

learn, laugh, live



1895 "Flaming June" by Lord Leighton

June is named after the **Roman Goddess Juno**, goddess of marriage, and wife of the supreme deity **Jupiter**

June birthstones are **Pearl, Alexandrite and Moonstone**

3rd Sunday in June is **Father's Day**

June 21st is **International Day of Yoga**

June 1st is Children's Day

The **Summer Solstice** in 2023 falls on **Wednesday 21st June at 15:58**, the point when we are most directly pointing at the sun

June 9th is **La Rioja Day** in Spain

Astrological signs are Gemini and Cancer

June 6th is **Sussex Day**

3rd week of June is **Bike Week** in the U.K. and Ireland

June is **National Smile Month**

Saturday nearest to the summer solstice is Pixie Day in Ottery St Mary

2ND SATURDAY IN JUNE IS THE START OF NATIONAL DAIRY GOAT AWARENESS WEEK IN THE USA

Chair's Hello

Flaming June and we are at the halfway point of the year. Personally, I wish things would just slow down now so that we can bask in the warm days, blossoming gardens and outdoor pursuits. Have you adjusted to the summer? Vests off, shorts on? Aperitif on the terrace? Ha! Ha! Knowing our weather, you are probably sheltering from the rain as you read this! But don't forget to put our Summer Party on June 12th in your diary. We have a full programme of summer fun – more details about the programme are in this Newsletter.

As our academic year begins to draw towards it's close, we are busy looking at the plans and adjustments for the new year beginning in September 2023. The matters that the Management Committee has been considering include the following:

1. **Financial changes:** You should be aware by now that the coming year sees the full transition to groups paying for their own costs. At the same time, we expect the Membership Subscription to reduce dramatically. This in turn means that we need to be much more aware of and precise about central costs as less money will be coming in to the overall Swindon u3a budget. The Treasurer and finance team are looking closely at and planning for the budgeting implications of this.
2. **Succession planning and volunteering:** as you may have noticed in some of my recent comments in the Newsletter, we are particularly concerned about the lack of people being interested in and coming forward to consider being Committee members. This has serious repercussions for the future of our u3a such that the Trustees held a special meeting on May 23rd to consider what, if anything, can be done to avert the crisis.
3. **Publicity:** we want to ensure we are more visible in our community in the run up to Open Day on September 2nd. As I outlined in the last Newsletter, we are planning to have a Swindon u3a stall at many of the summer events in Swindon. Thank you to all who have agreed to do a 'shift' on our stall. Come and say 'hello' – we are at the RWB Market Day, the Duck Race, the Lydiard Park Vintage Fair, the Wroughton Festival, and at Asda Orbital.
4. **IT:** We are introducing a new IT system and website called 'Simple Membership' – more detailed information on this is included in this Newsletter. This will entail training for our Finance Team and Office Staff in preparation for the change.
5. **A review of various important policies:** e.g. the Risk Register, the Privacy Policy and the Strategic Plan to ensure they are up-to-date and fit for purpose.

We continue to attract new members and hope that Open Day on September 2nd will attract even more. Enjoy the summer, your interest groups, and the company of your u3a friends. With warm wishes for a lovely summer season.

Gill

June Summer Party

Monday June 12th, 2.00 - 5.00pm at the Ellendune Centre

You are all invited to the Summer Party. It will be a great u3a fun event with something for everyone.

The Programme includes:

A Summer Quiz led by Chris Brooks

A Poetry Trail with poems chosen by our Poetry Appreciation Group

Songs by our u3a Singing Group

Maypole dancing! By everyone who wants to have a go, with help from a fiddler (Steve Russell) and a country dancing expert (Judith Randell-Sly)

There will, of course, be tea and cake!

Please book on the website if you can so that we have an idea of numbers coming.

Please come and join us. I look forward to seeing you there.

[Click here to book.](#)

Gill



Life, the Universe and Everything.

Are you interested in sciences such as medicine, technology, climate, astronomy, scientists, etc?

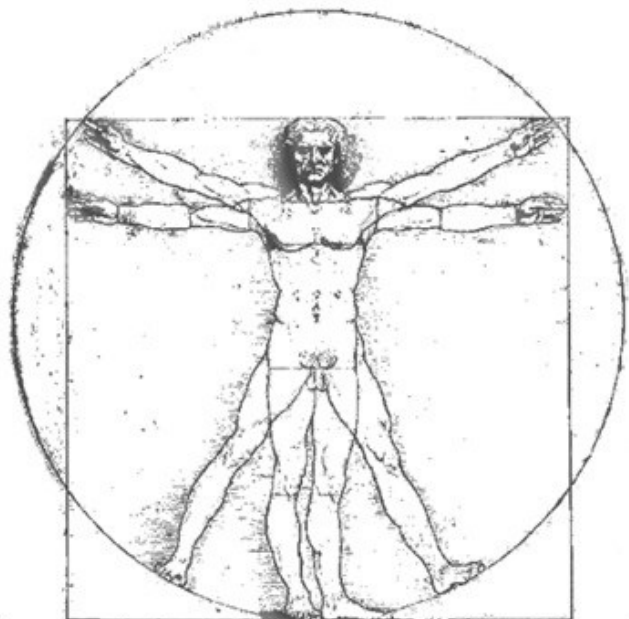
Our science-related group has some spaces for new members.

Upcoming meetings are on the subjects of museums, medicine, the National Grid, and nuclear power.

Meetings are at Meadowcroft Community Centre, Upper Stratton, SN2 7JX, on the second Friday of every month (except August), from 2pm – 4pm.

Please contact Chris Brooks by clicking on my name if you're interested in joining us.

Chris Brooks



Vitruvian Man

by Leonardo da Vinci c.1490

Friday Walking group coach trip to Bath

The Friday walking group are organising a coach trip on Saturday September 23rd.

We plan to walk from Bear Flat, Bath, through the Greenway tunnels to Monkton Combe, along by the Somerset Coal canal and the Kennet & Avon canal and past the Dundas aqueduct, ending up at the George Inn, Bathampton.

It is a flat walk of about 7 miles. The cost is £15 per person including driver's gratuity.

The coach leaves from Lakeside, Swindon, at 9.00am and will leave Bathampton no later than 4.00pm.

You will need to bring a packed lunch and drink.

If you are interested in joining us please click on a name to contact ***David Hewitt*** or ***John Saunders***.

David Hewitt



Use It Or Lose It

Living Longer, Living Well

Would you like to be part of a new team delivering this very successful u3a course? It covers the effects of ageing on our minds and bodies, looks at aspects of mental health such as dementia as well as physical activity and diet. The course gives pointers to further information on how to keep us mentally and physically active. It offers something for all u3a members.

The course consists of three sessions of two hours each held on consecutive weeks. Each session is a combination of teaching and group discussion or exercise. There is enough demand from u3a members to run 2 courses a year.

After several years the current team is stepping back from running the course but the good news is that there is an off-the-shelf course available for those who take over from us. This consists of all the materials and sources we have used including PowerPoint presentations, presenters' notes and handouts. We will give you as much help and support as you need.

Course members have consistently rated the course as more than 9 out of 10 on the post course assessment but it is not just the course members that get all the fun. We, the presentation team, have also enjoyed it immensely.

Please get in touch by clicking on our names below and we look forward to helping a new team carry the course forward.

Bob, Anna, Sue, Ken



Use it or Lose it

Membership News

A group of our volunteers met for coffee and a chat at The Kings in Old Town in early May. Many had not had the opportunity to meet before. It was good to be able to put names to faces and to share ideas. There are plans for another meet up at 10.30 on Tues July 11th. Anyone interested in knowing more about u3a volunteering opportunities would be very welcome to join us.

Jill Kelly

Monthly Meetings

As there were three Bank Holidays in close succession, no Monthly meeting took place during May.

The Summer Fun event will take place on Monday June 12th at 2.00 pm at the Ellendune Community Centre, Wroughton. You can read more about this special event elsewhere in the newsletter.

No monthly meetings will be held during July and August, so the programme will recommence on Monday September 11th at 2.00 pm at the Ellendune Community Centre. Look out for further details in the next newsletter.

Sue Cook

Jigsaws and Book Swaps

When we resume our regular monthly meetings in the autumn, we would like to revive the opportunity for members to pick up a new jigsaw at each meeting and bring the old one back for someone else to do. There are a number of jigsaws gathering dust in the office at Gorse Hill so we're going to dust them off and try them out over the summer – just perfect when you need a break from weeding! Some have already been checked to ensure there are no missing pieces but several need checking. Are you able to be a 'jigsaw checker' – surely a unique job? Please just call in at the Office and pick up a jigsaw that hasn't got a 'checked' sticker on it and have a go.

Similarly, we'd like to try out a Book Swap – bring along any book you've read but don't want to keep and swap it for someone else's book. Save up any books you read over the summer (or have already read) and that you would be willing to swap. Let's give it a go.

Gill



Life in a Poem

W. H. Davies 1871-1940

William Henry Davies was born in Newport, Wales, the son of a publican. After an apprenticeship as a picture-frame maker and a series of labouring jobs, he travelled to America, first to New York and then to the Klondike. Returning to England after having lost a foot jumping a train in Canada, he led a penurious life in London lodging houses and as a pedlar in the country. He married in 1923, Emma, who was much younger than him.

His first poems were not published until he was 34. Most of his poetry is on the subject of nature or life on the road and exhibits a natural simple, earthy style. This one is undoubtedly the best known and sounds strangely contemporary, chiming as it does with current notions of well-being and the countryside being essential for our mental health.

Leisure

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.



Lesley Basu

Barn Dancing

On Monday May 22nd the u3a held a trial Barn Dance with a view to restarting this group in September. It was a huge success!

The event was organised superbly by Rosie Jarvis and her team of volunteers. We had the services of a professional caller, Mike Courthold from Hungerford. He introduced the dances and talked us through the steps before setting us loose on our own. Quite a few times he had to intervene when we turned the wrong way and in one dance when one of us joined another set halfway through the dance. (I plead guilty to this charge)

None of us found it too tiring and we all had a great time. There is a strong desire to restart this group and there were volunteers who expressed their willingness to help in September. However, for this group to be successful it will need some more volunteers to help with the organisation and leading the dances. The u3a has all the equipment, the music and the steps for many dances so it is only a case of following the script. If you want this group to succeed and you can help, please contact [Rosie Jarvis](#) by clicking on her name.

Bob Carvey



Image © Craig Payne Photography

Coming soon: A new way of using I.T.

Keeping up with rapid changes in technology is a constant challenge. How many of us had heard of Zoom before Covid? Not everyone is a fan but it certainly helped many people stay in touch and even continue with their u3a activities in some cases. We have been working hard to ensure that we can use technology in a way that is accessible, sustainable and affordable.

Several years ago, Alex Cranswick, our webmaster, was a pioneer of an I.T. system developed to serve the needs of u3as, not just here in Swindon, but across the U.K. Ever since, he has developed and maintained our SuCAS website and admin system – an incredible achievement. Whilst Alex is continuing to support and advise us, he is now planning to take a little more time to enjoy his leisure pursuits. We wish him well.

Dave Todd, our I.T. support Trustee, has led a small team which has spent a great deal of time researching what is now available to replace SuCAS. They have looked at several options and considered them carefully. Our new system is called **Simple Membership**. It has been developed specifically to support u3a organisations and is proving popular with many other u3a's across the country. The developer of the system will be helping us as we introduce it. We also have assistance from a volunteer from Croxley Green u3a who has experience of introducing the system elsewhere.

Change is never easy and we know it will take time for us all to adjust. Training is being arranged for the office team, group organisers and other volunteers who will need to be able to use the admin system. The aim is for the new system to be in use for 2023/4 renewals and new memberships.

We are hoping to simplify and streamline payment methods. A new style Homepage on the website will offer some features not currently available.

We very much hope that **Simple Membership** will prove true to its name and provide us with an I.T. system fit for our needs now and into the future. Dave can be contacted on: itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk

The Committee



Swindon u3a Events 2023

Last month in the Newsletter I introduced the Publicity Team and the work they are doing for our u3a. This month I'd like to introduce our Events Team and the work they do to ensure we have a lively programme of u3a events during the year. Although, for most members, your interest/activity group is the focus of belonging to Swindon u3a, it is also beneficial for all of us to remember that we belong to a wider organisation that has a lot to offer in terms of learning, friendship, and social activities generally.

The Events Team: Firstly, meet the Events Team – our team of volunteers who are working to ensure a full programme of interesting events throughout the year. They are *Sue Cook, Monica Brian, Jill Kelly, Sylvia Alexander, Linda Young and Gill Brain*. Together we plan, organise, and run our annual events calendar.

Annual Events: We organise and run a full programme of regular *Monthly meetings* for members (with a break in July and August) involving contacting, booking and liaising with speakers. We hold a *Summer and Christmas Party* so we can have some fun! More seriously, we organise *our Open Day* in September to show the world what we do and hopefully, encourage new members. Even more seriously, we plan our AGM in November to ensure management information and feedback to our members. Other annual events include a regular *New Members Meeting* in the autumn to welcome those who have just joined us and a *Volunteers 'Thank You' Meeting* which does just what it says! Finally, we plan to hold some *Focus Group Meetings* during the year when we can sit and chat with some of our members and get feedback and ideas.

A lot of organisation goes into this annual programme of events. If you are interested in joining the Events Team and helping with the planning, the development of ideas, and sharing of tasks please get in touch with me. The more we spread the load the easier it is for all.

Gill Brain

Modern Technology Group

Unfortunately, the present organisers are unable to continue running this group after July. It would be a disappointment to our members if this group was to cease running as it is both interesting and informative. We help members with their laptops, tablets and smartphones. This gives them the ability to participate fully in all aspects of modern society including shopping, banking and communicating over the internet. This is becoming more and more important as time goes by.

If you feel that you could help run this group and continue the good work we would like to hear from you. You don't need previous experience of running a group because we can help you with that. What the group needs is someone to answer their questions on the problems they encounter with modern technology and to act a bit like a surgery for modern technology. If you can help, contact the organisers by clicking on the link. [Modern Technology Group](#)

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Copy Dates

Items for the **July** Newsletter must be received by

18th June

Items for the **August** Newsletter must be received by

19th July

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.