



## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Fleet U3A is alive and not only well, but flourishing. I never cease to be amazed at the spirit and enthusiasm of group leaders and members. Despite the fact that each year we lose on average one hundred members our numbers continue to grow. Since inception some 1600 people have joined and we have a current membership of over 900. We must be doing something right.

This time last year we were in the throws of the possibility of leaving the U3A Trust. That is behind us and we have been trying to establish relations with other U3A's. No one has worked harder in this respect than our Vice-Chairman but with the exception of an agreement with Yateley, as yet nothing has come to fruition. In the end it will come down to agreements with specific groups.

We have also tried to reduce the workload of the committee and have established a sub-committee on catering under the able guidance of Betty Fox and a sub-committee to produce the programme under Ray Oldham. Janet Davies has also taken on the difficult task of supplying the U3A News. I would like to publicly thank these members for their continuing invaluable support.

Next year will be our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We have some ideas on possible events but if any of you have suggestions on how we should celebrate this we would be most grateful.

Finally may I, on behalf of the committee, wish you all the very best seasons' greetings.

Gerard Walton

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## **FROM THE GROUP LEADERS LIAISON SECRETARY**

I am a new member of your committee and have been asked to make a contribution to this Winter Review as the Group Leaders Liaison Secretary in which post I am responsible for keeping all the Group Leaders informed of changes to the published programme in order for them to keep the membership advised of such changes.

At the moment your committee is very over stretched and if you wish YOUR U3A to continue, we would like to hear from any volunteers who are willing to join us to share the load of running our very successful and highly motivated branch of the U3A. You would be expected to attend a 2 hour meeting once a month and would be at the "cutting edge" of the decision making process that enables our U3A to function.

If you are interested, please contact any member of the committee whose details can be found in the Annual Programme.

At the recent Group Leaders meeting it was suggested that we form several New Groups such as: French for Beginners, Spanish, Italian, D.I.Y. and Computer Digital Imaging.

As always we are happy to consider these and any other suggestions, but it really comes down to people volunteering to organise such groups. If you wish any new group to proceed and would like to lead it, please contact any member of the committee.

It was also suggested that the classes should be held for 12 months of the year instead of the present 10. It was felt that this proposal should be put to the membership to ascertain how many people

would be interested in attending the classes during July and August particularly if they were on a self-financing basis.

Please let your committee have your views on this subject.

We are considering changing the **ENROLMENT DAY** for 2004 to **AUGUST** and the exact details will be announced when this has been finalised.

Iris G Martin

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## **MEMBERS REPORTS**

### **BIRDWATCHING**

As last year, we were extremely lucky weather wise. The outings were well attended - between 15 and 20 people each time - but thankfully, not the entire 40 who signed up to join the course initially. The number of people who actually turned up for each walk is about the maximum for this kind of activity -any more and it becomes rather unwieldy. As usual, the initial meeting took place indoors, in March. Thereafter, all meetings were outdoors, in April, May and June. We visited Moor Green Lakes, near Finchampstead, Blackbushe and Yateley Common, Fleet Pond, Basingstoke Canal (between the Barley Mow and Tundry Pond), Crondall area and Frensham Common.

Highlights among the 70 species of birds identified were Buzzard, Little Ringed Plover, Snipe, Woodcock, Redshank, Green Sandpiper, Night jar, Nightingale, Stonechat, Dartford Warbler, Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher, Linnet, Bullfinch & Yellowhammer.

I would like to thank all -new friends and old - for supporting the course; you have been so appreciative and enthusiastic. I would also like to thank my wife, Maureen, for her efforts as secretary and scribe, and both she and I look forward to seeing you again next spring.

Gilbert Rowland.

### **CHESS**

Average attendance is about five, from a group of some eight active players. Players of any standard are welcome to join us for games,

gossip and a cup of tea. We meet in a private house on alternate Wednesday afternoons.

Phillip Gething

### **COMPUTER WORKSHOP - INTERNET, EMAIL AND THE WEB**

This year the group signed up more members than the facilities at Calthorpe Park School could support, so we had to adopt a "waiting list" for those unlucky to join early enough. The subject is clearly of great interest to U3A members as more and more of us are joining the ranks of "silver surfers", now estimated to be in excess of 5 million people in the UK. Catering for those who already have adequate keyboard skills and a basic knowledge of how to operate a PC, our aim is to give our members a good basic knowledge of the Internet and some of the supporting technologies.

Topics we cover include: using a browser, surfing the web, search engines, secure online shopping, newsgroups, protection from hackers and viruses, setting up an email account, sending and receiving emails, etc. Members are encouraged to ask questions and to share their experiences with others. A few members are interested in website design and construction and a small subgroup is learning the basics of HTML, the language used for web pages.

We meet twice monthly on Wednesdays from 4 to 6 pm in the autumn and winter terms only. After Christmas I intend to repeat most of what was covered in the first term, and several members have indicated that they will not be returning. There will therefore be room for all

those on the waiting list if they wish to come along.

I would like to express my gratitude to the helpers who come along to demonstrate some of the techniques to the group members on a one-to-one basis. Without them it would be almost impossible to give the individual attention many members desire.

Colin Philip

## **ENGLISH LITERATURE**

We are having a very interesting study this year using "Jane Eyre" and "The Wide Sargasso Sea". We started with "Jane Eyre", the mid-nineteenth century novel by Charlotte Bronte. People may not realise that "The Wide Sargasso Sea" written by Jean Rhys in 1966 is intended to be a prequel to "Jane Eyre" as it is the story of the first Mrs Rochester.

Although we have 28 members on the Register, it is interesting that the smaller number attending each meeting does not include the same people all the time. If all 28 turned up, we would have to consider a larger room.

Helen Gething

## **EUROPEANS**

This year we are concentrating on two themes: the new draft EU constitutional Treaty and ways in which the EU "affects me and my family".

On the first we are studying the background to the Treaty, including the work of the Convention chaired by Giscard d'Estaing, as well as the text itself and various supportive and non-supportive commentaries upon it. Views, most unlikely to be unanimous, will be formed on whether the Treaty is "good for Britain" and whether or not a referendum should be held on it.

On the second we are looking initially at the fields of consumer protection and the environment and asking ourselves what is now the responsibility of the EU and what is Member States'. Should the EU do more or is it getting too far into the "nooks and crannies" of domestic affairs? These questions and the draft Treaty then come together insofar as one objective of the latter is to provide a clearer distinction on

what should be the business of Member States and what that of the EU.

As always this subject provides much scope for lively debate, with a wide range of views being expressed.

Derek Stroud

## **FRENCH INTERMEDIATE**

Having kept the majority of the group from last year we have welcomed some newcomers. We are about halfway through the BBC French Experience 1, which involves a certain amount of listening and plenty of lively communication. Our extra-mural activities have consisted of an idyllic day-trip to Le Touquet in July and a visit to see Le Placard during the French Film Season at Central Studio, Basingstoke.

Rosalind Kemp

## **GARDENING**

We held seven successful meetings during the year with an average of 30 members. We were very pleased to change our venue to the United Reformed Church Hall in February where the facilities are much better for our needs. Our first speaker had managed a local garden centre and spoke about growing plants in general and gave us many useful tips.

A talk with slides about 'Rushmoor in Bloom' gave us an insight into the organising of this very successful scheme. We were surprised to learn that it is cheaper for the plants for the many bedding schemes to be bought in rather than growing their own, as in the past.

A demonstration of 'Hanging Baskets' by the owner of a local nursery gave us many tips on suitable plants -his remaining plants were eagerly purchased whilst the winner of the hanging basket, donated for a raffle, was delighted!

We try to encourage members to talk about their particular horticultural interests and were fortunate to hear about 'Hellebores' and 'Cactus Growing' from two members.

A coach trip to Wisley Gardens was much enjoyed by 29 members on a fine though rather hot day.

About 34 of us visited the garden in Odiham of our first speaker. Of course the planting in quite a small area was superb, but we also had the pleasure of a delicious tea of home made cakes. The owner sent us a letter of thanks for our donation for the Odiham Cottage Hospital and several lovely photos of our visit. We try to encourage members to bring plants for sale to help boost our funds because speakers are very expensive and we try to keep our costs down as much as possible.

Pat Constantine.

## HISTORY

The History class continues to expand and now has 120 members, larger than quite a few U3As throughout the country. It is a good job that on any one session we average a sixty-six percent attendance, otherwise we would have to use olive oil to pack them in the hall. The downside has been that numbers have overwhelmed the tea makers, washers and dryer-ups, so members have now agreed to provide their own 'tipple', ensuring that a real party spirit prevails.

Sadly one of our regular speakers Jim Lacey who has given us some very interesting talks has passed away, and he will be greatly missed.

Last year's theme was, 'The Victorians' and presentations were made as follows:

Peter Smith on The Victorians and The Spencer Family, June Knowles on Queen Victoria, Victorian Childhood and Death at the Priory, Olive Thornton on Florence Nightingale, Neil Paxton on Victorian Women in Society, Rosemary Greener on Mrs Beeton, Jim Lacey on Victorian Social History, Ellsie Russell on Lillie Langtry and Victorian Holidays, Jim Russell on Victorian Engineers, Kristina Humphreys on Carl Gustav Emil von Mannerheim a Finnish general and politician.

Outside speakers gave talks on Victorian Railways, The Victorian Magic Lantern and Rasputin; Vera Hughes and David Weller entertained us with a dramatised reading of 'East Lynne' the Victorian Story.

Neil Paxton organised a coach trip to Osbourne House on the Isle of Wight which was very informative and enjoyed by all, except Neil, who was literally struck down and incarcerated in his arm chair the night before, and missed his own charabanc outing.

This year's theme is the first half of the Twentieth Century, and talks so far have been by Peter Smith on the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, George V by June Knowles, Vichy France by Phillip Gething, and the Wall Street Crash by Neil Paxton, also an outside speaker on the History of the Falkland Isles. Future talks will be Hollywood Greats by Ellsie Russell, Franco and the Spanish Civil War by Rosemary Greener, Evacuees by June Knowles, and Life in Occupied Paris by Marianne Keet. Talks by outside speakers will be on the Crystal Palace, Brooklands Race Track and History of the Post Office.

My thanks to all our talented speaker members, to the secretary Bryn Brassington for laundering the monies, and to his better half Jane for procuring the victuals, and the volunteered 'Press Gang' who made the tea in the heat of the kitchen, with special thanks to Kristina Humphreys for wielding the dish mop so professionally, and to those happy smiling devoted attendee's, without who's presence there would be no class at all. Finally my sincere thanks to the Deputy Fuhrer, Neil Paxton who has contributed so much hard work beyond the call of duty, in helping in the running of the group.

Peter Smith

## JAZZ CLUB

Many thanks for your support, to date we have over 30 of you interested and several more to come. We are currently working on a programme incorporating artists such as Louis (Satch) Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Kid Ory and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band to name a few from the States. On the British scene we have Alex Welsh, Chris Barber, Kenny Ball, Acker Bilk and others. On 'modern' jazz we need tapes, CDs etc. (any 'modern' collectors out there?) on loan of course.

We hope that supporters will take part in the programme, with their own tapes and CDs, to introduce jazz of a different vein and keep it all interesting; it is after all 'what we can make it'.

It has been suggested that at a later date some 'live' jazz can be introduced. Who knows? It's up to all of us. Let us have some of **your** ideas.

To remind you: -

Start day – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2004 (Thursday)

Time/Place – 10 am to 12 midday at the Methodist Church in Reading Road South, on a fortnightly basis.

Les Ayrton & Nick Tyson

## PHOTOGRAPHY

The Group continues to prosper under the guidance of Ted Clark now in his fifth year as our

Leader. . Our meetings are well attended by 18/20 members. We have seen increasing interest in digital photography. While there is an obligation to encourage those anxious to become familiar with this developing phenomenon, the more technical aspects this can involve must not discourage those still striving to produce even better results with their traditional equipment.

As a means to restoring a better balance in the use of future limited meeting time, two extra meetings were arranged November/December devoted exclusively to digital photography. The first to be for beginners and the second for the more ambitious, already involved or would like to become involved, in manipulation and enhancement through the computer. This will

allow concentration on the broader principles of general photography next term.

To promote opportunities for field photography, outings were arranged to Pains Hill Park in May and to Virginia Water in October. The first was a great success but the second was cancelled due to threatening clouds and forecasts of heavy rain and thunderstorms bearing down on us via the Kent Coast. Management decided to cancel on the basis that equipment needed to be protected even more than our members. The fact that by meeting time the sun was blessing one of the better days of that week only proves that all of us can make mistakes and that meteorologists still cannot get it right!

Following an enjoyable visit to the Guildford U3A Photography Group earlier this year, we felt we would like to further our relationship with them by issuing a challenge to take part in a Photographic Competition to take place in April 2004. This has been accepted and we are now busy making preparations for displays not only for that event but also for our local Open Day and the Annual Yateley Camera Club Exhibition, all taking place that month. A very busy time but testimony to the pride that Ted Clark has in the quality of the work he has helped us achieve.

Bert Jennings



**Photography Group on a Field Trip to Pains Hill Park**

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In the summer review of 2003 I stated that our average group attendance was around 30, and I would be delighted if this reached 40. At our first meeting in October, the actual attendance was 45.

The programme, which has been arranged for this year, is as interesting as it was last year with subjects ranging from; Off-shore Design Technology, Continents Adrift, and a Mini Adventure, (a graphic presentation by a competitor in the 2002 World Cup Rally, driving a Mini Cooper).

We do still have space at St. John's Hall in Clarence Road, and would be delighted to see our numbers increase still further.

Our Secretary Julian Barley continues to provide an excellent choice of chocolate biscuits during the refreshment break.

Rod Parker

## TABLE TENNIS

A new section is being set up which will take place in the Activities Room, Hart Leisure Centre, Hitches Lane, Fleet, weekly on Wednesdays from 16.00 to 18.00 hours. Initially there will be two tables provided by the Leisure Centre with a possibility of a further being donated by one of our U3A members. The standard will be mixed ability and, like most clubs whose players are in the older age bracket, the games will be doubles and will comply with the English Table Tennis Association latest rules; games will be played up to 11 points (not 21 points as members may have played to in the past). To play, you will need to provide a bat (balls will be provided), and you may like to bring along a bottle of drink.

The dates that have been booked are:

January 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th. February 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th. March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st. The cost will be dependent on the numbers attending.

If you are interested, just turn up, and let your friends know. Any questions? Please phone John Asprey on 01252 623 841.

John Asprey

## TRAVELOG

During the first 8 years of the U3A in Fleet, starting in 1994, the Travelog Group thrived on videos, films and talks on over 100 countries, islands, tours and cruises without any repeat showings. We then took a holiday from Travelog classes during 2001/2 season. This precipitated a flood of complaints and pleas from the enthusiastic group members, so we started again for the 2002/3 season and are continuing into 2004 but with some changes. It has never been easy for up to 70 people to watch a TV screen so we have now purchased sound equipment and a projector to show pictures on a large screen enabling the films to be more readily enjoyed by all – so we can now readily accommodate more in the group. Also in response to many requests to see places, which members have missed in the past, we will on occasions be showing some repeats as well as travelling to new destinations. We have recently visited Monet's garden, the EDEN Project, Cork, Dublin, the Giants Causeway, Northern Cyprus, Moscow voyaging along Russia's waterways to Petersburg, the Canary Islands and South Australia; all fascinating and varied destinations in this beautiful and wonderful world in which we live. So come along and join the happy band of friendly travellers!

Martin Bennet

## U3A STATISTICS

For the United Kingdom on June 12<sup>th</sup> 2003.

Total membership; 103,535.

Number of Groups; 522.

Average number in each Group; 250.

Fleet with over 900 members is therefore one of the biggest Groups.

Comments on this Review and contributions for the next send to the Editor, Brian Greener on 01252 697250 or [briangreener@ntlworld.com](mailto:briangreener@ntlworld.com)

