps an Easter Party?

I wish you all a very Happy New Year, Gill

The 2020/2021 AGM

Well, we finally got there! Thanks to all who attended and those who wanted to attend but weren't able to for various reasons. Apart from a couple of technical hitches and a few nail biting minutes as we counted up to the magic 100 attendees, all went smoothly. The minutes of the 2019/2020 meeting (held by Zoom in Feb 2021) were passed. The draft minutes of this year's meeting will soon be available and if anyone would like a copy, please do get in touch with me.



The accounts received the approval of the meeting and the motion to change the constitution to allow on-line and hybrid meetings if necessary was passed. The revised constitution is now available on the home page of the website - click or tap on Policies on the blue bar to access it. Any member without internet access who wants one can pop into the office for a copy or ring me and I'll get one to you. The final vote was to elect the trustees (Management Committee) for the current year

and you can find details on the last page of this newsletter. Spoiler alert - not much has changed!

You can contact [Sue Carvey](#) by clicking on her name

The Arts Society Kennet & Swindon

Please join us for our illustrated lectures at 11am on the third Monday in the month at The Ellendune Centre, Wroughton, SN4 9LW.

We are a friendly group for anyone in the Swindon or Marlborough area who enjoys learning and understanding more about the Arts and meeting new people.

Our annual subscription of £45 was from May 2021-April 2022, however guests are very welcome at £7 per lecture. We meet from 10am for coffee and the lecture starts at 11am.

For more information check our website: theartsocietykennet.org.uk or contact our Membership Secretary Judi: info@theartsocietykennet.org.uk

The January lecture on the 17th is "Joseph Wright of Derby - Painter of the Industrial Revolution" by Scott Anderson.

The February lecture on the 21st is "Decadence and Dreams: Jewellery from around 1900" by Clare Phillips.

We look forward to seeing you.

Have You Made A New Year's Resolution To Do Something Different? Book Worms Needs New Members

The u3a book club "Book Worms" needs to recruit a couple more members.

We meet on the last Friday in the month at The Lawns Community Centre, Guildford Avenue, SN3 1LA, from 10.00 am to approx. 11.30 am.

This is a group for all who enjoy reading and discussing books in an informal, friendly, and often fun atmosphere. We agree an annual reading list of 10 books, have a poetry session, and choose 1 classic book. The library gets our books for us for £14 per person per annum. If you are interested or want to know more, please contact the Swindon u3a Office on 01793 614629 Monday, Wednesday or Friday between 10am and 12 noon or click on her name.

[Wendy Hall](#)

Focus Groups

Thank you to all those who volunteered to take part in focus groups. Six groups have now met. Participants included new members, established members and group organisers. All groups had thoughtful and detailed discussions on the same range of topics which included: reasons for joining; positive and negative experiences; attitudes to technology and social media; issues to do with communication; the role of group organisers and suggestions for improvements and new groups.



Responses have yielded a wealth of information and many things to think about. On some topics attitudes were very consistent; on other topics a wide and sometimes conflicting range of views emerged.

The information is now being collated into a full report which will be made available to members. We plan to also produce a shorter version of key findings.

This valuable feedback along with insights gained from networking with other u3as will help us greatly as the trustees explore how to maintain a successful organisation which meets the needs of members and remains true to the intended purposes of the u3a and the Third Age Trust.

Jill Kelly

New Members

Since 1st June we have been pleased to welcome 160 new members to Swindon u3a. The constantly changing Covid situation has meant that as yet we have not been able to hold the usual New Members' Meetings. Plans are in place to hold one at 10.00 am on 22nd Saturday January at Coleview Community Centre. New members have been notified by e-mail and will be kept updated. If Covid thwarts us yet again we will look at the possibility of a Zoom meeting at another time.



Thank you to those new members who have already been involved in focus groups, started new groups, made other new members feel welcome or offered expertise in various capacities; it is much appreciated.

Jill Kelly

Membership Liaison Secretary

Postcards from our Anglian Adventure

On the 8th November a group of 30 u3a members left Swindon on a 5 day tour of East Anglia organised by travel group G. Below is our postcard guide to the very best highlights of our trip.

Cambridge



Exploring Beautiful Cambridge



Punting On The Cam

Beautiful Ely



Oliver Cromwell Museum



A Guided Tour Of The Cathedral



Outside The Cathedral



A Stained Glass Exhibition

Caister



Caister Lifeboat Station



UK's Fastest Lifeboat

Thursford Classical Spectacular Concert



The Show About To Start



Pipers Entertaining

A Trip On The Broads



Our Boat "Southern Comfort"



The Gang On Deck



Marion Taking The Controls



A Broads Windmill

Newmarket Horse Racing Museum



Outside the Museum



Meeting The Locals



Inside the Museum
Great Yarmouth

Our hotel was an excellent base. Accommodation, food, staff & entertainment were excellent. Situated on the sea front facing east we were treated to beautiful sunrises and sunsets.



Riding Their Horse Simulator



Hotel Palm Court



Sunset From our Coach



Sunrise From Our Bedroom



Special Guest "Santa"



Dancing the Night Away

Special thanks to Sue York our group leader for her hard work overcoming difficulties in planning this holiday and also Barry our driver and guide.

Their efforts resulted in a wonderful holiday enjoyed by all.

Marian Smith

Technically speaking...

My grandfather was born in 1893. Electricity and telephones in homes were still considered new-fangled and the preserve of the better off – which he was not. When, in later life, he was eventually able to have both in his home, he remained wary. Unsure of how either worked - and convinced that they were in some way connected - he would only pick up the phone between rings, worried that to do so whilst it was ringing might result in an electric shock.



It seems ridiculous now of course. Or does it?

I have to confess that my Smartphone is a mystery to me. I live in fear of losing precious contact details or important messages by pressing the wrong thing. I have yet to master the art of using it to get directions, take a clear photograph or make a video call. Perhaps I can blame Grandpa's DNA?



Technology has revolutionised how we communicate and access information. Some of my friends seem enviably confident and able to quickly adapt to every new gadget, feature and application; I remain embarrassingly reluctant and slow.

I have made my first attempts to contribute to the u3a Facebook page (have you taken a look yet?) but confess to being unsure of quite how Facebook works and who sees what. Recent conversations with fellow members reassured me that I was not alone in my anxieties. You can go to the u3a Facebook page by clicking here. [u3a Facebook Page](#)

The u3a Modern Technology group, which meets monthly, could be a good place to start for those who are interested in studying a range of topics such as The Internet, Social Media, banking or shopping online.

It would be interesting to know if there are u3a members who are more confident in their use of Smartphones, tablets or computers and feel they might have the time and patience to help others who would welcome some encouragement. Equally, it would be good to know what sort of demand there might be from those who would like some friendly assistance and what it is they need help with. If there were enough interest amongst u3a members I would be happy to look at ways of bringing people together. You can contact Jill by clicking on her name.

[Jill Kelly](#)

Membership Liaison Secretary

Note from the editor: Do you know the difference between using the term 5g when applied to a smartphone and 5g when applied to a Wi-Fi router in your house? Answers on a postcard please to Jill.



Christmas General Knowledge Quiz

(by Chris Brooks)

1. What colour are mistletoe berries?
2. Which pantomime does Buttons appear in?
3. Whose Christmas Day comedy show in 1977 had 28 million viewers? Guests included Richard Briers, Penelope Keith, Elton John, Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier, Michael Aspel, Eddie Waring, Barry Norman, Frank Bough and Angela Rippon.
4. What is the name of the popular Italian sweet bread loaf enjoyed around Christmas?
5. Which British monarch made the first ever royal Christmas broadcast?
6. What is the correct term for a female turkey?
7. In which children's classic book of 1950 is it 'always winter and never Christmas'?
8. What is the name of the cocktail popular on Christmas day morning, that is also the name of the British pop group that won the 1981 Eurovision Song Contest with the song "Making Your Mind Up"?
9. Which supermarket has Christmas adverts featuring Kevin the carrot?
10. Who is the English gravel voiced singer-songwriter from Middlesbrough, whose hits include 'Driving Home For Christmas' and 'The Road To Hell'?
11. Which animated film features the song 'Walking in the Air'?
12. In Scotland a popular Christmas dinner item is called 'kilted soldiers'. What are they called in England?
13. Which famous scientist was born on Christmas day 1642?
14. Which country has sent a Christmas tree to Britain every year since 1947, that is placed in Trafalgar Square in London?
15. What is the name of the 1892 ballet, with music by Tchaikovsky, that is set on Christmas Eve?
16. What sort of Christmas did both Elvis Presley and Shakin' Stevens have?
17. When making Christmas pudding, who should stir the mixture?
18. Who had a hit with "Lonely Pup (In a Christmas Shop)" in 1960? He also reached number 1 in 1959 with "What Do You Want?", and played Budgie in the TV series of the same name between 1971 and 1972.
19. Which Dutch beverage made from eggs, sugar and brandy is traditional in the UK around Christmas?
20. Which Grimm's fairy tale popularised gingerbread houses?

Answers next month

List of Email Addresses

Chair	Gill Brain	chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
Vice Chair	Linda Young	vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
All members of committee		committee@swindonu3a.org.uk
Accommodation	Chris Ockwell	accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk
Data Protection		secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
General enquiries		office@swindonu3a.org.uk
Groups' Co-ordinator	Linda Young	group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk
Health & Safety		secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
Membership Liaison Secretary	Jill Kelly	membership@swindonu3a.org.uk
Newsletter contributions		newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office manager	Sylvia Alexander	office.manager@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office administration		office@swindonu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Sue Carvey	secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
Speaker organiser (Monthly Meetings)		vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Graham Reave	treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk
Treasury Team for		treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk
Accommodation		
Banking		
Visits		
Webmaster	Alex Cranswick	webmaster@swindonu3a.org.uk

Office (Reopens 10.00 am Wednesday 5th January 2022)

Swindon U3A Office, Gorse Hill Community Centre, Chapel Street, Swindon, SN2 8DA
(entry is by middle door on right hand side of 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

Charity Number 298853

Copy Dates

Items for the February Newsletter must be received by

28th January

Items for the March Newsletter must be received by

25th February

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter contributions e-mail address: newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk or posted to the office.

There has been some concern recently about the delay in promulgating Management Committee decisions. The meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month and it can be up to a month later to the publication of the Newsletter. It has been decided that the Copy Date will be moved to the Friday following the meeting. The Newsletter will be published 12 days later.

Geoff Bryan