



SOURCES

An Educational Bulletin

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

One the last surviving founding members, Eric Midwinter celebrates here our 21st anniversary with a retrospective view.

Sometimes I am visibly taken aback by the sheer potency of the U3A movement in the United Kingdom. Remember that I was one of those trying to start such a movement. Remember there was nothing. Not one group; not one member. There was just an idea and a small band of enthusiasts. When standing on a platform and talking about this completely unfulfilled idea, I would never have dared believe that, twenty one years later, there would be over 500 U3As and some 120,000 members. Even then, in 1982, there were happy signs. I did a broadcast on the BBC programme, *You and Yours*, and that attracted over 400 letters, all asking where can we join - and, of course, the answer was, we'll put you in touch with others locally, but, basically, if you want to join, you have to form your own group.



A tiny myth has emerged of late that we turned to the self-mobilising device of U3A because the existing universities would not provide proper courses for older people. It is true to say that most of the universities were loath

to offer assistance, but that was all we were asking for. It had always been the intention of Peter Laslett and Michael Young, my illustrious co-founders, as well as myself, that the true principle of Third Age activity was that control should be in the hands of the Third Agers. The earlier French version of U3A, for all its virtues, was about older people negotiating a contract for services from an academic agency, if there was one conveniently located. Our view was always that Third Agers should be liberated to organise their own affairs and invent their own destiny. It was about older people being the creators, not the recipients, of a service.

Moreover, it was not about providing a cheaper, second-best option, although, clearly, the price had to be right - and, in the early days, there were Further and Continuing Education Colleges and Centres that complained bitterly about us 'undercutting' their provision and threatening the jobs of their tutors. No, our philosophy was based on the sound concept that cooperative, self-motivated learning was in many respects a more effective method than the one customarily applied in schools and colleges. From my viewpoint, as an educationist as well as a gerontologist, it is U3A that has many lessons to teach the rest of the education system, suffering, as I believe it does, from over-institutionalised force-feeding.

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It is worth mentioning that one of the models we considered was the playgroup movement, fascinatingly so, because, self-evidently, it was at the other end of the life span. It was a movement in which Michael Young and I had both been involved and it is probably right to assess it as the most significant experiment in social cooperation in Britain since World War II. Again, it was this wonderful notion of 'ordinary' people running their own show that appealed. It is the revealing idea that, given encouragement and confidence, the laity has much to offer and should not allow themselves always to be at the mercy of the professional cadres.

Of course, mistakes were made and, it must be admitted, there was a list of places where strenuous efforts were made to erect U3As in vain. But I think one aspect was correctly judged. This was the decision to act at both local and central levels simultaneously. We had all experienced successful local projects that had not had the legs to carry the ideas nationally and we had all been involved with successful national proposals that had suffered from a lack of examples on the ground out in the regions. This twin approach - central body to advise and promote, local autonomy for each group - has worked magnificently. In political science terms, the British U3A movement is a confederation, and a marvellous confederation it is, too. At an early point there was a criticism that we should have waited until, nationally, we had secured sufficient funds to have a really massive launch. What a blessing we did not accept that counsel - we might be still waiting!

As it is, with 500+ groups, we have easily hit the target I set for U3A several years ago and we are on the way to the target, which I based on analysis of certain areas where U3A has been especially penetrative, of 250,000 members. Congratulations, then, on our twenty-first birthday, but, truth to tell, we had long ago picked up the key of the door to sociable, cooperative learning in friendly, comfortable surrounds. My remaining hope is that, by our fiftieth birthday, the rest of the education service will have begun to look more like the average U3A.

ERIC MIDWINTER OBE MA DPHIL

Eric Midwinter was Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Exeter, 1992-2001, and, until lately, Chairman of the Community Education Development Centre, Coventry. He was Director of the Centre for Policy on Ageing, 1980-91, when the Centre was developing its new role as a policy institute. A social historian, educationist and social policy analyst, he has enjoyed a long career in the public and voluntary service. He is a Co-founder of the University of the Third Age and he has been consultant to the Millennium Debate of the Age project and to the International Longevity Centre UK.

Well-known as writer, broadcaster and consumer champion, he has many books and other publications to his name and has served on a number of public committees.

GREETINGS



**SOURCES sends
HAPPY 21ST ANNIVERSARY greetings
to the Third Age Trust, Officers and
Staff, U3A News, U3As up and down
the country, Group Leaders and
Convenors, Committee members and to
all the membership at large.
Looking forward to our Silver Jubilee!**

CONGRATULATIONS

SOURCES offers its heartfelt congratulations to Len Street on being awarded the OBE in the New Year Honours, an award which was made specifically for services to the U3A. Len served as National Chairman between 1997 and 2000 and among his many contributions to the movement, he was the inspiration behind the creation of the Resource Centre and this Educational Bulletin, SOURCES. He is currently Secretary to the Standing Committee for Education and regularly contributes a summary of SCE business to SOURCES.

WHAT IS MUSIC?

"Music is a strange thing. I would almost say it is a miracle. For it stands halfway between thought and phenomenon, between spirit and matter, a sort of nebulous mediator, like and unlike each of the things it mediates - spirit that requires manifestation in time, and matter that can do without space."

Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)

"Music is what unifies."

Seu-Ma-Tsen (145-87 BC)

U3A MUSIC NETWORK DAY BIRMINGHAM 8th MARCH 2003

Close to a fifth of the convenors of the over 400 U3A Music Groups displayed their skill in navigation and found their way to the Birmingham and Midland Institute for a fascinating day arranged by Tony Middleton, the National Music Network Coordinator. This had three parts: an opportunity to exchange experiences and problems; an occasion to ascertain what help is available nationally within U3A; and the delight of a chamber concert.

First, there was the exchange of roles and experiences among convenors. Clearly we are a very varied lot! There are groups that emphasise performance, whether vocal or instrumental; there are those that work to agreed programmes of music appreciation; and there are those that specialise, for example, in chamber music or anything except opera. The range extends from jazz to the exploration of less well known classical composers. But what is common is their enthusiasm, their dependence on personal initiatives and leadership, and their shared problems of operating.

So many are dependent on individuals whose homes are the only possible venues. Others who have larger groups to contend with are faced with the cost of accommodation and possibly of suitable equipment. All who rely on recorded music are concerned at the possible implications of the Performing Rights Society and are grateful for the action in this regard by U3A nationally.

Second was the opportunity to be aware of what is available nationally from U3A staff and other sources. It was clear that there was uneven awareness of what is available. Both the presentation by Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Manager, and the concluding forum helped to lessen the feeling of isolation and lack of support that some experienced. But the combination of what is available nationally with the mutual exchange of practical experiences was reassuring.

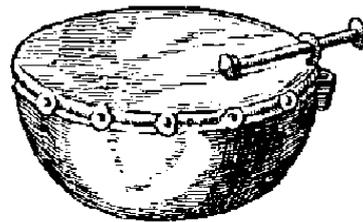
To cap it all we were treated to an excellent demonstration of how to explain musical form and the problems of performance in a two part presentation of a Mozart Trio by the Montpelier Trio. Each member – Colin Twigg (viola), Marcus Barcham-Stevens (violin) and David Powell (cello) – demonstrated and explained the intriguing features and performance problems of their respective parts before combining in an exquisite performance of the entire work to an audience, some of whom were there with complete scores in order that they could compare experiences.

This was the first such event that I have ever attended. I came away reassured, not only that I was not on the wrong track myself, but also that there were so many fellow enthusiasts beavering away to provide enlightenment and enjoyment for so many others. Our thanks and congratulations must go to Tony Middleton and the U3A staff who made possible so constructive and enjoyable a day together.

Raymond Thomas, Woodspring U3A (Avon)

MUSIC IN BOURNEMOUTH Active and passive

Bournemouth is fortunate in possessing an internationally renowned Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Chorus, a Chamber Music Society, three amateur orchestras as well as several choral and operatic societies. It is not surprising, therefore, that music has a strong presence in U3A. All the music groups are kept informed of local musical events and *Music Preview* offers illustrated talks about some of the music to be performed - encouraging members to attend live performances.



Composers' Gallery looks in some detail at the lives and works of a wide range of composers, spending two or three sessions on each. So far this year this has included

Bach, Telemann, Haydn, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Sibelius, Vaughan Williams, Gerald Finzi and John Adams. Meanwhile *Musical Encounters* is a house group which gives members an opportunity to hear music by composers little known to most of us.

One of the most popular groups is *Music Appreciation* in which four presenters take turns in introducing a programme of music of their choice. This leads to a considerable variety of music ranging from the major classics and operatic excerpts through to light music and some jazz. From time to time members are invited to bring recordings of their favourite items for inclusion in a 'members workshop'. Opera lovers are catered for specifically in the *Opera Videos* group.

On the practical side there is a very active *Choral Group* and a group for *Intermediate Recorder Players*. Both of these groups give occasional concerts as well as singing and playing for their own pleasure. There is also a group for those learning to play the recorder, now in its second year, called *Recorders for Improvers*.

So, music is alive and well in U3A Bournemouth. Long may it continue.

Donald Sheppard, Bournemouth U3A

MUSIC AT HARROW Groups galore

Harrow U3A is fortunate in having many groups specialising in different areas of music with dedicated and knowledgeable group leaders. There are ten opera groups with an average of 10/12 people in each group and five group leaders. All these groups are held in private homes. Each leader has his/her own method of leading the group but generally background information is given on the composer followed by notes on the conductor and artists taking part in the opera to be viewed. This is followed by a brief resumé of the story prior to viewing of the opera on video – preferably with English sub-titles!

We then have Music Appreciation and Classical Music – The Alternative.

Music Appreciation could perhaps be best described as the more highbrow of the two. Apart from the leader of the group, several members also give presentations. Notes on the background to the music are distributed and sometimes excerpts from the music to be studied are played to allow better understanding of the whole. This group has in the region of 40 members attending fortnightly. They meet for just over two hours with a 15-minute break and the meeting is in rented accommodation.

Classical Music – the Alternative. Here we have a group leader who was persuaded to break away from Music Appreciation and form a new group. She designed a programme, asked the members of her group what they would like to hear and planned accordingly. The subject matter covers a very wide spectrum from 14th century music to present day. At one meeting she may specialise in music from a particular country, at another she may concentrate on a composer. In three years, she doesn't think that she has repeated herself once!

Ballet Appreciation – is now just over a year old and Chamber Music started this year.

Comparisons in Music – here the group leaders choose a piece of music and the group hears it played with different conductors and different orchestras

There are two groups entitled Jazz Appreciation and these have proved very popular. From being held in private homes, one has now moved to larger rented accommodation.

We have an excellent choir with 30 plus members. Their range is vast, from opera to musicals and folk songs. They are often invited to give concerts to private functions which they do voluntarily.

Finally, we have a very active international folk dance group. They meet weekly, also give the occasional 'concert' and if one pays them a visit, it is possible to see how much they all enjoy themselves.

As you can judge from the above, the only problem is how to visit several of the groups. As you can appreciate, timetabling can be difficult. Some of the groups meet fortnightly which is helpful and an alternative solution is that some members join one group for one term and then move to another the next term.

Dorothy Guilain, Harrow U3A Study Group Coordinator

[Harrow U3A, it should perhaps be explained, is one of the largest in the country, with well over 1000 members. – *Editor*]

MUSIC IN RUTLAND

Social singing

I would like to tell you about Rutland U3A (membership 230) which has a music appreciation group and a choir. The former has been operating for three years but the choir is a new venture.

The music appreciation group (14 members) meets in members' own homes in turn once per month from 2 to 4 p.m. with a break for tea. Each member is invited (but not compelled!) to present a topic or concert of his/her choice to the rest of the group.

Examples of the programmes, which have been presented include --

1. studying and playing CDs of the work of single composers such as Sibelius and Brahms.
2. a selection of various instruments e.g. the guitar, the illustration of their characteristics and examples on CD of typical works.
3. an overall view of a genre of music e.g. the English folk-song tradition.
4. an overall view of the development of orchestral style and content from 1500.
5. the study of woodwind instruments since the 16th century with their increasing mechanisation and capabilities.
6. choral works including oratorios, operas and masses.
7. piano works played by a group member.

Sometimes members simply choose music which pleases them and they present an afternoon concert.

Alternatively, we have every two or three months, a Listeners' Choice when each member brings an 8 minute piece or extract to play after explaining his/her choice. This is usually themed, e.g. Christmas music.

The singing group is made up of anyone who would like to sing... Most cannot read music. There are 20 regular members. During the first year the choir has progressed



from "songs from the shows" in unison, to classical songs in unison, then on to national folk songs in two parts. The success of the choir depends very much on the efforts of the talented group leader who is also the accompanist - there is no conductor. The choir meets fortnightly in the leader's home. It has provided the

entertainment at the U3A Christmas lunch. In the future, it hopes to progress to three and four part singing but this is very much social singing. There are three full choral societies in the district for those who wish to sing seriously.

John Bagley, Rutland U3A

MUSIC IN EXETER

Pure appreciation

When we first started some years ago it soon became apparent that we were going to be a listening, music appreciation group. Our choice of music has been driven by the wishes of the members with some new composers and pieces included to widen our knowledge. It was not the intention that this should be a serious musical tuition group. The music programmes are organised by amateurs who just love music. We do not have any professional musicians or teachers in our group. No one ends up learning how to read a score or play a musical instrument. But certainly we are all learning something new even if just by osmosis.

For the first few years, the music sessions were held at home and we were able to choose the next meeting day

suitable for all. We eventually reached the point where we had to start a waiting list. But rescue was at hand by the offer from Exeter College of a room every Wednesday afternoon. Quickly taken up by four groups in the local U3A including the music group, each meeting once a month. Because we were now confined to a set day and time, we lost some stalwarts, Wednesday afternoons being popular for pursuing other activities. However, we now had a venue in the city centre and we became accessible to other music lovers who were not otherwise committed on that afternoon.

We have covered a wide range of music from popular, serious classical, opera selections, jazz and music now largely unheard, from the halcyon days of BBC when we all listened to the radio. Occasional video-recorded concerts by famous orchestras are enjoyed as we can watch orchestras not available to us and actually see what instruments are played to make the music. Often these include brilliant soloists. Some of the video-recorded programmes are also instructive. For a purely listening session we endeavour to have appropriate notes on the selected music and composers.

The monthly sessions are approximately two hours and the only thing we miss is the break for coffee and a social chat about the music, we enjoyed at home!

Margaret Painting, Exeter U3A

MUSIC IN NORTHAMPTON

A range of options

Northampton supports four music groups, incorporating Keyboard Tuition, Music Making, Music Appreciation and Music Study.

Keyboard Tuition covers both electronic organ and piano, either for individual pupils or small groups. The tutor is especially happy to teach the techniques of the electronic keyboard because she says learners can achieve encouraging results fairly rapidly this way.

The Music Making Group welcomes anyone who plays a wind or string instrument and who wants to make music regularly together with others. It is led by an enthusiastic clarinet player, who began his study of this instrument only about ten years before retirement. His Clarinet Choir is held in high esteem throughout the East Midlands and beyond.

The Music Appreciation Group was one of the earliest U3A groups to be established in Northampton, and it has always been popular and well attended, with twenty five to thirty members regularly on the roll. The

group meets fortnightly, when individual members take it in turn to select and present a two-hour programme of their favourite recorded music, perhaps based on a particular theme or a random collection, whichever suits the preference of the presenter. The members' choices represent a very wide range of musical interest, and while the general trend is mainly classical, its broad and often nostalgic repertoire embraces a rich mixture of taste and style from Max Bygraves to Max Bruch and Anton Bruckner, Vera Lynn to Vaughan-Williams and Vivaldi, Scottish Reels to



Slavonic and Polovtsian Dances, or Charlotte Church, Tchaikovsky and Chamber Music.

The Music Study Group grew as an off-shoot from the Music Appreciation Group when a few members expressed an interest in studying serious music in some depth and detail. Over the space of three years this group has gradually grown from very small beginnings to a regular attendance of about a dozen or so. Using mainly recorded music, sessions follow the format of lecture discussions, primarily given by the Group Leader, but frequently presented by other knowledgeable group members.

Having recently devoted several months to the study of music of the Baroque era, principally that of Bach and Handel, members are currently engaged in attempting to tease out some of the defining characteristics of compositions of the Classical period, with particular reference to Haydn and Mozart. Spanning the next twelve months of the curriculum we plan to explore the influence, if any, of previous composers on Beethoven. Beethoven's influence on Brahms, and that of Brahms and Schumann on each other. The mode of presentation is shared between CD and video onto a large screen, with mini-disc and piano to illustrate details and draw comparisons, especially comparisons of interpretations on record, which is a popular feature.

We have regular members' choice sessions, but rather than just giving sentimental or personal reasons for a choice, members are asked to 'justify' their selection in terms of inherent musical interest and significance. It is surprising how much such a requirement develops one's musical insight and listening skills! Two or three times a year a live music session is arranged in which a local musician or singer demonstrates a particular instrument or musical style.

This Music Study Group meets almost every week throughout the year, some of its best attendances being recorded in August when most other activities have closed down, and from April 2003, the first session of each month will be devoted specifically to the study of opera, both on CD and video, and eventually possibly DVD.

Alun Bye, Northampton U3A

BRECON MUSIC

Sampling the unfamiliar

At Brecon U3A music groups have been in existence for about four years. At first, we started a Music Appreciation group and shortly afterwards added an Opera group. Each group meets monthly.

At the beginning, in the Music Appreciation group, members would bring CDs or cassettes of music which they personally enjoyed and this, for a couple of years, gave us much satisfaction. It did not necessarily mean, however, that we were enriching our appreciation of music since we were hearing music which was familiar and most of it of the popular classical kind.

As a result we decided to give attention to covering more of the breadth of a composer's contribution to music. This meant that the music of one composer would cover a few months of meetings. We commenced with Beethoven and, after an introduction to the man and his music, we listened not only to some of his symphonies and piano concertos but also to piano sonatas and quartets as well as other

compositions. In this way members increased their understanding and began to get used to unfamiliar music.

Since then we have explored compositions of Schubert, C19th French music and C20th French music. This experience of a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar music has made our meetings much more worthwhile.

With the Opera group we usually watch a video at each meeting. Some of our members have videos which we use but we have also found that Elizabeth Gibson at the Resource Centre has been most helpful in supplying us with videos.

Some of our members were, at the beginning, quite ignorant of opera, so our meetings for them have been an entrance into a new world. Some months after seeing a video we have replayed it so as to be able to appreciate more the various arts involved in the production of an opera. We have found that videos with subtitles have been most helpful and we would like the Resource Centre to have this in mind when adding to their library.

Reg East, Brecon U3A

MUSICAL RICHES IN WONERSH

For a modest, village-based U3A, Wonersh (Surrey) has an exceptionally strong musical content as part of its varied programme, with no fewer than four groups – each different in its own way.



MUSIC

For the group with this simple title we are fortunate in having a leader who is an accomplished violinist and is thus able from time to time to lead us through a detailed analysis of a particular work – usually chamber music. Recent visiting speakers have enlightened us on the life of Gounod, the art of the tenor, John Lewis, the works of Sir Hubert Parry (by his great grand-

daughter, no less), Elgar's Enigma Variations and some favourite Beethoven piano sonatas.

MUSIC MAKING

This has the same group leader, bringing together a number of members and their chosen instruments – flute, violin, cello and piano. The range of talent is no doubt variable, but there is much enjoyment to be found in 'going live' and the group has tackled Mozart, Beethoven, Pleyel and Reinecke. The great pleasure of playing together stems from a basic necessity of being able to make a reasonable stab at sight-reading. A bit of practice at home in advance is of help.

OPERA ON VIDEO

This group has a faithful following, with each opera spread over two evenings held in a member's home. Latest offerings have included Delibes' *Lakmé*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Puccini's *Tosca*. Three evenings are currently being devoted to absorbing Wagner's *Die Walküre*.

LISTENING TO MUSIC

This is rather less academic than the Music group but is able to offer a wide range of works and performers, sometimes with a specific theme. Although programmes are

frequently put together by members themselves, we have a regular core of visiting presenters – some drawn from local recorded music societies.

Visits to concerts and the opera are frequently preceded by an afternoon devoted to an illustrated talk about the content of the performance.

Leslie Warner, Wonersh U3A

MUSIC STUDIES IN U3A LONDON

A wealth of opportunity

THere are now eight well-attended music groups in U3AL, offering a range of music to suit a wide variety of interests, from swing and jazz to classical music and opera. There is also a lively singing group and recently a new group was added on the importance of interpretation in music. In order to discuss issues of common interest, the coordinators of all the groups meet on a regular basis. This group also plans extra-mural musical events such as the ones described at the end of this section.

SWINGTIME

This is run by David Barber and is a trawl through the easy listening of the 20's, 30's, 40's and occasionally the 50's and beyond. The nostalgic reach of the group incorporates names such as Ellington, Basie, Henderson, Miller, Goodman and Dorsey. We also listen to recordings of the smaller bands (e.g. John Kirby, Teddy Wilson, Louis Jordan, plus the small groups that were part of the big bands like the Goodman Quartet and Artie Shaw's Grammercy Five. Heavily featured are vocalists such as Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Mildred Bailey, Jack Teagarden, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. This is just a small selection of the music we enjoy - a trip down memory lane of the sounds that many of us grew up with.

CLASSICAL MUSIC: THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPRETATION

Described as "a music lovers' class with a new angle", the key principle of this, our most recently formed group, led by Claudia Miller-Knight, is that our enjoyment of hearing good music depends on the artists performing it as well as on the skill of the composer. It is just as important to ask of a concert or a recording "who's conducting?" as it is to ask of a movie "who's directing?"

In seventy years listening to music, Claudia has learned that music comes freshly alive when the conductor, soloist or chamber group (as appropriate) is inspired in the moment of performance; whereas other recordings of the same composition can seem unenergised and therefore mediocre. In her group, Claudia has led the members of the group to hear how works such as Beethoven's Ninth, Bach's Second English Suite and Strauss's Four Last Songs, are conveyed with extra breadth or depth by different performers, or expressed more or less fully from the heart, or played with sparing or excessive use of the piano pedal, or whether we hear soloist and accompanist truly working as a team.

A typical session begins with a cassette or CD of one movement of a piece of music, first one recording and then one that differs. Then Claudia elicits responses. Comments have been as simple as "I liked the first version better" or as specific as "I preferred the second one because

the first one sounded rushed. In the second version, I could hear lines of music that were 'lost' in the first rendition." On occasion, one interpretation is not better or worse than the other, just different. One is more dreamy, the other sounds more pure. Usually, two or at most three recordings are sufficient to explore how interpretations differ, but once we had as many as five. The programme is usually announced a week in advance so that group members can, if they happen to possess such things, bring their own CDs/cassettes to be included in the comparison, or a copy of the score.

ASPECTS OF LISTENING TO MUSIC

Led by Pam Larkin, this is our longest running music group. This extremely popular group, with a regular attendance of 50+, features a wide range of approaches to classical music, including studies on instrumentation, musical forms and analyses of both solo and ensemble works. For example, string quartets have been observed both from the viewpoint



of structure, and for the interplay of instruments and the balance of sound. Recently a more searching exploration of the design of fugue has been discussed, including examples from both Baroque music (Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's B

Minor Mass) and from the classical period (Beethoven's Op 110 piano sonata). Other sessions have included a survey of the evolution of keyboard instruments, including the contribution of "touch" (legato, staccato, rotary and lateral effects on sound), the pedals, and how the design of the instrument changed between the 18th and 20th centuries.

A particularly attractive aspect of Pam's group is provided by presentations by visiting musicians, including live performances. For example, a visit from a professional guitar player explained how the sound was made. It is planned to invite a quartet from the Royal College of Music in the summer term, to illustrate the features of string quartets discussed in the group; the quartet will be asked to play "in the round", so that as many people as possible can see as well as hear what is happening.

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

Performance is also central to Vic Golding's group. There are about 35 singers all told; as always the sopranos and altos (15 and 12 respectively) "swamp" the tenors and basses (3 and 3!). Their repertoire is very varied, ranging from opera and oratorio choruses to numbers from musicals, operettas and folk music. A full concert is given every year, at U3AL Christmas Party, but the group is open to offers to fulfil other engagements.

This is a very long-standing group – Vic's wife Jenny joined the "Singing for Pleasure" group in 1988, and Vic was persuaded to join the group in 1993 – as the second bass. Vic's considerable experience of singing with amateur operatic societies, choral societies and choirs made him the natural choice to take over as leader when the group's founder, David Ellenberg, died. The group has two excellent accompanists, and everyone is very enthusiastic and derives much pleasure from the group, although they could do with more men.

JAZZ AT U3A IN LONDON

is coordinated by Peter Goulding. He was asked to form a jazz study group 15 years ago. Reluctant at first, he agreed to take on the task provisionally. In fact, there was so much enthusiasm from the initial members that he decided to continue (a familiar tale in U3A groups!) Several of the first members still come to his sessions which many think are too short.

Every style of jazz is covered, from folk music to avant-garde, although the main interest is from the mid-1920s to the present day, in what is known as "mainstream". One member is a former professional jazz musician now aged 84, who was a major influence in jazz circles for many decades but perhaps best known for recording sessions in the mid 40's. He has given invaluable help to the group about harmonies, tempos, dynamics, etc.

Peter started to collect records as a teenager 60 years ago. Since then he has built up a collection of over 10,000 records, some of them very rare, which are invaluable for group study material. According to an American directory of the world's major jazz collections, Peter's collection is acknowledged as being the third largest in the UK; though this is not, of course, exceptional by US standards. Having been so long in the "business", Peter has become a jazz historian of some international repute and exchanges information with many like him throughout the world [mainly in the USA, UK and Germany].

As far as his method of operation in the group is concerned he avoids entrenched positions, although drawing attention to particular performances of outstanding merit and major musicians, as rated by jazz aficionados. For each session a weekly "hymn-sheet" is distributed, with sequences of titles, the musicians on the recording, and dates and places of recording. Peter makes a few notes as aide-memoir for himself, and he can provide anecdotes from personal experience. Discussion and feedback on particular recordings helps Peter to extend his already vast knowledge of the subject.

LANDMARKS OF OPERA

This group is led by Don Moore, and (perhaps too ambitiously) attempts to cover the development of opera from Monteverdi to Thomas Ades. After two terms it has only just finished *Fidelio*, and the group has demanded a thorough investigation of 19th century Italy. The group is usually vastly amused at Don's attempts to grapple with modern sound technology, and this works only after a protracted struggle with various leads and connections. Musical illustrations are the central feature of this group, which after being lulled gently by Handel and Mozart will eventually be electrified by Wagner and Strauss (some way ahead!).

Opera only really lives in performance, however, and we have already organized two parties to the Coliseum, to enjoy *Rigoletto* and *Rosenkavalier*. Hopefully, more outings will be planned, and failing this we would welcome an operatic event from "Singing for Pleasure".

JUST MUSIC

Last but certainly not least come **Stan Freed's** two music groups, somewhat prosaically known in the U3AL programme as "**Music B**" and "**Music C**" (to distinguish them from Pam Larkin's "**Music A**"). Stan's sessions are hugely popular and entertaining. They normally kick off with

a blast of swing from his minidisc player, "to make sure the equipment is working" (Don Moore could take note – see above).

When his group started, in 1998, he had an attendance of about 9 or 10 per session. This grew steadily, but when U3AL moved to Hampstead Town Hall in 2001, the group expanded so much that he was forced to open a second group, covering the same ground but with a year "time lapse" in this historical course.

The music offered in Stan's sessions gives an overview of musical development from the 16th century onwards, with particular emphasis on the symphony and on orchestral and chamber music. The sessions include many facts about music over the period as well as careful analysis of some of the principal works of the major composers, all couched in what is basically non-technical jargon. The whole is accompanied by a series of handouts, which many group members collect. The idea behind Stan's programme is to enhance the enjoyment of listening to music by imparting a basic knowledge of the nuts and bolts of the art.

Don Moore, U3A London

A BREATH OF MUSICAL FRESH AIR!

The Greater London Region has recently had two opportunities to inject some new approaches to learning in the field of music.

The first of these was a special study day planned and organised jointly by members of U3As in the region and the Education Officer of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. The Orchestra wanted to hook into the lifelong learning activities and asked U3A if they would like to have a special day for the study of Haydn's "Creation" which they were to perform in the Royal Festival Hall on the 30th January 2003. We enthusiastically agreed and helped to plan a day which included the wider concept of the Creation as seen by scientists as well as musicologists, singers and instrumentalists.

One hundred U3A members from the region signed up for the day and also reaped the benefit of greatly reduced tickets for the performance. The sessions were led by excellent speakers most of whom were university professors who took us through the various concepts of The Creation of the world and then of the way in which Haydn had conceived this great composition. We had sample performances of the wonderful choruses of the piece by members of the OAE choir and a demonstration and



display of the instruments of the period which were to be used at the performance. The atmosphere of the day was one of enthusiasm and excitement and a most encouraging rapport was established between the members of the orchestra and choir and the U3A. Unfortunately the performance was on the night of the terrible snow so that some of our members could not make it to the Festival Hall but that had not robbed them of a most instructive study day.

The feed back from our members was one of great enthusiasm for this type of educational activity and a request

for more of the same. We have already heard, on the grapevine, that the OAE will be performing the Beethoven Brandenburg concertos and we might be able to have a study day on that subject next year. We will not fail to keep after the Education Officer to bring this idea to fruition.

The other Greater London Region project was a continuation of last year's workshops with *Double Image*, the wonderful quartet who were U3A in London's quartet in residence last year, when they had an Arts Council grant to develop educational work with older people. This year they provided us with two most enjoyable workshops on the comparative interpretation of Russian, French and German music. This included Stravinsky's "A Soldier's Tale" adapted for piano, violin and clarinet, Fauré's wonderful piano trio and a Beethoven piano trio. The latter had to be replaced on the day by a Beethoven piano and violin sonata as the cellist had a family crisis and could not be replaced in time for the end product which was a concert in Lauderdale House on a Sunday afternoon, attended by about seventy people.

There is little doubt that most orchestras and chamber groups in the country are now cottoning onto the lifelong learning opportunities in their educational programmes. U3As therefore have every opportunity to plug into these possibilities wherever they may be.

The combination of music appreciation as a regular study activity in U3As and building links with professional musicians, music colleges, music societies and orchestras could be a most enjoyable and fruitful development. Listening to CDs and tapes is a very enjoyable learning experience but working with real professional musicians and live performances is even more fun.

The financial aspects of these special projects will vary. In some cases U3A members may have to make modest contributions for participating in such a programme. In other cases the professional groups may be able to find funding through their educational programmes.

Marion Bieber, U3AL

A NEW APPROACH TO U3A MUSIC WORKSHOPS

Many U3As, including our own, have wonderful music appreciation groups and music making of various kinds. All of these provide learning and pleasure for our members.

Since January 2001 U3A in London had the good fortune of experimenting with a different approach. A widely acclaimed chamber ensemble called *Double Image* obtained a modest grant from the London Arts Board in the context of the "Year of the Artist". The grant was to enable the group to become the "Ensemble in Residence" to the U3A in London for a period of six months.

In close co-operation between the musicians and interested members of U3A we drew up a programme of nine fortnightly workshops and two public concerts. U3A had to find the funding for the venue, a piano and some publicity. We publicised the programme among the members of U3As in the Greater London Region and gathered thirty-eight enthusiastic members. We divided the projected cost among ourselves which meant that the whole programme, including the concerts, cost each of us £18.

The workshops were a wonderful education in music-making for the uninitiated. Sessions gave us a chance to learn about interpretation, rehearsal practice, conducting, composition, and instrumental techniques. There was always some performance involved. We covered periods from Bach to Brahms and beyond and also had a contemporary composer talk to us about her work and life.

In the conducting session we learnt the secret behind the waving of arms by conductors and even had a chance to try for ourselves. We were given the opportunity to comment on the rehearsal of the programmes for the public concerts and all noticed the difference in the way we listened as a result.

The most exciting outcome of the "residence" was the friendship which has developed between U3A members and the musicians (piano, violin, cello, flute and clarinet) and the enthusiasm that has surfaced for future co-operation.

The "Double Image Ensemble" would always be open to suggestions for future co-operative ventures with other U3As if local Arts Council or other funding can be found. Music is their livelihood and, unlike members of U3A they could not undertake these exciting ventures without payment. But the pleasure and knowledge they have brought to us is immeasurable.

There may be other ways of developing inter-generational music projects. Why not try the local Music Academies. Many music students are budding professionals who might well enjoy the experience.

Marion Bieber, U3AL

WE HAVE FUN Joy unbounded

Like many boys of my age and education, I had my fill of music at school! We were made, as part of the school's discipline, to listen to much "good music" in school hall and chapel, because it was "good for us". Of course, if we did not listen with sufficient attention, the inevitable consequence was a sound caning! Not surprising, I grew up with a considerable dislike of music, but now, in my older years, that has mellowed to a love-hate relationship.

Thus, it was, with some surprise, that, with my wife, we found ourselves as the hosts of the newly formed Solihull Blossomfield U3A music group, mainly because we have a large sitting room. This meant that we had to decide, with the agreement and participation of the other members, how this group was to operate.

The following guiding principles have evolved and govern how the group runs

1. It is democratic – we do not have any one person who always runs or leads the group. It is a group where everyone has the opportunity and encouragement to join in and to take turns in presenting the afternoon's programme. We do not to have a leader, and certainly not one who imposes his/her own agenda or ideas of what we should do or listen to.
2. It is enjoyable. Everyone has the opportunity to play whatever music they enjoy and want to share with others. It is a chance to share their pleasure and experience of certain music with their friends, and so there is complete freedom in what they play

and how they organise their afternoon's programme. In addition, the social side is important – it is a monthly meeting of friends who enjoy doing the same thing, so the chat and the tea with good quality biscuits is an important aspect.

3. It is educational. By giving this freedom, the group has heard an extremely wide selection of music, ranging over many composers, periods, instruments and themes. We respect the judgement of others, and we listen carefully and thoughtfully, because we know that that music has a special meaning for the presenter. Thus, our knowledge and experience of many types of music have been enlarged in a way that would not otherwise have been possible.

The first meeting of the Group was in June 2000, with 14 present, and the membership has now doubled to about 30. So far we have had 29 meetings, and in an average afternoon, between 5 and 10 pieces of music are played. The presenter usually explains his/her theme, and then tells us about each piece before it is played. Obviously, each programme is very different, depending on who is the presenter, and that is much of the delight and the pleasure. It has been so encouraging to see people who initially were very diffident, now they know that it is a warm and non-judgemental atmosphere and they are among friends, give a confident and interesting presentation. All those who have presented a programme say how much they have learned while making the selection and preparing the music and the background information.

We have had a wonderful range of music, with titles like "a musical mystery tour", "who's afraid of chamber music?", "April is bursting out all over", "Hot Cross Buns – a musical miscellany" (by Daphne & Roy Cross), and "a little bit of Britten".

Of course, we have special afternoons, such as when the presentation is by a husband and wife partnership, and, at Christmas, we have a Christmas party with special food and programmes with titles like "Childhood & Christmas" or "The Joy of Christmas".

And so that is where I will stop, with the theme of "Joy".

Yes, we do have fun in our Music Enjoyment Group and we hope you enjoy your music groups as much as we do.

*Ian Sinclair, Solihull Blossomfield U3A
icsinclair@blueyonder.co.uk*



OPERA BITES IN THE COTSWOLDS Getting to grips with Wagner

Our group has been meeting monthly (ten times a year) for nearly seven years. Over this period we have, especially since the Resource Centre started under Elizabeth Gibson's efficient management, based most meetings on video performances although audio recordings have been used on occasions.

Our record to date shows more Verdi and Wagner (7 operas each) than any other composer, but has included both Berg's operas, four by Britten, three by Janacek, and works by Berlioz, Massenet, Monteverdi, Stravinsky, Turnage and Weber amongst more popular operas.

Various general policies are followed, and certain factors remain problematic.

- Meetings are held monthly; a higher frequency is impracticable, but would allow operas to be spread over more meetings, thus allowing more time for genuine 'study' and discussion.

- Meetings last two and a half hours including a fifteen minute tea break. Even so, we sometimes need to extend for another ten or fifteen minutes. But we still have too little time for discussion.

- We never devote more than two meetings, a month apart, to a particular work. 'Doubles' have included *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Carlos* and *War and Peace*.

- Lack of subtitles on certain videos, mostly of German or Austrian origin, and original language audio recordings present difficulties. Photocopying selected libretto passages of special importance can help. Increasing availability of DVD material should gradually eliminate this.

- Unless most members are broadly familiar with a piece - and this is very rare - we aim to see or hear most of the recording, sometimes making 'judicious' cuts to cope with the time factor.

- With Glyndebourne Touring Opera and Welsh National Opera accessible in Oxford and Birmingham, we run trips to three or four live productions a year and are usually able to prepare for these in advance. This season we have had preliminary meetings on *Albert Herring*, *Eugene Onegin* and *Tosca*. Our membership numbers 16 and we usually travel by a community minibus driven by a member. Costs are thus kept affordable, taking advantage of group bookings.

- Wagner demands special treatment, as he does in the opera house. We have to date spent

- a whole day viewing *Tristan*, 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with local pub lunch after act 1;

- three consecutive days viewing the complete *Ring* cycle, with similar arrangements;

and we shall, at our June meeting (shortly before *Johannestag!*), be viewing *Die Meistersänger* with acts 1 and 2 one afternoon and act 3 the following morning, ending our season with picnic lunch in the nearest equivalent to the *Festwiesen*, our host's garden.

We should be delighted to exchange thoughts about these or other matters with similar groups.

John Busbridge, North Cotswold U3A
busbridge@ecosse.net

FARNHAM OPERA

Big screen 'irrational' entertainment

The formation and running of an opera appreciation group may be of interest to members, as the subject is not obviously one of academic or even of general interest. Defined by Dr Johnson as 'an expensive and irrational entertainment', opera does however seem to attract an inordinate amount of media and political attention, possibly just for those reasons. So is it worthy of serious study? The answer probably relates to the fact that, since

about 1600, it has attracted most of the giants among European composers, drawing for their stories upon the works of the greatest authors, from Virgil to Shakespeare and onwards and, of course, countless well-publicised dramas developed during the actual processes of creation.

Asked to start an opera appreciation group in 1994 for Farnham U3A, I initially ruled out theatre visits on purely logistical grounds, and concentrated upon an in-house operation, literally. With a gramophone and reasonably large television and VHS recorder, my home became the opera house, on a monthly basis. A notice went out and an extremely efficient secretary recruited. We expected about half-a-dozen recruits initially, and were delighted to get fifteen, soon rising to a domestic capacity of eighteen, and a waiting list was started. Our secretary firmly requested prior notification of non-attendance so that waiters in the wings could be invited.

We established a varied menu of items - arias, ensembles and scenic highlights, sampling of great voices, conductors and performances on records, videos and films. These were interspersed with sessions on technical terms, operatic themes and history, personalities and musical vocabulary.



The material was selected from members' collections, county library archives and the Resource Centre at National Office. It was fun to organise occasional airings of shellac 78s from enthusiasts who had actually heard Melchior, Ponselle or Gigli in New York, Bergamo or London. We also arranged a tour of Covent Garden, including backstage. Sessions usually run for two to two and a half hours for complete or edited works, with a break for coffee. We had no illusions that, according to

U3A mores, comfort, coffee and chatter were essential!

Opera is not a modest medium, especially the Teutonic species, so performances tended to exclude overtures, ballet and sometimes whole scenes.

Farnham U3A is most fortunately able to rent accommodation in a multifacility renovated maltings and as our waiting-list grew I ultimately persuaded our Committee to invest in a quality portable CD-cassette player and VHS recorder with display-projector. We now therefore enjoy 8'x6' projected videos and the group has passed the fifty mark. A large range of performances is available on VHS cassettes, soon to be supplemented on DVD; two recent winners were the Lyon "L'Elisir d'Amore" and the Glyndebourne "The Rake's Progress". The fare is occasionally lightened by a quiz or a relay of, say, Anna Russell explaining the plot of "The Ring" or Manfred Sturmer, the centenarian tympani player of the Vienna Philharmonic, recalling Mahler performing as a transvestite Salome!

We feel that Dr. Johnson could have accepted it.

John Vernon, Farnham U3A

G & S IN CHICHESTER

The very model of a modern U3A

Here in Chichester we have several music groups. Mine has been running for three years, and is by no means the oldest. Having carried out a great deal of research to give a talk to our local music club, Music on Sundays, I decided not to waste it all, and started a group on the Operas of Gilbert & Sullivan. We had sufficient interest to run two mornings a month for two hours, each meeting being the same. That first year I gave the background to the pair and their partnership, and each month we took a different opera, studying the story and the music on CD. The groups seemed to enjoy it, and all wanted a second year, so I bought all the video films and we added a third day. (We had acquired just a few more members, but this was mainly so that people who on one occasion perhaps could not come on their usual day had an alternative, and they have made good use of this opportunity.) By then we were going on till 12.30, because again we talked about the operas each week.

People were still enthusiastic by the start of the third season. Only two people left, and attendance each time is high. The oldest member is 93, and walks the 200 yards to our house whenever she is not 'shattered' by her arguments with her brother over the bridge table the evening before. Now we are again watching the films, but paying more attention to Gilbert's enormously clever texts, and finishing at 1 p.m. or even later. Many of us have attended G&S productions as much as twenty miles away.

There is the minor inconvenience of living for three days with the chairs all out of place and in semi-darkness because the sunlight streams on to the television and has to be blocked out, not just with curtains, but with two heavy projector screens, too cumbersome to take down each time. I could not have done the job on this scale without an extremely supportive husband, who manhandles these screens each time, sorts the odd technical problem, makes the coffee, and ensures that the television is set for the best possible colour reception each time.

Three years probably exhausts even Gilbert and Sullivan, and we shall end in June with a fun session of G&S oddities. My members are all absolutely delightful people. I have enormously enjoyed the experience, and wish I could go on for ever and ever.

Marion Somerville, Chichester U3A

MANDOLINS IN BECKENHAM

A 'plucky' U3A

Beckenham U3A has what we believe may well be the only Mandolin Group in the country where members, some with no previous musical knowledge whatsoever, are learning to make the sweetest of all sounds – those of the mandolin.

We have two small groups (Beginners and Improvers) and already the Improvers have given their first performance, albeit a



short one, to a very sympathetic audience at the local U3A Christmas Party.

Initially, the group leader loans mandolins. Then, when individuals feel sufficiently confident and committed, they buy their own.

What the group leader would like next is to find some guitarists for more varied ensemble work and possibly a U3A fretted instrument orchestra. Anyone interested is invited to ring 0208 778 4309.

Janet Ambrose, Beckenham U3A

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

And not forgetting the tea-break

The preface to a pocket Sing Song book printed in the early part of the last century states "One of the delights of singing in chorus is the friendliness which it promotes among the singers. It is, besides, a health-giving pastime, and friendliness and healthfulness are two conditions of life that our nation sorely needs." Three hundred years before that, William Byrd is quoted as saying "The exercise of singing is delightful to Nature and good to preserve the health of Man. It doth strengthen all parts of the brest and doth open the pipes." Then, after enumerating other excellent results he says in conclusion "Since Singing is so good a thing/I wish all men would learn to sing."

We began singing for pleasure 2½ years ago and can certainly vouch for the truth of the statements quoted. We are not a choir as such and there is no requirement for members to read music. We meet weekly for 2 hours and over a period of time have greatly increased in numbers and expertise, to such an extent that we now regularly entertain other people. Some of us have belonged to more formal choirs and now look for something less restrictive whilst others have not sung before but want to give it a go. We currently have about 40 in the group, both men and women, ranging in age from 50+ to 80+. As well as singing, we laugh a lot and find time for a cuppa and chitchat mid-way through each session and always return home feeling refreshed and light-hearted even on the gloomiest winter days.

Margaret Smith, Peterborough U3A

BARBERSHOPPING

Sweet harmonies in Cheadle

This is not a grand report as we haven't been a group for long but it's something which I hope will grow big from small beginnings. I am a singing teacher and performer from the Stoke on Trent area and last year a friend of mine, who has been a supporter of U3A for a few years now both as a group leader and group member, approached me and asked whether I knew anything about Barbershop Singing as it's something he'd always wanted to do and would like to start up a group in the local U3A area.

Well, actually it's something I'd always wanted to have a go at. (I sing in a trio - one too few for Barbershop. Any arrangements I've attempted have not been successful and consequently abandoned.)

You've probably guessed the next question - would I like to, and be willing to, lead the group? Of course I said "Yes".

So, in February, having got the OK from the area organiser, we went about finding a room in a local Methodist Church for our Friday afternoon session. What would we do without places such as these? I was able to buy some scores with a generous grant from our U3A, as I did not want to use illegal copies. The first few weeks were a big learning curve for us all but we persevered. We have from six to twelve singers - however many turn up we always have a great time. Some of our members had previous choir experience - others none at all. Now we have "tuned in" to what "Barbershopping" is all about, the hard work is paying off after just a couple of months. I am very new to U3A and have thoroughly enjoyed the last 9 weeks for the friendship, fun and teamwork. We have even been asked to do a "turn" at the AGM in May - our first gig!

I was wondering whether there were any other similar groups in U3A who would like to share experiences, resources, meet up or correspond, etc. I'd love to hear from them.

Sarah Williams, Cheadle U3A

IN PRAISE OF JAZZ

And all its gods

I believe that Jazz is the most enjoyable form of music ever created. Not only that but, to quote trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, "Jazz music celebrates life - human life. The range of it. The absurdity of it. The ignorance of it. The greatness of it. The intelligence of it. The sexuality of it. The profundity of it. And it deals with it in all of its.....no, it just deals with it." Jazz reflects the history of the last hundred years. It has incurred the hatred of Fascist and Communist dictators but has been absorbed into every other form of musical and artistic expression.

In Harrow, on the edge of London, we have two U3A Jazz appreciation groups to deal with the demand. Both meet at a local Arts Centre on alternate weeks. The group which I lead has just moved from my home to enable more members to join. This year we celebrate our tenth anniversary.

I have to say that our group has a simple objective - Pure Enjoyment. Enjoyment of good Jazz, enjoyment of the company of fellow Jazz enthusiasts and enjoyment of the pleasurable atmosphere which Jazz creates

In the group which I lead we cover all the main styles of Jazz - Swing, Cool, Bebop, Modern, Dixieland, New Orleans - to name a few - and I can honestly say that as a result of meeting together, all of us have widened our appreciation of Jazz to take in different styles to those we might be naturally drawn to and learnt to enjoy a very wide range of performers.

Although we work on a structured basis with a printed programme for each term, nonetheless the chat factor (I won't necessarily call it discussion) within the group is usually at a high level with lots of laughs and banter.

Each fortnightly session is run by one of our members, following a particular theme. This may be based on a Jazz artist, such as Benny Goodman, or on the Jazz interpretation of a composer's music (e.g. Cole Porter) or on a particular period, such as wartime swing, or even just an association of

words contained in song titles (e.g. Sun, Moon and Stars). Twice a term we have our most popular afternoon which is called Members' Choice. On these occasions each member brings a track from a CD or tape or even LP to play to the Group, explaining why they've chosen it or saying something about the jazz artist.

There are a fair number of local Jazz events which we can attend without having to go into central London and our members support these together or individually.

In our group we experience Jazz as uniting and uplifting music - but not to be taken too seriously or treated like a religion.

David Bennington, Harrow U3A

LIVE JAZZ IN PEMBROKESHIRE

From small beginnings

When a '94 Pembrokeshire Meeting raised the question of new groups, Geoff Nicolle's "Let's form a jazz band" was drowned by laughter. His attempted Jazz Appreciation Group had attracted a maximum attendance of two and many members knew he had never played an instrument in his life.

To everyone's surprise a band of sorts emerged. Colin volunteered as organist. Peter brought along a cornet. Denis resurrected his grandfather's banjo. Spike found the remains of a drum kit in his loft. Geoff fixed three washboards to an old ironing board and Gerry Attric and the Pacemakers was formed.

The band was completed when two new musicians joined U3A. Paul's magnificent sousaphone boosted the rhythm section. David brought not only his clarinet but also the experience unique to the group of having played in a jazz band before. Following a successful debut appearance at a U3A lunch the band was renamed *Celtic Saints Jazz Band*.

By 1996 the band was playing well enough to be invited to entertain the Swansea Conference and Jean Thompson hired Celtic Saints to play for a European Conference at the University of Surrey.

For a variety of reasons band members came and went. A devastating blow came when the linchpin of the rhythm section, Denis Larcombe, died suddenly near Christmas 1997. No replacement could be found but it was agreed that if Geoff attempted to teach himself banjo the others would stick with him to see how things went. Eventually all agreed to appear in public with him.

The South Wales and Severnside Annual Lecture included 'A Light-hearted Look at the History of Early Jazz' presented by the Celtic Saints. Guest Speaker Lord Parry of Neyland was sufficiently impressed to invite the band to play for the coming visit to his hometown of the Prince of Wales.

Gigs have included fêtes for Cancer Research and for units at local hospitals, the National Vegetable Show, Pembrokeshire Horticultural Show, Evening Concerts for RNLI and Flood Relief in India plus the Opening of a Music Festival and even a film appearance.

The line-up of the band, which plays New Orleans Jazz, is Peter Gwenlan (cornet), Ron Moles (clarinet), John McNally (trombone), Paul Randall (sousaphone), Geoff Nicolle (banjo) and Bernard Weldon (drums).

The band remains open to offers. Anything considered.

Geoff Nicolle, Pembrokeshire U3A

DAWN OF COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

Perhaps it is not surprising that it was in the native land of Jules Verne, who foresaw so accurately so many aspects of the twentieth-century life, that composers first recognised the importance to them of the Public Performing Right and hit upon a practical method of enforcing it. In 1849 a French composer of light music name Victor Parizot dined at a Paris café-concert and listened to the orchestra playing some of his own compositions. On being presented with the bill for his dinner he refused to pay unless the restaurant in turn paid him for the use of his music. This interesting dispute came before a court and the composer won his case! This was a dramatic and important precedent, for up to that time orchestras, singers and pianists alike had had free access to the most popular compositions of the day, but within a few months of the court's decision some of the most successful and popular French composers had joined together to form the first performing right society in the world. This society was soon collecting substantial sums from concert halls, cafes, restaurants and other public places where its members' music was performed.

Composers outside France were slow to follow their colleagues' example, but in 1903 Richard Strauss and others had succeeded in getting established in Germany a society similar to the French one. Within a few years most other countries had followed suit by including in their revised copyright legislation a clear recognition of the exclusive right of a composer to authorise all public performances of his works, and by establishing or permitting the formation of societies of composers, song-writers and music publishers to exercise that control. The British Society, The Performing Right Society was founded in 1914.

Ruth Rose, Hastings & Rother U3A

[The Performing Right Society can be contacted on 0800 068 4828]

ART AS A PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

Art for many of us, perhaps because of its variety, can turn out to be the most inactive of all practical activities. Take, for instance, sitting out by the river somewhere on a gorgeous summer day, with a pencil and paper, pastels or watercolours (something that doesn't weigh very much): what a glorious pastime! Which is very likely the reason it is the most popular.

Just a pencil and paper is all you need to open up (and create if you have the time) a whole gallery of pictures, and you will never need more than a shopping basket to pack it all in. Don't ever think a small drawing is not worth framing - it will be worth it once you have paid it the compliment of a mount and frame. To get some idea of the possibilities of humble pencil and paper work, read anything you can find on Queen Victoria and you will very likely see some of her drawings reproduced. They are not rated highly as "works of art" but each one is a gem, and she was so happy drawing them. That is the secret of art - go for what you can cope

with and do what makes you happy with the least amount of trouble.

From pencil and paper beginnings pastels can provide endless pleasure, and they don't weigh a ton either! Whatever medium you choose, the best way to enjoy it is to make light work of it, and I am talking seriously about weight. Leave the heavy accoutrements for the younger people in their studios. There is a wealth of activity to be enjoyed with a pencil, a pad of paper, a purse-sized box of watercolour paints, something to sit on (a fallen tree trunk may be there already) and some water. You can then specialise in so many things - trees, wild-life, architecture, mountains, lakes, people, boats, the list is endless.

No matter where you are you can always be active, sitting down in the most idyllic surroundings you can find, enjoying your active hobby. Remember, art is the most delightfully inactive practical activity of them all. Don't allow yourself to become just a copier. Practise basic drawing, go out and look around you, add some colour - pen and wash gives some lovely results - and you will soon have an enviable gallery of original artwork. Just don't ever think your work is not worth framing. Start buying frames from car boot sales, now!

Violet Simons, Shoreham & Southwick U3A

LAW AND GOVERNMENT

Running a group on Law and Government sounds difficult. We chose 'Crime and Punishment' as a popular subject, looking at topical cases such as Woodward, Aitken, Archer and the Bulger boys in greater detail, the relevant acts and precedents. We also studied the causes of crime, the importance of punishment, and the penal system as it relates to the young, women and men.

In the course of discussion, however, it became apparent that members were unaware of many of the basic principles of government. We embarked on a study of such principles as the rule of law, the separation of powers, jury service, the duties of the Lord Chancellor, the business of Parliament and the British Constitution.

This leads us to consideration of the draft Constitution for the European Union and the diminution of sovereign powers by the various EU treaties and acts. Understanding of these matters has become more urgent with the future extension of the European Union.

Elizabeth Thomson

Network Coordinator for Law and Government

WOODWORKING IN WATFORD & DISTRICT

Last autumn I started up a Woodworking study group. We began with woodturners, woodcarvers, router-users and restorers but, sadly, with the passing months, we are left with woodturners only. This was probably due to the fact that the other woodworkers would most likely wish to work on their own.

We watched a video entitled *Woodturning – a Foundation Course* and read the accompanying book, then the woodturners jointly turned a wood bowl and have just started on a second, using my lathe.

We meet once a month in my house where we have had invited speakers on 'Wood Finishing' and 'Wood Recognition'. This month we had excellent accompanied visits to two furniture factories, Lynfords in High Wycombe and Ercol Ltd at Princes Risborough.

We would be glad to hear from similar groups and to learn what activities they undertake so that we may learn how to widen our field of interest.

Tony Platts, Watford & District U3A (01923 243394)

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of SOURCES will be mailed to those on the database in November 2003. The special theme for this issue will be **RECIPROCAL LINKS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS**. Many U3As have working relationships with museums, galleries, libraries, records offices and the like or have connections with other organisations such as the RSPB or the National Trust. If there are U3As that use such links as an extension of their learning and as sources for study, then SOURCES would very much like to hear from them and to publicise their experiences.

Please submit contributions to SOURCES via the National Office (see back page for new address) not later than Monday 1st September 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!).



SOURCES PAST

The following appeared in Issue No.2, November 1998 in a report on a research project carried out by NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education).

The motivations for joining a learning organisation such as the U3A were mental and intellectual stimulation, social activities and wider interests, meeting new and like-minded people, pursuing a particular subject or further learning in general, a change in lifestyle (retirement, relocation, bereavement), and the U3A style and format of learning.

THE SEARCH IS ON

In the March issue, we thought that there might be a number of U3A study groups that can lay claim to being unique in some respect or that cater for an unusual specialised interest and we invited contributions from such groups. Perhaps surprisingly, we have heard from only one or two so far. May we try again to encourage members or leaders of such groups to submit a brief write-up (200-400 words) to the Editor c/o National Office, outlining the nature of the activity and how the group organises its learning.

❧ ❧

SUMMER SCHOOL TUTORS

U3A Summer Schools are fortunate in their tutors. They are generous in giving their time and efforts in the true spirit of U3A. Learning and teaching together. We would like to offer an even wider range of subjects. There are many areas that have not appeared on our Courses. Languages, Sociology, Archaeology are a few. Many more remain.

Would you like to join our teams of tutors?

2003 sees the fifth year of U3A Summer Schools. There has been a steady increase in interest and attendance since the first Study Days in York. This year we are holding, for the second time, two Summer Schools in Cheltenham at the University of Gloucestershire. Summer Schools have come a long way. U3A is about education and the popularity of these events shows the value U3A members place on learning.

Commitment

This involves fifteen hours tutoring time and is concentrated. For some of our participants this is a first experience of residential study. They have high expectations and pay to come. Tutors receive all expenses but we do not offer fees for tuition. Our aim is to offer a wide range of courses at the lowest possible cost. It matters that as many people as possible are able to enjoy U3A Summer Schools.

Being a tutor asks you to spend time in preparation, to offer to our members the best you have in knowledge and experience.

Above all -

Learning is Fun. Summer School is a joyful, enjoyable experience for Tutors and Members - an opportunity to meet like-minded people and to enjoy the pleasure of late night discussion in the bar or a walk around the lake.

If you would like to be a Summer School Tutor please contact :

Shirley Thew, Summer Schools 2004, Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QH
I can highly recommend U3A Summer Schools.

Sophie Deakin-Smith

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 LANGUAGE SPOT**

Were you born in the **twenties**? Were you a hippie in the **sixties**? Did your parents marry in the **thirties**? No-one will find anything unusual about those questions. But how will your grandchildren tell their own grandchildren about life in the first ten years of the twenty-first century?

“Back in the **noughties** we didn't have TV implants.” (?) or “It was towards the end of the **ohs** that electric cars suddenly became more popular.” (?) Or will this remain (as in previous centuries) a concept without a word for it?

Editor

WHERE'S THAT BOOK?

Good news for web surfing booklovers (and don't be put off if you haven't got a computer – you can always go down to your local Library!) Anne Grubb of Ealing U3A recommends www.abebooks.com as an 'umbrella' site for hundreds of second-hand booksellers around the world. I have used it myself now several times with great success. My finest hour was in being reunited with a 'Mammoth' book of stories from my childhood. The copy came all the way from Australia – festooned with stamps! – at a very reasonable price and in excellent condition.

The Editor

WHAT IS THE CAPITAL OF CANADA?

So long as the present Editor remains in post, readers may have to forgive his enthusiasm for the Internet as an 'alternative' Resource Centre. The Editor is aware that not everyone has access to this resource. However, the Internet is far from being the only resource, access to which is problematic for some and impossible for others. The British Museum springs to mind as another example. SOURCES would not wish to cause anyone to feel marginalised through lack of access to specific services. Our enthusiasm derives from the belief that an organisation such as ours, given our principles and objectives, should make the

best possible use it can of all resources, wherever they might be and whatever form they might take.

With that off his chest, the Editor specifically recommends the CIA's Factbook website as the most exhaustive repository imaginable of data on all the countries of the world

Go to www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ and then Select a Country from the list box. When the page appears, the first thing you will see is a map of that country. Scroll down the page and you will see that information is presented under a huge variety of headings (fields) covering every aspect of that country's geography, history, economy, government, people and much more.

What is particularly fascinating is to click on the rightmost of these two icons that appear alongside each Field (heading).

Doing this will take you to a comparative list of the data for **all** countries of the world in respect of that field. For example, if you have called up Austria and you have scrolled down to the Population field, then clicking on the icon will provide you with a list of the populations for all countries (in alphabetical order).

From any one of these comparative lists you can easily switch your attention to a different country by clicking on its name.

The 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. (Thanks this time around to Paul Hansford of Stroud & District U3A for some valuable suggestions.)

MUSIC

www.learnjazzpiano.com

Hmm.

HISTORY

www.victorianlondon.org

A guide to the social history of Victorian London

RADIO

www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews

Clips from BBC interviews with famous people

www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/progs/listenagain.shtml

Did you miss a programme on the radio? Hear it again.

LITERATURE

promo.net/pg (no www)

Project Gutenberg which makes the text of thousands of important historic and literary texts freely available. Of interest to historians and bibliophiles.

INFORMATION

www.statistics.gov.uk

Home of National Statistics

MUSEUMS

www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/

Museums, galleries and heritage

HEALTH

www.jr2.ox.ac.uk

Site of the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, with some impeccable health information.

RESOURCES

www.teacherxpress.com (the education web all in one place for busy teachers)

Links to interesting sites, including, newspapers, libraries, museums. This is a great website, well worth investigating. Don't forget to scroll down the main page to see everything there is.

Standing Committee for Education REPORT Apr 03

REPORT on the SCE meeting held on 11
February 2003

The SCE meetings, under the chairmanship of Keith Richards, are always friendly, enjoyable and lively occasions that encompass a wide range of educational issues of importance to U3As.

Finance underlies many agenda items so the Chairman was particularly pleased to be able to announce that the DfES had made a further grant to the Trust of £9,500 (in addition to £34,360 already granted) to help with the projects already under way and, following the Esmée Fairbairn grant to the Trust to use a fund-raising consultant, the SCE identified a number of educational initiatives that would benefit from fund-raising endeavours.

Another recurrent theme is the increasing number of links being developed with other educational organisations. The Chairman reported on the recently completed British Museum project, those just begun with the V & A and Science Museum, the Maritime Museum project about to start and the possibility of a link with ROH Covent Garden. Mike Long outlined a joint project with WEA and Shirley Thew and Stan Miller reported on meetings that they had attended organised, respectively, by the National Extension College and NIACE.

Other issues discussed included: -

- ✂✂ The work of the Learning Support Group (reported elsewhere in Sources)
- ✂✂ Subject Networks and the first of the general Network meetings held in Northallerton on 18/2/03
- ✂✂ New 'On Line' courses
- ✂✂ Discussion themes for the 2003 Annual Conference
- ✂✂ Plans for the '21 Years On' anniversary display at the Conference
- ✂✂ Research in U3As

Len Street

U3A LEARNING SUPPORT GROUP

(Sub-committee of the SCE)
Progress report

At a recent meeting of the Learning Support Group two members of the Learning Support Regional Network – Ian Searle (South West) and Jenny Clark (Greater London) reported on their endeavours in recent months. These efforts have ranged from actively promoting debate on Peter Laslett's "Objects and Principles" (Ian) to setting up "neighbourhood" groupings of local U3A to encourage better co-operation (Jenny). It is clear from their reports and from other feedback we receive that there are wide variations across the country amongst U3As in their perceptions of the principle of self-help learning and their need for support in this area. This feedback is very important and will enable us to focus support where it is needed most.

The Learning Support Regional Network will be formally introduced at this year's U3A Conference in York. Members of the Learning Support Group have been involved in formulating the theme for the Conference as well as suggesting topics for the various discussions, which will take place during the Conference.

The Learning Support Group has recently been very fortunate to be in contact with Dr Terry Chivers of Worthing U3A. Dr. Chivers, who was a social scientist by profession, has completed a piece of systematic educational research in the form of a case study of his own U3A. He has written up the research in a paper entitled "Learning in the University of the Third Age" and Dr. Chivers hopes it will eventually be published in an educational journal. We are particularly grateful for his research and the contact with him as we think that this is the first time that anyone has attempted to analyse U3A learning in a way that is both sympathetic and appropriate as well as being professional. In considering what kind of learning takes place in the groups he observes, he uses a model of learning which focuses in particular on the growth and development experienced by members of a learning group. This approach is particularly appropriate to the U3A and is in stark contrast to current practice in mainstream education which increasingly seems to focus on measuring the knowledge that has been acquired. We will continue our contact with Dr Chivers and hope that his paper will be available to the wider membership by the time of the York Conference.

Please note: the contact information below of members of the Learning Support Regional Network has one new addition.

East Anglia (NEW): Francis Lewis

Tel: 01638 713155 Email: frances_lewis11@hotmail.com

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, Mercia, East Midlands

Elaine Williams (Convenor)

Contact: Elaine Williams, U3A Learning Support,
Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QH or
e-mail u3alearningsupport@tesco.net

RESOURCE CENTRE NEWS

By the time you read this issue of SOURCES we will be settled in our new offices in Bromley, Kent. In the last issue I wrote that we expected to move in February but in fact (as is often the case with moving) we were held up by building work which started 3 months late! The actual relocation date was late April/early May and so we were closed over Easter which was perhaps a more convenient time for our users as groups often take a break from meetings then.

MUSIC

In the current issue we highlight the work of the many U3A groups who study music. Since the creation of the Resource Centre in 1998 we have been providing videos of operas suggested for purchase by group leaders from all over Britain. We now have a considerable collection of these, which is still being added to, and you can request a complete list of what we have available for loan from the new address below. We have augmented our loan collection with operas on CD which we were given as a very generous donation, videos on the lives of the great composers, audio cassettes from the Great Composers Series and Opera Bites made by

Glyndebourne's Education unit. Recently we have added jazz CDs to the collection donated by various recording companies at the request of the leader of the U3A Jazz Network, Robert Jones. The Resource Centre holds two music courses by U3A member Ron Hewstone which he created for his local group and offers to other leaders for ideas and inspiration. We have had the first course for some time, it covers all the basic



information needed for understanding and enjoying classical music. The new course covers the appreciation and understanding of choral music. Ron would be interested in feedback from any group leader who borrows the course from us and decides to use some, or all of his material with their own members.

LANGUAGES

Gloria Blackburn leads the U3A Languages Network and she recently acquired for us (at a greatly reduced price) the Michel Thomas CD course on Spanish. You may know of his work with language teaching, he claims to have a new and very effective way of introducing a language without the need of books or notes. Several members reviewed the Spanish course for us and after favourable reports from them I decided to purchase the sets on German, French and Italian as well. If you would like to explore this new way of learning a language with your group please contact me to arrange a loan.

HEALTH

I receive many requests from groups studying health matters and the two BBC series we have on health and the human body are heavily used. We now have four new videos on complementary practices for treating common health problems such as back pain, migraine, osteoporosis,

insomnia and so on. In each case the practitioner is filmed listening to, and treating, clients who have chosen to use their therapy. They then explain what benefits and positive effects the treatments have had. Each video runs for 23 minutes and could be used as part of a study of that particular health problem or for the study of alternative medicine in general. For a full stock list of all our health and human biology videos please contact the Resource Centre.

HISTORY

I would like to draw your attention to three new and very different additions to our large collection of history material: firstly the double video on Conquistadors, the BBC TV series by Michael Wood relating to the Aztecs, Incas and Spanish conquests in South America, very useful if you are following up a recent visit to the wonderful Aztecs exhibition at the Royal Academy in London or just studying ancient civilisations! Secondly, a video which really defies classification: Myth, Man and Metal - bronze sculpture of ancient Greece and Rome. An American art history professor tells the story of ancient technology using myth, archaeology and science to recreate the flourishing industry of bronze casting in ancient Greece and Rome, how bronze statues were made, if they were mass-produced and what happened to them all. She looks at similar work in a modern foundry and the work of conservationists. From ancient industry to more recent times: the third video I recommend is a double set entitled Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age. This well-known television presenter investigates Britain's industrial history and looks at wind, water and steam power, mills and factories, mining, iron and steel, then railways, ships and shipbuilding. A complete overview of Britain's industrial revolution in fact.

ART

In this article I have only written so far about new videos but we do have some unusual slide sets that have recently been added to stock. Scandinavian art of the nineteenth and twentieth century is a set of 22 donated slides on the work of artists from Norway, Sweden and Finland. We also have 3 large slide sets on the work of women artists from the 16th century to the present day, acquired after many requests from study groups for more material on female painters and sculptors. Very few of our art slide sets are subject related but we have been given a set of 20 slides on nudes in late 19th and 20th century art, again a very popular subject with U3A art appreciation groups. If any of these sets appeal to you or you would like to receive a copy of our very substantial list of art resources please contact me at our new address:

*Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Manager
Third Age Trust 19 East Street Bromley, Kent BR1 1QH
Tel: 020 8315 0199
Email: resourcecentre@u3a.org.uk*

[Please note that the Resource Centre telephone number is not the same as the one for the National Office. The email address has also changed.]

SOURCES PUBLICATION DATES

Sources currently appears three times a year, with publication dates in November, March and June. If you are a subscriber and have not received your copy by the end of the month in question, please notify National Office, stating your name, address and U3A.

MUSIC MAKING

I never cease to be surprised at the number of our members who are retired professional musicians. Included among these is Leonard Davis. Leonard, a member of both SE London and Bexley U3As, had a most distinguished musical career, playing the violin and the viola for the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the RPO. He has now formed a U3A String Orchestra which rehearses on alternate Saturday afternoons at the Goldsmith College in SE London. The Orchestra has now given a well-received first public performance of works by Bach, Haydn and Mozart.

[Leonard's flyer for this group makes it clear that the Orchestra is geared to the needs of amateur instrumentalists of retirement age. He encourages 'rusty' players to rediscover the joys of music making. No auditions. He can be contacted on 0208 304 8827. Editor]

Leonard has asked about the possibility of having a special U3A Summer School devoted to string playing. I hope that this idea will find support, as I am particularly anxious to get more members interested in active music making.

Please contact me to know more about either of these initiatives, the String Orchestra or the Summer School.

*Tony Middleton, Music Network Coordinator
024 7630 4122*

SUMMER MUSIC WEEKEND

"Brahms, the Classical Romantic"

Two Days of Lectures and Concerts

In Wells, Somerset August 30th & 31st 2003

Wells U3A is presenting this study weekend on behalf of the Somerset U3As.

The format is a morning lecture followed by an afternoon concert on each of the days. The subject will be Brahms and the lectures will be given by Julian Williamson, who as well as being a musician with great insight is also an excellent and most entertaining lecturer, with much experience both in Britain and abroad.

The afternoon concerts will be given by a variety of artists including Roger Huckle and members of the Emerald Ensemble together with Pamela Rudge, mezzo-soprano.

Works to be performed will include the piano quintet, the horn trio, the songs for voice with viola, together with piano solos and duets and songs by Brahms and Schumann.

This event is popular and will be heavily subscribed, but if you are interested in more information or booking forms,

please contact David Nasmyth, Wellfield Barn, Walcombe Lane, Wells BA5 3AG, tel. 01749 675129, email davidnasmyth@beeb.net.

This music weekend is the fifth of its kind to be presented for Somerset U3As. The first two were held in Minehead and organised by Ruth Michaels. She handed the baton to me and we have so far held two events in Wells, which is blessed with almost ideal facilities in the form of the Museum lecture room and Cathedral School Concert Hall, both adjacent to the Cathedral Green.

If you come I assure you of an interesting and entertaining week-end, and, who knows, it might stimulate one or two other areas to emulate our initiative in Somerset.

David Nasmyth, Wells U3A

JAZZ APPRECIATION NETWORK

There is now a start-up leaflet on Jazz Appreciation available from the National Office. If you read it and have any comments please let me know. I would rather receive adverse reports than none at all.

I have been informed by members of the Network that they would like a Study Day/Conference, call it what you may, and I am in the course of trying to arrange one, in Reading which is very well road- and rail-linked, for March next year. You have to book so far in advance as musicians have such full diaries. My idea is for the morning to be devoted to U3A business and discussion groups and the afternoon to the playing of music and hearing about the life in jazz of the musician I have provisionally booked. No names but the person concerned is a broadcaster as well as a jazz player - no, it is not that one! The day will be open to all members of U3A as long as space in the Hall is available. I will circulate U3As when all details have been arranged.

I have placed a further three CDs, Kid Ory (1944-47), Louis Armstrong (1930-33) and Great Bluesmen in Britain, into the Resource Centre and I hope you will play them as well as the others which are available.

Just remember there are only two types of music - good and bad. Try to open your ears to it all.

Bob Jones, Jazz Appreciation Network

NATIONAL LANGUAGES NETWORK

On 22nd March 119 members of 22 U3A Language Groups met in Evesham for a Study Day. Mike Tennant, Assistant Headmaster and Director of the Language College welcomed the visitors to the school, which can trace its history back to the Abbey School of 1377.

In her opening address Kate Wedd, National Chairman, Third Age Trust, spoke of the desire to learn foreign languages as contrary to the common attitude. She commented on the desire to learn and the enjoyment which members derive from it. Much depends on the contribution of Group Leaders, their enthusiasm and commitment.

The remainder of the morning was given over to Group Sessions for speakers of French (four groups), Italian, German and Spanish, with a separate one for Languages on the Worldwide Web. It was clear from comments that

members greatly enjoyed the stimulation of meeting together and taking part in the activities prepared by the leaders.

Rosemary Bradley, General Manager of BBC Languages, gave a talk explaining the many resources available from the BBC, in a variety of languages, both video and audio at many levels. She commended the Web Site because it is updated regularly.

The review of what is available on the Internet, which Jean Thompson, Internetwork Coordinator, gave us, was surprising in its range. She had also prepared a list of material and addresses, a handout, which was eagerly sought after as delegates left at the end of the afternoon.

Thanks should be recorded to all those who made the Day an enjoyable success, and most especially to Gloria Blackburne, the national Languages Network Coordinator, who organised the whole event.

Brian Reid, Evesham U3A

THANK YOU

This is the first time in its short history that SOURCES has been able to run to twenty pages. Contributions simply flowed in this time. We hope it has proved to be an interesting issue. Our thanks are due to the many readers who have provided the material within its pages. And apologies to those who took the trouble to write in but have not seen their work in print. It is not always easy to make choices about what to include. We do appreciate all the good work and the enthusiasm of study groups up and down the country and if yours did not get a mention this time around we can only plead an embarrassment of riches.

The Editor and the Editorial Panel

- A LETTER TO OUR READERS -

Monday 5th May 2003

Dear SOURCES Subscribers

A major exercise will be taking place between now and the end of the year to update the SOURCES distribution database. This has become necessary, as the current database, which is maintained by the mailing house, was found to contain a large number of duplications and out-of-date entries. In order to ensure that the new database consists only of current subscribers, **we need to ask everyone to re-subscribe**, using the enclosed (Re)-Subscription form. Please complete this using BLOCK CAPITALS and return to Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QH.

After distribution of the November issue of SOURCES, the names of those who have not re-subscribed **will automatically be removed from the database**. Please note that subscriptions to SOURCES are still FREE and that delivery is made directly to your home.

Should there be no form in this issue of SOURCES for you to fill in, please send to the address mentioned above your Last Name (stating Mr, Mrs, etc.), your Initials, your Address and Postcode (**essential!**) and the name of your U3A.

Yours sincerely

Mike Williams (SOURCES Editor)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SCIENCE

U3A Science & Technology Network Meeting

Wednesday 4th June 2003 from 12.30 at the Science Museum, London

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 for both from Ken Bates (Sci-Tech Network Coordinator) 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.

CELEBRATING LONDON

The Pleasures and Treasures of a Multicultural Metropolis
The Greater London Regional Forum is organising its first regional conference on this subject on Thursday 21 August 2003 at Brunel University, Uxbridge. Participation will be open to 200 members of all GLRF U3As, allocated according to the size of U3A. Details can be obtained from Hilary Greenwood of Hillingdon U3A, Tel: 01923 821380.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2003

"I Could Do That!" - Participation: Our Learning, Our Future
The University of York is hosting this year's U3A Conference and AGM from 29th August to 3rd September.

Details and booking forms are obtainable from SAGA. Please write to: U3A 2003 Conference, Group Sales Department, Saga Holidays Ltd, FREEPOST FO49, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1BR and **NOT** to National Office.

U3A ONLINE COURSES

Full details can be found on the National U3A Website at www.u3a.org.uk/~courses/online/

TUTORED COURSES

These have 8 Units in which participants need to work some 3-5 hours each week, in collaboration with each other and the tutor.

BIOGRAPHY & JOURNALLING starting on 7 July (last applications on 30 June).

CONTINENTS ON THE MOVE starting on 7 July (last applications on 30 June).

These are both Australian courses but information and application forms are on our UK web site.

CREATIVE WRITING: SHORT STORIES A Pilot course.

This will start with an Introductory week on 7 September. Eight Units will follow from 14 September at two weekly intervals except the last which will be issued after Christmas on 4 January 2004.

ARTISTS OF SPAIN A Pilot course.

This starts with an Introductory week on 21 September, and the last Unit is issued on 16 November.

VENICE AND HER ARTISTS

This starts with an Introductory week on 28 September, and the last Unit is issued on 23 November.

DOWNLOADABLE COURSES

The Units of the last three courses above will be available for downloading during the run of each course. The material can be used for individual study or by Group Leaders.

The complete course of each of the following will be available for Downloading from 7 September.

CREATIVE WRITING:FICTION

CREATIVE WRITING:POETRY

DESIGN IN YOUR LIFE

ITALIAN ART 1400-1600

Course Frameworks will be online from September. These are topics suitable for group study but in note form only. Suggestions are given on how to search the web to fill out the details. The first is DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHTHOUSES.

The fee for downloading is £5 and for a tutored course the fee is now £10. Online courses take a great deal of preparation and time, and the Third Age Trust holds the copyright. They must not be circulated without permission.

Published by the Third Age Trust



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