



Newsletter



Town Gardens Bandstand
Photograph by
Stella Allen

June 2019

Chair's Report April/May 2019

Events committee

We were delighted that there was such a good turnout to our lecture on robotics and for the positive feedback we received regarding it. Thank you to everyone who responded to our request for suggestions for future subjects for our occasional lecture series. We are currently contacting many of those people you suggested and once we have confirmed the speakers for our new programme, we will put it on SUCAS.

Management Committee Awayday

The committee meet together twice a year at "Awaydays" to review our workplan for the year. At our latest meeting on April 13th topics included reviewing our constitution in the light of the latest model constitution issued by the Third Age Trust. The updated constitution will be brought to our AGM on 14th October for members to ratify. Other topics which we discussed at this meeting were succession planning for the MC, an induction process for new MC members, reviewing our members code of conduct and complaints policy and how our U3A can support the provision of "social prescribing" in Swindon for those members of our community who feel lonely and isolated.

Treasury Team

The new treasury team headed by Viv Dipper, our treasurer, is now working well together. The team members consist of Janet Keats who deals with all banking, Sue Bryan who deals with the finances linked to trips and Chris Ockwell who is our accommodation officer and deals with the finance matters related to venues. The management committee recently agreed that funding is available from the treasury team for equipment required by groups. Examples would be a piece of equipment or a teacher's pack for a language group.

Additions to SUCAS facilities

During the past two months our webmaster and his support team have been training group organisers, treasury team members and MC members on the new facilities now available on SUCAS. We are very grateful to Alex who has constructed one of the most comprehensive U3A websites in the country which enables our members to carry out many of the transactions needed to enjoy our membership. In addition to being able to access up-to-date information about all our current groups and activities, read our Newsletters and What's On online, it is now possible to complete membership application forms, pay online and sign up for events and trips online.

Christmas entertainment

Thank you to the people who have contacted me about taking part in a small light-hearted skit/drama at our Christmas meeting in December. We are still looking for more people to join us, so if you would like to be part of this experience, please contact me either directly at avmuirhead@gmail.com or via SUCAS.

Avril Muirhead

Chair

French Improvers Group 3

Looking to improve your French. We have spaces available in a friendly group, we meet weekly at members' homes on Thursday afternoons. There are vacancies in this fun & friendly group.

For more information please contact [Lance Kingsman](#) by clicking on his name.

Stretch and Balance Group

We are very mature (!) members of the twice-weekly Stretch and Balance group which is run by Beryl Howe. Last year we made some cheerleading pompoms (from Steradent tubes and plastic bags – don't ask!), to use in an energetic routine. Beryl was talking to a couple of young girls and asked for some suggestions to add to our very limited repertoire.

The instant response – “Will you be doing backflips?” !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Lesley Coleman

Barn Dance study day

Barn dancing is always looking to improve; a new class has been started on a Tuesday and on Saturday 23rd March it was agreed to set up a study day to train new callers.

The group has always had a small number of enthusiastic and skilled callers but if more people are confident to call dances it spreads the load and gives more chance for all to gain the whole barn dance experience.

There is a lot more to calling than immediately seems evident. The caller has to give clear instructions to direct the dance, keep to the tempo of the music and be able to get everyone moving in the right direction. And then to be able to help them untangle themselves when that doesn't happen!

6 new people came forward to call a dance and a group of current dancers came to be guinea pigs.

Mike Courthold from Hungerford with his wife Rita, kindly came to share his expertise. The 'trainees' did an amazing job and all gained tips to improve the experience. Barn Dancers thanked Mike and the U3A and band dance committees for arranging this fun experience and look forward to having some new callers soon.

Claire Smith

Monthly Meetings

Ellendune Centre, Wroughton
on the 2nd Monday of the month at 2.15pm

10th June 2019

Why Diets Fail and What we can do about it John Rope

An interesting and fun presentation about the problems associated with diets, the frauds, the science and some of the "big lies", together with tips for success.

9th September 2019

Marlborough Castle David Du-Croz

Nothing today remains of Marlborough Castle, but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that in the 12th and 13th centuries it was a significant royal building playing a key part in the military and political affairs of the kingdom.

4th October 2019

AGM followed by

A Safe and Well Talk Bob Tabel

Safe & Well Advisor, Swindon North, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service

Callers' Workshop

Saturday 23rd March at Liden Community Centre

We had a total of 26 people attend the barn dance callers' workshop, of whom 6 brave souls elected to call a dance under the guidance and personal feedback of Mike Courthold, professional caller.

We all learnt from each other and even discovered another facility to the Coomber P.A. system which we hadn't known before! Mike gave us tips and hints with regards to calling, demonstrating some dance steps and the effective use of the Coomber. He gave us the confidence to modify a dance to suit our dancers, and praised one of our callers who had already planned that dance.

We hope that the callers will be able to contribute calling a dance at our sessions and we're looking to build on the good work which they displayed at the workshop. Credit must go to the "back up" dancers who were kind, encouraging and endlessly patient. Without them we would not have had anyone to do the dances!

We felt that the workshop promoted the U3A principles of participative learning, adding to our knowledge and skills thanks to the professional caller, as well as the whole group working cheerfully together for the benefit of all.

Frank Rutzler & Rosie Jarvis

Aviation Group

Kentours Day Out 12th April 2019

Under cloudy skies and in a chilly breeze, fifty flying fanatics boarded a Barnes bus bound for aviation nostalgia. Traffic was light so we arrived at the De Havilland Museum, Hatfield (now Salisbury Hall) promptly at 10.30 hours opening time. Josh the Driver proved Master of Manoeuvre as he negotiated the chicane approach road. Sporting ID stickers we immersed ourselves in Mosquito Magic, Comet Contentment and Dove Delight, as well as Venom, Vixen, Moths, Autogyro and others. Oh, and an aircraft mounted field gun. The DH Museum is quite small, but totally enthralling. Where else will you find 3 Mossies in one place? The new hangar under construction promises an expanded range of exhibits.

Departing at 13.00 hours, Josh extricated his vehicle with driving delicacy from a tight parking situation. We retraced our journey as far as the Uxbridge Bunker, 11 Group's 1940 Control Centre. A guided tour started at 14.00 hours and was about an hours duration. Volunteer guides were informative and helpful, the Bunker atmospheric. But 76 steps down turned in to 76 steps up: aching thighs at the summit. A photo of Ken and Ivan with an RAF police officer dummy behind a grille triggered an identity crisis, adding to the humour of the day. WI representative, Bez Suter, joined the party unexpectedly, suggesting that Ivie Travel Inc is broadening its client base in to ever more local groups.

The return to base was somewhat delayed by heavy traffic (Friday on the motorway) but arrival at Ellendune at 18.00 hours was as foretold. KenTours had delivered another smoothly organised and hugely enjoyable excursion.

Brilliant work, Ken. From all of us, Thank You.

Steve Burford



Can You Help Your U3A?

Did you know that the U3A is a Self-Help organisation? Which means that we need everybody to play a part in the running of our U3A. Many of you will do so already, in different ways, in your groups. But Swindon U3A as a whole is held together by a small number of volunteers, who help out on the Management Committee, or in other ways.

Committee members and other volunteers facilitate the setting up of new groups, train group leaders, book speakers for monthly meetings, arrange tea and coffee at larger events, organise all the membership renewals and finances, book venues for groups, staff the office, sort out the website, publish the Newsletter and What's On, publicise U3A locally, oversee health and safety matters and help new members feel part of the organisation.

It takes time! And we are short of people to help at the moment.

We need extra help on the Committee – currently we have no Vice Chair or New Members' lead.

And we also need people who don't necessarily want to act as Committee members, but who can help in other ways with a specific task over a short time, or to 'meet and greet' at different meetings.

Can you help? It doesn't need to take huge amounts of time – and it can be time-limited!

If you can, please contact Avril Muirhead, our current Chair on 01793 525315 or chairman@swindonu3a.org.uk

Alternatively, come to the Coffee morning on Saturday June 29th at Coleview Community Centre between 10.00am and 12.30pm, or agree to be nominated for the Committee – papers for this will be out in late May or early June.

Margaret Goldie

Secretary

Town Gardens Band Concerts

Stella Allen's photograph of the Town Gardens Bandstand was cue for me to remind you that the Sunday Band Concerts have started and will be on most Sundays till early September . A provisional list is on the South Swindon website.

Geoff Bryan

Badminton Group

Swindon U3A has 2 badminton groups. One on Wednesday which is presently fully subscribed and has a short waiting list plus a newly formed group on Friday from 2pm until 4pm at the Haydon Wick Leisure Centre.

The Friday group uses 2 courts and regularly attracts 8 players which is great for the usual mixed doubles but leaves little time for rest and chatter so we'd welcome a few more players of any age or ability.

Please contact the Group Organisers via the U3A web site or by clicking on the name **Roger Williams**.

Proposed Second Sunday Walking Group

Aims of the group: to walk approximately 3 miles, taking time to admire the view, watch wildlife, etc. followed by Sunday lunch at a local pub; the lunch is an integral part of the activity. Group-members take it in turn to recce and lead the walks - though not straight away! Whilst help will be given initially, it is intended that the group itself will provide a leader and deputy within a few months.

Meet: 1st & 3rd Sundays each month.

Duration of session: from 10.45 am to about 2.30pm.

Venues: various, meeting in a pub car park or a public one. In summer we walk in the countryside around Swindon, wintertime usually in or nearer Swindon. We drive to the meeting point; distance is limited to a maximum of about 1/2 hour.

If you interested in joining the group please contact me by clicking on my name.

Barbara Mason

'A' is for Arsenic

Lecture by Dr Kathryn Harkup

Saturday 6th July

This lecture is at the Coleview Community Centre starting at 10:30 and lasting for 1 hour with time for questions afterwards. Tea & coffee will be available from 10:00.

Has your partner been asking about insurance? Does your tea taste funny? Do you have a rich relative tenaciously clinging to life? This is the talk for you!

Agatha Christie used poison to kill her characters more often than any other crime fiction writer. Poison was a central part of the novel, and her choice of deadly substances was far from random. The characteristics of each poison provide vital clues to the discovery of the murderer. Christie gained her extensive chemical knowledge from working in pharmacies during both world wars.

Dr Kathryn Harkup is a chemist and author. Kathryn completed a PhD then a postdoc at the University of York before realising that talking, writing and demonstrating science appealed far more than spending hours slaving over a hot fume-hood. Kathryn went on to run outreach in engineering, computing, physics and maths at the University of Surrey, which involved writing talks on science and engineering topics that would appeal to bored teenagers, and she is now a science communicator delivering talks and workshops on the quirky side of science.

Please sign up on the Swindon U3A website or contact **Bob Carvey** or **Sandie Mulcahy** by clicking on one of their names and they will sign you up.

Sandie Mulcahy

Siren Song

This is the one song everyone
would like to learn: the song
that is irresistible:

the song that forces men
to leap overboard in squadrons
even though they see the beached skulls

the song nobody knows
because anyone who has heard it
is dead, and the others can't remember.

Shall I tell you the secret
and if I do, will you get me
out of this bird suit?

I don't enjoy it here
squatting on this island
looking picturesque and mythical

with these two feathery maniacs,
I don't enjoy singing
this trio, fatal and valuable.

I will tell the secret to you,
to you, only to you.
Come closer. This song

is a cry for help: Help me!
Only you, only you can,
you are unique

at last. Alas
it is a boring song
but it works every time.



Prize winning writer: Margaret Atwood, well known for her novels and recent televising of "The Handmaid's Tale", also published seventeen collections of poetry. Art appreciation members in particular, may appreciate this one!

Lesley Basu

If Only

If only I could wake one day,
And find my pain had gone away.
If only I could leap from bed
Without the thoughts inside my head
Of hours of pain, just stuck there waiting
To stab at me without abating.

If only I could look around,
Instead of staring at the ground
In case a stone be out of place
To trip me up – flat on my face.
To walk & dance with steps so light
Instead of putting up a fight
Just to keep moving – so frustrating,
I hate to keep the others waiting.

Perhaps one day they will find a cure
To end this curse for ever more.
So till that day it's still worth while
To find it doesn't hurt to smile.

Olive T. (Arthritis sufferer)

This poem was written several years ago by a lady suffering from osteoporosis and osteoarthritis. It was found after the lady's death by her daughter who is one of our members. Olive fought against this awful disease right to the end and always tried to project a positive and cheerful disposition, no matter how much pain she was in.

Coffee Morning
for Possible New Helpers for Swindon U3A

Would you be prepared to give some time to helping with your U3A?

You might join the Committee – help host meetings – join a sub-Committee – or shadow an existing Committee member to see what they do.

The possibilities are endless!

If you'd like to consider helping, come and meet some of the Committee to discuss how you might contribute, on:

Saturday 29th June, between 10am and 12 noon,
At Coleview Community Centre, Towcester Road, Swindon SN3 4AS

Margaret Goldie

Secretary

The Arts Society Kennet & Swindon

The Arts Society Kennet & Swindon meet at The Ellendune Centre. We are a friendly local group and our new programme starts May 2019 to April 2020.

The annual membership for 10 talks, by accredited speakers, is £42. Membership does offer the opportunity of visits and a special Study Day. We also support Young Arts and have several strong Heritage Volunteer groups all locally.

Monday 17th June

Coffee from 10am followed by talk at 11am on Silver in England: 'A Fresh Look'. This wonderful metal is one of the most recyclable, transient and subject to the vagaries of taste.

Further information: www.theartsocietykennet.org.uk All welcome but you must be a member of TASKS or guest fees are £7.

Oakham Treasures Day Trip

Wednesday 19th June

The Day Trip Group will be running a coach trip to Oakham Treasures Museum on Wednesday 19th June. This will be open to all Swindon U3A members.

A trip down memory lane, the museum is a family collection of memorabilia, farm equipment, a working model railway and a haberdashery and grocery store from the early fifties and much more.

There will be time for a leisurely tour of all the exhibits in the museum as well as coffee and/or lunch in the large cafe, with home - made cakes as well as lunch items.

Pick up points

9.00am Sainsburys car park, Royal Wootton Bassett

9.15am West Swindon Ashington Way

9.30am Swindon Bus Station

3.00pm Depart for Swindon

These times are approximate and will be confirmed nearer the visit.

If you are interested in this trip please contact [Kathrina Fairgrieve](#) by clicking on her name. Please leave your name and contact details and she will get back to you.

The cost will be £12.00 per person which covers the coach and driver's gratuity.

Book and send the £12.00 non-refundable coach payment to Swindon U3A by 29th May.

Please write on reverse of cheque reference "Oakham Treasures Trip" or use same reference if paying by bank transfer. Group entrance fee to the museum is £6.50 per person payable on the day.

Day Trips Group

Buckler's Hard With River Cruise

9th September 2019

The Day Trips Group is running the above trip. Discover the history of this unique 18th century shipbuilding village.

Originally founded as a free port for the trading of sugar, Buckler's Hard actually flourished as a naval shipbuilding centre and has become famous for building warships for Nelson's Navy, including three vessels that took part in the Battle of Trafalgar.

Visit the Maritime Museum and Buckler's Hard Story to follow the development of this fascinating village, the story of its ships, and the residents who lived and worked here. Learn about activity on the river during WWII, including the important role Buckler's Hard played in the D-Day landings. Plus watch a film presentation to discover the story of Buckler's Hard at war.

Enjoy a cream tea or light lunch in the Captain's Cabin Tea Rooms.

After lunch we will take a tranquil river cruise on the privately owned Beaulieu river. Originally granted to the monks of Beaulieu Abbey by King John in 1204, the rights and responsibilities of caring for the Beaulieu River later passed to the Montagu family. Their careful ownership has created a river which is largely unspoilt and a haven for wildlife. An engaging commentary will reveal the fascinating history of this unique river as well as the creatures that inhabit its riverbanks.

Picnic tables are provided on the banks of the Beaulieu River, if you wish to take your own lunch.

If you wish to find out more visit www.bucklershard.co.uk

Departure times and pick-up points:-

8.30am Royal Wootton Bassett, Borough Fields car park, behind Sainsburys

8.40am Ashington Way, West Swindon

8.50am Matalan, Greenbridge.

4.00pm Depart for Swindon

Cost £22pp includes: coach, driver's gratuity, entry to Buckler's Hard and river cruise. **All members welcome.**

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

Aviation Group

Visit to Solent Sky Museum & Boscombe Down Aviation Collection (BDAC) Friday 25th October 2019

The Solent Sky Museum in Southampton is uniquely concerned with the development of aviation in the Solent area over the past century. The collection includes the Folland Gnat, Sandringham flying boat, Schneider trophy S6 Seaplane and the immortal Spitfire.

The BDAC now located at the famous Old Sarum Airfield having moved from its previous home at RAF Boscombe Down tells the story of Boscombe Down and its history with regards to test flying and aircraft development

Following our visit to Solent Sky in the morning we will make our way back into Wiltshire to visit the BDAC in the afternoon.

Departure times and pick points

- 8.00am Highworth, Brewery St Car Park
- 8.20am Wroughton, Ellendune Centre
- 8.25am Downes View / Marlborough Rd
- 8.30am Coate Water,
- 4.00pm Depart for Swindon

Cost £32 Includes Coach, entrance to both museums, driver's gratuity and tea/coffee, biscuits and a talk on the history of BDAC on arrival at Old Sarum. All members welcome.

Contact [Ken Ivie](#) by clicking on his name.

Travel Group G

Visit to Sheffield and Chatsworth Christmas market Sunday 17th November to Wednesday 20th November

Staying at Sheffield Metropolitan Hotel for 3 nights bed, breakfast and evening meal.

Includes coach, entrance to Chatsworth and driver's gratuity

Cost £280 single supplement £75

Deposit Due: £40 by Monday 3rd June

Balance Due: Monday 16th September

For further details contact [Sue York](#) by clicking on her name.

Concertgoers Group

Advanced Notice - Date for Your Diary

On Sunday, October 6th, we will be going to the Albert Hall to hear the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Bach Choir perform Beethoven's 9th Symphony (the Choral) with its climactic Ode to Joy, and Beethoven's well known Piano Concerto no 5 (The Emperor).

Don't miss this opportunity to hear awe-inspiring music in a magnificent setting!

The concert starts at 3pm and we will be leaving Swindon in the morning.

We expect the cost to be under £50.

For more details and expressions of interest, contact:

Cindy Matthews or **Nina Stimson** by clicking on one of the names.

Copy Dates

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

13th June 2019

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

18th July 2019

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

12th August 2019

Items for the October Newsletter must be received by

7th September 2019

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

12th September 2019

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

Geoff Bryan

Stop press

*****PAT testing date *****

31st July.

Keep an eye open for details.

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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.