



SOURCES

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LIVING LEARNING AND THE U3A

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Ageing in Perspective

'Ageing' is a term open to a variety of interpretations. At root it is concerned with changes that occur as time passes. Consequently it is a continuous process and, in living organisms including human beings, a life-long process. Infancy, teen-age and middle-age are just as validly seen as periods of ageing as old age.

These changes fall into two broad groups, namely those of growth and development, and those of decline and deterioration. In a young person growth is so dominant that signs of deterioration are largely obscured. In adults the two sets of processes begin to come much more into balance and as we get older we have to work harder to ameliorate the effects of decline.

It is important to realise that, throughout our life span, both processes of development and decline are



present. In small children, if they are to achieve their maximum potential in many fields, the younger they start the better, be it playing sport or a musical

instrument or learning a second language. As they 'age' through infancy and childhood they begin to lose flexibility in motor and linguistic skills as well as becoming partly programmed by the culture in which they are brought up.

It is this loss of flexibility, becoming physically less agile, more set in one's ways, more resistant to change that are the stereotypes of the older person. But, for those who take determined action, further substantial continuing development can occur despite the accumulating limitations which inevitably emerge.

Different people age at different rates and in different ways. Consequently any subdivision of what is a continuous life cycle into phases is likely to be arbitrary as far as the individual is concerned.

Although convenient administratively and politically it can often be counterproductive both to society and its members. Certain groups, e.g. retired or older persons, can be put into categories which are then undervalued and hence marginalised to the mutual

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disadvantage of both the individuals so labelled and to the society which labels them. Clearly a movement such as the U3A, which helps people to help themselves, to continue to contribute to the common good and to marshal themselves into a force to be reckoned with is of enormous social, economic and educational importance.

Learning and Life

A fundamental characteristic of living organisms is that they are in a constant state of interaction with the world around them. Consider human beings for instance. Physically we take in food and give out waste products, we take in oxygen and give out carbon dioxide and water, we warm up and cool down. Psychologically we take in experiences and give back responses.

Closer examination of this interaction shows it to be quite complex. Take food for example. You are the same person before a meal as you are after it but the meal changes you a little. Depending on circumstances, it makes you a bit bigger, stronger, fatter or just gives you a bit more energy. The change is so small that you don't notice it, but compare photographs of yourself as a baby, a youth and now in the full flowering of your maturity and it is clear that you have changed physically. There is, however, nothing physical in your body apart from the food that you have eaten and the oxygen that you have breathed. You are what you have eaten! These raw materials have been programmed by your genes to make you the individual you are.

Similarly with every experience we are changed a little (we learn from it). Our genes are responsible for how our sense organs, muscles, vocal cords, brain and nervous system develop and function and may well determine some of the parameters of the quality and nature of our mental functioning. This is a huge subject in its own right. Suffice it to say here that these are the mechanisms with which we interact psychologically with our surroundings. We programme our own brains with the experiences we take in and the responses we make. So our skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, culture, language and probably much more are all the result of learning. Just as we die physically when we stop eating and breathing, so we will die psychologically when we stop learning. Learning is essential for life and the greater the learning opportunities available, the richer the quality of life will be. This is the message of U3A learning and, indeed, the experience of so many U3A members.

Learning in Later Life

'Learning' is very difficult to define. Here I am using it loosely to mean 'any change in behaviour and its underlying processes which result from experience.' In everyday language we use the term to refer to

acquiring new skills and knowledge, changing attitudes, broadening horizons. This is technically called 'extension learning' and is clearly very important in the development of the individual.

Equally important for survival, however, is 'reinforcement learning'. Here the individual in performing a range of familiar, often routine activities, develops a sense of security, continuity and a degree of control over his/her immediate environment. Achieving the right balance between the security of the familiar and the stimulation of the new is important at any time. It is particularly crucial at periods of major change in life be it starting school, entering hospital, taking retirement or adjusting to bereavement. The learning balance for people in such vulnerable states is likely to be quite different from that of more confident, established individuals. Only when you feel secure in yourself do you have the confidence to take the risks associated with more adventurous extension learning.

The kind of learning opportunity relevant to an individual will depend on his/her needs. Clearly the first and most basic need is to survive. When that has been achieved other considerations come into play e.g.

- ?? feeling secure in new and challenging situations
- ?? being accepted by others and joining one or more groups
- ?? being recognised as a good friend, an able colleague
- ?? feeling stimulated, extended, fulfilled

Achieving satisfaction in most of these areas is also likely to involve the individual creating or enriching learning opportunities for others. The modus operandi of the U3A ensures that it can cater for people at all points along the learning spectrum. It can encourage them to think beyond the constraints of routine, get them out of the house, meet other people, try something new and this might be as much stimulation as some individuals can cope with at that time. For other people (hopefully many), with increasing confidence and competence much further development can result.

In summary we have seen that learning is a life-long process and one that we may hope to be involved in for as long as possible. Our active creation of learning opportunities for ourselves and others, as the U3A *par excellence* demonstrates, can only increase our personal and social sense of health and happiness. The nature of the opportunities from which we can benefit at any one time depends on many individual factors. In catering for these varied needs in a supportive developmental context the U3A is for many a life-enhancer, for some a life-saver.

SOURCES would like to extend its congratulations to the newly-elected officers of the NEC, in particular to the new Chairman, Keith Richards, who succeeds Kate Wedd and to the new Vice-Chairman, Rosemary McCulloch, who succeeds Keith Richards. Ivor Manley was re-elected as Vice-Chairman and Glenys Tuersley and Jean Goodeve are confirmed as Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer respectively.

The published 'theme' for this issue was given as 'RECIPROCAL LINKS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS'. The hope was that U3As would tell us about their experiences of working with local museums, libraries and others. The response has been most interesting, if not overwhelming, and some of the contributions that follow testify to a fairly loose interpretation of the theme. Thanks to all those who contributed.

BRITISH MUSEUM U3A RESEARCH GROUP

We report on this successful initiative from two different viewpoints. First, Joy Blech, who co-ordinated the project for the U3A, tells her side of the story. Then Margaret O'Brien, Head of Adult Education at the British Museum, reveals the Museum's view.

In the autumn of 2002 an exciting experimental research group was launched by the Education Department of the British Museum in conjunction with the U3A. The Museum was interested in assessing how their resources might be used by older people doing research on artefacts of the collection.

The seventeen members of the group were asked to choose an object (or group of objects) of particular interest to them and to use the outcome of their research on it to make an informal presentation at the end of the term.

Accommodation was provided for the group in the Clore Education Centre where the weekly two-hour meetings engendered a lively atmosphere and led to some interesting cross-fertilization of ideas plus the opportunity and stimulus of learning from the interests of other members of the group.

The objects chosen came from many different cultures, which therefore resulted in appreciations from various points of view: historical, scientific, artistic, geological and sociological. The items ranged in size from Egyptian and

Assyrian sculptures to Chinese snuff bottles and small Roman bronzes.

At the first meetings of the group, suggested ideas for pursuing research in the Museum were put forward by the Co-ordinator, Joy Blech, who was also available to help with the queries of individual members. Invaluable technical help with materials and equipment was given by Kim Lawson, an enthusiastic representative of the British Museum's Education Department.

One particularly rewarding morning was experienced in the Museum when the group followed a route which enabled them to view the items that had been chosen and a short talk was given by each participant in front of the object he or she had selected. This was both informative and fun and served as a challenge and rehearsal for the final presentations which took place in the last two weeks of the term.

The Head of Lifelong Learning, Margaret O'Brien, attended these 'end results' of the research done. The presentations were given in a variety of formats ranging from Powerpoint to straightforward reading. They were considered both highly informative and inspiring.

Members of the group involved in this pilot enterprise were excited to have the opportunity of acquainting themselves further with the treasures of the British Museum and also by having the focus and incentive of having to produce a synthesis of their research by a certain date. It was also felt that the Paul Hamlyn Library and the Compass Computer database in the magnificent Reading Room created a feeling for people of belonging to a joint project within the Museum and that these resources generated a sense of exploration.

The success of this enterprise has led to further research groups for U3A members being set up in 2003 at the V & A Museum, the Science Museum and the National Maritime Museum.

Joy Blech, London U3A

The British Museum and object based learning: a research project with the University of the Third Age

'It is good to use several senses in the understanding of one thing . . . Things and words should be studied together'

Francis Bacon

I was first approached by Keith Richards, Chair of the Standing Committee for Education at U3A in early 2002 to discuss how we might work together. We developed the idea of a project whereby U3A members would research objects in the Museum and in the process provide us with much needed information on how and what older people learn in museums. From my point of view as a museum educationalist, the object and its presence are the keys to what a museum is about and museum education is essentially concerned with teaching with and learning from objects. However, there has been little research on how older people learn from objects and, as Keith was quick to point out, U3A members are ideal for such a project because of their distinctive methods of learning from and teaching one another.

We invited 15 U3A volunteers to sign up for a period of nine Friday mornings, to pick an object or group of objects from the BM's vast collection, to develop their own investigation of that object and to report back to the group. Everyone was expected to subscribe to the following

mission statement: *The aim of the pilot project is to record the value of the British Museum as a resource for learning, especially object based learning for the experienced older student.* In the U3A tradition the group was led by a designated co-ordinator, in this case Joy Blech who was involved in the planning from early stages. We also had the able assistance of a Museum Studies postgraduate intern, Kim Lawson, who was attached to the BM Education Department from Florida State University.

U3A members approached their tasks with enormous energy. Objects chosen ranged from wall reliefs to Victorian household tiles and from Islamic metalwork to Chinese snuff bottles. The authenticity of the object and its presence are the keys to what a museum is about and museum education is essentially concerned with teaching with and learning from objects. Themes covered along the way included creativity in older age, attitudes to death and what the skill of the craftsman can tell us about little known societies. The standard of the final presentations to the group was uniformly impressive - whether power point, overhead transparencies or talks with visual aids. What was most impressive however was the infectious enthusiasm for the objects and the generous communication of knowledge not only of the topics but also the different routes of acquiring knowledge in the museum context.



For everyone I think, the high point of the learning experience was the gallery session, when most people had the chance to talk about their object - in its presence in the gallery. The level of shared enthusiasm and interest was inspiring, there was a wide variety of approaches and according to Keith Richards the whole experience really fulfilled the U3A maxim of 'teachers must learn and

learners must teach'.

Thanks to our intern Kim, the Museum and all who took part have a detailed report of everything we did, as well as evaluations kindly provided by the participants a record of concluding evaluation discussions of the project. Most gratifying was the response of other museums to the idea. The Science Museum, The Victoria and Albert and the National Maritime Museum have all run similar projects and, thanks to Keith's good work, the idea of working closely with older people and objects is spreading to other museums across the country.

Margaret O'Brien, British Museum

MUSEUM PROJECTS HELP WITH PRESENTATIONS

Members who joined the Science Museum research experience in the spring of 2003 were given the opportunity to study an object or theme from the museum's collections. Each member was expected to give an account of their findings to the whole group at the end of the nine weeks.

The following suggestions were produced to help individuals choose and develop a comfortable and suitable technique to use when giving their presentation.

Although I produced this paper for those working on the museum project it could be useful to anyone seeking inspiration and guidance when contemplating or faced with a call to deliver a talk, discussion or lecture to members of their own U3A.

PRESENTATIONS

- ?? A 'stand up' exposition similar to the technique used by TV historians
- ?? Your own account read to the group
- ?? The use of a blackboard, whiteboard or flip chart
- ?? A biographic account of a scientist, his discoveries, inventions - with visuals
- ?? Give your account demonstrating your research in front of the object
- ?? Make reference to distributed fact sheets with a Q & A to develop your argument
- ?? Give a presentation in the Gallery in front of the object of your study
- ?? A presentation with artifacts and/or models on view and/or quotations outlining the progress of your research
- ?? Audio tape or disc (your voice or others) with readings, poems, commentary, facts and results
- ?? Video diary-viewing objects, talking to experts, showing objects and explaining your progress
- ?? Use of 35 mm slides
- ?? Overhead projector black and white. B/w with colour-enhanced or colour transparencies
- ?? High-Tec PowerPoint presentations with charts and other visual examples
- ?? When two work together share the presentation selecting one or more of the techniques above in a) a light hearted manner but accurate b) a questioning method rather like Plato's interlocutor in Protagoras and Meno.

Members are encouraged to use any of the above or combinations of the different techniques which are appropriate and with which they feel comfortable. There is no hierarchy in this order of methods and techniques

Dick Raine, Hounslow

MARITIME MATTERS

[If ever there was any doubt that the Museums Project would go from strength to strength once the idea started to catch on, then the following article should serve to dispel it. The Sources team would like to pay tribute to the pioneering spirit of those who have trailblazed these initiatives and who have reported in such inspiring terms in this article and the preceding ones. Who will be next? And in which part of the country?]

At one of our recent U3A monthly meetings I had the good fortune to hear Keith Richards talking about the museum projects. The latest link was to be with the National Maritime Museum (NMM) at Greenwich and as the subject area was close to my heart I spoke to Keith after the talk and was offered the opportunity of acting as co-ordinator. Eleven members from five groups across London and the south-east then met up with Sarah Lockwood, NMM Head of Lifelong Learning, for the start of the project in late March. Sarah had arranged three days of introduction to the main parts of the museum; the Caird Library and the main buildings, the Royal Observatory, Greenwich (ROG) and the Queen's House. We then had six weeks of research leading up to the days when we each made presentations on the subjects of our own research to the rest of the group. We ended by presenting a bouquet of flowers to Sarah for being so very helpful, and repaired to a quiet pub overlooking the Thames for a pleasant meal and final reflections on the project.

Throughout the project it was interesting to see how the threads of our research developed and how we were able to comment on each other's progress and make suggestions for further study. On the first day we sat around the table in the Old Board Room, overlooking the old Royal Hospital for Seamen, now largely part of Greenwich University, and described our general interests, with a certain trepidation in some cases. The object of the curatorial introductions arranged by Sarah was to widen our horizons, particularly on the availability of documents. These introductions opened new avenues for study and when we then discussed our individual plans everyone had Plan A and Plan B, with Plan C in reserve.

The Caird Library, as a reference archive, was so convenient and the staff were so helpful that this was everyone's first port of call. The opening of the (electronic) e-library, officially opened by Baroness Blackstone during the project, had just enhanced the facilities. One of the objectives the NMM had for the project was to learn how older people approach the learning process and how they make use of the facilities. We filled in forms at the start and end of the project to describe methods and resources to support the NMM objective. In addition one of the members of the project gave a detailed report on the features of the NMM website as well as conducting his own research. Once they had made their choice of topic, participants focused all their efforts and put in the hours required, often visiting other relevant sites and museums, including the British Library; Sarah had provided a letter of introduction.

The sheer wealth of opportunities for research at Greenwich, even beyond the NMM holdings, is staggering and the area has been a World Heritage Site since 1997. On the Thames waterfront is the Royal Hospital for Seamen, begun in 1696 to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren and Christopher Hawksmoor, which contains the famous Painted Hall and neo-classical chapel. The Five-Foot Walk provides a public right of way along the Thames front and leads to Cutty Sark and Gypsy Moth IV. Behind the waterfront buildings is the site of the Palace of Placentia where Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were born and up the hill is the ROG with the original Flamsteed building designed by Wren in 1675. The old palace was pulled down and replaced by the Queen's House designed by Inigo Jones. It was started in 1616 for Queen Anne of Denmark, James I's

Queen, and finished for Queen Henrietta Maria, Charles I's Queen.

Eventually the Queen's House was incorporated in the NMM as it was formed and then opened in 1937, with new buildings in the style of the Queen's House to hold the collections; the ROG also became part of the NMM. The NMM is now in the news with the opening of the NMM Cornwall at Falmouth, which has taken over the small boat collection, and the major Elizabeth Exhibition at Greenwich on the four hundredth anniversary of her death. Most recently the museum director, Roy Clare, was quoted in the Times (25 August) on the subject of intelligent deacquisition of museum holdings, subject to digital recording and rescue archaeology, and a paper on this topic is expected at the national museum directors' conference in the autumn.

The maritime paintings in the Queen's House were splendid, although most of the holding is in store and a full digital image record on the website will be very welcome when it becomes available, as it surely must. The objects in the ROG stores and the ship model stores were a scholar's delight but the sheer availability of the documents in the Caird Library led to this becoming the focus of our main interests. Daphne Knott, Manuscripts Manager, brought in a fascinating range of documents for us to examine including a letter to Charles II from the Prince of Rhine at the end of the "Four Day Fight" against the Dutch on the Thames in 1666 [I've been too busy to write earlier...], Samuel Pepys' letter book 1662-1678, the Pitcairn Island Register 1790-1853, Fletcher Christian's first aid book, a 1782 book of flag orders and the log of a 1793 slaving voyage.

The NMM has a holding of several thousand "lieutenants' logs" – these were produced by all naval officers as part of their training and as a requirement before being paid – all were submitted to and had to be signed off by admiralty officials. Checking on Horatio Nelson one finds that his first log started on 10 March 1777 when he joined HMS Lowestoffe at Sheerness as an eighteen-year-old lieutenant. His first eleven days were employed in supervising carpenters who were "variously employed" making the ship ready for sea. The daily records continue until he became captain at the uniquely young age of 21 when various ships' logs continue the record of his momentous career. Previously, of course, Nelson had entered the Royal Navy as a midshipman shortly after his twelfth birthday.

The enthusiasm engendered by all these intriguing documents was infectious and we followed each other's progress with interest every week. Presentations were made at the end of the project and a small volume containing summaries has been placed in the U3A Resources Centre. I hope this account inspires others to carry out their own research in local museums or libraries. Our group covered world-war maritime painting, powder and shot in 1800, Royal Navy ship names, HMS Worcester, women at sea, the Verbruggen master gunners, the seamen's hospital, the East Indies trade and early passenger travel. The presentation on the paintings was carried out in the rooms of the Queen's House and alongside ship models, but the rest dealt with topics that were best covered by a presentation using OHP slides.

Thanks are due to Michael, John, Peter, Ian, Vernon, Pauline, Dick and Joyce for being a splendid team, to Sarah for welcoming us whole-heartedly at the NMM and to Keith Richards for setting up the contacts with the NMM and the other museums. If anyone would like to know more about

the project please contact me via ian.funnell@iee.org or on 01372-374236.

Ian Funnell – Guildford Area and Fetcham & District U3As

WORKING WITH YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

Lucky you if you hold your meetings in the local public library! Three years ago I started the Nantwich Local History group as a branch of the much larger Crewe and Nantwich U3A Local History group. The latter had grown to a membership of 84 - and a waiting list! It meets weekly and has just completed its eighth year.

Some members of the library staff asked me to run a course on the history of Nantwich because some of them were not natives of Nantwich, did not know much about its very interesting history and felt in need of such knowledge in order to talk more usefully to readers.

An arrangement was made whereby our U3A had free use of a meeting room and could move books, etc. back and forth from the Local Studies Room as required for each talk. For a subject such as local history nothing could be better than to have immediate access to the materials to support the speaker. Books, pamphlets, newscuttings, maps, photographs, multimedia, etc., all to hand.

Sometimes, if there was no one in the Local Studies Room I would take the class to the materials and show them how to find information. The sequel to the talks in class was that I set three or four questions each week and asked the members to find answers and talk about their searching methods the following week. Members were very interested in their results demonstrating how pleased they were to have unearthed this or that bit of information! Some of them had never used reference sources before, did not know how to use indexes, how to skim, did not understand the thinking behind a classification scheme or how to think of related terms

It was not long before each class meeting became one half on a new subject in the history of Nantwich and the other half spent talking about the findings for last week's questions. The only drawback was that we did not have enough time! Then the blow fell. The meeting room has been converted into a computer room under the modern urge to have everybody computer literate. We were thrown out! Very luckily we have found accommodation in the meeting room of the local museum. While we can see some objects, maps, photographs, etc. we are limited to a class of 25 members (health and safety regulations) and we have to pay, which means one hour only!

Allan Whatley, Crewe & Nantwich U3A

WORKING WITH THE RNIB IN BRISTOL

When Bristol's Blind Centre opened a new building twelve years ago they offered us a room free of charge for a reading group if their people could come. The co-operative venture has proved beneficial to us both. We now have two groups meeting there regularly, a **Reading Group** of eighteen people on the second Monday

morning of the month from September to May and a **Short Story Group** of fifteen every first Monday morning of the month. RNIB people provide coffee for us and we pay them £1 and meet together for half an hour before we get down to business. We have three blind or partially sighted people who come regularly, and one guide dog. About once a year an Open Day at RNIB can bring more people in.

For the **Reading Group** we read and prepare the book beforehand, some by listening from tape or cassette. We have read a variety of authors over the years, some newly published such as Ian McKewan, Rose Tremain, Helen Dunmore and William Boyd. We sometimes re-read an Evelyn Waugh, Mary Wesley Ellis Peters and other favourites. About once a season we read a classic - next term it will be Emil Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise* suggested by Oxford University Press. We have had their little magazine sent to us after one of their people came to observe our group.

Usually one person takes on the job of introducing the book, we each in turn give our view of it and then have open discussion. We do have a chairman of the group to keep us all on track.

The **Short Story Group** is ideal for exploration of different authors, whom we may otherwise not have encountered. At the moment we are reading a story each month from *The Secret Self* published by Everyman. We read the story aloud round the group and then discuss it. We believe that this is the best way to read a short story and experience the works of writers in the English language from around the world. The partially-sighted people have taught us concentration as they remember the details of the story we have just read. After discussion we find that the purpose and point of the story becomes clear. Each author's method of doing this is different and we have learnt to observe different styles of writing. As many authors start by writing short stories we have found this a good way of exploring a writer's work. The whole set-up is mutually helpful to both U3A and RNIB. Several of the RNIB members have now joined U3A.

Mary Wright, Bristol U3A

WITNEY U3A LINKS

For the last five years, Witney U3A has pursued an active policy of making links with other organisations. A chance meeting with the Arts Development Officer for West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) at a Forum for 'Better Government for Older People' in 1998, quickly led to the offer of theatre workshops, and ultimately to funding for a major intergenerational project with a local secondary school.

'Project 16', as it was called, involved about 25 U3A members working with A level students in art, drama and English on the theme of 'being 16', backed up by help from the U3A computer group which ran a regular class at the school.

The following year we worked on Victorian history, and we have also worked with primary students on World War 2 and a joint project on community arts. There has been a lot to learn in order to 'teach' on these projects, and we are now helping to plan the school's bid for Specialist Status in Performing Arts, which could provide further opportunities for collaborative activities.

At the 1998 Forum it became very obvious that there were no regular meetings between the professional and voluntary workers responsible for the education, health and well-being of the 50+ age group in this area. Working with others, we helped to create a new network, 'Older and Bolder in West Oxfordshire' which meets regularly to plan and implement initiatives with older people.

Lobbying for the reinstatement of adult education classes in the town has been of particular concern to this group - with some success, at last. (We had just five classes for a population of 22,000 last year.)

Another area under discussion involves making closer links with Ruskin College, in Oxford. Among other activities, the college offers 'second chance' education, and an increasing number of our members have enjoyed weekend courses there, sometimes leading on to further study.

As one Witney member wrote, 'Doors are opened which many of us felt had closed years ago. Ruskin offers wonderful opportunities to those, who, for various reasons, have been denied, or have chosen not to take, higher education in their youth.'

The college is discussing an expanded programme, and it might be possible to make their courses on Family History, for example, available to U3A membership as a whole. Further information will be in U3A News.

Being involved in outreach of this kind is very beneficial. It raises the profile of U3A and makes sure that the views of older people are included in planning. It also brings practical benefits in access to information, funding and support.

*Barbara Bond, Development Officer Witney U3A
and Oral History Network Co-ordinator*

EAST DEVON TOWN WALKS GROUP

For several years East Devon U3A has had an enthusiastically supported Town Walks group. There are many interesting, mostly fairly small, towns in our area and we explore three or four each year. We do our homework on the history, architecture and industry of our chosen town and have a meeting when we gather all our



information together; then a week or so later we have our walk, guided often by someone from the local history society, or maybe an official guide or a professional, who puts flesh on the bare bones of our research. I think we have yet to be disappointed in our days out although, of course, the quality of the guides varies.

Of necessity we are a small group as more than about 12 people cannot cluster around to hear the guide adequately. We try to vary the type of town, for example

Exeter is a large town with official guided walks on many different aspects of its history, whereas Chard, a small town, has in particular a very interesting industrial past (and present), with many old industrial buildings converted for continuing use.

We shall, in due course, run out of towns that are close enough to be practical, but it should not be for a while yet.

One aspect of our trips that we all enjoy is the visit to a teashop as a reward for all our efforts!

Pat Calder, East Devon U3A

TOWN STUDY GROUP (READING)

The Group I belong to is called Town Study. Although we are not unique, we are thought to be unusual by members visiting from other U3As. The knowledge that I have gained has made me appreciate the history of our part of England as a continuous whole.

We study three towns each year, meeting once a month. For two months we look at the geography, history, architecture, people etc., and visit in the third month. The towns are chosen, according to the season, and the distance to travel from Reading; the nearest in the winter, further in the spring and furthest in the summer.

The Convenor with a small group of volunteers meets in extra sessions to plan the meetings and details of the visit. The result of their research is given to the members at the monthly meeting. Libraries, the Internet and often a short visit to the town assist with this research.

On the visiting day, we travel by coach and have found that a coffee break, followed by a guided walk makes a good start. The afternoon is for personal exploration. The Guides and Tourist Information offices are always helpful and pleasantly surprised at what we have discovered and still want to know.

This group has been running for eight years and has evolved in different directions over that time. The numbers attending vary between 30 and 40. We encourage all members to take part in the research whenever possible and those that do so have found the whole process much more interesting and stimulating.

For no obvious reason, some towns generate more interest than others, while others have a far more interesting background than at first thought.

Monica Butler, Reading U3A

SPINE TINGLING

I have followed with great interest the 'spine-tingling' items* in previous issues. "Leda and the Swan" was a matter for much discussion at our poetry group on the Costa.

But higher on my list is Goya's "The 3rd of May, 1808". At first sight of this picture, many years ago, I was filled with horror and it still not only tingles my spine but curdles my blood!



The atrocity being witnessed in this painting makes one shudder with terror. It smells of blood, sweat, fear and death. The faceless point their rifles directly to the helpless condemned man. His luminous white shirt declares him to be an innocent being, crucified in a wicked world, arms flung wide and anguish on his face. The tension compares with the limp, lifeless dead and the peaceful town in the hills.

Set in Spain and dated, but to me a universal and timeless statement to make one tremble at man's inhumanity to man.

Mary Havelock, U3A Fuengirola

?? **Lovely to hear from colleagues in Spain! We welcome further contributions on the spine-tling theme. Earlier ones are to be found in Issue 16 p.4, Issue 17 p.9 and Issue 18 p.8.**

?? **We also heard from Mary Havelock of Malaga who sent in some thoughtful and well-crafted verses inspired by an earlier article on genetically engineering a rainbow. Sadly, we are not able to accept original poetry as contributions but congratulate Mary on her inspiration.**

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE THAT IS NOT SUBJECT BASED? (A Conference Experience)

It could have been Technology, Modern Art or even Design. Maybe it was just a Visual Experience? It all began on entering one of the newest buildings on the York Campus. Full of bright, intelligent, active and aware individuals later to be grouped round tables to confer and dine. We all knew there would be facilities but the small symbol on one door needed closer examination to clearly see one female and one male figure. It opened into a large *area* with a single hemispherical stainless steel work of art or non-functional fountain. The coloured glass block wall opposite did have names indicating two *regional* entry points. Sound does travel across boundaries and somehow questioning voices are the loudest.

"What is it?" "There are no basins." "There are hand-dryers." "Where are the taps?" "How does it work?". Eventually, the sensors to the water *source* having been found, a small mixed group left wiser. The round tables worked and the *knowledge* spread!! A subsequent visit proved that questioning voices did still carry and it was accepted that: "The fountain is different." "You get the unsuspecting very wet." "Is it a *communal* bidet?" "We'll just wash our hands." "I suppose it *is* unisex?" "Wonder how much it cost?" "This made coming to York well worthwhile."

John Lloyd, Wearside U3A

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of SOURCES (No.21) will be mailed to those on the database in March 2004. The special theme for this issue will be Reading, Writing and Words (e.g. Storytelling, Etymology, etc.). We leave contributors some freedom on how they interpret this theme, but would prefer to leave Literature as such for a later issue.

Looking ahead to Issue 22 (June 2004), the focus will be on Current and International Affairs, Law and Government, Politics, etc.

Please submit contributions to SOURCES via the National Office (see back page for new address) not later than 8th January 2004.

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.3, February 1999 in an article on the U3A Design/Age Network.

"Older people are moving beyond consumerism. Younger people are more likely to want the latest or more fashionable products, whereas older people are beginning to realise, to paraphrase Mae West, that it is not the years in your life but the life in your years that really matters."

THE SEARCH IS ON

In the June issue we appealed for more responses to our search for U3A study groups that might justly claim to be unique or, at least, on the more unusual side. Here are a few entries to surprise, enlighten and entertain.

BASILDON AND BILLERICAY DANCING

"In response to "The Search Is On", I thought you may be interested in a group I run in the Billericay area (Basildon and Billericay U3A) – MIDDLE EASTERN DANCING"

I was introduced to the U3A at the age of 36 - 11 years ago, by a member who told me about the group, already set up. I joined the group - a great set of ladies, and with a video in one hand and library book in the other we proceeded to copy the movements. Great hilarity followed. A short while after joining the group a professional 'belly dancer' opened a class in Billericay. A few of the group joined and we did improve our techniques. Alas the class closed after 18 months, however we continued practising.

We were approached by the Basildon and Billericay U3A and asked to "perform" at a group presentation meeting. With great trepidation and nerves jangling, about ten of us danced for a short while. Our performance was met with great joy and amazement. Over a period of time, members left and new ones arrived. I took over the running of the class and choreographed new dances. News soon spread and we were approached by local Women's Institutes and charity groups. We set to and decided to put our new found fame and talents to good use and raise money for charity.

Things have moved on from there and we have raised funds for Dogs for the Disabled, British Heart Foundation, McMillan Nurses and Cancer Research. We have for the past four years also raised funds for our local hospice - St Lukes, based in Basildon.

I also now run a private group, which includes members of the U3A. Despite announcements in the Newsletter, we have been unable to tempt many new members from the U3A, however the two groups join forces and hold 'friends and family' evenings for charity.

Our U3A group has great fun on Tuesday evenings practising techniques and new dances. Great new friendships have been formed within the group. All members work extremely hard to keep the group running, and interest never diminishes.

Fay Keary, Basildon and Billericay U3A

PRACTICAL HORTICULTURE IN CHRISTCHURCH

With reference to your request in the June Sources - 'The Search is on', I would be interested to know if there are any other 'Allotment' groups in U3A. Below is a brief write-up of our activity.

In September 2001 I started the U3A Allotment Group with six enthusiastic members. The site is rented annually from Christchurch County Council. First we cleared the site of weeds, fenced it and constructed a shed. Members were then allocated their own plot and were ready to start planting in the spring. A very wide range of vegetables and fruit has been grown using a variety of propagation methods (and plenty of manure!) We meet one morning a week but members can often be found harvesting or tending their plots at other times too.

We learn by experience, from books and magazines, and by comparing notes on the many different varieties of plants available and the resulting crops. It is often hard work and the weather can be a problem but we have all enjoyed some wonderful fruits and vegetables and a good range of salad crops. Members enjoy the fresh air, exercise and a coffee and a chat at half time!

This year we visited the Royal Horticultural Society ground at Wisley to see their vegetable and fruit growing methods.

*Group Leader: Veronica Locke
Tel. 01202 397036*

A STEEL BAND

Once upon a time, before my U3A days, I attended evening classes to learn the steel pans. Over a period of several months the band members achieved a standard of playing whereby we were invited to play at a school concert. We were very nervous, but the tune we had elected to play was performed without errors and we were well received. At the end of the concert we were approached by someone who was so impressed they wanted us to play at their wedding reception! We were really chuffed, but hesitant in telling them that we only knew one tune - namely the one they had just heard, *Crazy*.

Having recovered from that experience, I continued learning for a year or so until this activity came to an end when the teacher departed and the school could not find another steel pan teacher.

A couple of years later, I discovered our local U3A when it was first formed and suggested to the members that I could teach steel pans at beginners' level. I was aware that the local Fanshawe School in Barking and Dagenham had a full set of pans which were currently lying idle and my suggestion was that the school might be sympathetic to my idea that the U3A could make use of them. The school responded favourably and agreed that we could use the pans during the twilight hours, i.e. the time between the day and evening classes. We were, of course, extremely grateful to take this opportunity.

I told the people joining the band that they did not have to be able to read music: the main requirement was enthusiasm.

The band meets once a week and the session lasts from 4 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. The sessions are relaxed and we really play just for fun. If we make a mistake we just laugh about it. The more mistakes, the bigger the laugh we have, but our real intention is to achieve the best we can. Perhaps we are philosophers as well as musicians.

I play the piano and follow the sheet music and the other members play the accompaniment. The ideal is to play the pans by ear, but we write down the notes that have to be played in an easy to follow way for the steel pans. We play songs such as *Super Trouper*, *Edelweiss* and *Ode to Joy*.

When we first started, people would walk straight past the door of the practice room - we were that impressive! Two years on, some still walk straight past, but many also stop and listen. At least we have progressed from making what was initially a racket into a pleasant sound.

The band members only get the chance to play the pans at the school, although they have the option of practising at home with cardboard cut-outs, which are replicas of the pan

tops. They are circular pieces of cardboard with the notes written on, and this helps to achieve familiarity with the pans in terms of quickly locating the notes and chords.

I practise the Cello Pans on cardboard cut-outs at home. The Cello Pans comprise a set of 3 pans covering 21 notes. I lay the cut-outs on the sofa and play them using two pencils for sticks. This way the neighbours never complain about the noise. Perhaps they love the sound of silence – or is it because I play their favourite tunes?

At this point, it's worth mentioning that many people are interested in how the pans are made and how the sounds are produced, but a full explanation would take several pages so I shall give an overview of the process and, for those who would rather skip the science, please jump three paragraphs. For the rest, here is a brief explanation.

The pans are made from standard 45-gallon oil drums. If you look at the top of a pan where the notes are made, it has a concave shape. The deeper the concavity, the higher the pitch of sound will be. For example, the Tenor Pans (the ones that usually play the tunes) have a greater concavity than the Bass Pans (the ones that play the bass notes). The Tenor Pans are also shorter in length than the Bass Pans, and this gives them a more ringing tone. The longer pans, like the Cello and Bass have a deeper and more mellow tone.

Each note on the pan is marked out with a groove around it and this is done with a hammer and punch to isolate the notes from each other. The large notes, i.e. those covering a larger surface area of the pan, will produce a deeper sound than the smaller notes. However, each note will also have a slight dome shape such that if a note goes out of tune, it can be fine tuned by either increasing the height of



the dome, making it more convex to raise the note, or lower the note by hammering the dome down. Considering there are about 30 notes on a Tenor Pan, the making and tuning of these pans is a highly skilled job and it's not surprising that a new Tenor Pan with stand costs around £1,000.

To summarise, when you strike a note with your drumstick the sound you get is really an accumulation of a sound produced by the length of the drum, the concavity of the pan, the size of the surface area of the note, the depth of the dome shape of the note itself, and the tempering process the drum goes through.

That's it, folks, here endeth the science lesson. Relieved? I am.

Hey! Do I hear a drum roll? Why, yes. Who is it? It's the members of the band. The best band in the land? Well, maybe. And who are they? There's Beryl Bond and Pauline Hanson on Guitar Pans, Rita Weaver and Jean Dyerson on Cello Pans; Doreen Wray on Bass Pans and myself, Rob Thorn, on Piano.

Having introduced the Band and stated what we are currently doing, the next question might be 'where are we going?' The Band members do have several options: we can retire gracefully or battle on with our quest to improve but essentially play for fun or move on to broader pastures. The broader pastures being the option to join the local college night school course on Steel Pans, which has a professional teacher, or to join a local Steel Band, namely the Dallaway Steel Band, who run a School of Music for Steel Pans. They describe themselves as being semi-professional and play at

various venues, including fêtes, weddings, charity functions, etc. You can join as a beginner and, initially, you might learn only a limited number of tunes, but providing you can play these tunes competently you will be invited to play with the rest of the Band at one of their functions. I have taken this route and I do play as a friend of the Dallaway Steel Band.

The other members of the U3A Band seem to be happy where they are and, in our journey from metal bashers to music makers, our next venture will be to play at the school concert. At the moment, though, one thing is for sure - we are unlikely to be invited to play at another wedding reception unless, maybe, we play *Crazy!*

Rob Thorn, Barking and Dagenham U3A

MAH-JONG

I teach Mah-Jong. A number of people I meet at gatherings ask me What's that?. I am wondering whether the study takes place in any other U3A area.

Mah-Jong, the name of which means 'The Sparrows', is a Chinese game thousands of years old. It has been likened to bridge, poker and dominoes, but actually it has very little in common with these games. I myself liken it more, if one must make a comparison, to rummy.

The game is played with tiles on which are printed Bamboos, Characters and Circles. These represent the three suits. There are Honours, namely Winds, Dragons, Flowers and Seasons. There are nine tiles in each suit (repeated four times), three Dragons (repeated four times), four Winds (repeated four times), and four each of Flowers and Seasons, making a total of 144 tiles.

There are 16 rounds in a complete game of Mah-Jong but we have not once in all my five years of teaching it completed it. But we do have fun.

Kay Rouchely, Harrow U3A

CHELTENHAM REVISITED

Sometimes I wonder what Peter Laslett would have thought about the U3A Summer Schools. They have been described as "the best of U3A", "the jewel in the crown". They fulfill the concept of shared learning. Tutors and students work together in exploring the intricacies of chosen subjects. Ideas are exchanged through discussion and experiment. Our tutors are generous in giving their knowledge freely. Students respond with interest and enthusiasm. The residential character of Summer Schools gives an added dimension to the experience of shared learning. Discussion and conversation continue over meal times and into the night. In true U3A fashion, no qualifications are required and none given but standards are high and courses studied in depth over the three days.

This is the time for delight in learning, the pleasure of spending time with people of shared interests and being aware that **Learning is fun.**

This was our second year at Cheltenham. Members of Tewkesbury and Cheltenham U3As again were responsible for registration, giving directions and carrying luggage. Even more than practical help, arrivals at the Campus were welcomed with warmth and kindness. Returning to

Cheltenham was re-visiting old friends. They can not be thanked enough.

This year we offered twenty-two subjects involving a diversity of learning styles - discussion, hands-on, language learning, appreciation, and lectures. Summer School is concentrated, hard work balanced by evening entertainment. This year we began the first evening bringing people together with a Pimm's Reception. A String Quartet provided a delightful musical evening. There was the ever-popular Read-In producing some fascinating selections of Prose and Poetry. An interesting talk on Cheltenham was given by the Curator of the Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery. The final evening was our Gala Dinner followed by a jazz band.

Summer Schools are becoming a tradition. As people leave, exhausted but satisfied, many voices are heard saying,

"See you next year."

Let us hope U3A friends will be meeting for many years to come at the U3A Summer Schools.

Sophie Deakin-Smith

CELEBRATING LONDON - GREATER LONDON REGION'S FIRST CONFERENCE

On 21st August the Greater London Region Forum (24 constituent U3As) held its first conference. Brunel University in Uxbridge proved to be an excellent venue for this purpose. The theme and aims of this gathering fit well into the theme of this issue of SOURCES as they were geared to providing ideas for future collaboration with museums, galleries, buildings of special interest and venues which provide educational opportunities.

About one hundred and sixty members from sixteen U3As in the region participated. The speakers were drawn from coordinators and outside speakers representing different London venues.

Not all the sessions tuned in on activities which could open new vistas for U3A groups. In order to study as many aspects of London's study opportunities as possible the programme suffered from a slight overload, leaving no time for questions. Nevertheless, there were a lot of discussions and friendly exchanges during the breaks and lunch. Most of the presentations provided food for thought and leads for fresh approaches to U3A study.

The author of this report was particularly stimulated by the talk by Professor Heinz Wolff, already well known to SOURCES readers. He called his talk "The Dinner Party in 1852" and presented brief and succinct pen sketches of ten famous guests at this dinner who had made major innovative contributions to society. Names such as Faraday, Brunel, Fox Talbot, Siemens.

Rothschild and Lovelace were included. The presentation immediately conjured up the idea of a U3A study group with a similar title which would encourage the group to reflect the discussion at this dinner and for each U3A member to take on the role of one of these great innovators and study their lives and works and the lasting effect they had on our society. It could easily form the fruitful study for a year's meetings.

The British Museum speaker, Margaret O'Brien, Head of Lifelong Learning, after reporting on the recent BM-U3A

research experiment, provided hopes of many more research opportunities in the arts, sciences and other fields. The speaker showed herself more than ready to consider new proposals from any of us.

Martin Funnell, the Architecture Network Coordinator, offered ideas for a whole series of studies of new buildings in the London area and is happy to pass on details. My own imagination was caught by the new John Lewis Building in Kingston which would offer an excellent source of study for our "Design for all Ages" study group. A study of the functional, architectural and aesthetic aspects of such a building might well fire the enthusiasm of our group.

Michael Kauffmann, the History of Art Coordinator of U3A in London, took another path. He identified four works of art and then proceeded to suggest ways in which the study of unfamiliar art objects could be approached, with emphasis on the importance of the initial visual familiarisation with the object and then digging further into the period of its origin, the artist and the materials used, inviting the important question of why a certain work of art appeals to us.

Derek Scott, Co-ordinator of London Visits in London U3A, provided ample information and leads to visits to unusual places, coupled with a most entertaining presentation of music, linked to places and times, all of which awakened memories of London in days gone by. Many members of the audience were heard humming along with Derek's tunes.

Finally, to end where the conference began, with the most amusing welcoming speech by the Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University. He showed a remarkable understanding of what makes U3As tick and we all felt that a return visit to Brunel would be most welcome.

An excellent end to a very enjoyable and instructive day.

Marion Bieber, U3A London

ROYAL INSTITUTION MEETING 2003

U3A EXPLORES SCIENCE at the RI 14 April 2003

The third in the annual series of lectures for U3A members again drew a capacity audience in the lecture theatre at the Royal Institution. The meeting began, Kate Wedd in the Chair, with Professor Paul McMillan (University College, London and the Royal Institution) talking on the theme of 'Diamonds and the Deep Earth'. Starting with a description of the pressures and temperatures in the various zones at great depths below the surface of the earth where conditions exist for the formation of diamond he then, using models, explained the difference in crystal structure of the two forms of carbon - graphite and diamond - and showed how this structure accounted for the fact that diamond is so very much harder than graphite. The lecturer then showed, amid gasps of surprise from the audience, a 200 carat diamond and used it to explain how the shape can be employed as an anvil in order to exert enormous pressures on a sample and at the same time observe the effects of pressure through a microscope. Finally Professor McMillan used a projection microscope to show the effect of a change in pressure on the

structure of a sample of silver iodide as a simulation of the pressure effects at great depths below the surface of the earth. It is by using such high-pressure techniques, combined with high temperatures, that scientists can begin to understand the structure and composition of the earth at great depths.

Dr John McNabb (Southampton University) then spoke on the theme 'The Archaeology of Being Human' in which he took a broad look at the genus *Homo*. He explained how hominids were differentiated from apes by bipedality that freed the forelimbs and allowed them to become delicate hands useful for manipulating tools and feeding etc. Using photos of the skeleton of *Australopithecus afarensis* (known also as Lucy) Dr McNabb contrasted it with other skeletons showing how Lucy represents an ancestor of other species of hominids such as *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*, both now extinct, and the surviving species *Homo sapiens*. Another evolutionary feature discussed was the size of the brain volume.

After the interval for tea the final talk 'DNA: From Microbes to Mammoths to Man' was by Dr Liz Sockett (University of Nottingham). Dr Sockett started with a brief explanation of what DNA is and how it is connected to genes by making use of a comprehensive series of pictures and a number of simple models. She then moved on to talk about her research work on microbes that aims at trying to understand the relations between genes and the functions they encode. Finally Dr Sockett talked briefly about the human genome, cloning, managing genetic disease, genetics and current work in the field.

Len Street

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

Am I alone in finding something faintly absurd about the fashion, prevalent in the world of TV presenters, for referring to 'the top of the hour' and 'the bottom of the hour'? We have managed adequately till now with 'on the hour' and 'on the half hour'. I cannot conceive what might be the pending neologism equivalent to 'at a quarter to the hour'. Is it to be 'on the left-hand side of the hour'?

Perhaps the movers and shakers will start a trend for using points of the compass for greater accuracy. 'At the W of the hour' would successfully indicate 15 mins to the hour. But would 'at the NNE of the hour' ever catch on?

Editor

FRENCH ON TV

For anyone who is both a subscriber to Sky TV and a lover of the French language, the good news is that Channel 825 carries TV5 Europe, a compilation of French TV from France and other francophone countries. News, documentaries, fictional series and films make up its staple diet. The latter two programme types are subtitled – in French! – making comprehension of dialogue much easier.

The additional good news is that one can subscribe to a monthly emailed set of pedagogic notes, compiled with inimitable French flair and thoroughness, that could prove of value to convenors of U3A French study groups. For more information on this plus programming schedules, visit the TV5 website (www.tv5.org).

The Editor

U3A WEBSITE UPDATE

Thanks to the sterling efforts of our Webmaster, Paul Baron, the entire U3A website is now searchable. Furthermore, with the aid of Google, you can search the entire Web from within the website. The relevant address is www.u3a.org.uk/search_site.htm or go to www.u3a.org.uk and click on Search the Site.

One advantage of this facility is, of course, the ability to search through back issues of SOURCES itself (all of which are to be found on the website).

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.

The Sunday Times 20.4.03

HELP THE AGED

Is there an online service that helps senior citizens make the most of the net?

Susan Hall, via e-mail

Pay a visit to 61-year-old Shoban Sen's computer basics page (members.aol.com/shobansen3). It contains a set of clear, concise free tutorials on how to start off in computing, as well as good general tips. The Silverhairs site (www.silverhairs.co.uk) also offers some useful pointers for novice and experienced silver surfers alike. Enjoy!

members.aol.com/shobansen3
www.silverhairs.co.uk

PHILOSOPHY & DISCUSSION

<http://www.nizkor.org/features/fallacies/>

Explanations and examples of fallacious reasoning.

HISTORY

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/themes/default.stm>

BBC news archive

searchable by themes or by dates

POLITICS/CURRENT AFFAIRS

<http://www.tagish.co.uk/tagish/links/>

A splendid starting point for access to UK central and local government websites. From here very easy to locate a website for any Parish, Town, District or County Council. Plus other interesting links.

MUSEUMS/RESOURCES

www.resource.gov.uk

re:source has been put together by the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. It looks like a fascinating starting point for research.

LANGUAGES

www.leplaisirdapprendre.com

A website for teachers of French as a foreign language

ARCHITECTURE/

HISTORY

www.imagesofengland.org.uk

Database of photos and descriptions of all UK's listed buildings. Searchable by location, type, period, etc.

Excellent resource for architecture, history, local history, etc.

referred to his recent paper, *Thriving People Revisited*, where he praised the movement for achieving his earlier target forecast of 500+ U3As but he suggested that we could improve on our membership numbers. He gave some reasons why he thought this had happened and then looked specifically at what might have hindered large U3A growth. He thought that too often the reticence or refusal to allow a U3A to grow was more the point at issue. He felt that the excuse often put forward, namely the danger of outgrowing present accommodation and the difficulty of finding larger premises, could be overcome more easily if the spirit was willing.

To give an example of what is possible, he cited Milton Keynes which has only 13% of its population in the third age, yet has a U3A of 900+ members. He feels that the social arguments put up about not to develop are self-cancelling and that people employ opposite viewpoints to support the argument for it.

He questioned why the numbers attending the monthly meeting of U3As should be accorded such an undue and unnecessary focus, allowing the possibility of the tail to wag the dog on occasion.

The discussion which followed was informative, lively and positive. All the responses sent in later about this meeting were full of praise for its content and the fact that it had taken place. One even said that it was the most useful day he had ever experienced in the U3A.

The meeting was recorded on cassette and also videotaped by Peterborough U3A's video group. After they have had a chance to edit the results, there may be film footage of the day ending up perhaps in our Resource Centre. The question remaining that was certainly most important to me and probably to others attending was *Where do we go from here?*

Eric Midwinter is hoping that some sort of practical package will result from this meeting to help U3As who wish to grow larger.

There is no doubt that much more that large U3As could discuss in future meetings. Would they like to hold a meeting annually to discuss such matters? Would they like to consider forming an email contact circuit for continuing discussion and suggestions for further meetings? Any responses you would like to make to me on these points will be welcome.

*Mike Long, Development Officer
C/o National Office*

FOR U3As HOPING TO CREATE THEIR OWN WEBSITE

Local groups looking for a domain name (u3abarset.org.uk or witteringu3a.org.uk) plus a website can now get one at low cost. U3A Internetwork in association with a Warwickshire-based voluntary organisation MYGROUP offer this with 250 Mbytes of web-space plus 25 email addresses.

Advice is also obtainable on software you might use for maintaining and updating your website - but please note that maintaining your website from that point on can only be done by the local group.

Visit worldu3a.org/templates for more information.

Tom Holloway

LARGE U3As MEETING IN PETERBOROUGH

On the 20th May this year, the 30 largest U3As in the country were invited to a one-day conference in Peterborough to discuss items of mutual interest, arranged by John Knight, East Midlands Area Representative.

The day started with a welcome by John Gribble, Head of the local Bretton Woods Community School. Jon Knight then told us what he hoped the day would achieve. It was an opportunity, he said, for large U3As to find answers by working together. Ivor Manley then offered the meeting the blessing and support of the NEC.

Eric Midwinter gave the keynote address. He has long been an advocate of large U3As and in this speech he

WARMINSTER U3A GROUP LEADERS DAY

[An example of Learning Support in action. The participatory principle of U3A learning was well debated in Warminster. See also the LSG report towards the end of this issue. Chris Dickson, Subject Network Co-ordinator, recommends this as one good example of how to organise a successful Group Leaders Day.]

On 12th June, 56 members of Warminster U3A and other U3As in the Bath and mid-Wilts Link, met at a local hotel conference centre for a Study Day. John Ogden, chair of Warminster U3A, welcomed guests

and speakers. In her opening address, Kate Wedd spoke of the uniqueness of the U3A, as the only society for older people devoted to the principle of self-help life-long learning. Elaine Williams, convener of the Learning Support Group, then tackled the subject 'Continual Learning - are we past it?' We were convinced that we certainly are **not**, and are now taking up with renewed vigour the opportunities offered by our U3As!

Then we split into six groups for the first of our discussion sessions on a wide range of topics and knotty problems facing group leaders and those who help to run our U3As, followed by humorous and serious feedback from the chairperson of each group. Then it was the turn of Christine Dickson, Subject Networks Co-ordinator, who spoke about the wide range of help available from the 40 members of this network, all of whom are enthusiasts in their subject. Four group leaders then told us about the somewhat more unusual groups that they lead. Lunch followed and, blessed by lovely weather, we were able to sit outside by the river to consume it.

In the afternoon, standing in for a sick colleague, Elaine gave us many lively ideas to consider with her second topic of the day, 'Keeping up the momentum - a guide to not running out of steam'. This was followed by the afternoon group discussions, on some more challenging topics, followed by feedback.

The day ended with a 'Brains Trust', the panel consisting of Kate, Elaine and Christine skilfully answering some difficult questions. So ended a most useful and sociable day. Many thanks to everyone who came, our speakers and to those who helped in any way with the organisation.

Shirley Moss, Warminster U3A

[If you have organised a Study Day on this, or any other pattern, Sources would be interested to hear from you. – Editor

JAZZ APPRECIATION

The Jazz Appreciation Network will be holding a Conference/Study Day on Saturday 20th March 2004.

It will be held at the Warehouse, 1a Cumberland Road, Reading where there is parking for about 100 vehicles. It is about 0.5 mi from the Reading exit of A329(M) with easy access from the Railway Station and all Motorway Junctions and Main Roads from the North and Midlands.

The morning will be taken up with various Discussion Groups and the afternoon will be handed over to Digby Fairweather, Trumpet and Cornet Player, Broadcaster, Writer and who is also interested in Jazz Education.

For details and application form send SAE to Bob Jones, 48 Mowbray Drive, Reading RG30 4XY. Tel No. 0118 941 3889.

Come and enjoy the music!

SPANISH LESSONS

Those of you with access to the Internet may already know of the excellent Spanish Embassy Website which offers one lesson per month at three levels, all of which can be downloaded free by leaders and teachers of Spanish groups. In addition, there is an Archive of lessons

going back four years. (However, for those without Internet access. I have downloaded a number of lessons from the site and they are now available from Elizabeth Gibson at the Resource Centre.)

Website address: www.sgci.mec.es/uk Go to Publicaciones, then click on TECLA to access the lessons.

*Gloria Blackburne, Coordinator, Languages Network.
www.u3a.org.uk/languages/Languages_Network.htm*

NOVEL APPROACHES

What's the most difficult part of running a U3A? Finding leaders? Not because there aren't plenty of capable people around, but because they 'wouldn't know where to start'. The *Third Age Trust* has already addressed this problem vigorously with various start-up pamphlets, but now Eric Midwinter has weighed in with a definitive course guide for book clubs/groups, tracing the development of the popular classic novel in England from 1500 to 2000.

As one of the four founders of U3A in the UK, Eric knows exactly what is required to give leaders the factual back-up they need to identify and introduce each milestone publication to their groups. ***Novel Approaches***, published by the ***Third Age Press***, is also an absorbing read for the rest of us, bringing much-loved but almost forgotten books vividly alive again and prodding us into rediscovering them for ourselves. Designed for easy reference, Eric's book divides the development of the novel in this country into seven chronological phases, following a comprehensive introduction, and illustrates the various phases with detailed analyses of thirty-five representative novels.

His criteria for a 'popular classic novel' are that it should have staying power from generation to generation and also add something worthwhile to our human experience. It is significant that not only are his choices still in demand at libraries and bookshops, and therefore easy for group members to obtain, but nearly all of them have also been successfully adapted for film, radio, video and TV. Think of *Tom Jones*, *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Forsyte Saga* and all the rest.

Eric, from the depth and breadth of his own reading, sets the scene for groups to study and discuss each novel, providing easy-to-assimilate background information about the social conditions and history of each period, together with thumbnail sketches of the writers, relating their lives and works to those of other novelists, including some from Europe and America. He also gives brief but masterly summaries of the plots, each one an invaluable *aide-memoire* for busy course leaders.

With groups primarily in mind, he is concerned to encourage discussion. Does the group agree with his choice of milestone authors? Has he selected their most important novels? What alternatives would the group put forward? Is Dickens the greatest novelist ever and did the novel reach its peak with the Victorians, then start to decline? What about its position today? Are any novels published in our own time destined to become future classics or will our foremost writers forsake print more and more in favour of other forms of self-expression? Are best-sellers likely to survive?

Novel Approaches is a pleasure to read, if only to congratulate oneself on how many of the thirty-five milestone novels one has already read! It is also exceedingly

well structured and well written with some memorable phrases - one I particularly relished: 'While a Jane Austen story is like tasting a tangy slice of lemon meringue dessert, a Dickens novel has more the rich texture of the Christmas pudding'. If that doesn't whet your appetite to read this fascinating book for yourself, I don't know what will!

And no, I am not going to spoil your fun by telling you which authors and which novels Eric has on his list. Happy reading!

NOVEL APPROACHES is due to be published on 15 October, available from Third Age Press, 6 Parkside Gardens, London SW19 5EY. Cover price £9.50. Special offer to U3A members £8.00 (£7 to groups purchasing five or more copies). All prices include p&p.

Gwen Parrish

Standing Committee for Education REPORT - August 03

REPORT on two SCE meetings held on 29 April and 18 June 2003

There have been two meetings of the SCE in the period since the last issue of Sources. At the meeting held on 29 April the Chairman, Keith Richards, reported on:-

- (a) the progress to date with the projects funded by the DfES.
- (b) further developments related to links between museums and U3As e.g. the Greenwich Maritime Museum project was now under way and exploratory talks are taking place between U3As and museums in the Sussex area.
- (c) a statement on the way in which U3A members learn is being prepared for AIUTA and
- (d) the dates for SCE meetings for the next twelve months.

Elaine Williams reported on the progress being made by the Learning Support Group, including the activities of some of the members of the Learning Support Network, and the arrangements for participation by Network members in the York Conference proceedings. A proposal to create a 'U3A Learners' Handbook' was enthusiastically supported with the suggestion that it might possibly attract funding support from the DfES.

During the meeting on 18 June the full range of activities covered by the SCE were discussed including:

- On Line learning - members were informed that there is to be a training day for potential course writers on 30 September
- ICT - the redesigned website now includes a search facility for use within the site
- Resource Centre - now that the service had been restored following the move to Bromley, a new assistant, Susan Radford, had commenced duties
- Sources - the leading article for the November issue would be by David James who will also be giving a keynote address at the York Conference. The Editorial Panel had discussed the possibility of

providing an 'audio version' but it was decided that it was not feasible at the present time.

- Subject Networks - a total of seven study days had been held and dates have been agreed for study days on geology and jazz
- Learning Support Group - details about the event in Warminster, involving the group, are to be reported elsewhere in these pages and enquiries resulting from an earlier article are being followed up

Len Street

U3A LEARNING SUPPORT YORK CONFERENCE 2003

"Launching the Learning Support Network"
(report from the Learning Support Group –
a sub-committee of the SCE)

The theme of this year's U3A Conference in York was "Participation" and many of the 300 or more delegates took part in two sessions of group discussion. The first session was devoted to discussing aspects of Peter Laslett's *Objects and Principles* and the second session focused on topic areas that arise directly from consideration of our unique style of U3A learning. Delegates had been given an opportunity to choose their preferred topic in advance of the Conference. The topic areas were:

1- Diversifying Membership. 2- Group Dynamics. 3- Learning Support. 4- DfES Survey on Methodology. 5- Learning On-Line. 6- Shared Responsibility. 7- Funding Issues. 8- Subject Networks/Sources. 9- Third Age Learning in Museums. 10- Fourth Age Issues. 11- Experience as a Resource.

It was against this background of discussion that the newly formed **Learning Support Network** was formally introduced at the Conference. The context is particularly important as the remit and scope of the Learning Support Network are firmly rooted in the twin themes of the Conference - Participation and Review of the Peter Laslett Principles.

What is the Learning Support Network?

Essentially the Network is made up of U3A members from across the country who have volunteered to take on both an advisory as well as a learning role in relation to U3A group learning. Each member of the network will operate within their own locality. (See below for contact details.) The Network representatives will also be supported by the SCE as well as being in a position to carry back information to the committee, so that it, too, can learn. The principle of participatory learning is a fundamental one for us all as it is the most important characteristic which differentiates the U3A from other providers of Lifelong Learning. The SCE is keen to learn more about how this participatory principle is being achieved and also to be able to offer encouragement wherever it is needed.

How will the Network Representatives operate and what can they offer?

Because of their essentially advisory role, Network Representatives hope to be contacted by any individual member or U3A who feels they would like to make use of their services. They should be viewed as another important U3A Resource. However, the Representatives will be more proactive when it comes to making contacts in their locality so that their role can be more widely known and appreciated. Leaflets and information about the Learning Support Network have been sent to all U3A Regional Contacts and a closer liaison will be developed which will enhance everyone's role.

The leaflet entitled "U3A Learning Support Network – Contact Information" was prepared for and available at the Conference. It explains what the Network can offer to those who want to make use of it and the leaflet is also now available through National Office. In brief, Network Representatives will offer advice on many aspects of participatory learning as well as being willing to take part in workshops and seminars locally if invited to do so. In addition, everyone will have access to the expertise of everyone else – the advantage of belonging to an extended network.

Learning Support also now has a new presence on the U3A national website (www.u3a.org.uk) where further information can be found. The full text of the presentation of the Network at the Conference can also be found on the website and will remain for a few months.

As has been said before, we always welcome feedback. Please use any of the contacts as indicated below.

Eastern Area: Francis Lewis

Tel: 01638 713155 Email: frances_lewis11@hotmail.com

London: Jenny Clark

Tel: 0208 346 3751

N. Ireland: Joyce Gibson

Tel: 02891 462043

Email: joyce-gibson@UTVinternet.com

North East: Jean Riley

Tel: 01904 633649

North West: Eric Barnes

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

Scotland: Karen Cannon

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

South East: Edna Wright

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

South West: Ian Searle

Tel: 01209 210220 Email: ian_searle@lineone.net

Thames Valley: Don Rankin

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

Wales: Doug Jones

Tel: 01656 657571 Email: jay3deekay@aol.com

Wessex: Anne Marie Seacroft

Tel: 01722 324397 Email: amseacroft@onetel.net

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

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

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 apply to National Office for an official subscription form.

THANK YOU

We thank all our contributors and offer 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 continue to welcome your submissions for publication.

On this occasion a number of pieces that were seen as relevant to the theme of the next issue have been deferred.

ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

Three of the UK U3A's newest online courses are outlined below. Dates, fees and enrolment details will be found on the back page.

UNDERSTANDING COMPUTERS

Fifty years ago the word 'computer' meant nothing to the average person. Today the computer affects our lives in many ways. Computers control our cars, give us money at the cash machine, book our holidays and pay our salaries.

Fifty years ago you could count the computers in the whole world on the fingers of one hand. Today there are as many computers in the world as there are people.

This course is not designed to help you to use your computer. Local evening classes are full of Computer Literacy courses which will give you 'hands on' computer training. This course aims to explain how computers work, and how they have achieved such phenomenal growth in such a short time. This course is about understanding computers and understanding the IT revolution in which we all live.

The course will outline development of the three threads, which came together during the Second World War, to make computers possible. We will look at the short and exciting history of computers. We will look at control applications, the 'virtual' world and the Internet.

We are still in the middle of the computer revolution. We can expect more computing power for our money every year

for some time to come. Hopefully, understanding the reasons for this revolution will give us views on where computers will take us in the next decade or two.

*For further information – Allan Fowke 01223 832308,
allanfowke@ntlworld.com*

WRITE TO GOOD EFFECT

The first unit in this course – CLARITY – introduces Mr. Beck's map - *The Design of the London Underground* - as a metaphor, to describe how it is possible to convey information, no matter how complex, in clear, direct terms. And this skill, to communicate opinion, ideas and reasoning in such unambiguous terms, is at the heart of all writing practice activities presented throughout the eight units in the course.

Like wine, the quality of thinking, though clear at the source of origin, does not always travel well. A writer's thoughts and ideas may be clear in his or her mind, but they do not always arrive in the reader's mind with such clarity. Writing is effective when it conveys the writer's intended point of meaning, so writers need the ability to think clearly if they are to write clearly.

Each unit is designed around topics of current interest from which students select a topic to write on, relevant to the designated central theme, e.g. water – lakes, rivers and canals; attitudes to social change; the rural/urban contrast; travel as escapism.

Motivation to engage in writing practice activities is first stimulated by reference to a quotation relevant to the theme, e.g. Wodehouse advising never to apologise, followed up by an example of a suggested model piece of prose presented in a LINK, to print out for reference. Or, say, awareness of the value of accuracy in punctuation and grammar, stimulated by a piece presented in a LINK, for students to correct, according to their own interpretation. Writing is hard work, but the load here is sometimes lightened by humour.

The course provides opportunities for creative responses, so it is useful for all writers to explore, whether they lack confidence but want to become more skilful, or although already confident and engaged on a current writing project, wish to improve on their present standard. The material presented in the units can be held on file by students for future reference. As the units present activities in different formats, from Opinion and Survey Articles to Essay, and from informal register to formal, most needs are catered for: the final unit allows the student to write a piece for assessment in the format and register of his or her choice, or need.

Because each unit concludes with an assessment writing task, which is emailed to the tutor for feedback and comment, the number of students taking part is necessarily limited.

Brenda Thornton

WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

A new course to be piloted in February 2004

This course is written by Tony Thornton of Carlisle U3A. It is for those who want to get their non-fiction articles published in magazines, newspapers and on the Internet. Writing is a craft to be learned. There are skills to be acquired, rules to be adhered to and mistakes to be avoided. The Units show you how to improve your writing skills so that you can refine your stories to the standard required for publication.

During the eight sessions, you will be expected to complete an article to send to a publication of your choice. Each unit contains examples of the common problems that are a barrier to publication, along with the solutions that you can apply to your article.

The course is interactive with most of the learning consolidated by email discussion among participants. The Introductory Unit will be available on 1 Feb and the eight succeeding units will each take two weeks to complete.

Topics include: The first paragraph, writers' guidelines, punctuating speech, ambiguity, clichés, metaphors, similes, acronyms, presentation, markets and pictures.

The course is limited to eight and costs £10.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

We hope that all our readers have taken the necessary steps to re-activate their subscription to SOURCES.

In case you missed the announcement in Issue 19 (page 19), you need to know that the decision was taken to update the SOURCES distribution database. This meant scrapping the old one and starting all over again from scratch. The idea was to eliminate duplicated and superseded entries.

This, in turn, has created the need for every subscriber, new and old, to submit a new application in order to ensure a place on the distribution list. A registration slip was placed inside every copy of Issue 19.

We are not providing these slips in this issue, so would ask you, if need be, to apply to National Office for the official (re)-subscription form. All U3As were sent copies of this form recently in the hope that they could be duplicated for distribution.

We would urge all U3As, and in particular committee members and study group co-ordinators, to promote subscription to SOURCES amongst their U3A members and colleagues and to back this up with supplies of the (re)-subscription form. This official form **must** be used for all applications.

(Contact details for National Office appear on the back page.)

Editor

RESOURCE CENTRE NEWS

As the theme of this issue of SOURCES relates to working relationships between the U3A and other institutions, I would like to report on a co-operative venture between the Resource centre and the Education Department of the Royal Opera House. This relates to the In2arts project which they produced and launched this summer. It is a CD-Rom which allows groups to create their own version of the opera Peter Grimes. The computer program provides characters, scenery, props, words and music and allows every part of the opera production to be manipulated by the user. A copy has been donated to every senior school in Britain and the Royal Opera House have also donated several copies to the Resource Centre to allow U3A members to use this very original product.



There has been a considerable amount of publicity on TV and in the press about this item and we would like to encourage as many U3A groups as possible to try it. If there is enough enthusiasm for the project we hope to be able to offer a training session on using the CD-Rom and also that we may be involved in some way in the special productions of Peter Grimes being produced at the Royal Opera House in summer 2004. If you are interested in taking part in

this project please contact me at the address below.

For many years the U3A has had a beneficial relationship with the Open University whereby they offer us, without charge, course material which has been replaced by a new edition and which they no longer need.

We have a new list of Open University courses available for loan from the Resource Centre. At the time of the move to Bromley we took the opportunity to reorganise our holdings and discard some of the older or less relevant sets. We also have new courses, donated by the Open University over the past two years, which have not appeared on our lists before.

Courses are for group use only and applications to borrow them must be made by group leaders. Initial requests should be made by letter giving the full course title and number. Group leaders should include their full address, telephone number and the name of their U3A.

On receipt of the letter we will contact them by telephone to discuss the content of the course in detail and make sure it meets the needs of the group. The loan can be arranged for three months, six months or a year and the course will be sent by post.

The group will have to pay for outward and return postage, usually between £6.00 and £12.00 each way.

Please note that most of the courses are not complete; there may be one or more units missing from the set. This donated material does not include video or audiotapes, only printed course units.

Courses are at undergraduate level, either first, second or third year studies and groups need to give considerable thought to whether they can cope with study at this level. OU courses will seldom be suitable for beginner groups in a subject.

All the courses currently available are listed on the chart. In some cases we have more than one copy.

*Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Manager, Third Age Trust
Old Municipal Buildings, 19 East St. Bromley, Kent
Tel: 0208 466 6139 (Tuesdays and Thursdays only)
e-mail: resource.centre@u3a.org.uk*

CODES FOR COURSES

A=Arts
D=Social Sciences
E=Education
M=Mathematics & Computing
P=Environmental Studies
S=Science
T=Technology
U=Women's Studies

100= 1st year studies

200= 2nd year studies

300= 3rd year studies

e.g.

A100 represents 1st year university art

S237 represents 2nd year university science

| COURSE NO. | COURSE TITLE | COURSE NO. | COURSE TITLE | COURSE NO. | COURSE TITLE |
|------------|--|------------|---|------------|---|
| A100 | Humanities & Civilisation | D103 | Society & Social Science | S102 | Science Foundation |
| A101 | Introduction to Humanities | | | S103 | Discovering Science |
| A102 | Arts Foundation | D204 | Human Geography | S203 | Biology: Form & Function |
| A202 | The Age of Revolutions | D207 | Introduction to Sociology | S236 | Geology |
| A203 | 17 th Century England | D208 | Decision Making in Britain | S237 | The Earth: Structure, Composition & Evolution |
| A205 | Culture & Belief in Europe 1450-1600 | D211 | Social Problems & Social Welfare | S238 | Earth's Physical Resources |
| A210 | Approaching Literature | D212 | Social Sciences | S246 | Organic Chemistry |
| A220 | Princes & Peoples: Britain 1620-1714 | D214 | U.S. in the 20 th Century | S247 | Inorganic Chemistry |
| A281 | Technology & Change 1750-1914 | D301 | Historical Sources & Social Scientist | S271 | Science: Discovering Physics |
| A282 | Science & Everyday Life 1870-1950 | D308 | Democratic Government & Politics | S281 | Astronomy & Planetary Science |
| A293 | The Augustan Age | D314 | Restructuring Britain | S327 | Living Processes |
| A294 | Fifth-Century Athens: Democracy & City State | DA301 | Studying Family & Community History 19 th & 20 th Century | S339 | Understanding the Continents |
| A301 | War & Society | DE354 | Beliefs & Ideologies | S342 | Physical Chemistry |
| A309 | Conflict in Modern Europe 1789-1970 | DSE202 | Introduction to Psychology | S364 | Evolution |
| A310 | Life & Death | DT201 | Urban Development | SD206 | Biology: Brain & Behaviour |
| A311 | Reason & Experience | E262 | Education: Language & Learning | T101 | Plain English |
| A312 | The Nineteenth-century Novel | | | T102 | Technology Foundation Course |
| A313 | Philosophical Problems | E362 | Cognitive Development | T202 | Analogue & Digital Electronics |
| A316 | Modern Art | ED356 | Race, Education & Society | T236 | Thermofluid Mechanics & Energy |
| A317 | British & U.S. History | EH266 | Learning through Life | T237 | Environmental Control & Public Health |
| A318 | War & Social Change: Europe 1900-1955 | | | T264 | Design: Practice & Principle |
| A319 | Literature in the Modern World | M101 | Mathematics Foundation | | |
| A331 | Religion in Victorian Britain | M205 | Computing Fundamentals | T301 | Technology: Complexity, Management & Change |
| A341 | Beethoven | | | T322 | Digital Telecommunications |
| A353 | Art in 15 th Century Italy | M353 | Programming Languages | T362 | Design & Innovation |
| A361 | Shakespeare Plays | M355 | Software Engineering | THD204 | Information Technology & Society |
| A362 | Romantic Poetry | | | TM282 | Modelling with Mathematics |
| AA301 | Philosophy of the Arts | MS284 | Introduction to Calculus | U205 | Health & Disease |
| AM289 | History of Mathematics | MST204 | Mathematical Models & Methods | U206 | Environment |
| AS283 | Science in Europe 1500-1800 | P101 | Practical Conservation | U207 | Women's Studies |
| D101 | Making Sense of Society | | | U208 | Third World Development |
| D102 | Social Sciences Foundation | | | - | Auftakt - Get ahead in German |

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SCIENCE

U3A Explores Science at the RI
Monday 26th April 2004

SUMMER SCHOOLS 2004

Gloucester University, Cheltenham

Tuesday 20th – Friday 23rd July
Tuesday 27th – Friday 30th July

JAZZ APPRECIATION NETWORK

Conference/Study Day
Saturday 20th March 2004, Reading
Details: Robert Jones 0118 9413889

UK U3A ONLINE COURSES 2004

Full details and application forms can be found on the National U3A Web site at www.u3a.org.uk/~courses/online/ from October

TUTORED COURSES [Fee £10 per course]

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

ARTISTS OF SPAIN (First full course, starting 25 Jan)
WRITE TO GOOD EFFECT (Pilot, starting 25 Jan)
WRITING FOR PUBLICATION (Pilot, starting 1 Feb)

DOWNLOADABLE COURSES [Fee £5 per course]

The material can be used for individual study or by Group Leaders. Notes available for downloading on 18 January, with a tutor available for discussion.

UNDERSTANDING COMPUTERS [New]

The complete course of each of the following will be available for downloading from 11 January.

ARTISTS OF SPAIN
CREATIVE WRITING: FICTION
CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY
CREATIVE WRITING: SHORT STORIES

DESIGN IN YOUR LIFE
ITALIAN ART 1400-1600
VENICE AND HER ARTISTS

The Units of the 2 Pilot courses above can be downloaded as they are being issued, weekly.

COURSE FRAMEWORKS [Free]

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.

GENETICS
LIGHTHOUSES

The Third Age Trust holds the copyright of all the above courses; they must not be circulated without permission.

LINKS TO OTHER Free COURSE MATERIAL

WARTIME REMINISCENCES
MIEVEAL TIMBER-FRAMED HOUSES

AUSTRALIAN ONLINE COURSES

Five places are reserved on each for UK members of U3A.

Applications can be made through the national U3A web site at www.u3a.org.uk/~courses/online.

| Course | Numbers | Start | End | Units | Course Leader |
|-------------------------------|---------|------------|--------------|-------|--|
| The Night Sky | 5-15 | 1 Dec 2003 | 13 Mar 2004 | 8 | Win Howard whoward@tpg.com.au |
| Continents on the Move | 5-15 | 2 Feb 2004 | 15 May 2004 | 8 | Ian Wilson fendival@aol.com |
| Autobiography and Journalling | 10-15 | 2 Feb 2004 | 15 May 2004 | 8 | Cate Russell isaiah54@optusnet.com.au |
| Ageing and Retirement | 5-15 | 5 Apr 2004 | 24 Jul 2004 | 9 | Leslie Dale lesdale@melbpc.org.au |
| Design in Your Life | 5-12 | 5 Apr 2004 | 17 July 2004 | 8 | Anthony Baker revanthy@bigpond.com |

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