

u3a

Swindon

Newsletter

November 2022

learn, laugh, live



Before letting off fireworks please think about your neighbours and their pets.
Some elderly people can also be frightened by noisy fireworks!



Chair's Hello

By the time you read this we will be well into autumn and what an autumn it looks like being. We've enjoyed a lingering summer with many warm, sunny days which have prolonged the gardening season – good news for our Gardening Groups and others of you who enjoy your gardens. On most other fronts however, we seem to be facing a possible difficult winter. I hope that the enjoyment of our u3a group activities and the warmth of the friendships you have there will help you through any difficult times.

My most important message to you this month is to remind you that the next key event of our Swindon u3a year is our **AGM which takes place at Ellendune Centre on the 14th November at 2.15pm.**

May I urge you to attend. I know that the AGM sounds like something rather boring but it is a legal requirement and an important part of our communication with you. At the AGM we will be able to summarise all the main activities and events of the year 2021 - 22 and give you an up to date picture of our accounts and financial position. Although I know that, for most of you, the important part of belonging to our u3a is your interest groups, the AGM is a time for recognising that we all belong to the same u3a family and for gaining a better understanding of what that means.

What I would particularly like to stress is that, since it is a legal requirement for us to hold our AGM, if we do not get a quorum (i.e. 100 members) 15 minutes after the start time, we cannot go ahead with the meeting and will have to reschedule it. This is both a waste of time and money since reports for the AGM will have been prepared, the setting up of the technology required taken place, materials for serving tea will have been sourced, and the payment for the hire of the room already made. So, a good deal of time, money and energy will have been wasted. If this does not spur you to sign up for the AGM, perhaps knowing that the business part of the afternoon will be followed not just by tea and biscuits but by a **Quiz**. So please Click or Tap here to [register for the AGM](#) as soon as possible.

During this term we will also be holding a further series of **Focus Groups**. These were very successful last year and gave us some in-depth interesting and useful feedback from members. Jill Kelly, our Membership Secretary, has masterminded the schedule and has already sent out invitations.

A series of Group Organiser meetings, organised by Linda Young, has also just been completed this term. I went along to one of the meetings in my role as Group Organiser of two groups and found it very useful. As well as a session giving us information, there was a lovely opportunity to meet other GOs and have a chat over cake and tea – another great example of our u3a family at work!

Next time I write it will be the beginning of December and Christmas will be just around the corner. Until then, enjoy your group meetings, your autumn walks and the last of the Indian summer. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM.

Gill

Your Finance Team needs You!

Are you interested in u3a finances? Would you like to be involved in a small dedicated team? Then join the Finance Team and help create a smoother more efficient u3a for all of us.



We have a couple of areas that the finance team would appreciate support with.

Bank management support: This crucial role is a fundamental bedrock of our u3a Finances. It could be as simple as collecting cash from the office and banking once a month to full bank reconciliation and prepayment calculation. No specific financial skills are required and full training, if needed, will be provided.

Payment authorisations: We all like getting paid, so do our suppliers and the u3a members' expenses. I'd like to create a small team of 3 or 4 people who can authorise payments created by the Finance Team. If we can do this it will only require your help once a month. It's pretty simple and full training will be provided. If you can pay your own bills, please help us pay ours.

Other areas which you may be able to help with are monthly reporting and forecasts where experience of using Excel would help greatly and also in general admin. helping with receipts and payments.

If you're interested please email me at: treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk
Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Gordon Wilson

ACCOUNTING



New Members' Meeting

A warm welcome to all our New Members. Over 100 of you have joined us recently. There will be a New Members 'Welcome' Meeting on Saturday 26th November 10.00 – 12.00 noon at Coleview Community Centre, Towcester Road SN3 4AS.

You should all have received a personal invitation. If for any reason you have not received yours, please contact me by clicking on my name below.

This will be an opportunity for new members to meet each other, ask questions and share ideas.

We hope many of you will be able to attend and look forward to meeting you.

Booking can be done online via the Homepage of the website. Alternatively, you can contact me by clicking on my name below. Anyone without e-mail can contact the office and leave a message.

Jill Kelly

Membership Liaison Secretary



Swindon u3a AGM

Monday 14th November, 2.15pm at the Ellendune Centre, Wroughton, SN4 9LW

Please make every effort to attend the AGM. It is an important event in our year when the Committee reports to you, our members, on the key events of the last year 2021/22 and explain our financial situation. We need a quorum of 100 people to go ahead so please try to attend. If the business part of the meeting doesn't sound too attractive we are following it with tea and biscuits and a fun quiz – not to be missed!

It's easy to register – just go to our website at www.swindonu3a.org.uk or ring the Office.

Whilst on the subject of the AGM, please consider becoming a trustee of Swindon u3a. If you or a member you know has skills in IT or admin, communication or listening, please start the nomination process. It only requires a click in a box on the home page of the website. Nominations for trustees can also be made by contacting the office and asking for a nomination form.

Swindon u3a Secretary

Monthly Meetings

Monday 14th November - AGM and Quiz at the Ellendune Centre, Wroughton.

Monday 19th December - Christmas Concert with The North Swindon Big Band at 2.00pm in the Ellendune Community Centre.

Instead of the usual monthly speakers meeting in December we are delighted to welcome the North Swindon Big Band to play a concert for us. What better way to get into the Christmas spirit. Do put the date in your diary and book in for the event via the website.

The Speakers' programme will resume on Monday 9th January at Ellendune Community Centre.

Sue Cook



Focus groups

We are planning a series of 'Focus' groups in November. Those we held last year involved a number of members in small groups sharing their ideas, thoughts and experiences in a way that helped us understand more about our membership.

One thing that emerged was that for some members, getting to venues can be an issue. We have therefore planned for our 6 focus groups to be in different areas this year to try to make participation easier.

Each group will have a maximum of 10 people in order to give everyone the opportunity to contribute fully. The same issues will be discussed by each group. Notes will be taken and a report produced and shared with members. The person running the group (a Trustee in each case) will take the role of facilitator. She/he and the note-taker will not enter into the discussion other than to give points of factual information.

We need 60 people to volunteer to take part! Could one of them be you?

We would like to hear from people who have been members for many years, people who have only just joined and those in between. It would be good to talk with some members who are perhaps only in one group and some who belong to several. You might be a group organiser; you might be one of our many volunteers who help out in a variety of support roles; you might only be interested in attending your activity group(s). We need to hear from representatives of the wide range of activities on offer: the sporty folk, the crafters, the artists, the readers, the linguists, scientists and technologists, musicians, historians, travel groups, lunch groups, coffee morning groups, theatregoers, concertgoers etc. etc. etc. Whatever your involvement, your voice matters.

Venues and dates:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Gorse Hill Community Centre | Thu 17th Nov | 2.15pm – 3.45pm |
| Ellendune Community Centre | Mon 21st Nov | 3.00pm – 4.30pm |
| Freshbrook Community Centre | Mon 21st Nov | 10.15am – 11.45am |
| Haydon Wick Parish Offices | Thu 17th Nov | 10.15am – 11.45am |
| Highworth Methodist Church | Tue 22nd Nov | 10.00am – 11.30am |

If you would like to take part, please book online by clicking the relevant tile on the [Swindon u3a Homepage](#). Places will be on a first come, first served basis. If you are unable to access the Homepage, please contact the office or e-mail me at membership@swindonu3a.org.uk. If we are unable to accommodate everyone who would like to take part, we will look at the possibility of a further round of meetings at a later date.

Jill Kelly

Membership Liaison Secretary

Travel Group J

Thursday 1st December 2022

Visit to **Victoria and Albert Museum** in London

When leaving to return we will take a detour to see the

Christmas lights

You may wish to visit one of the other museums in South Kensington or shop in the area.

Cost £24.00 to include driver's gratuity

Pick up 8:30am Ellendune Medical Centre

8:45am Coate Water

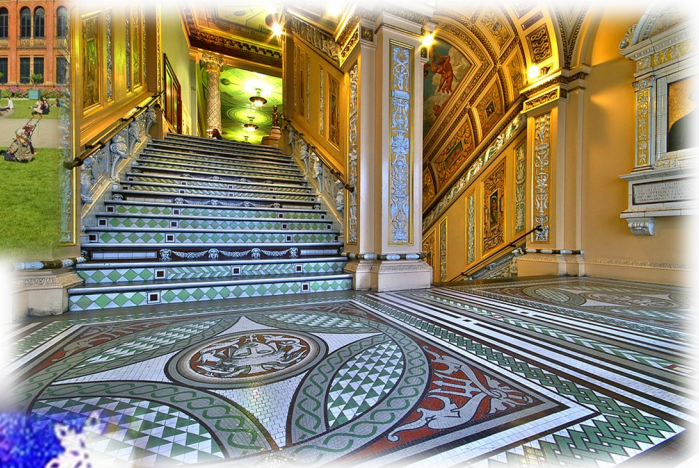
Our drop off and pick up will be at the V & A

Leave V & A at 4.00pm

All u3a members welcome

Please Contact

Fiona Meredith by clicking on her name



October Monthly Meeting

“Environmental Archaeology” a talk by Inés López-Dóriga

Inés is the senior environmental archaeologist at Wessex Archaeology, a large international Archaeology business and charity. The organisation provides archaeological services to developers, local authorities and anyone with an interest in investigating our past. As part of their charitable work they provide educational facilities for schools and organisations such as ourselves.



During their studies on site, archaeologists find evidence of human occupation in part through the remnants of what has been cooked or eaten. Inés is an expert on seeds, grains, roots and other micro remains found on site. These may be found in waterlogged soil, cesspits and burnt remains for example. Samples found are identified by reference to their library of identified samples.

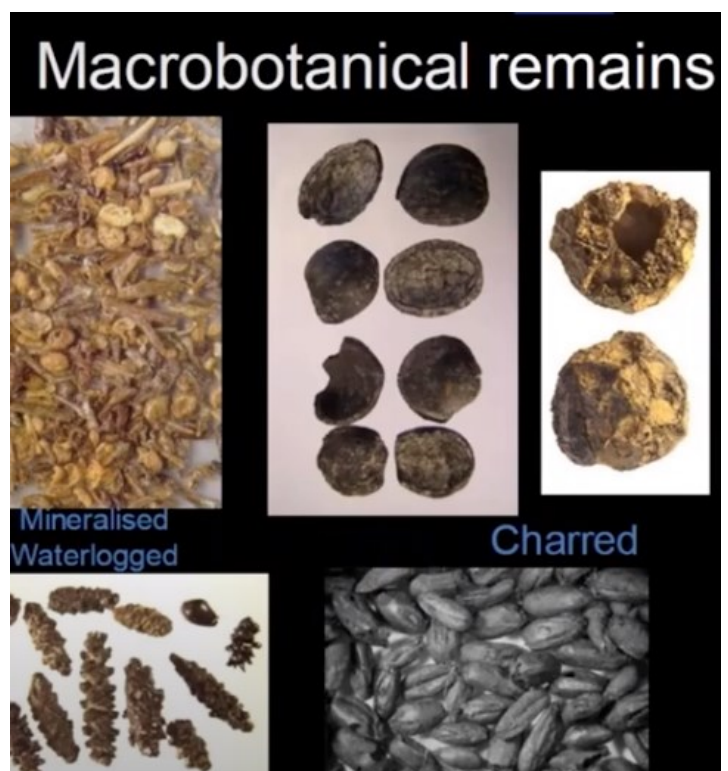
From these studies it is possible to uncover a lot about the agriculture and diet over the ages. This ranges from the hunter/gatherers and the seeds and berries they gathered and ate to the movement of wheat strains from the Middle East to the UK. It is even possible to distinguish the diet of poor people in a town from that of the wealthy although this can be blurred by shared disposal facilities.

A good example of the work undertaken by Inés is that of Bulford Neolithic Pits which predate the barrows on the site. A large quantity of hazelnuts was found and these had been roasted in pits in the ground. The roasting preserves the nuts found in the wild and may indicate a need to replace a possible crop failure.

If you missed the talk but would like to know more, follow the link below to watch a Webinar by Inés on this very subject.

https://youtu.be/_oaZKfT-Jk

Bob Carvey



Life in a Poem

Lisel Mueller was born in Hamburg, in 1924. The daughter of teachers, she and her family were forced to flee the Nazi regime when Mueller was 15. They immigrated to the US and settled in the Midwest. Interested in language and memory, Mueller's work probed the enigma of our public and private selves through image and metaphor. She worked as a translator but is mostly remembered for her many collections of poetry, for which, in 1997, she won the Pulitzer Prize. I have to confess that this is a poet I have only recently discovered; such are the opportunities afforded by u3a !!

Submitted by [Lesley Basu](#)

Hope

It hovers in dark corners
before the lights are turned on,
it shakes sleep from its eyes
and drops from mushroom gills,
it explodes in the starry heads
of dandelions turned sages,
it sticks to the wings of green angels
that sail from the tops of maples.

It sprouts in each occluded eye
of the many-eyed potato,
it lives in each earthworm segment
surviving cruelty,
it is the motion that runs
from the eyes to the tail of a dog,
it is the mouth that inflates the lungs
of the child that has just been born.

It is the singular gift
we cannot destroy in ourselves,
the argument that refutes death,
the genius that invents the future,
all we know of God.

It is the serum which makes us swear
not to betray one another;
it is in this poem, trying to speak.

Lisel Mueller (1924-2020)

Interested in Drama?



Have you ever wanted to tread the boards or learn more about putting on a play? Even if acting isn't your 'thing' there's all the fascinating stagecraft to learn about: costume, props, set design, prompting, the structure of plays, maybe even playwriting.....and much more.

I already have a couple of members who have shown an interest. Why not join us to set up a new u3a Drama Group?

Whatever else it may be, it'll be guaranteed fun!

Let me know if you are interested – we could all get together and see where we go from there.

Gill Brain

chair@swindonu3a.org.uk

Volunteers needed in the Office

The life of an office volunteer is rarely dull. There are membership fees and supplement payments to collect and register on the computer system, phone calls and emails from members and prospective members to answer and the opportunity to meet members and other volunteers.



If you are used to working with a computer, willing to learn and you enjoy meeting and helping people, become an office volunteer working with other members of the office team.

To volunteer, or for more information please contact Sylvia, the Office Manager by clicking on her name.

Sylvia Alexander

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 | Sharon Finch | dpo@swindonu3a.org.uk |
| General enquiries | | office@swindonu3a.org.uk |
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| Health & Safety | | secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk |
| Membership Liaison Secretary | Jill Kelly | membership@swindonu3a.org.uk |
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| Speaker organiser (Monthly Meetings) | Sue Cook | speaker.organiser@swindonu3a.org.uk |
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| Treasury Team for Accommodation Banking Visits | | treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk |
| Webmaster | Alex Cranswick | webmaster@swindonu3a.org.uk |

Office

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, 10am 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 **December** Newsletter must be received by
18th November

Items for the **January** Newsletter must be received by
19th December

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter
contributions e-mail address:

newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk

Geoff Bryan

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.