



SOURCES

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COMING OF AGE

The 21st anniversary of U3A's foundation in the UK comes in July 2003, just before we hold our last old-style Conference and AGM in York, with plenty of time to discuss important issues of lifelong learning in our unique self-help organisation.

This seems a good point to take a fresh look at the Objects and Principles which Peter Laslett published for Universities of the Third Age in 1984. A condensed version, approved by Peter, appeared in 1998. I have recently re-circulated these documents, and the discussions at York will focus on the U3As' response to them. I hope that some U3As will re-visit "A Fresh Map of Life", Peter Laslett's description of the value to society of a Third Age population no longer in full-time paid employment but having immense free potential for "intellectual, cultural and aesthetic personal growth"; able to speak and act for themselves, not through well-meaning Second-Agers.

Certainly U3As have become a force for lifelong learning and have a unique self-help low-cost model of "those who teach shall also learn, those who learn shall also teach". Our refusal to demand or give qualifications or awards emphasises the pleasures of learning for its own sake. The study-group principle is fundamental – we have developed many learning support and resource systems locally and nationally, to encourage members and dedicated group leaders, without whom "U3As would be indistinguishable from any other club for retired persons".

Certainly, every U3A is independent and autonomous – help and services from the national centre have developed by demand, not direction from above. The principle of helping other older people to achieve similar benefits to U3A's is well-established in outreach to local communities. We have made progress in provision for physical activities and craft and artistic skills. There's some progress in links with other bodies, including international ones, interested in older people's welfare and education – here we must note the dangers of emphasis on gerontology and reliance on second-age academic teaching! The Principles call for "the closest possible collaboration with extra-mural boards of universities, with WEA and all providers of adult education". Peter was wary of interference in our U3As by governmental and other authorities giving support, but we have interpreted his views on obtaining "facilities" as allowing us to accept funding for our work.

Any or all of these aspects of our aims are subjects for discussion by U3A members – at Conference and at home.

Looking now to the future, there are two areas of particular interest which arise directly from the Laslett principles. One is extending our membership to older people in Britain who have limited, indifferent or negative experience of "education", or who find our self-help peer-group learning model odd compared with conventionally taught courses. Founding U3As in inner city, rural or multi-cultural communities is a lengthy business, requiring understanding and patience. How should we widen our client-base?

Then, we have only limited fulfilment of the Objectives & Principles regarding research. I personally argue that every member or leader who prepares any contribution to a group's studies or writes a piece for a magazine spends time on research! Many research projects have been done by our members individually or in groups, some published. Some members do traditional academic research; still others act as research assistants to university departments. Is there scope for regular research on "the process of ageing in our society"? – Third Age learning and methodology? – Museums and Galleries as an aid to Third Age learning?

All these issues, affecting the present and future development of U3A, should be debated in U3As in the context of our Objects and Principles. The theme of the Conference arises from this review of our aims and contributions to the debate are welcomed from all members before and at the York meeting. I hope everyone will take the opportunity to bring their experience, varied opinions and enthusiasm for U3A to share in our fresh approach to the basics of our learning with U3A.

Kate Wedd, NEC Chairman



In the year of U3A's 21st birthday we have a responsibility to prepare for the "fourth age" of many of our members. While we should be mainly concerned with the provision of continued mental stimulation, Professor Heinz Wolff and his team are seeking solutions for the maintenance of physical care in the context of maximal independence. Our own concerns together with those described in the following article should develop hand in hand for the future of the ever-increasing longevity of our future selves.

The Millennium Homes Project.

The intention is to produce a system, which makes it possible for contemporary technology and community supporters to interact in a manner such that it enables elderly "metastable" people to continue to live independently in their own homes. In the context the term "metastable" is defined as meaning that the individuals concerned are substantially capable of looking after themselves, and do not require frequent medical and nursing attention. On the other hand, because of minor loss of memory function, possibly some reduction of sensory and cognitive ability, diminished physical strength, stiffness of limbs etc., they are less capable of meeting the challenges of everyday life. A challenge could be a minor infection, the failure of a domestic appliance, having forgotten to take medication, having left windows and doors open at inappropriate times and any one of the hundreds of different problems, younger people solve effortlessly. A more serious challenge could be a fall, the sudden onset of a more serious illness, inability to get up, failure of public utilities, or even a burglary. Metastability, actually describes the condition of an rapidly growing number of people who increasingly survive into their eighties and beyond.

Whilst, most elderly people would prefer to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, for reasons of perceived quality of life, emotional attachment, and financial considerations, this may be considered to be unsafe for metastable people by both their relations and possible the authorities responsible for social services.

One remedy, which would be ideal, would be to have family and an army of home visitors and carers, to provide personal care. In most industrialised societies, this is no longer possible because many women, who previously assumed these responsibilities, generally without reward, are now working, family structures have become socially and geographically dispersed, and paid carers, irrespective whether provided by the

state or local authority or through an insurance scheme, impose an economic burden, which does not appear to be sustainable.

It is a **FUNDAMENTAL** aspect of the Millennium Homes project, that the technology which is to be deployed in the homes of the “tenants”, should function as a catalyst for a greater involvement of community “supporters”, who will either work as volunteers, that is unpaid, or for much less than the market cost. It is our belief that it is only by using intelligently applied technology to mobilise community support, that even “rich” industrialised countries, will be able to provide an acceptable quality of life to the growing numbers of elderly people.

There are many additional advantages to involving the community, particularly if many of the supporters are drawn from the ranks of the “young elderly”. First, after some training they will provide care and social contact, and in the process train themselves to be recipients of care as they themselves attain the age of metastability. Secondly, they will form a network amongst themselves, which with the dispersion of families, gives them a sense of “belonging”, which appears to be a basic psychological need for most of us. Thirdly, the training which they will receive, will also allow them to take better care of themselves, apart from giving them a sense of purpose, which some may lack after retiring from work.

To summarise therefore, ideally Millennium Homes represent a partnership between the community as a whole, and the mass of elderly people who require some assistance to enable them to retain their independence, and stay in their own homes. This partnership is made economically possible by the deployment of technology, which is capable of alerting the supporters if their intervention is required. Unfortunately, certain features of modern society, militate against this, because of increasing regulation of who is permitted to assist a vulnerable person and the universal fear of litigation, which may result from some human error, committed with the best of intentions.

It is an additional feature of the technology that it is interactive and can negotiate with the tenant, usually, but not necessarily using speech,. This means that most incipient hazards can be removed almost immediately, merely by drawing the tenant’s attention to something, which he/she has forgotten to do, or some external challenge, which if reacted to promptly, can be made harmless.

Self-imposed “Rules”

1. There shall be no electronic attachments to the tenant, whatsoever.
2. There shall be no transmission of information to the outside world, except for a call for a supporter to come. We regard the preservation of privacy as a very important aspect.
3. The interactive monitoring system is presented to the user as being part of his or her personality, a function, which in younger people is performed by their own brain. It is a form of prosthesis, like a stick or a walking frame, NOT a way by which other people keep watch over them, however good their intentions might be.

Millennium Homes, which started off as a DTI/LINK project in partnership with a number of commercial organisations, has now been adopted by a major healthcare company. This company will market its own version of the system together with various support services. This company has also agreed to fund further work concerned with social and healthcare support outside the hospital environment at Brunel University, for a minimum of a further two years.

Prof. H.S. Wolff, Brunel Institute for Bioengineering,

Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UK

COOKERY IN ENGLAND

In September 1995, five of us got together to discuss our mutual interest in the history of food and cooking, and began to re-read some of our cookery books. Little did we realise, then, what an incredibly rich vein of social history we were tapping into. Over the next six years, we expanded into two groups of eight, becoming ever more convinced that Eileen Powers was right in her claim that: "The true history of mankind lies in the kitchen" We saw our remit as not just English cookery, but also the history of the influence of the world's cuisines, and topics such as attitudes to diet and the rise of vegetarianism.



At every stage we experimented during greatly enjoyable foodie afternoons (usually at three-week intervals). We generally pre-prepared the food at home, so that all that was needed at the venue (we rotated to each other's kitchens) were heating facilities. We made some marvellous discoveries -as well as some horrors! Nobody needed to be an expert cook -just willing to stick one's neck out.

We would plan a few sessions in advance so that different members could look for source materials. But whatever approach we took, whether it was historical (food from Richard II's kitchen), thematic (the versatility of the parsnip), ingredient research (the history of nutmeg), the role of women cooks (Hannah Glasse, Marguerite Patten, Elizabeth David), tasting was central to group sessions.

We enjoyed exhibitions and outings - especially to the Tudor kitchens in action in the week after Christmas at Hampton Court; visits to 'Books for Cooks' off the Portobello Road; and afternoon demonstrations at the London Cordon Bleu cookery school. One of our members attended the Leeds Symposium on Food History and Traditions in spring 2001.

We did a presentation on our current research at a branch AGM for which we provided an historical tea (including: Roman honey cake, Richard II jumbles and Mrs Beeton's egg and anchovy sandwiches). But our

most ambitious project was cooking a Millennium Lunch in January 2000 for 150 branch members. We provided a buffet with dishes from virtually every century in the last millennium, one of the highlights being the spiced beef (two six pound joints of silverside) which took ten days to prepare to an early nineteenth century recipe of the farmer's wife ancestor of one of our members. It is still spoken of in reverent tones!

The groups are in abeyance at the moment, but one of our members is running a course on the History of Vegetarianism and we are planning a study day on Tudor cookery for next year.

We have distilled our experience into a new U3A Start-up Leaflet which is now available.

Griselda Barton, Sevenoaks U3A

HERALDRY IN SALFORD



How about Heraldry as a candidate for a U3A activity? Heraldry started about 1150 AD in almost all European kingdoms as a means of identifying a warrior in the 'modern' armour of the day, when his face was covered and was not to be seen. It was a way of identifying Knights and others by way of their shields, and when guns replaced swords around 1500 AD heraldry became a language of decoration and illustration, which it remains to this day.

Throughout the UK there are about 20 Heraldry Societies, but in Salford U3A we have our own two Groups, one to go with our History, and another to try to learn something of Heraldry in its own right. We have found that it pays to take a King's reign and try to improve our History, and show how the political leaders make their appearance in Heraldry, say from about 1150 to 1530. We touch on the problems of Heraldry, and in the limited time at our disposal we can learn a few of the problems they had.

We can run through the friends and the enemies of the King, and can fight some of his battles and take his country forward. Amongst some 15 of us we have 3 colourists who will draw the Heraldry of the day on A4 sheets, and we often have ten or twenty drawings, sometimes including repeats. My Heraldry can be serious, others are more adventurous. We do have our problems, when we find different shields for the same family. This keeps us occupied, and enables us to enjoy our Heraldry.

David Butterworth, Salford U3A

A MOTORING GROUP

Having thoroughly enjoyed one of our regular U3A lunches, I found myself deep in casual conversation. One subject discussed was owning a car and having to put up with the crippling servicing costs charged by most garages.

One member asked me what my car servicing came to, seeing that I owned a large car. I replied that most of the work didn't need the major franchise services as most of the regular checks were done by myself and that careful driving techniques could help eliminate the need. The discussions continued until another member suggested, "Why don't you start a Motoring Group so that we could learn more about our cars and driving techniques?"

That was the beginning, about five years ago, of a very successful group that acquired an average membership of about eight keen members who now meet once a month at my own and other members' homes.

I was already a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists and had taken the test three times since 1965. Later on, two other IAM members joined. The group was keen to discuss and hear of tips and guidance for improving their driving skills and discussing general motoring issues. As the leader of this group I started to prepare a multi-page booklet entitled "Car Care".

The aim of this publication was to include very basic information about safety checks, routine servicing, driving skills and, most importantly, road safety. As each monthly meeting approached I prepared additional pages that were used as the subject matter for discussion. There is still much to add to the "Car Care" document but I will eventually have it vetted, checked and finalised.

Many topical motoring issues have been raised and discussed at various meetings before the main theme was approached and I have managed to book several very interesting speakers including expert police-trained drivers, traffic wardens (very lively discussions!) and from our local parking attendants who gallantly answered our many very pertinent questions!



Throughout all the meetings we constantly learn and question each other on the Highway Code together with other rules and regulations. We gradually learned the theory of the working of various mechanical parts of the motor car. We never once got our hands dirty! The nearest we get to the practical side was in challenging members to show where the spare wheel and jack were kept, to locate towing points and where to put the oil and water in their own cars!

We have covered many aspects of road safety, parking correctly and safely and how best to deal with breakdowns on both ordinary carriageways and motorways. Winter driving techniques and towing procedures comprised the subject matter for the autumn and winter meetings together with practice in using jump leads and a tow rope.

As most of our members have been driving for a good number of years, the discussions naturally veer toward reminiscing about our motoring past. How enlightening to be able to compare past and present driving methods and advanced designs of the modern car. Many of the experiences from the past would certainly be of interest to others and I am trying to arrange for some of these to be published. One of our members (in her eighties) has never passed a driving test! (Tests were not available during WW2).

All members have agreed that ours is a successful study group and we have learned to make our driving more skilful, safer and, most important, less stressful. We now tend to enjoy our motoring by having learned to have

more positive control of our vehicles, planning our journeys in advance and being more tolerant to other road users.

My secret ambition is to have some members request an 'Observed Run' by the Institute of Advanced Motorists with the aim of taking the 'Test'. I feel that the outcome of the Group has been to show that we have learned a lot of good motoring techniques and have become much better drivers. To be able to display an IAM Badge is a somewhat secondary requirement.

This group has contributed, in a small way, to improved road safety. Happy motoring.

John Lucas, Hastings & Rother U3A

John has produced a booklet containing comprehensive details of the meetings of the Hastings & Rother U3A Motoring Group and has very kindly made his work available to all U3As. This publication represents a valuable 'syllabus' for anyone contemplating setting up a Motoring Group. Contact National Office if you wish to obtain a copy. (Ed.)

TEMARI

Japanese embroidery

This is the age-old art of marking a ready-made sphere of any size, first by halving it, then quartering it and, depending on the individual embroiderer's taste (and expertise with the needle!), continuing to divide the ball into smaller and smaller segments. When this has been marked to the embroiderer's satisfaction, each section is then individually designed and embroidered. No two sections should be the same! The smaller each segment is, the more skill is required to balance design and colour, whilst at the same time keeping in mind the effect of the sphere as a whole. It is an absorbing skill but at the same time it is fascinating to see how others interpret the same basic idea – decorating a sphere.



Our group in Stroud was only set up last June but already its enthusiastic members have derived much pleasure from learning this art, as well as gaining new friends. The group has done so well that its leader is considering starting a new one in 2003.

Audrey Roberts, Stroud U3A

[For those interested in the idea of Temari, the Editor offers the following additional information encountered on the Internet:

Simple and inexpensive materials are easy to find and fun to combine. A Styrofoam® ball forms the core, a layer of batting is applied and trimmed to the ball, thin yarn is randomly wrapped over, then sewing thread is randomly wrapped on the outside of the ball. These layers produce a cushioned surface to stitch into. Preparation of a ball takes only about 20 minutes.

Most Temari balls average three to five inches in diameter, although any size is possible and larger ones are popular in Japan, where collections of all sizes and styles are treasured. Smaller ones may be made for Christmas tree ornaments, and other home and personal accessories including jewellery. They may be displayed singly or collected and arranged in groups. When shown singly they may be hung in windows or from ceilings or doorjambs. They may be mounted from crossbars as a mobile. Single balls may be hung on tabletop display stands. Alternately they may be grouped in a bowl or basket, or shown individually on a ring base or "egg" stand. Temari balls make exquisite Christmas ornaments. They make wonderful, unique gifts and treasured as wedding and anniversary gifts, and as mementoes of friendship and special occasions.]

U3A AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Readers may recall the leading article in Issue 16 on “Museums and Lifelong Learning” by Margaret O’Brien of the British Museum. Since then, a very successful joint venture between the BM and London U3As has taken place and *Sources* hopes to carry an article in the June issue on this project. The whole area of co-operative ventures between U3As and museums, libraries and other institutions as resource centres is one that *Sources* hopes to develop in the future.

CALLIGRAPHY IN CHARD

While it is the general function of the craftsman to make a thing legible, it is his particular function as a decorator to make it becoming” (Edward Johnston, Calligrapher 1872-1944)

Although this article is printed in Garamond its real origin is from work done by Edward Johnston in the early twentieth century. He looked at all the early manuscripts and came up with a composite letter hand, which he called ‘Foundational’. It is the basis of lettering we use today and is nearly always the hand beginners learn when they start calligraphy. The craft has a similar discipline to learning a musical instrument with the same gradations of skill, from simple work such as greetings cards to far advanced illuminated scripts replicating the Lindisfarne Gospels. Getting through this hard discipline is difficult with many giving up well before they have mastered the craft sufficiently to develop their own styles. It needs patience, dedication and determination and those students who do stick at it get immense pleasure, not just for a finished piece of work but also by the sheer satisfaction of producing perfectly formed letters that reflect the history, language and skill of the craft.

One would think that a written craft could be learnt easily from a book but it helps so much to learn from someone who knows how to scribe. If you can do join a class as you not only learn from the tutor but you get worthwhile criticism from fellow students. In the beginning it is similar to learning scales on a piano; the rules of the letter form, the angle, the size of the letters, the spaces between letters, words and lines and how it fits onto the paper.

With the practical work comes the language of calligraphy, words used today going back centuries. The hands, or letters, have wonderful names such as Caroligian, Gothic, Bastard, Uncial, Verbal, Lombardic, Copperplate, Italic, Humanist and Illuminated Script. These names just conjure up the social history that surrounded the scribes.

With the hands go the utensils and materials used. In our study group we use pens, quills, reeds, brushes, Chinese bamboo and peacock feathers. We work in majuscule and minuscule (upper and lower case). We write on vellum, parchment, hand-made papers, glass, wood, and ceramics, with inks, acrylics, gouache, crayons and gold leaf. The variety of materials is as diverse as the calligrapher wants it to be. I have used corrugated cardboard on one piece to give just the right texture.

As Johnston was the one who standardised the western lettering in England, other western countries were developing their own letter formations. They had, and still have, a strong interest in calligraphy. The Germans were interested in the development of black letter hands and are now amongst the leaders in very modern pieces, using personalised styles of writing. The French and Italians had a much softer style, with beautifully decorated lettering. The Americans who put such energy into any craft they undertake are often brilliant at copperplate. Eastern calligraphy, particularly in China and Japan, has never lost its appeal over the centuries, with scribes held in high esteem. In England we have an eclectic approach to calligraphy, which makes it all the more exciting. Going to an exhibition of modern calligraphy leaves you breathless with admiration and a desire to experiment with your own work, and the real joy comes from the knowledge that you can.

Iris Leake, Chard U3A

Iris is the Subject Network Co-ordinator for Calligraphy – Ed.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of SOURCES will be mailed to those on the database in June 2003 and will have **MUSIC** as its focus. Contributions will be welcome from U3A groups that feature music appreciation or performance, be it classical, operatic, dance, jazz, choral, instrumental and more besides. Please submit contributions to SOURCES via the National Office not later than Friday 11th April 2003.

Despite the fact that SOURCES is always declared as having an overarching theme for any given issue, prospective contributors should not feel discouraged from sending in other offerings. The Editorial Board welcomes articles of interest that will serve to vary the diet on offer and make each issue a little more wide-ranging than the thematic approach might imply.

U3A members may receive SOURCES at home, free of charge, by sending their full name and address (in capitals) with postcode, plus the name of their U3A, to the National Office.

For technical reasons, the Editor will be more than grateful for contributions that take the form (in order of preference) of (a) a file on a floppy disk (b) an email (mikandel@tesco.net) or (c) clean typescript suitable for scanning – but please do not feel bashful about submitting other forms of contribution. It may not always prove possible to send out an acknowledgment, though every effort will be made to do so. Contributions are considered for inclusion by an Editorial Panel (including the Editor!).

CRAFTS IN SURREY

We formed our Craft group at the beginning of 2002 with seven members and a waiting list. It was necessary to restrict the size of the group to allow us 'elbow room' when working at our monthly meeting. During the first three months we concentrated on the making of different types of cards, 3D, teabag folding and stamping and embossing.

We then launched into fabric crafts and during the summer months made a shopping bag using 6" squares of curtaining fabric; used patchwork to make a purse and a needle case, and a needlework caddy which goes over the arm of an armchair and holds a book or the current needlework project. September saw us making Christmas baubles with glittery fabric using polystyrene shapes. We made a Christmas Tree wall hanging during October and finished our first year by being shown how to make a Christmas table decoration or wall hanging using decorations, fir cones and a glue gun. Together with the Art Group we were invited to display our work at the AGM in October and received many favourable comments.

None of the group claim to have any expertise, but we are all keen and have great enthusiasm to try something new. At our January meeting we moved into toymaking and began making a small fur puppy dog.

Joy Krill, Reigate and Redhill U3A

EMBROIDERY IN HERTFORD



This group of around 12 members was set up some 8 years ago and was led by Sheila Fraser who had been Head of Department at the Royal School of Needlework. She brought her excellent skills to the group and shortly before she was taken ill, we decided to celebrate the millennium with a piece of embroidery depicting some of the buildings and landmarks in Hertford together with the rivers that flow through the town.

We enlisted the help of a local artist (who is a member of the of the Art group of the Hertford U3A) who assisted us with the design. We then researched the local buildings and their age. Sheila Fraser kindly donated the materials but shortly after this sadly she died. As a tribute to her, we decided to continue with the project and after a lot of hard work, cajoling one another and sore fingers, we finally completed it at the end of 2000.

We decided to donate the completed piece of work to the town and the Town Council very kindly agreed to meet the cost of having the work framed. It was on show in the local Museum for several weeks before its final hanging in the entrance to The Castle, Hertford, which is where the Town Council is based. It was a true labour of love.

We are fortunate in that the group is now led by Julie Walsby, who is also a member of the Textile Conservation Group at Hatfield House and teaches at the WI College at Denham. She is only too pleased to pass on her skills and enthusiasm to both beginner and experienced worker and we are very fortunate in having her as our leader.

Barbara Norris, Hertford & District U3A

“Did you realise that SOURCES is an anagram of COURSES?”

“What is this, some kind of running gag?”

MAP READING FOR WALKERS

Many retired people enjoy walking in the countryside. Published books, leaflets or a weekly walk featured in the local press are good sources of routes. But if you can read a map your choice becomes much wider.

Colchester U3A runs a map reading course for walkers each year. No previous experience is required although most of those who join are already interested in the subject. It is run for personal interest, to extend the ability to plan outings and navigate successfully. There is no requirement that members should go on to lead walks for the U3A (though it is a bonus if they do!).

The groups meet for about eight sessions indoors, followed by two or more outdoors, between New Year and Easter. This is the time of the year when the active retired are most likely to be at home for two months at a stretch. The size of the table will determine the number in the group, as space is needed for everyone to open out a map. It is also useful for the leader to be able to see what each person is doing so in practice six is probably the maximum.

The syllabus covers the basics - grid references, symbols, contours, scales, bearings and the compass. Once these have been mastered they are used in activities such as planning a walk of a specified length, describing a route from the map, and identifying the point on the map from which a photograph was taken.

Finally outside, they take turns in leading the group on a given route, noting useful techniques on the way.

Green Pathfinder and new orange Explorer maps are used throughout. I have used my own collection of maps for the course but each member could purchase the local Explorer which would provide sufficient material for the course. Alternatively, the local U3A itself could purchase a set of maps. It is an advantage to have maps of different areas to encourage members to read the map rather than rely on their knowledge of the locality. Exercises to practise each aspect of the syllabus (with answers for self-checking) are useful and members like to take these home for extra practice between sessions.

In lowland areas one can usually manage very well without a compass but U3A members take holidays in hilly areas where a compass can be a lifesaver, so it is included in the course. Indoors the 'grid-to-magnetic' process can be practised in a reasonably realistic way and then used in the field. I have found that groups master this well, but find the other processes confusing so they are omitted.

Map reading is close and detailed work for elderly eyes so about an hour is enough. But coffee, biscuits and a chat make a welcome end to the sessions.

Rosalind Kaye, Colchester U3A

SPINE-TINGLING

POETRY

The spine-tinglers so far have been visual or aural. Here's one from literature: W. B. Yeats' sonnet *Leda and the Swan*, elegant in structure but, in the first part, violent and sexual on a personal level, then in the sestet transferred to the universal devastations of war and the indifference of the gods (fate, destiny, what you will) to human suffering.

Bob Melbourne, Epsom & Ewell U3A

ARCHITECTURE AND AMBIENCE

I nominate the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Mid-19th century; John Ruskin among the advisors. 1860 'Darwinian' debate between Thomas Henry Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce. Central Court of cast iron, wrought iron, glass roof (leaks, I'm afraid). Everywhere you look is decorated with Natural History motifs, including colonnades with columns of named decorative stones (all different) with 'botanical' capitals. It is my privilege to be associated with the Museum as a Voluntary Curator. I am often

there 'after hours' and to walk silently amongst the exhibits in this 'palace' of Natural History can induce a deep reverie. It may take me fifteen minutes to walk (and pause) the few dozens of metres from my work-room, along the upper colonnade, absorb the atmosphere, pay my respects to the magnificent dinosaur exhibits, and, almost reluctantly, head for supper or depart for my Lymington home.

Paul Clasby (Lymington U3A),

Honorary Associate Curator, Geological Collections

SOURCES PAST

The following appeared in Issue No.1, August 1998

Adult learning matters. It changes lives. Adult learning also fuels creativity. Yet far too many people believe it is not for them." So said Dr Kim Howells, Minister for Lifelong Learning at a UNESCO Conference in July 1997.

TALKING ABOUT MINISTERS

Margaret Hodge is (at the time of writing) the Minister of State at the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

As Minister for Lifelong Learning and Higher Education, Margaret Hodge MP has responsibility for higher education, post-16 education and lifelong learning, the Learning and Skills Council, adult skills and vocational qualifications.

If you would like to know more, try this website:

www.epolitix.com/webminster/margaret-hodge

You might, like me, search in vain amongst her speeches and press releases for a mention of Third Age Learning.

The Editor

THE ROYAL SOCIETY'S SUMMER SCIENCE EXHIBITION 2002

It is with great pleasure that we present, in this issue of SOURCES, a selection of extracts from the Exhibition Guide to the Royal Society's Summer Science Exhibition 2002. The Royal Society has kindly granted us permission to reproduce this material which, it is hoped, will be of interest both to the scientists and the non-scientists amongst us.

The Royal Society, for those who have not come across it before, is the UK's national academy of science. It funds the nation's best researchers, encourages them to publish and discuss their work, and leads public debate about the implications of new developments in science, engineering and technology for Government and society in general.

The annual Exhibition began in the 19th century as an opportunity for the scientists of the day to display their latest work to other scientists. Today the emphasis is on making the science on show as accessible as possible. Many of the exhibits are hands-on, interactive and a lot of fun, while still having applications in everyday life.

We have selected four of the exhibits as representative of the Royal Society's Exhibition 2002 and hope that readers will find the extracts both informative and entertaining. Co-ordinators and Convenors of Sci-Tech Groups in U3As around the country may find inspiration in the articles below for projects and/or discussion. Contact details for the Royal Society will be found at the end of the text.

1 HOW TO GENETICALLY ENGINEER A RAINBOW

Professor Anthony Campbell and his group at the University of Wales College of Medicine are developing 'rainbow proteins' that can literally light up the chemistry of living cells. Such proteins are genetically engineered to emit light using the same mechanisms that are used by such bioluminescent organisms as fireflies and glow-worms. It was his interest in creatures like these that inspired Tony Campbell to develop proteins capable of producing coloured light through chemical reactions within their cells. "It's a marvellous example of how curiosity about nature can lead to discovery and invention," he says.

Professor Campbell is excited about the potential of his research in clinical diagnosis and drug discovery. "Imagine," he says, "a vet being able to detect foot and mouth disease in a field, and get an answer in five minutes. This technology will do that." Add to this his plans for luminescent water-pistols and you have an idea of the range covered by this unusual project.

2 THE CARBON TRAP

We are all familiar these days with the concepts of the 'greenhouse effect' and 'global warming', phenomena that are the result of a progressive increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Two projects sponsored by the Natural Environment Research Council are under way to solve the problem by creating 'sinks' to trap excess carbon dioxide.

The first of these involves using plant life as the trap. When plants photosynthesise they take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and use it to build into their own tissues. So by increasing the amount of vegetation on the earth's surface, it should be possible to capture more of the excess carbon dioxide. There is, however, a snag. Plants don't only take up carbon dioxide from the air, they also release it when they respire. The trick will be to develop vegetation sinks that absorb more carbon dioxide than they release. That is the challenge facing experts at the University of Sheffield..

The second method, involving a team at the British Geological Survey, involves storing excess carbon dioxide underground "for thousands, if not millions, of years." How are they proposing to achieve this feat? By trapping carbon dioxide in porous rocks, such as those surrounding oil and gas fields, the same rocks that have been holding liquids and gases for millions of years. Apparently, the storage potential under the North Sea alone is enough to take the total output from all the UK's power stations for centuries.

Through co-ordinating projects like these, it is hoped that ways will be found of reversing global warming, ways which reflect the natural never-ending cycles that we are all part of.

3 TETHERED SPACE PROPULSION

When the European Space Agency decided to look into new technologies for sending spacecraft to other planets, they were inundated by weird and wonderful designs. One of the most ingenious proposals they received was for a propulsion system designed by Professor Matthew Cartmell and his team from the University of Glasgow's Department of Mechanical Engineering.

It sounds fantastical to the layman, but this device resembles a double-ended slingshot, powered by a central motor. Designed to remain in orbit around the earth, it would fling outgoing loads into space while also catching incoming loads and handing them safely down to Earth. The system works by building up speed, like a slingshot, until it has enough momentum to fling its load off into space. The attraction of this "motorised tether system" would be its long-term cost-effectiveness. As Professor Cartmell says, "It's actually virtually free once it's up there." And he hopes that its curiosity value will do a lot to regenerate the public's interest in space projects.

4 SENTINELS OF THE SEA

John Gould, of the Southampton Oceanography Centre: "It is absolutely crucial for the human race that we understand how the planet that we live on works, especially as we are placing ever greater pressures on the natural environment."

The Argo Project, which John Gould heads, is concerned with mapping and measuring the deep ocean currents of the world that have so much to do with climate change on the global scale. It does this by using ships or planes to launch specially designed floats that sink to a pre-set depth of 2000 metres and then float in the deep sea currents. After nine days they are programmed to return to the surface, relay their position to a satellite and then sink again. Using this information, the scientists on the Argo Project will be able to simulate the oceans' currents. In addition, these floats provide valuable data about temperature and salinity. There are currently 400 floats in action around the globe and, by the end of 2005, it is expected that there will be a total of 3000 individual floats beaming back their vital information.

HOW TO CONTACT THE ROYAL SOCIETY

The Royal Society
6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG
Tel: 020 7839 5561
Email: info@royalsoc.ac.uk
Website: www.royalsoc.ac.uk

WHATEVER NEXT?

I listened with sympathy as our outgoing Chairman explained that after seven years he could no longer remain in office. He said that, as we were a registered charity, by law he could not continue but that, without an elected Chairman, the Stroud U3A would cease to be. I was feeling a little smug as I had already offered to become a member of the Committee and felt I had done my bit. "Someone will come forward," I thought.

Of course, by the time of my first Committee meeting nobody had. I knew it was now up to us to sort the problem out. "I'm new so I don't really know much about anything," I thought comfortably. "They will resolve it somehow."

They did. They asked me.

Somewhat stunned, I muttered something about needing a little time to think it over. For the next few days I vacillated. "An extra tie"; "not too onerous"; "nearly 300 members, around 30 groups - could I cope?" "You'd meet new people"; "It'll fold if you don't"; "everyone will help"; "for three years!"; "..give it a go." So, in the end, I said yes. The relief down the phone was palpable.

There followed a flurry of sample signatures, encouraging and supportive phone calls, a committee meeting

that went quite smoothly, various files and lists of addresses handed over and I seemed to be in business.

I now have a Christmas party under my belt, two left over wine bottles to look after, Christmas cards from people I didn't know two months ago and various ideas for the future buzzing around my head.

I think I'm beginning to enjoy it.

Mary Newman, Stroud U3A

WORKING THE WEB: E-LEARNING

Whether studying for an MBA or finding out how a car works, learning online is a serious business, writes Chris Moss

Thursday October 10, 2002

The Guardian

[SOURCES thanks the Guardian newspaper for permission to reproduce this article which may well contain useful pointers to resources for some of our readers.]



Cod degrees "requiring no tests, classes or books" are offered daily in your junk mail - but logging on to learn is becoming a serious alternative. There was a time when distance learning meant getting up at 5am to see a bearded train spotter on BBC2 explain molecular biology using a blackboard and chalk. The pain of studying came with none of the redeeming pub-crawls and character-building social stuff.

Now, even teeny tots are comfortable logging on at their workstations and some great resources are at Discovery (school.discovery.com) and at the BBC's website (www.bbc.co.uk/learning) which has school stuff alongside a handful of leisurely adult courses, including languages and gardening. The Guardian's e-learning website (www.learn.co.uk) is another useful resource.

Schools' own sites are gathered at the National Grid for Learning website (www.ngfl.gov.uk) where, under "What are you looking for?" are hundreds of sites for all school ages. Many are kid-friendly brainwork disguised as fun. There are quick multiple-choice type tests that are easy to complete and can be marked by machine.

As pupils and teachers demand more interactivity, remote access and curriculum-focused materials, companies are vying to sell their brand through annual or longer-term licences. The Digital Brain (www.digitalbrain.com), and the Blackboard, (www.blackboard.com) along with Virtual Campus (www.teknical.com) are **private sector** initiatives providing media to link pupils and teachers through institutions and educational authorities.

Teachers can upload their best classes and contribute to a site tailored to local needs. They can also check if a pupil has looked at the homework text - and even access a record of how long it was perused. The City of Nottingham and London Grid for Learning have adopted Digital Brain as the engine for community-wide educational sites.

Individuals are the other big market and busy, homebound adults are natural targets. At Learndirect (www.learndirect.co.uk), 750 courses ranging from Internet and IT skills to maths and car mechanics are offered, some with an offline component.

Video, animation and sound are used to liven up the classes, though some are for PC only. The site is also a handy place to skim 500,000 non-virtual courses across the regions. In the US, Mexico and Catalunya, several universities are wholly virtual but in the UK, virtuality is still an extension of the real thing, aimed mainly at mature students.

The cost and complexity of providing educational technologies to service tens of thousands of 18-year-olds has so far beaten the e-dreams of dons and administrators, but there are a number of courses combining new media and traditional printed matter.

The Open University is the main player in distance technologies, with 160,000 staff and students online and 178 online-dependent courses. At the Open University (www.open.ac.uk) is a list of broad subject headings that link to everything from day courses to higher degrees.

Dean Taylor, the Open University's assistant secretary for technology development and an online tutor, says the benefits of computer-based learning include "electronic asynchronous conferencing - you needn't all be there at the same time - with 100% participation, easy modification and delivery of course materials and stimulating media, such as the CD-ROM we use to model the environment and simulate the effects of acid rain."

The university is also looking into programmes based on model answers and an application known as "latent semantic analysis", which screens the words used in an essay and helps students pre-mark work before submitting it. The OU site hosts the International Centre for Distance Learning (www.icdl.open.ac.uk) a database of 5,000 courses from around the globe, from NVQS certificates to PhDs.

Just about all the major UK universities and further education centres are represented. In January, UK eUniversities (www.ukeu.com) launches three online postgraduate courses - learning in the connected economy, information technology, and public policy & management - aimed at overseas students who want

a British qualification.

The UKeU, given £62m by the department for education when David Blunkett was in charge, works as a broker, representing three well-known UK universities with proposals from 53 others being reviewed. How far wires will eventually replace spires is an open question. New technologies have so far been more meaningful in the non-academic areas of administration and fees.

Just as OU and the renaming of polytechnics have sought to democratise learning and dissolve the old hierarchies, virtual learning strips brainwork of its traditional trappings - the hall of residence, the quad, the silly clothes and the champagne breakfasts. Loans, housing costs and the sheer volume of undergrads already impact on the teenage dream of leaving home for three years of intelligent fun. Such basic economic factors may hasten the drive by institutions for virtual classes.

THE SEARCH IS ON



Amongst the thousands of U3A study groups that are active throughout the country, there must be a handful that can lay claim to being unique in some respect or that cater for an unusual specialised interest. SOURCES invites members or leaders of such groups to submit a brief write-up (200-300 words) to the Editor c/o National Office, outlining the nature of the activity and how the group organises its learning. It is hoped to feature these in a future series entitled “The Ten Most Unusual U3A Study Groups”.

NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

In the last issue (No.17) we carried a piece on p.10 entitled DIGITAL TV. *John Edwards* of Lea Valley U3A has responded to the invitation to comment by agreeing with the sentiments in that article and expressing a yearning for the ‘good old days’ of programmes such as *Civilisation* and *The Ascent of Man*, not to mention the regular appearances of full-length opera productions. He comments: “There are still quality programmes on mainstream TV, but far too many of them are very late at night (beyond my bed-time!). Unfortunately, this deficiency is hardly remedied by the new BBC4 channel.” John also feels that the introduction on BBC4 of “yet another news programme” at 8pm is more than he can endure.

START-UP LEAFLETS - A VALUABLE RESOURCE

Griselda Barton, in her article *Cookery in England*, made reference to Start-up Leaflets. Not everyone will be aware of the full range of these or, indeed, how useful they can be, both as support for new groups and a source of ideas for existing ones. They are available from National Office, in a new A5 booklet form and

cost 50p each plus a SAE. There are almost 40 titles in all, some of the shorter ones being free of charge. Here are a few titles to whet your appetite: *How To Run A Family History Course*; *Ways of Organising Wildlife Appreciation Walks*; *How To Start A Group For Bookworms*; *How To Organise Outings And Visits*.

Full details in one A4 flyer can be sent on request.

The Editor

RICHES GALORE

How many different U3A study groups might there be up and down the country? And what fascinating subjects are there to be found amongst them?

It has been estimated that there could be as many as between 8000 and 15000 different study groups operating throughout the land, but we may never be able to come up with a precise figure. A full survey of the range of subjects is out of the question because of the near impossibility of gathering in this information.

In the summer of 2001, however, a survey was done in Sussex of all the study groups across a network of twenty U3As and, although this revealed some interesting information, there is no reason to suppose that this small sample should be taken as representative of the country as a whole.

The total membership of those twenty U3As was not ascertained but, taking the national average, a reasonable estimate would be 5000. The survey yielded a total of 472 study groups (giving an average of 10-11 members per group). Some of the groups were parallel ones, as in French I and French II.

The most interesting part of the survey was the analysis of the nature of the study groups. They conveniently fell into broad topic areas and the following table shows the top 12 (accounting for 63% of all groups).

| TOPIC AREAS | Occurrences |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Literature and Books | 52 |
| Music | 40 |
| Artistic Hobbies | 31 |
| French | 31 |

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Drama/Playreading | 24 |
| Art | 18 |
| Computing | 18 |
| News & Debate | 18 |
| Exercise | 17 |
| Personal History | 17 |
| Tile Games | 16 |
| German | 15 |

Overall, the Arts accounted for 143 of the 472 groups (30%). Languages was the second most popular category with 68 groups (14%), followed by Practical Hobbies with 50 (11%). Other categories were History (38), Outdoor Activities (34), Science & Technology (33), Indoor Games (30) and Physical (25).

Literature and Music were two topic areas represented in virtually every one of the twenty U3As, with Languages and Play Reading close behind. Among some of the more unusual groups to be found were The History of Ballet, Painting on China, Public Speaking, Reflexology, Bamboo Pipes, Corn Dollies, Motoring, Flying, Chinese Brush Painting, Piano Duets, Human Behaviour and Anything For A Laugh.

One should perhaps not be surprised at the wealth of activities on offer but it is refreshing to have one's suspicions confirmed that membership of the U3A movement represents one of the most stimulating experiences available to Third Agers today.

The Editor

PPL LICENCE

Back in August last year, National Office circulated some 'bad news' about the requirement for groups using recorded music to contribute to a blanket PPL licence (Phonographic Performance Ltd). Thanks to some hard work by National Office, negotiations have ended in certain concessions, announced in late November by Lin Jonas.

Now, music appreciation groups, which listen to recorded music, and have a planned programme of study on a weekly or monthly basis, and group co-ordinators or individual members presenting the sessions who have prepared them in advance, **DO NOT** require a licence.

You will still need one, however, if you have recorded music groups which are recreational and/or social in nature and if you use recorded music for such activities as line dancing, aerobics, etc. For details, please

contact National Office.

SOURCES ONLINE

For those of you with access to the Internet, you may find it useful to know that back numbers of Sources can be viewed online, and printed off or saved to your word processor. Visit the Third Age Trust's website at www.u3a.org.uk and click on **Sources Online**.

The Internetwork Group

Who are we? We are a group of U3A computer enthusiasts who met together in August 1998 with the purpose of encouraging the use of the Internet for more effective communications and learning for U3A members in the UK.

Our website can be found at <http://worldu3a.org> It seeks to establish a service for our international contacts and to provide educational resources as part of a worldwide movement. It also provides access to our electronic newsletters – U3A Signpost, which are pointers to educational resources to be found on the world-wide-web. History, Philosophy, Art and Poetry links are there in profusion.

U3A-Signpost (see below) is sent out as a one-page email on the first of every month by the U3A Internetwork Group UK and U3A Online Australia to any and all U3A members. It is edited and issued by Tom Holloway in the UK and Rick Swindell in Australia. You can be placed on the list of recipients by email if you write to tom.holloway@u3a.org.uk

Please click on or go to <http://worldu3a.org> to see it and to gain access to the Forum. You will find:---

- n one year of back-issues of U3A-signpost
- n Forum discussions organised by subject network
- n technical support by knowledgeable peers
- n the most recent copy of History Network News
- n archived historical documents of an international nature

n contacts for hundreds of U3A and similar groups worldwide

Come and join us!

Tom Holloway & Jean Thompson

SIGNPOST points the way

When the Internet arrived a few years back, quite a few people scratched their heads and wondered where it might fit in. The pieces of the puzzle are now beginning to come together, and the Internetwork group (a subject network which promotes the educational use of the Internet) see the monthly u3a-signpost newsletter as one of the major pieces.

What is it? Just a single page email listing some useful websites, plus the occasional National Office announcement. Hardly the sort of thing to clog up your mailbox, but handy enough to be able to include in your own local group newsletter. Some secretaries even print it up in a large format and just stick it up on their notice-board.

It's easy enough to join -- simply send an email to owner-u3a-signpost@u3a.org.uk and you'll be added to the list. Back-issues can be found on the Internetwork website; ask your web 'browser' to go to <http://worldu3a.org> and click on the button marked "What we can offer".

Tom Holloway

The Editor adds:

Definitely worth a look if you are 'an online person'. I have been collecting *Signposts* since No.1 appeared in October 2000 and have dug out the following reference from No.2 which should be of great interest to Internet surfers.

www.harrowu3a.co.uk has links to all UK U3As with their own websites and also links to Third Age organisations around the world. Find out what other U3As are up to!

n **THE LANGUAGE SPOT**

“None of our study groups are full.”

“None of our study groups is full.”

Received wisdom would have it that *none* requires a singular verb, being a contraction of *no one* or *not one* and that the first utterance above is ungrammatical. *None* comes, however, from Old English *nan* which was inflected and had different forms in the singular and the plural. Today, the choice of verb has everything to do with sense rather than form, and depends on what is in the speaker’s or writer’s mind. Both are correct. *None* can be as plural in meaning as *some* or *many*. [Students of German might like to compare the usage of *kein-*, a word meaning *not a*, which has plural forms.]

Editor

WEBSITES

Recommendations from readers on useful websites. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information. Apologies for any errors that may have crept in. Please send in your contributions to this corner.

AMATEUR DRAMATICS

www.amdram.co.uk

COUNTDOWN

www.thecountdownpage.com/index.htm

For fans of this programme, a cornucopia of information

LANGUAGES

www.freetranslation.com

Rough and ready, but good fun

INFORMATION

publ.ac.uk/link/

Encyclopaedic. Do try the Sort by Dewey option

www.ask-a-librarian.org.uk/

Amazing Public Libraries service open 24 hrs a day to answer factual questions

OPERA

opera.stanford.edu

Known as OperaGlass, this is an opera information website where you can get detailed information, including: [Libretti](#), [Source Texts](#), [Performance Histories](#), [Synopses](#) and [Discographies](#)

SCIENCE

www.newscientist.com

The well-known journal

www.howstuffworks.com

Fascinating

ART

www.artcyclopedia.com

A treasure-trove for art lovers

SCE REPORT Jan 03

Report on the SCE Meetings held on 1 October and 3 December 2002

The report covers two meetings of the SCE and, at the first of the two, the Chairman, Keith Richards, announced that the negotiations with English Heritage had reached a favourable conclusion. This means that U3A groups will be accorded 'educational group status' and allowed concessionary admission rates for visits to English Heritage sites. An important factor in persuading English Heritage was the fact that bodies like the DfES and the WEA regard U3As as educational organisations.

Another important item reported by the Chairman was that a successful application had been made to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for a grant of £64,000 over three years to support the further development of the U3A Resources Centre. The grant will cover the costs of an assistant to Elizabeth Gibson, additions and replacement to the Centre stock (the volume of loans continues to grow, as reported elsewhere) and an allocation of funds to enable the Trust to seek advice from a professional fund raising consultant.

Other issues discussed at the meetings included: -

- Progress in the deployment of the DfES fund allocation for projects:-
 - (a) A programme of Study Days for 2002/3 and 2003/4 - Art, 5 February, London; Literature, 12 March, London: and Music in Birmingham and Physical Activities in York in the Spring: for 2004, Geology, Philosophy, Study Styles and the Internet
 - (b) A series of Network Days, the first of which is to be in Northallerton on 18 February
 - (c) An update on the design of the questionnaire for the survey of U3A learning
- The U3A Learning Support Group and the first meeting of the Learning Support Group Network (reported elsewhere in Sources)
- The 2003 Summer School programme - 24 subjects are on offer covering a wide range
- The Annual Conference arrangements and topics for discussion by the delegates in the increased allocation of time
- Progress in the expansion of the range of U3A Online Courses
- The growth in the volume of loans by the Resources Centre

Len Street

U3A LEARNING SUPPORT GROUP

(Sub-committee of the SCE) - Progress report

Following on from the article in the November 2002 issue of SOURCES (p.11), we are pleased to be able to report the formation of a network of contacts nationwide who are willing to co-ordinate and assist in U3A Learning Support activities in their localities. The first meeting of this Regional Network together with the Learning Support Group was held on Nov 19th 2002. Since the meeting we have enjoyed a lively exchange of ideas via email. The formation of the Network has energised us all and we are looking forward to future developments. The work of the Network will also be featured at the U3A conference in York this year.

What kind of help can U3As look for from the Learning Support Group and the Network? Some initiatives

are already underway. We respond to requests from individual U3As and larger groupings of U3As. The requests often involve finding someone to take part in workshops and day-events organised locally or sometimes simply to help in shaping a programme for these events. The events are often organised to support the work of group leaders as well as looking at ways of encouraging more members to participate in the "tutoring" role in their groups. We know that there is already much support given to group leaders and convenors by individual U3As up and down the country and one of the ways in which regional contacts can be of assistance is to put organisers in touch with one another. We all recognise that some of the best U3A initiatives arise when members have a chance to meet or share ideas. We in the Learning Support Group and the Regional Network would be happy to be regarded as facilitators. Sometimes the help that we are asked for can best be met by the Subject Networks and we make sure that we liaise as closely as possible with them.

Listed below is the current contact information for individual members of the newly formed Learning Support Regional Network.

Scotland: Karen Cannon

Tel/Fax: 01738 840606 Email: bandk@tesco.net

Thames Valley: Don Rankin

Tel: 01844 346715 Email: don.rankin@tesco.net

South West: Ian Searle

Tel: 01209 210220 Email: ian_searle@lineone.net

Greater London: Jenny Clark

Tel: 0208 346 3751

N. Ireland: Joyce Gibson

Tel: 02891 462043

Email: joyce-gibson@UTVinternet.com

South East: Edna Wright

Tel: 01903 753696 Email: wrighton@freezone.co.uk

Wales: Doug Jones

Tel: 01656 657571 Email: jay3deekay@aol.com

North West: Eric Barnes

Tel: 0151 6085885 Email: eric-f-barnes@tiscali.co.uk

For the following regions please continue to contact the Learning Support Group via the National Office.

Wessex, North East, East Anglia, Mercia, East Midlands

Elaine Williams (Convenor)

Contact: Elaine Williams, U3A Learning Support,

Third Age Trust, 26 Harrison Street, London WC1H 8JW or e-mail u3alearningsupport@tesco.net

RESOURCE CENTRE NEWS

In this Spring issue of SOURCES we are looking especially at groups which produce or create items of any sort, practical rather than academic groups which flourish in so many U3As. I am always happy to purchase audio-visual material to support these groups but it is often very difficult to find material suitable for hands-on instruction. I was recently asked for a video on the making of stained glass and it took a while to trace anything suitable but eventually we obtained 'Stained glass - a beginners guide to techniques' which was actually produced by a glass making and design company. I have often thought that it would be a good idea for groups to make a homemade video of a particular practical activity, showing exactly what the members are creating and how they tackle it. I would be very pleased to add this kind of video to the

stock of the Resource Centre so that it could provide ideas and inspiration to other U3As. I know that some U3As have produced videos, covering the wide range of activities they offer, which are used for promotional purposes in their local area, but I have never heard of a study group making their own instructional video.

SCIENCE

The study of scientific subjects in the U3A continues to increase and I am always adding new stock to our collection. I have mentioned before the excellent videos made by the University of Leeds, and I recently purchased 'Thunder and Lightning' a famous lecture on explosives and luminescence presented by the late Dr. Frank Palmer of Nottingham University. There is an accompanying booklet which explains the chemistry involved. We also have in stock 'Chemistry Demonstrations' a set of three videos which contain 106 experiments in inorganic chemistry, physical properties and electrochemistry. They include demonstrations too difficult or dangerous to be performed in an average school laboratory and, of course, they always work!

CINEMA



Until recently I had very little material to offer groups studying the history of the cinema although I know there are many members with a serious interest in the subject. However, I now have videos relating to: European silent films, the early British film industry, the life of D.W. Griffith (known as the 'Father of film') and on early science fiction and horror films explaining the special effects and make-up techniques used. These are documentary videos: I do not buy British or American feature films for the Resource Centre collection.. We have always bought foreign language films with subtitles to assist the language groups in the U3A and some cinema and film groups have made use of these for their own studies. Lists are available for all these from the Resource Centre.

THEATRE

Cinema and Theatre are closely connected and, although I have not discovered any documentary videos on the theatre, I have an audio tape and booklet set called 'The History of Theatre'. It is read by Derek Jacobi

with a supporting cast and ranges from the first tragedies and comedies of Ancient Greece to the high-tech musicals of the present day. There are more than fifty excerpts from plays and contemporary accounts of performances, as well as music where relevant. The running time for the set is just over five hours so you can see it covers a substantial body of work. I have, at last, completed our collection, on video, of all the plays of Shakespeare. These are BBC versions of the plays broadcast several years ago and starring some very well known actors. They are produced for educational use and are not abridged in the way that many modern films are.

ANTHROPOLOGY

In 1973 Jacob Bronowski made a set of TV programmes called 'The Ascent of Man'. These are now regarded as a classic account of the history of mankind's cultural evolution. We have the entire series of thirteen 50-minute videos and I would be happy to provide a list of titles to anyone interested in using this series with their group. Used in sequence they could form the basis for a short introductory course on Anthropology, or individually as part of a much wider study of the subject.

MUSIC

We are fortunate in the Resource Centre to receive substantial donations of useful material. We were recently given an entire set of 63 audiocassettes on the 'Great Composers'. I know that many U3A music groups ask for material on the music of famous composers and we have had a small set of videos on the most well known of them for some years now, but this donation will allow us to offer groups back up material for much wider study of composers from all over the world and many different historical periods.

OFFICE MOVE

By the time you receive this issue of SOURCES the National Office and the Resource Centre will be preparing for a move to new premises in outer London. This will cause inevitable disruption to our service, as there will be a period when the Resource Centre is closed, probably for about two weeks, while we pack up in one location and set up in another. As soon as we have firm details of dates all U3As will be informed but I would advise our potential borrowers to write in with requests (avoid the telephone or e-mail) to our present address and book as early as you can for meetings in February, March and April. Last minute requests for items will not be accepted until we have full access to our stock again in the new premises.

Elizabeth Gibson Resource Centre Manager

REMINDER



The next issue of Sources hopes to focus on MUSIC GROUPS. We look forward to receiving your contributions. Start composing now!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ART

Two Study Days have been arranged at the Barber Institute, Birmingham for 1st and 8th April 2002. For an application form, send a SAE to: B Perkins, 18 Homeabbey, High Street, Tewkesbury, Glos GL20 5BL.

COMPUTING

Internetwork Study Days - a day of (fairly) advanced work making slideshows for teaching purposes, and handling digital images. In Leamington Spa, 2nd or 3rd May, cost £15. More information is available on the Internet. Go to <http://www.worldu3a.org> and click on the 'What we can offer' button.

LANGUAGES

The next Languages Study Day will be held in Prince Henry's College, Evesham, on Saturday March 22nd 2003. Details from Gloria Blackburne, 20 Abbey Mill, Church Street, Bradford on Avon BA15 1HB (SAE please).

MERSEYSIDIE & WEST CHESHIRE U3As

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday 23rd April 2003, further information: 01978 262470

MUSIC

The Music Network will be promoting a further Study Day in March 2003, most likely a Saturday. Details TBA. For a programme please contact Tony Middleton on 02476 304122

MUSIC WORKSHOPS

U3A in London is organising another series of workshops and a public concert with the DOUBLE IMAGE ENSEMBLE. The first workshop was on Tuesday, 25 February and the next is on 25 March 4 at 6 pm. The concert is on Sunday 30 March at 3 pm. The theme of the series is VARIATIONS IN SOUND: EXPLORING THE MUSIC OF RUSSIA, FRANCE AND GERMANY. Total cost for the three events is £25. All details and reservations from Marion Bieber, 0207 722 5399 or e-mail: bieb@onetel.net.uk All U3A members in reach of London NW3 are welcome.

NORTHWEST EDUCATION DAY - 'Window on the Arts'

Thursday 24th April 2003, further information: 01772 892469

SCIENCE

U3A Explores Science at the RI

Monday 14th April 2003 at 1.30pm. The Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1.

Industrial Archaeology & Related Energy Issues

A 3-Day (Residential) Seminar at Ty'r Morwydd Environmental Study Centre Pen-y-Pound (with U3A Sci-Tech at Abergavenny)

Monday 23rd - Thursday 26th June 2003

Details from Ken Bates (Sci-Tech Network Co-ordinator) 01159 241156 or ken.bates2@btinternet.com

SUMMER SCHOOLS 2003

Gloucestershire University, Cheltenham Campus

Tuesday 22nd - Friday 25th July

Tuesday 29th July- Friday 1st August

Courses are filling up fast. Telephone National Office for details of remaining vacancies.

U3A ONLINE COURSES 2003

**UK SUMMER
PROGRAMME**

**AUSTRALIAN
PROGRAMME**

INTERACTIVE COURSES

An interactive course

CREATIVE WRITING (FICTION) starting Sunday 4 May **AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND JOURNALLING**

Starts on Monday 7 July 2003

The course lasts for 9 weeks.

CREATIVE WRITING (POETRY) starting Sunday 11 May

There are 6 places for UK students.

(Both the above last 9 weeks. Downloading will be available at the same time, for self-study or group-leading.)

Applications to be made direct to Australia's website u3aonline.org.au

ALSO AVAILABLE

DESIGN IN YOUR LIFE and ITALIAN ART 1400-1600

For more details see "What Others Say" on their Course List

Starting 4th May and lasting 9 weeks, for downloading only

Application forms are on our website u3aonline.org.uk on the Online Courses page and under each subject.

Everyone must fill in a form. The £5 fee will be charged for each course. This will go into a reserve fund against the time when the Pheonix Fund runs out.

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