

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



FLEET AND
DISTRICT
2001

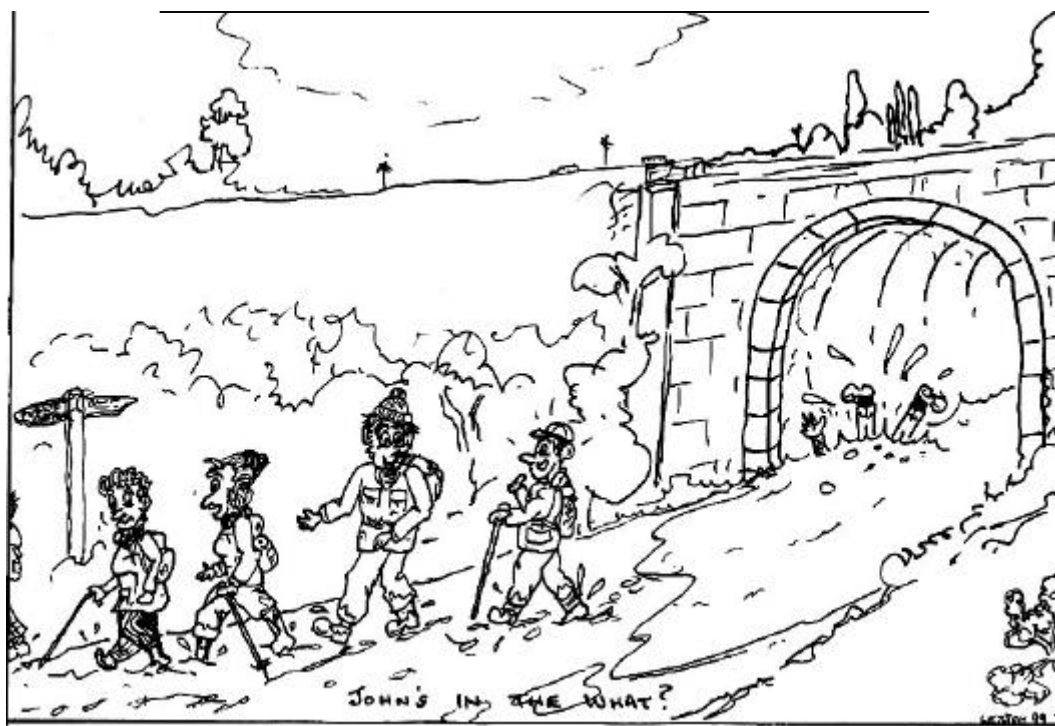
FROM THE CHAIR

As we near the end of our seventh year I think we can all look back with a certain amount of satisfaction at what we have achieved. We were fortunate to make a flying start with a hundred or so enthusiastic members and our numbers have increased year by year. Our first few groups have also grown to over fifty; this means that we have extended considerably the range of topics on offer and we are adding new ones almost every month.

However we cannot afford to become complacent. In order to continue to succeed we need every member to play their part, whether it is helping with a group's coffee rota at monthly meetings or responding to requests to help with the catering, or to lead a group or join the committee. Please do consider what contribution you can make. **We urgently need volunteers to join the Committee.** Your effort and your enthusiasm are what make our U3A successful; without your support we can do nothing.

Finally, I would like to add a personal note of thanks for all the encouragement you have given me right from the start. I have found my time on the committee both rewarding and enjoyable, but the time has come, in parliamentary terms, 'to spend more time with my family'. I shall, of course, remain in office until the Annual General Meeting and after that I shall have more time to enjoy the wide variety of activities available to members.

Now all that remains for me to do is to wish you a happy, sunny and rain-free summer!
Janet Pulley.



Les Ayrton's view of the Walking Group, before Foot and Mouth.

BRIDGE

The group goes from strength to strength with tuition and guidance from Mary O'Connor. Beginners are taught in a small group and more the experienced receive guidance in the larger "Improvers" group.

They also help run the weekly meetings. Members are prepared for joining local clubs. This is quite a daunting prospect but those who have taken the step enjoy the social contact. At the last class we had eight tables of improvers and eight members in the learners group. Sixteen members now play with established clubs but continue to learn at U3A. For information on the group, phone us at home and I will answer, Mary will be elsewhere, playing bridge.

Dennis O'Connor.

CALLIGRAPHY I AND II

The Group meets on alternate Fridays at the Velmead Community Centre.

There are beginners and those who have been attending for years.

Calligraphy I have learned Foundational, Uncial, Carolingian, Italic and French Ronde scripts. Calligraphy II has developed the script of their choice. They have also been working in colour, learned Rennie Macintosh script and have worked on a calendar for 2002. Altogether there are eleven scripts that can be learned.

Everyone plans their own piece of work to space it correctly and lay it out artistically, decorating it if they desire. The aim is to work in a friendly atmosphere giving each other encouragement and producing beautiful writing.

Sheila Williams

C R E A T I V E

Writing is something we like to do

Rightly or wrongly we struggle away

In hopes that it will be a success

Time is all we need

Inspiring each other

Naturally with kindness to criticise

Giggles of fun we certainly have

Acrostic by Christine Alley

COMPUTER WORKSHOP GROUPS

Each Group uses the computers at Calthorpe Park school which all have Network connections. We do not provide a follow on to the Beginners Workshop as these are well covered by the Fleet Learning Centre.

E-mail and Internet

This group concentrates on getting the best from e-mail and the Internet while enjoying the challenge of searching for specific topics.

The Workshop runs between September and December only.

At the end of the Workshop you will be a 'Silver Surfer', able to talk knowledgeably to your Grandchildren about the Web. This group replaces the old Intermediate Workshop.

Beginners I and II

These two groups, working at the same level, aim to help absolute beginners or those with little knowledge of a Personal Computer (PC), to become familiar with a PC and Word Processing. The group leaders work closely together to ensure that the workshops cover the same ground by

using printed material and set examples that introduce different topics. Individuals enjoy working on a PC and progress at their own pace while developing PC and Word Processing skills.

Ian Stephenson

DRESSMAKING

After aspiring for the last seven years to have a dressmaking class in the U3A our hopes were realised when Gladys Wilson came to Fleet to retire.

Gladys was a teacher in the Adult Education Service for thirty-two years and also worked in Haute Couture. The class started in October with eight enthusiastic members all with some experience of sewing.

At our first meeting our measurements were taken and to spare blouses were given to each on a piece of paper.

We decided that our first venture would be a straight skirt from a block pattern drawn up by Gladys. Next we made trousers from our own patterns. We were then taught how to cover buttons and to put in zips by hand.

In January we celebrated our successes by treating ourselves to lunch at the Crab and Lobster.

For the Spring Term we have decided to make a rather special summer skirt; long, soft and flowing, to a design by Gladys.

So if you see us in Fleet during the months of July and August, we will no doubt be wearing our swishy skirts.

Josephine Walton

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

The English Literature group is having an enjoyable year. We have read Oscar Wilde's novel, "The Picture of Dorian Gray." This slim volume proved to be complex and thought provoking. It did contain the sparkling wit that we expect of Oscar Wilde, along with some very flowery language, but the story was concerned with disturbing aspects of London Society, at the turn of the century, and the darkest areas of the human character.

We then relaxed with the video of "Under Milk Wood," which is an enjoyable romp of a tale although we felt that some of the magic of the original writing was lost. We are currently reading "The Mayor of Casterbridge" and are finding, as always, that we get a great deal more from our shared exploration than we would from a solitary reading. We enjoy being read to by those members of the group who are happy to read aloud. Our two men readers have been a welcome addition to the group as it is interesting to have their perspective on the books. Also, they are both good at regional accents so Thomas Hardy's Dorset has really come to life.

Anon.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

FOUR NEW MEMBERS ARE
NEEDED FOR THE
COMMITTEE AT THE NEXT
AGM IN NOVEMBER



EUROPEANS

A fine frosty Monday morning witnessed the departure of 49 members on a trip, by coach, to Brussels, Waterloo and Bruges arranged by the Europeans Group.

Le Shuttle operated with its usual efficiency but the cloud we had seen in Kent thickened into a foggy murk in the flat landscape of Flanders. We were getting closer to the administrative centre of the European Union - was the fog a sign of things to come? Perhaps, but as we advanced into the suburbs of Brussels there were a few encouraging gleams of sunshine! The following morning was crisp and clear and saw us on our way to Waterloo. There in 1815, Bavarian, British, Dutch and Prussian soldiers fought the French - one of many variations on a familiar European theme of coalition and conflict.

From that darker side of history we moved on to the institutions of today's EU. At the European Commission, in company with some students of the first age from Turkey, we were told that the EU is "the Kingdom of

Compromise". Compromise seemed to be the key word too at the Parliament where we were initiated into the mysteries of "co-decision" and qualified majority voting.

Our working day ended with an address from Roy Perry MEP and a lively question and answer session. Mr Perry gave us an insight into his typical working day and the major tasks in which he is involved. These include work on Parliamentary Committees and as Sport and Recreation spokesman. A main message was the need for the UK to be fully engaged in the EU. Only by putting something into the work of EU institutions, and into the debate on their future, would we get something worthwhile in return. On the final day we made our way to the beautiful city of Bruges to contemplate some of Europe's finest artistic and architectural achievements. Then it was time to move on to "duty-paid" shops; the Chunnel; and so, mindful of Europe's chequered history and better informed about its possible future, home to Fleet.

Derek Stroud.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS GROUP

Since the start of the Autumn 2000 session, the group has met at St John Ambulance hall in Fleet. Despite having to move our slot from Wednesday morning to Monday morning, attendance has continued strong, and we are an active group of 35 and more members.

A lot of knowledge exists within the group on many aspects of finances, and the willingness to share such experiences (both good and bad!) cause many discussions, views, input and awareness for group members. To keep discussions fresh and up to the minute, we continue to anchor meetings agendas around current and topical information from newspapers, supplements and magazines. In addition, one member has organised a fantasy share competition within the group, so currently we are all hoping that our chosen share turns up with the highest gain over the selected period to give a winner.

Members also have the opportunity of professional presentations by outside speakers once or twice during each term session. The contacts for these speakers on most occasions are by the efforts of individual members for the benefit of the group as a whole.

Financial affairs are a bit like gardening, home improvement and motoring programmes on Television – there is always some new item, viewpoint or product for our attention and interest, and the group continues to flourish.

Brian Robinson

MUSIC APPRECIATION

The group continues to meet fortnightly and numbers have been slowly increasing. Attendance is now usually 30-40 - but we still have room for more. We recently issued a questionnaire to see if our arrangements and programming were to members' liking. The results were reassuring. In general they represented a vote of confidence and we shall not be making any significant changes. There were however lots of suggestions for particular composers or particular types of music and we now have enough ideas to keep us going until about 2010!

Our programmes concentrate mainly on "classical" music - from the 16th to the 20th centuries. We haven't yet listened to anything from the 21st century but by the time this newsletter comes out we shall have heard a choral item by John Rutter, written only in 1999, in memory of Linda McCartney. During the summer term we shall have three visiting speakers and one of our own members will be presenting stories from the operas.

One minor change we shall be introducing for the summer term is to make our starting time 15 minutes later - 2.00pm instead of 1.45pm. Apart from anything else this is more convenient for the organisers!

Brian Smith

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Attendance has increased over the last year, the average audience numbering 200. September 2000's enrolment meeting was not without its

difficulties: many members had been unable to obtain forms for postal enrolment, but with improved arrangements planned for September this year, the enrolment and group registration should run more smoothly. Presentations have ranged from Financial Advice to Codebreaking During World War II, through Woodland Conservation, to Jane Austen's Hampshire Family. Over the next year, topics will include Crime Detection, ENSA Broadcasting, A Coastal Walk Round The British Isles and Weather Forecasting.

We have, this year, instituted a system of providing coffee servers from each subject group in turn. Unfortunately we recently had a group that failed to take its turn; we feel that should this happen again, coffee will simply not be provided at the meeting.

My grateful thanks to all of those members who have helped so magnificently at the various social functions - it has been a pleasure to work with you. Here's to another enjoyable, interesting year.

Pat Davis.

PHILOSOPHY GROUP

About twelve of us meet four times each term with the aim, basically, of exploring the nature of a human being and the universe in which we have evolved. The main topic this year has been mind and consciousness; in particular whether there is evidence to support the belief of many religions in an afterlife and, if so, what the nature of that life might be. Future topics will include Tennyson and philosophical poetry, but often the most fruitful topics are those raised by members themselves in the course of our discussion. Isaac Newton likened his efforts to those of a little child on the

seashore, discovering a smoother pebble or prettier shell, "whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me". This sums up the aim of our group and, perhaps, philosophy generally, namely to develop or regain the sense of wonder and curiosity that children have. On the radio, shortly before I wrote this, the presenter of Thought for Today regretted that questions such as 'Who am I?' 'Where do I come from?' 'To where am I going?' occur naturally to many children, but tend to fade out as we get older and wiser.

David Claytor

RESOURCES

Over the past three years we have accumulated equipment worth more than four thousand pounds, for the use of the groups in Fleet U3A.

Equipment available includes; a television/video, an overhead projector, flip charts with stands, projector screens, bidding boxes and boards for bridge and cassette recorders.

At the end of 2000 a lottery grant for £2,800 was successfully negotiated for the purchase of a laptop computer and a laser printer. During 2001 it is our intention to make a second application to the Lottery Fund for a grant up to £3,500 for a digital projector. This with a PC will make possible professional presentations for the benefit of all Groups.

If Group Leaders have any questions relating to our resources, please contact me on 01189732691.

Rod Parker

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