

*'Instructed in all languages living or dead':* Charles Dickens

# Languages in U3A

Languages is still one of U3A's favourite subjects

**M**ost U3As run a French or German group. Large U3As may be fortunate enough to have several graded groups for the popular languages.

Small U3As have to find ingenious ways of coping with mixed levels of knowledge and perhaps irregular attendance. There seem to be as many solutions as there are local U3As so language groups continue to flourish.

Some groups are lucky to have a retired language teacher or even a native speaker. Even then, it is a challenge to present their knowledge in a way that suits U3A members.

One way is to select an interesting text for reading and translation. Books can be borrowed from libraries, local schools, or photocopied. This idea has the advantage that members at all levels can join in. Those less advanced can prepare ahead with their dictionary. Short stories with plenty of action are popular. (I remember acquiring an extensive criminal vocabulary from Inspector Maigret.)

Another approach is to have an ongoing topic that members can prepare ahead of the meeting. One Spanish group invented a soap opera. Each week they added an instalment, each more breathtaking than the last.

Some advanced groups prepare views on a current affairs topic in the country of their choice. Beginner groups sometimes follow a textbook or BBC series. 'Homework' can be a problem for some members and has to be kept flexible.

As with all U3A groups, the members have to find the activities enjoyable or they will vote with their feet. Some experimenting with the regular programme of a language group is advisable. In most groups the social element is strong. The usual coffee, tea and biscuits are an important feature.

But languages can add their own flavour. One German group found they operated more successfully with a glass of German wine at each meeting. A French group asked its members to take it in turns to provide a small French snack – and to explain in French how they had made it. A meal in a local restaurant provides the opportunity to practise the language for real.

The range of languages being learnt by U3A groups is surprising. While French, German, Spanish and Italian remain the most popular, there are groups studying Russian, Latin, Greek, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, Hebrew, Arabic, Mither Tongue and Yiddish. I'm sure I've missed a few and look forward to hearing about them.

The language teaching resources available today are much more extensive than in the early days. In 1989, the idea of learning Spanish through a computer was met with derision.

Nowadays, BBC courses continue to expand and are ever popular in U3A. Most have an accompanying TV programme, audio and videotapes, and supplementary materials to back up the textbooks.



**Jean Thompson**  
Coordinator U3A Internetwork  
and International U3A

**J**ean Thompson joined Reading U3A in 1987 and soon became Secretary, then Chairman. She attended the Annual Conference in 1998 and has been at every one since. She joined the NEC in 1989 and was National Chairman from 1992 to 1995.

Jean was elected to the Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Age (AIUTA) Governing Board in 1994 and was U3A International representative for six years. During this time she travelled extensively, speaking about aspects of the 'British model'.

In 1989 she started the first two subject networks, Languages and Creative Writing. For six years she ran the U3A Translators and Interpreters Network.

Jean now coordinates two networks: Internetwork, which encourages the use of computer technology and resources, and International U3A, which links internationally-minded members from around the world.

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### In the next issue

The next issue of *Sources* (No 26) will be posted to those on the database in October 2005. The special theme will be History, but any articles of interest are welcome.

Contributions are considered for inclusion by an editorial panel. Please submit them not later than 31 August 2005 – via the National Office or direct to the editor.

You can send them by e-mail to tony.thornton@virgin.net (preferred), on disc or cleanly typed suitable for scanning (but hand written words are also acceptable). Every effort will be made to acknowledge them. Looking ahead to Issue 27 in March 2006, the focus will be on Religion and Philosophy

### How to receive *Sources*

U3A members may receive *Sources* at home, free of charge, by completing a subscription form (obtainable either through their local Committee or from the National Office) and submitting it to the National Office. Please mark the envelope 'Sources Subscription'.

You can also subscribe online at u3a.org.uk

*Sources* is published in March, June and November. If you enjoy reading it, please tell your fellow members that subscription is free. Back numbers can be viewed online and printed. Visit the Third Age Trust website at www.u3a.org.uk. More recent issues require Adobe Acrobat Reader which can be downloaded free from the website.

### Feedback

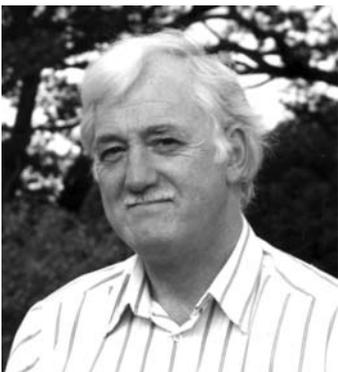
If you have any comments on topics in this issue, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please write to the editorial panel, c/o U3A National Office or e-mail the editor.

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### Tony Thornton: New editor of *Sources*



Tony is 64 years old, married to Pat and they live in a converted farmhouse on the outskirts of Carlisle.

For the last eight years he has been the leader of the Carlisle U3A Writers' Group.

Tony teaches Magazine Journalism in Carlisle learning centres. He also runs the U3A online Internet course *Writing For Publication*.

Tony qualified as a Production Engineer then formed a small company in this capacity.

Twelve years ago he wound this down to fulfill his dream of becoming a freelance writer. Since then he has had hundreds of articles published in magazines.

Tony is now the freelance editor for a publisher in

Carlisle. For four years he also ran his own publishing company and produced a quarterly regional magazine.

Tony: "I'm a believer in the U3A movement so becoming editor of *Sources* is a way of extending my support.

"I look forward to receiving your stories and comments, and presenting them to an appreciative audience."

# Languages in U3A

Continued from page 1

A strong point of these is that they are geared to adult interests, but U3As can also use school textbooks to good effect. Tape recorders are invaluable for spoken language.

There are also the 'newspaper' publications, such as the *Authentik* range, which provides lively treatment of topical subjects that is adaptable. Magazines of various language levels are also available for a small fee.

Most groups today use computer sources too. Sections of daily papers in any language can be downloaded free. Language materials and interesting exercises can also be downloaded and printed. An interesting source is the short accounts of wartime experiences from many countries at: [timewitnesses.org](http://timewitnesses.org)

These are translated into French and German and the background is familiar to our age group. The Internet is a useful source of information, images and ideas. Instant translation, using say, Babel, is a challenging exercise. If

even only one member of the group is a computer user, these resources are available for all.

But why do U3A members go to language groups? Some years ago, we did a survey. For many members there was a practical reason for learning. They wished to visit, or even live in, another country. They had friends or family abroad. Or perhaps they wished to regain or even just maintain, a language they had learnt in the past.

Others had missed the chance to learn a language earlier in life and wanted to see what it was like.

Sometimes there was the added incentive that language learning improves the memory and is good mental exercise. As one member put it, "I want to activate my cerebral cortices."

There is another reason. Learning a

language opens many doors – a new world of history, literature and art, experienced at first hand. Speaking the language makes travel a different and richer experience as well as having practical benefits.

We can also make contact with our fellow U3As around the world. Many U3A language groups have initiated visits and exchanges with overseas groups. Sometimes these are on a yearly basis, with home stays. Sometimes it is a one-off experience, as when our colleagues in Malaga U3A went in search of the 'Russian soul'.

Internet contacts make communication faster and easier. E-



mail twinning works well and provides useful language practice.

How do we find out about U3As in other countries? We are fortunate in having the online contacts list of many countries, created by Peter Sinclair of Harrow U3A. There is a link to his list on the international U3A website at [www.worldu3a.org](http://www.worldu3a.org).

In the World Papers section there is information in several languages about U3As around the world. The section Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Age (AIUTA) describes its founding in English, French, German and Italian.

In the U3A Cooperation e-mail group there are international projects that groups could join.

When I started the first Subject Network in 1989, the members of language groups were anxious to share

ideas, solve problems and benefit from each other's experiences.

But how? One way was to subscribe to a newsletter where we could share our views. Another was a Study Day, where as well as meeting face-to-face to talk about our groups, we could have a display of language teaching materials, including our own tried and tested ideas. Eventually, we produced a series of discussion leaflets to summarise our experience and support new groups.

Some U3As, however, especially in the early days, had no one qualified to teach a language. Somehow they managed to go it alone.

I belonged to a group that learnt Esperanto using a course on audiotapes. Of course, Esperanto is a relatively easy language, but even so, to persevere with no correction or encouragement was hard. We visited a local Esperantist and spoke only in Esperanto. It turned out to be a stilted and curious conversation, but our excitement when we succeeded was well worth the effort.

One of our early leaflets was called 'Learning a language without a teacher', and several local groups succeeded in this.

In the days when Subject Networks ran groups parallel to the Social Weekend at the Annual Conference, I remember 'tasting sessions' where we experimented with learning German, Welsh and Esperanto in one day.

I think it was this experience of attempting the impossible which inspired me to experiment with Language and Culture courses, (ie Chinese and Russian) at the Cheltenham Summer School. No doubt there will be many more bold ventures ahead for our language buffs.

It was the Languages Network that pioneered the way for other Subject Networks. And to this day, we continue to experiment and cooperate to the benefit of our members.

# The languages dunce of Europe

This is how Britain appears in a recent report from the European Union, to be published by the Centre for Information on Language Teaching in its 2005 Handbook. Interviews conducted in 28 European states showed Britain to be ranked 28th, based on the percentage of speakers of any foreign language in the sample

## "But not U3A members!" says Gloria Blackburne

Against this trend among younger age groups, languages continue to be popular in the U3A, with groups coming into being as U3As are set up around the UK.

For this issue of *Sources*, I have contacted a sample of U3A groups representing various areas of the UK and one in Spain. Reports of their language activities appear below.

These show that 16 languages are being studied, from Anglo Saxon and Arabic to Yiddish, the most popular being French.

Congratulations to our language groups and their leaders for their continuing enthusiasm in studying their chosen languages, and special thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. If your U3A is studying a language not covered here, please let me know.

### Typical enquiries received

The enquiries I deal with come by post, telephone and e-mail. Alongside are some examples of enquiries received during the past year:

*Where can I find resources for a self-help group or for groups studying French, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Latin, Modern Greek and Urdu?*

*What about audio-visual materials, news broadcasts, materials on the Internet, Michel Thomas CDs and language-learning holidays abroad?*

*Are there language classes in my area? Can you find someone to translate a letter I have received from Russia?*

Help with materials is available from the valuable Resource Centre at the National Office, and websites such as:

#### ■ [bbc.co.uk/languages](http://bbc.co.uk/languages)

Transcripts of TV programmes and other material may be downloaded free.

#### ■ [www.sgci.mec.es/uk](http://www.sgci.mec.es/uk)

This is the Spanish Embassy website. If you click on Publicaciones, then on TECLA, you will find lessons produced weekly at three levels, plus an archive of lessons going back ten years. These may be downloaded free.



### Could you be our Network Coordinator for Languages?

Gloria: "This is an opportunity to let members know that I have decided to resign as Network Coordinator from 30 June 2005.

"I have been in the post for 11 years and feel that it is time to hand over to someone else. It is an enjoyable task, bringing one into contact with so many of our language groups."

**Gloria Blackburne**  
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## Sir Trevor McDonald at the European Day of Languages



## The European Day of Languages

On 27 September 2004, I attended a Festival to mark this day at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in the magnificent and recently restored Durbar Court.

Sir Trevor McDonald presented European Awards for Languages for 17 exceptional projects. These were chosen because they were highly effective in developing ability in other languages and could be models for others to follow.

### Some examples are:

■ A distance learning Access to Gaelic course brings together students worldwide to learn practical Gaelic.

■ The Institute of Linguists is working with Haringey Borough Council to provide an opportunity for Somali speakers to gain certification in their language and culture.

■ Nottingham Council offers staff in tourist offices the opportunity to learn a foreign language to welcome European visitors and deal with their enquiries.

The European Day of Languages is celebrated every year across Europe. Many of our U3As participate in local events to celebrate the Day.

# Resource Centre News

The focus subject for this issue of *Sources* is the study of foreign languages. In past issues we have had submissions from groups studying many different languages but the Resource Centre has stock related to the study of French, German, Italian, Spanish and Latin

The Resource Centre has a range of material for modern language study but we have concentrated mainly on material that can be used by beginners. Although some of the items we have for loan are language courses, they are only available for short loans for a group to try them. If the group then decide they wish to use that course for a long period of time, they would be expected to buy their own copy.

Probably the most popular sets we have are the BBC series: *Talk French*, *Talk German*, *Talk Spanish* and *Talk Italian*. They consist of a small booklet and two audiocassettes or CDs. They are specially designed for adults, unlike most courses that are designed for school or student use, and cover the basic language needed in everyday situations.

There are other good BBC courses that you can record from the *Learning Zone* programmes that are broadcast at night.

The Resource Centre has some of the printed extension booklets that you can borrow to supplement the courses, but you have to record the programmes. We do not have permission to copy them.

If you have Internet access you can register to get the BBC Languages E-mail Club Newsletter, which gives dates when courses are broadcast and lots of other useful information. To join, e-mail Tony Hammond who compiles the newsletter at:

tony.hammond@bbc.co.uk

As well as the language courses, we have a number of videos that can be used as teaching aids for groups, either made as educational programmes, or foreign language films that have been recommended for purchase by language group leaders.

A list of our language stock can be obtained from the address at the end of this article.

## Gardening

Gardening groups use our stock heavily during the winter months. I have started to collect gardening DVDs as well as videos. A lot of new stock has been added recently so please contact us to get the latest gardening list so that you can plan your autumn/winter programme in good time.

## Fashion and Art

We have recently acquired a set of three videos on the history of fashion. They are presented by Karl Lagerfeld and trace the development of fashion during the last 150 years.

The videos contain archive footage and interviews to present the social role of fashion, and to discuss contrasting approaches to it in the UK, USA, France and Italy.

Each video runs for 60 minutes and the whole set could form the basis for a short course on fashion as well as being of interest to history, art and design groups.

Another new series of videos I would like to promote is the BBC series *Shock of the New*. This consists of eight videos on modern art. Architecture, painting and sculpture are placed within a social, political and scientific context.

The subjects range from the machine age of the late 19th century to surrealism and pop art. I expect this to be popular and to be heavily used so please book early if you are interested.

I would be happy to send a single video for group leaders to preview if they are not familiar with the series.

## Music

Opera group leaders have been active in suggesting new DVD titles for our collection. Since the beginning of this year, I have purchased a number of



operas on DVD and we now have up-to-date lists of our new stock. Please let us know if you would like lists of DVDs only, or both videos and DVDs.

## On the grapevine

If you have a Line Dancing Group you might be interested in five audiocassettes that have been donated to our collection.

They are western music tracks suitable for line dancing and one: *The best of Western Line Dancing - Memphis Boots*, even has dance instructions included.

I don't think these would be suitable for a beginners group without an instructor. The instructions seem complex, but more advanced groups might enjoy the wider range of music.

The dance for each track is usually included on the printed cassette insert.

For further information or for lists of material on any subject please contact:

Elizabeth Gibson

Resource Centre Manager

Third Age Trust

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E-mail: resource.centre@u3a.org.uk

# Running a language workshop

What is a language workshop? Well, it's groups of aspiring linguists sitting at separate tables enjoying themselves. French beginners work earnestly here, Spanish improvers laugh over there, the Germans watch a video.

Three languages are offered at different levels comprising between three and eight learners.

Our aim is to settle each cluster with a language pack, a cassette player, a good dictionary and a suitable individual to act as informal leader.

Success is undoubtedly bred by light-hearted rapport, the exchange of telephone numbers, and people calling if they are unable to attend.

Each year begins with a little general discussion. What is language? How do we learn? Why do we want to? How can we help ourselves?

The BBC's excellent book, *Lingo* by Doyle and Meara, is helpful here. After that, it's down to business. Progress varies. A group has to gel and until this takes place you will get a disproportionate number of dropouts. Hanging on to beginners is not easy.

Seven years on, our two advanced groups are still with us and their level would surprise you. The Spanish learners knew nothing when they started, but these days I hardly dare go near them for fear of revealing my ignorance.

In the driving seat we have a team of four, a convenor plus three 'tutors'. These are not necessarily experts but they have some knowledge of at least one foreign language and plenty of enthusiasm to go with it.

Our convenor collects the money, pays the rent, sees that we sign in and looks after new applicants. Our three leaders, who are to some extent interchangeable, run around trying to be in two places at once, encouraging, entertaining, suggesting and explaining, providing materials and ideas to keep up interest.

Our evolution was gradual. We began using our own cassette players. We now own eight Sony machines and have access to a portable TV/video player, both purchased with a small grant from the Lottery (now Community) Fund.

For years we charged a nominal sum for each weekly attendance (free to basic

The Language Workshop has been an important part of the U3A programme in North Down and Ards in Northern Ireland since we started in 1997. We now average 25 to 30 participants per week and run up to eight groups simultaneously, so we must be doing something right!



Joyce Gibson, Language Workshop Leader



The language workshop at North Down and Ards

pensioners), and funds mounted up enabling us to purchase communal dictionaries, tapes, and books.

Learners are persuaded to buy their own books but an assortment of extra materials sustains interest and eases the load of the floating supervisors. In addition, language programmes from TV and radio are sometimes recorded.

Language course packs, on which the whole system depends, must be attractive to adults – well set out, colourful and easy to follow, comprising a book, tapes and possibly a video.

We chose Palgrave MacMillan's *Breakthrough* as our main pack, whilst for beginners the BBC's *Let's Talk* is helpful. Hodder and Stoughton's *Living* series panders to the taste of the more formal amongst us, and why not?

Familiar methods are occasionally comforting. BBC courses such as *Sueños* and *French Experience* are excellent but not recommended without a tutor. They are used as supplementary material or for our more advanced learners.

Disadvantages? Sessions can be noisy. A large hall helps – tables can be spaced well apart. A few side rooms would be even better. Acquiring books and equipment took forever, but to tide us over we borrowed books and once even a language teacher from our friendly local Adult Education College.

And the advantages? Administration is minimal. Numbers ensure we can pay the rent. We use the same tutors to work with several levels and even several languages during the one session. Learners soon realise that they can manage on their own. They enjoy the challenge. Small gatherings are friendlier, especially for oral work, encouraging participation.

Language workshops give great pleasure to those involved, making and cementing lasting friendships. They follow the tenets of U3A – self help, teaching and learning from each other. What's more, they encourage the notion that learning a language can be fun.

You get out of a workshop whatever you put in. Have a go. You'll enjoy it!

# A tough challenge

Although two of us had been foreign language teachers, we were by no means familiar with the Cyrillic script, let alone Russian language courses.

When the catalogue arrived from the London-based booksellers Grant and Cutler, we were obliged to use our intuition. The course we chose, Ruslan 1 and 2, turned out to be ideal: modern, lively, and geared towards the spoken language. Cassette tapes and a compact disc are useful adjuncts, providing the opportunity for interactive learning via dialogues, grammar exercises and viewing video clips.

We also chose a reader:

**Читаем О России по-русски**

This was published in St Petersburg in 1997. It contains an extensive collection of texts of varying length and difficulty. It's divided into sections covering: writers, composers, artists, scholars, explorers, fictional stories, literary extracts, and short biographies of historical figures. The book offers a wealth of information as well as interesting reading.

Contributions to our fortnightly sessions are also made by members in the form of songs, newspaper articles, and sightseeing brochures.

**When our small group started to learn Russian some seven years ago, we were groping in the dark**



**Roy Walker**  
**Buckingham and District U3A**

Some of us have travelled to Russia and established personal contacts, which in turn has led to the exchange of letters and e-mails. Writing by hand or typing on the computer in Cyrillic script can be a real, though not insurmountable, challenge, but also a skill which can be put to practical use.

Obtaining a travel visa to Russia as an individual is still neither straightforward nor inexpensive (though an agent can be employed to accelerate the process), unless you book a holiday with a travel company.

Moscow and St Petersburg are favourite destinations and Ramblers Holidays Ltd is one company that does excellent value package tours to both, the latter including an optional trip to Novgorod. From St Petersburg you have access to Pskov or across Lake Ladoga to Valaam. From Moscow, excursions to the ancient cities of the Golden Ring, such as Yaroslavl and Rostov, or Vladimir and Suzdal, are a delight.

Our group visits to Russia have resulted in a developing interest in the music, art, literature, history, science and politics of the largest country in the

world, stretching from Western Europe to the eastern shores of Asia.

Since losing their status as a superpower, the Russians have experienced difficulties in their transition from communism to a form of democracy. They are still highly suspicious of America and the West.

However, after visiting Russia and meeting the people, it is impossible to deny their hospitality, generosity, individuality and passion.

What better way to understand a people than by learning their language?

Ruslan 1 and 2 is compiled by John Langram and Natalya Veshnyeva, obtainable from:

RUSLAN, 19 Highfield Road  
Moseley, Birmingham B13 9HL  
Tel: 0121 4491578

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## Russian in London

**Sylva Rubashova: Russian coordinator London U3A**

I am a native Russian speaker. Members of the group are encouraged to read, write and speak only Russian in class. This naturally does not occur without a struggle or without some mistakes.

We usually start the meeting with a brief discussion of the week's events. Some of us will have been to the theatre or to a concert. Some will have had guests and others speak of an interesting book they have read which they would like to share with others.

We call this 'razgovoritsia' – getting used to the language.

Early in the meeting we have a few explanations of grammar, although grammar is reminiscent of the past for the group. Obligatory homework is also a

thing of the past but one of our members, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday, did a brilliant job of written work when she presented two of Chekhov's short stories with humour and elegance – though not without mistakes.

The main task is reading Russian books and translating into English. The problem is what to choose. Do we choose the book because it interests us or because the language is of such high quality?

During the past two years we have had a few rebellions. For example: I recommended a marvellous book, *The Faithful Russian*, about a guard dog who is supposed to be shot by his keeper after the prison for political prisoners they were guarding was being dismantled.

But the dog is not shot and the story goes on to tell of the dog's miserable life in cold freedom. A terribly sad story and some members felt it was too sad to read and the language was too contemporary.

There was even a bit of Russian slang and I was told 'we don't want that'. Fine. So another book was chosen. This time it was *The Dog's Hearth* by the famous writer Mikhail Bulgakov.

Similar criticism. This time it was not difficult enough! Finally, we chose a selection of short stories. More recently we enjoyed *Going Under* by Lidya Chukovskaya.

As the coordinator, I certainly enjoy the group meetings, the interaction with members, and the other related activities involved.

# Learning Ancient Greek

**Eva Gillies: Lewes U3A**

As we know, what's on offer at local U3As depends largely on available expertise. In Lewes, we're lucky. We have an Ancient Greek group.

This we owe to Caroline Wilson, who unbelievably, after a working lifetime of teaching Greek and Latin in schools, still has the energy and enthusiasm to take on late beginners and guide them through the intricacies of Homer, Aeschylus, Herodotus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Aristotle.

We go to plays. Caroline knows who's

doing a Greek play, whether in the original or in English translation (and often gets us cheap tickets). We go to lectures and study days too.

There's so much to learn.

Most of us have long known that Homeric and Classical Greece form an important part of our intellectual ancestry. We may even have known about Zeus and Athena, Aphrodite and Apollo. But I at any rate, having for many years earned my living in both oral and written translation, am also acutely aware that no translation can ever be a

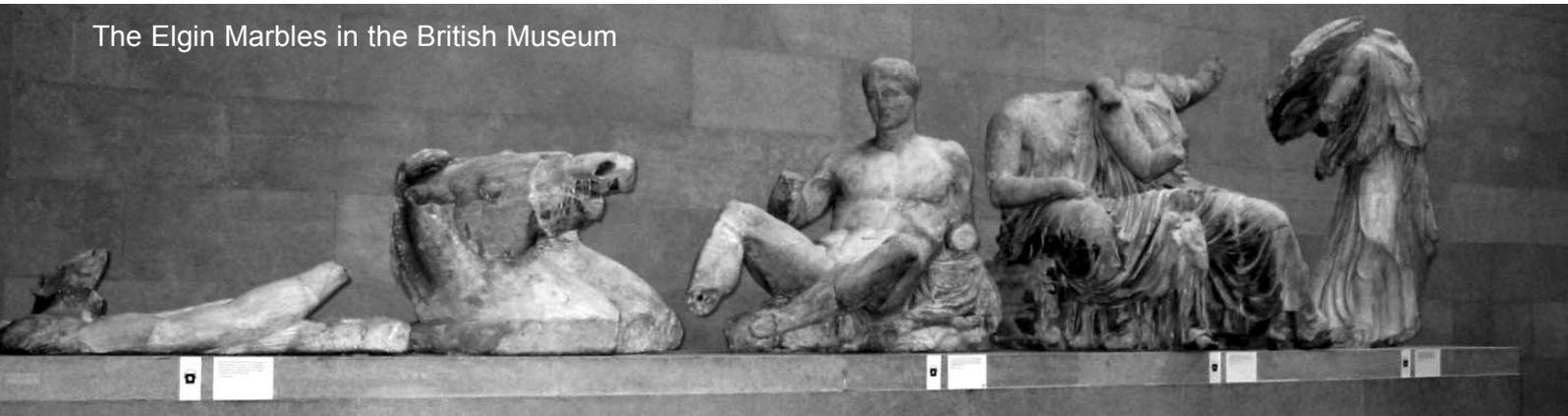
faithful rendering of the original.

The nutrition may be there, but the flavour is lost – and who eats just for nutrition? At any rate, I didn't want to die before having read Homer and Sophocles in the original. Now, thanks to Caroline Wilson, I shan't have to.

And what do we do when Caroline is busy with other duties, or even having a well-earned break? No, we don't converse in Platonic dialogues. Instead, we get together and read Old Testament Greek – a doddle after the ancient stuff, just as church Latin is after Caesar or Cicero. Fascinating, though – another door opened to us by learning Greek.

Yes! We are lucky in Lewes.

The Elgin Marbles in the British Museum



## Latin and Greek

**Louise Pavey: Bath U3A**

In Bath we have four groups for Classical Languages: Latin Language and Literature, Latin Intermediate, Literature and Classical Greek.

In Greek, we have worked through *Reading Greek* and are beginning to read extracts from Greek authors in *The Intellectual Revolution* (both CUP).

The seven members of the Latin Language and Literature group started as beginners and have been working together for several years. They have worked through *Reading Latin* (CUP) and are now competent to read Latin authors.

They have read about a third of *Juvenal, Satires 3* and are currently reading Cicero, *Pro Archia Poeta* in its entirety. There is a lot of discussion about background, questions of history and Roman law and antiquities.

The Intermediate group comprises people who have a good though long-

unused knowledge of Latin. This is refreshed by using *Reading Latin* and by reading extracts concerning Britain from Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*.

There is a small additional group with a more specialised interest in literature that wants to read more Latin. The members meet once a fortnight to tackle more demanding texts. They have read Virgil, *Aen. 8*, and are currently engaged on Propertius, *Elegies Bk. 1*. The object of these groups is to enjoy the pleasure of reading classical literature together.

I organise the groups and 'teach' the linguistic side. I am a Classics graduate and have taught Latin and Greek during my professional life. I am delighted to share my pleasure with people who are as interested and beguiled as I am.

There is a wide interest in the Classical World and several people have done some of the elementary stages of Latin, and stopped when they have found out what they wanted to know.

I am prepared to start a new beginners group when I have the time.

## salvete omnes!

**Mary Poyner: Rutland U3A**

When it was suggested that Rutland U3A should include Latin, a gasp went round the room. I thought that no one would entertain the idea but a week later, 12 people had expressed interest.

At the inaugural meeting, two groups were formed: beginners, which included one complete beginner, and intermediate for those who thought they could remember more than the beginners.

We started in May 2004, meeting once a fortnight. We follow the Cambridge Latin Course, 4th edition, which has splendid background material. Now and again I find a video that fits the topic.

There is also a book of Latin short stories that is good for homework. After less than a year, both groups are nearing the end of Book Two. We have been introduced to Pompeii, Roman Britain and Alexandria. Our beginners cannot be called real beginners any more. This summer I hope to visit Roman sites.

## Learning Italian Valerie Hodges: Cheltenham U3A

The first of four Cheltenham language groups was started 16 years ago. The latest is a few months old. They accommodate the various skill levels. The smaller groups allow each member to have several goes at whatever we are doing. Each one lasts 90 minutes with no coffee break.

Learning a language is much the same everywhere but these are some of the considerations we practice.

Trying to follow spoken English, even when fluent, reminds us of the basic necessity of getting pronunciation right.

There is a need to be at ease with numbers for money, dates and train times (announcers are no clearer in Milan than in Bletchley). A few sums, playing shops or card games like Newmarket, can help.

We include grammar because this makes building blocks for all kinds of non-colloquial communication. We do homework because it is satisfying and good practice.

Every group finds hearing speech difficult, so we practise listening without text to tape or CD (which is easier for finding the bit you want) or reading ourselves. The source needs to be non-conversational or you find yourself

struggling to translate names and getting the voices muddled.

Textbooks such as the Perugia books, which are designed for people of every nationality, are helpful because they don't use English. They are self-explanatory and make you think.

In one group we take it in turns to devise a short play, a quiz, something to be identified, words to be matched, etc. It makes for variety and takes a lot of thought and research.

In another, more advanced, we translate texts into and from Italian. We also listen to extracts from opera. This needs to be post Mozart so that you don't get two or three words lasting ten minutes – Ad-d-d-i-i-i-i-o!

We have a link with Pavia Unire U3A. When they visit, we pair up and take them home or go sightseeing rather than arranging a group event.

Lastly, you may find native speakers, perhaps through a church or, as we do, in the local friendly Italian Society.

You can join specialist link organisations like the San Martino Trust that offers English study to the descendants of Italians who helped our prisoners during the war.

## German literature

Brigitte Hay: London U3A

Descriptions of the aims of this group are announced in German so that every member knows from the start that only German is used. We call the group intermediate rather than advanced so as not to scare away the timid.

There is always a problem of mixed abilities. Some join to listen to or speak German while others join for the literature. The group embraces a range of linguistic proficiencies, from dim memories of O levels to native speakers, but the members work together well.

We guard against the discussion being monopolised by the more fluent and less shy members, but among older learners there is always a rich reservoir of knowledge and experience and everyone has something to contribute.

To avoid degenerating into mere 'conversation', the group is firmly based on the written word. The texts chosen must be of manageable length such as a short story, a radio play, extracts from longer works or verse. We select texts that are easily available. We use the same editions so that everybody 'sings from the same pagination'.

The dictionary is used sparingly.

## German conversation Sophie Dodds: Evesham U3A

### 'Deutsche Sprache, schwere Sprache', but not in Evesham

When the Evesham & District U3A was established three and a half years ago, the German Conversation Group was one of the first. Its development was fostered by the enthusiasm of a few people, who were eager to resurrect their language skills for a variety of reasons.

These included: conversations with friends in Germany; holidays in German speaking countries; or reviving knowledge from school days. The success is due entirely to the members, who have shown great interest and eagerness. The 20 members were split into two groups – one for more able and one for less able German speakers.

The activities are not confined to twice monthly sessions in my living room. Contact has also been established with a group of German visitors from Heidelberg. They are active members of

the German equivalent to our U3A but based at Heidelberg University. We have also welcomed visitors from Berlin.

Last October, members of our group joined with the German Group from our neighbouring Tewkesbury U3A. We went on a privately arranged, six-day trip to Seiffen. This is a small town situated in the Erzgebirge, a mountainous region bordering the Czech Republic.

From there, a visit to Dresden and Meissen, and a day trip through the Erzgebirge and Prague, were a few highlights we embraced in such a short time. This allowed the members to practise their German and have an enjoyable time in a delightful area.

For some time, a number of members have been writing interesting stories in German. We are collecting these stories to produce a book with a variety of highly diverse articles and subjects.

In 2003, Evesham & District U3A hosted the 8th National Language Day.

Members of the German Group organised the arrangements for this highly successful event. Language Days do cater for all languages, of course, but I mention it here to emphasise the dynamic nature of the Evesham Group.

At Christmas, we served German food and wine and sang Weihnachtslieder carols around the piano. On summer evenings we enjoyed garden parties.

Many groups throughout the country do similar things which goes to show the comradeship which develops through involvement in the U3A movement, whether it is studying languages or science, playing short mat bowls or Scrabble.

Becoming conversant with any language is a formidable and time-consuming task. When Mark Twain said: 'This awful German language with its grammatical gender and word arrangement', he wasn't entirely wrong, but we in Evesham have struggled with the grammar and found enjoyment in new and reawakened skills.

The U3A Summer Schools provide 13 hours of learning from experienced tutors. But why were there no languages?

### Jean Thompson: Reading U3A

With the AIUTA biennial Congress taking place in Shanghai in 2004, Chinese seemed a good place to start. I was reminded that U3A members should share their skills, especially when those skills were thin on the ground. In a fit of enthusiasm, I accepted the challenge.

China has many languages and dialects but the northern form, used by the court and officials in Beijing, has been accepted as standard.

We still call it 'Mandarin' but there aren't any mandarins so the correct name is Putonghua. It is taught in schools and used in newspapers. It has only four tones, but these are vital to the meaning of words.

And the writing? Those characters (about 50,000) are of ancient origin and not phonetic. Chinese languages speakers share the same writing system, but the characters must be written correctly in the fixed stroke order.

As a challenge, I accepted the offer of a display board on the third day. Most people seemed to think we were attempting the impossible anyway. But the students worked hard to provide their own version of what we had learned on smallish pieces of squared paper.

Fortunately the grammatical structures of Putonghua are relatively simple. I concentrated on simple everyday phrases we could use in the classroom.

In 1958, the Chinese government



With our Chinese hosts at the Shanghai International Congress 2004  
Front l-r: Jean Thompson (Reading U3A) Terry Chivers (Worthing U3A)  
Shirley Thew (SCE Chairman)

Back: Richard Forse (Bath U3A) and Tom Conway (Berwickshire U3A)

## Learning Chinese in four days

authorised a romanisation system called Pinyin, which enables characters to be written in our alphabet. Unfortunately, it was devised by the Russians, so takes a little practice. I was delighted when a student used her knowledge of Pinyin at the Shanghai Congress, when she joined the choir and learnt a Mongolian ditty.

China has the longest recorded history of any civilization – at least 5,000 years. Just before our course, the Chinese Embassy added another 2,000 years.

It was a challenge to condense this and relate it to the language, so we flew through 2,000 years a day, ending with current events.

I built a different world in our classroom by playing Chinese music, filling the walls with maps and pictures, and setting out as many Chinese objects we could assemble, including the Animal of the Year, who sat on my table to provide much-needed luck.

An ample supply of handouts was ready to supplement the sessions and our reading list constantly expanded.

Attempting Chinese was hard work, but the enthusiasm of the students has encouraged me to try the same plan with Russian. I'm sure there'll be bold U3A spirits who will join me in striving to do the impossible in four days.

## Speaking French

### Lis Shephard: Wendover U3A

When I retired after 40 years from being a language teacher – part-time, full-time, at home, in a school, in industry – the last thing I expected to do was to start teaching again, and enjoy it.

After a while I realised that there was something missing. I didn't go abroad much any more, being on my own. So I went along to some language classes, just to see what was going on, hoping to meet people who shared my appreciation of French and Spanish life.

Taking on the running of the group seemed too much when it was first suggested, but when Barbara, who's recently completed a degree in French, agreed to share the group, it began to sound possible.

We were both keen to help people to speak French and understand it when spoken. A few of our members were beginners but most had done some French at school – just didn't feel comfortable using it.

We don't do anything grand or literary. We just practise speaking and understanding spoken French.

Reading does come into it, of course, but only to extend vocabulary or as a basis for discussion. We are two small groups – the more advanced working from French magazine articles, the other from the BBC's *The French Experience*.

We use cassettes a great deal and a video or a film every once in a while. We have established a link with a group of people in Brittany, in the same age group as us, who are studying English with the daughter of one of our members.

Eighteen months later we enjoy leading the group, and I think they enjoy learning – at least they keep coming!

# Arabic

**Elizabeth Thomson: Southampton U3A**  
Subject Network Coordinator for Law and Government



The Bedouin – Photo: Nourit Padon-Melcer

One of our members offered us the chance to study Arabic with her. She wished to continue her own study having completed two years. A few decided to join her.

She started by giving us a map and a list of the 22 countries where varieties of Arabic are spoken, with their names and nationalities – in Arabic of course.

North Africa, the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula have a great history during many centuries. Springing to mind are Omar Khayyam, Lawrence of Arabia, Bedouins, Jerusalem, Morocco and the Sahara.

We are also acquainted with stories of war heroes ancient and modern, erudite men (and beautiful women) of Cairo, Alexandria, Tripoli, Carthage, Troy, Petra and Amman.

There are many different dialects in the Arabic speaking countries. Egypt's is distinct. In Iraq they speak Arabic, but not in Iran. They are neighbours with names that look similar in English, but are not written alike in Arabic.

Furthermore, in Iran they speak a tongue of Persian roots and origin, as do the Turks, only different. There is, one might say, a 'gulf' between them.

Reading, writing and speaking Arabic has proved difficult. It is a tough

language to learn. You read and write in a strange script and the pronunciation is often a matter of guesswork because vowels are not always shown. It is a fascinating study.

As our vocabulary increased, we looked at the differing customs, cultures and institutions of the Arabic speaking countries. This is important because locally we have a multi-cultural society.

People come to Southampton from all over the world and speak many different tongues for which City Hall, the hospitals and libraries have to cater.

Naturally, many of these visitors and immigrants know Arabic. It is the language of the Koran. It is appropriate that members of U3A, as an international institution, should learn about other races and religions.

You can learn a lot from the study of a language.

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## Yiddish Conversation

**Vita Glass: Stanmore U3A**

There is a Yiddish class that meets every Tuesday morning at the U3A venue in Stanmore.

About 20 members attend regularly to enjoy Yiddish conversation. Everyone is encouraged to speak in Yiddish and it has been wonderful to see how well the class has progressed (with gentle persuasion).

Before, many members spoke only a few words. Now they relate opinions and tell stories.

As many people know, Yiddish was the common language spoken by Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe and the Old Russian states. It is one of the most expressive – a language of tears and laughter.

Our conversation covers a multitude of interests, both past and present. The journeys down memory lane are wonderful, and even deliciously so, when discussing the marvellous food at our parents' tables in years gone by.

The discussions are lively and interesting, whatever the topic.

Our class has evolved into a cohesive, friendly and caring group, and we welcome casual visitors and new members.

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## Hebrew

**Yacov Moselle: Norwich U3A**

Although I am not a qualified teacher, I taught Hebrew (which is my mother tongue) in the past, at evening classes and in the Heder – the Synagogue school. So when I retired to Norwich I wanted to continue if possible and U3A gave me the chance.

We set up the group about four years ago and it meets once a week. Although people come and go, there are still some of the original members in it.

Some students are linguists and just love learning a new language, while others either want to be able to read the *Old Testament* in the original, or they have Jewish connections and want to help keep up the traditions in the family.

With the newcomers, I start with basic Modern Hebrew and then progress to

reading from the *Old Testament* and following the Jewish festivals in Hebrew. The Internet is a good source of material.

As students progress, we study Hebrew poetry using the *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, and read articles which I take from the Israeli papers, again via the Internet.

At every lesson, we have some conversation in Hebrew using language games to improve fluency. The students prepare a topic about their own lives to tell the others. For example, one student recently visited Israel for the first time and gave us a long and interesting description of his stay.

The group members have become friendly and if I am not available they meet in each other's homes. The more advanced help the beginners. They put in a lot of effort and I hope that they enjoy their lessons.

# Swedish language and culture

June Göransson: Monmouth U3A

Monmouth U3A has almost 40 flourishing group activities on offer, but in the summer of 2004 we decided that we should increase the number of language courses. Swedish is not a language that is easily accessed. Courses are few and demand probably somewhat minimal, but we decided to give it a try.

I had lived and taught in the country for 40 years before retiring to Monmouth with my Swedish husband. We felt we might offer an insight to another way of life, as well as the rudiments of a language more unusual than French, Spanish or German. To my surprise, by the end of the monthly meeting at which the group was first announced, it was fully subscribed.

It was decided at our first meeting that we would extend the concept of language learning to include culture. This has been advantageous. We start with language, checking homework and revision of work done previously. The middle part of the meeting is devoted to culture, the third part to the introduction of new words, phrases and grammar.

I concentrate on language, my husband deals with culture. His main interest is history, so some of the more interesting periods and personalities of Sweden's past are being explored.

We have learned about Swedish Christmas and Easter traditions, about St Lucia celebrations in December, and the 12,000-participant ski race called the Vasaloppet in March.

We have enjoyed the taste of Swedish food on festive occasions and learned some of the songs that accompany the toasts that are drunk.

Of course, it would be wonderful to become fluent in the language, but we have our feet firmly on the ground and know that would take considerably more application and hard graft than we are able or prepared to give.

We are busy people who have other interests too. Our aim is to learn words and phrases so that if we travel to Scandinavia, we will understand some of the things that are said to us and be able to respond with a few words in Swedish to the people we encounter.

In that, we are succeeding.

## Dutch conversation

W Vonk: Norwich U3A

To my surprise I learned that Dutch Conversation is unusual the U3A.

My approach requires an existing basic knowledge of the Dutch language. I encourage the class members to relate stories (fact or fiction) to give them confidence in speaking.

In doing so we come across words either not understood or used wrongly. This gives the result that we can have a 'mini' lesson on the derivations of words and/or expressions.

Often the class members have good relations with people in the Netherlands and therefore a reason for learning, but they lack the confidence to use the language fluently.

Maybe it is a trait of English people that they do not want to make mistakes.

I encourage them to practise every day. My approach seems to work and I do feel that being a native speaker helps a lot with pronunciation. We do not set tests and enjoy a relaxed atmosphere.

## Anglo Saxon Group

Margaret Lewis: Bath U3A

Our group has been running for about two years. There are 12 members and attendance is good.

To be correct perhaps we should be called the OE Group because our interest is mainly in the language of the period. However, we do make contact with the Anglo Saxon Society, the Gesithas, and interest ourselves in Anglo Saxon culture and mores.

We are a mixed group. Several members have studied Anglo Saxon at university level, some have a smattering of knowledge and one or two were new to the subject. We translate prose and verse and have just finished *Beowulf*. We pay some attention to grammar.

Recently we went as a group to Cirencester where the Museum has opened an Anglo Saxon department to display local discoveries.

I am told that we may be the only group that studies this language.

Is this true?

## Lymington Earth & Space

This title enables us to talk about almost anything. But in practice, it is difficult to consider geology and geochemistry without an outline knowledge of some astronomical concepts.

We are a group of seven and meet in private homes – usually mine because that's where the resources are. During 40 years, I have accumulated considerable quantities of fossils, rocks, minerals, books and maps. Our current investigations into a geological murder mystery alone call for 138 specimens.

Whilst the general practice is of taught mini-courses, participation in presentation is encouraged and general discussion ranges widely about TV, newspapers, books, bits picked up and things seen on holiday.

My extensive resources have been used for tutoring Earth & Space at the last three U3A Summer Schools at Cheltenham.

Paul Clasby: paul.clasby@tesco.net

## Metrication made not so easy

I was interested to read the article by Joy Joseph of Bristol U3A on Metrication. The change to Metric is not as simple as it could have been, although I agree that the system is easier to use than Imperial.

In the building industry, 1,000 millimetres make a metre. Centimetres are never used. A unit equivalent to about half an inch is not small enough even for the wet trades of a building site.

However, if you go down to the shops today to buy a pair of laces, a length of lace or anything else for that matter you will buy it in centimetres and never ever in millimetres. For further variety you can of course buy a metre length of 4"x2" inch timber.

Worse still, schoolchildren are being taught in centimetres. When one of my daughters enquired about the width of a door, I replied 2ft 6ins.

"What's that Daddy?" Quick as a flash I followed up with 750 mm.

"What's that Daddy?" I seized up but inspiration finally dawned.

"75 cms," I said somewhat lamely.

Come the revolution the situation may be resolved. In the meantime we shall soldier on using Imperial, two sorts of Metric and a mixture of both.

John Humphries: Haywards Heath U3A

# U3A goes back to school

By Audrey Cooper: Epsom & Ewell U3A

Three branches of U3A meet at Nonsuch High School for Girls in Cheam, for lectures in science and maths

*“The leader of our science group David McCallum and I began attending the lectures along with members of Sutton U3A. Last autumn we were joined by members from Banstead U3A. Nonsuch has obviously fulfilled a need. I have learnt so much and it has opened my eyes to a new world. I wasn’t interested in science at school (many decades ago) but it wasn’t presented in such an interesting and enjoyable way.”*



Audrey Cooper with Kathy Nicholls

The partnership came about when Nonsuch School was expanding its work in the community. Headmistress Genefer Espejo and the governors had decided to seek Specialist Science School Status. The bid for funding from the DfES had to include detailed plans for outreach activities.

In Summer 2003, they contacted the secretaries of Epsom & Ewell and Sutton U3A. Because group leadership of science had proved difficult to sustain, both committees were happy to publicise a group at Nonsuch which Deputy Head Kathy Nichols agreed to establish.

We began with monthly meetings and in-house speakers, setting up the routine of tea and sandwiches on arrival, provided by the school’s caterers and paid for from outreach funding.

The sixth form common room with its armchairs and ease of access from the parking spaces on the playground is an ideal venue. The 45-minute lecture is followed by questions. Our first meeting of 20 people heard about the moon from a teacher at the school who is a keen amateur astronomer. Enthusiasm was such that several members now regularly attend Nonsuch Astronomical Society’s evening viewings. In a sequel lecture he explained how distances to various bodies were first calculated and brought along his GCSE group to assist with demonstrations.

An ex-student, whose passion for insects led to a degree in Natural History, talked about her PhD research in Africa into the behaviour of dung beetles.

(Did you know that, before European dung beetles were introduced into

Australia, the dung of cattle was threatening to lay waste the soil because indigenous beetles could not assimilate it?)

Such gems and the infectious enthusiasm generated by hearing experts in their fields have sustained the group. Other speakers included lecturers from London and nearby Kingston Universities and the education officer from the Royal Meteorological Society. The year ended with our food technology teacher explaining what was meant by smart foods – she brought some to taste.

News spread and Banstead U3A members joined in. We now average between 40 and 50 of the 60+ members on the books and we have increased

## ***Gems of information and infectious enthusiasm sustain the group***

meetings from monthly to fortnightly.

We alternate topics between maths, physical sciences, biological and ethical issues. Feedback from members has been overwhelmingly positive and generated ideas for the future.

The benefits of the partnership are mutual. While members of U3A enjoy the hospitality, socialising with friends and the stimulus of learning, the school has benefited. The bid for Specialist Science Status was successful and in the recent OfSTED inspection, links with the community were described as excellent.

Although periodically deprived of the

use of their common room, sixth form students have also gained. Those hoping to become medical students have led U3A meetings – invaluable experience for forthcoming interviews.

The Medical Society gave a presentation and took questions on the ethics of genetic engineering. Then they led a debate on euthanasia. Students from the Philosophy Society acted as the opposition. This sensitive issue was thoroughly explored as 70 year olds challenged the thinking of 17 year olds.

Our Head of Maths rose to the challenge of finding speakers. She lured Professor Marcus du Sautoy to talk to U3A members with Y13 pupils in the audience. His book, *The Music of the Primes* was his topic and although a bit difficult for non-mathematicians, his lecture was fascinating.

To design a programme of speakers, lateral thinking and some insider contact in universities are essential. In one session led by the retired classics teacher, we learnt about the origins of medicine in Alexandria. In others we heard about herbal medicine, the good and bad side of fat, and of the work of a volunteer with VSO in Ethiopia.

Soon we will be learning about pre and pro-biotics, fractals, bee keeping and the physics of sailing.

For information and lecture summaries: [www.nonsuchhigh.co.uk](http://www.nonsuchhigh.co.uk)

Other interested U3As might begin by looking for specialist schools at: [www.dfes.org.uk](http://www.dfes.org.uk)

# English: Language of the world

Dr Sidney Soclof is a Professor at the California State University. In response to our general invitation to submit material for Online Courses, he has provided something out of the ordinary on this CD ROM

Dr Soclof used this material for lectures on cruise ships. It is in a suitable form for Powerpoint presentation on a computer or to project the slides.

The lectures cover a wide range and consist of some 20 sets of lecture notes. Each set can contain up to 50 slides of notes, graphs and pictures, and there are many audio recordings included. There is material here for many sessions if a group leader is looking for information to draw on.

The collection is subdivided into five sections. The first is an introduction: three sets of slides concerning the relative importance of English as a language throughout the world, given the increasing 'globalisation of the knowledge industry', which includes the establishment of the Internet and the setting up of call centres in India. It also gives an overview of the history of the development of English from the proto-Indo-European language through about eight stages to modern usage.

The second section traces the

There are readings from Chaucer as his form of English was probably pronounced, the Gettysburg Address as it was probably delivered, and recordings of some of Churchill's wartime speeches.

Here and there you stumble across little nuggets of information embedded in the text. Did you know that the Vikings had a word, *batswain*, which we still use as boatswain; and that the suffix 'by' means town as in Grimsby? Dr Johnson's Dictionary definition of oats – 'that grain which in England is fed to horses but which in Scotland supports the people', may be familiar, but have you come across this definition of cough? A convulsion of the lungs, *vellicated* by some sharp serosity. If you have, are you any the wiser?

Dr Soclof has given us a licence to print and sell copies of this CD ROM. It is of great interest to anyone interested in language per se and I guarantee you will sit at your computer and read it and study the maps and diagrams with fascination.

It can provide group leaders with a great deal of ready-made material to use

***'This can provide group leaders with a great deal of ready-made material to use with their groups. They and their members will learn a great deal, and will want to talk about it and research it further'***

beginnings of comparative linguistics from Sir William Jones in 1746, and goes on to discuss Grimm's Law, which describes changes relating to pronunciation rules. There is a fascinating section on the Celts.

Sections three, four and five take the history through from the Roman occupation, the Vikings, the Anglo-Saxons, the Norman Conquest, Chaucer, Shakespeare and much more. It digresses slightly into the history of dictionaries and dwells on important writers like Chaucer and Shakespeare.

with their groups. They and their members will learn a great deal and want to talk about it and research further.

Much of the material has been taken from the Internet. In true academic tradition, Dr Soclof presents a bibliography at the end of each section, and also gives many URL references so that you can pursue the work from the same sources.

I recommend the CD ROM for private viewing or for use in groups. If you are a leader who wishes to use it for your group, you can examine it in detail first.

CD ROM review  
by Ian Searle: Chair  
Online Courses Group



Dr Sidney Soclof

Occasionally a section was a little obscure, though that was rare. There is a lot of historical information and lots of maps, while audio clips demonstrate the phonology.

There are many sound clips to illustrate variations of pronunciation through history – compelling to listen to – and the differences in pronunciation in various English speaking parts of the world.

Some of the diagrams are animated. Living as I do, in Cornwall, I was particularly interested in the longish section on the Celts, though I found the following sentence difficult:

*The Gaelic and Brythonic groups of Celtic languages differ in that Gaelic preserves the velar element of the Indo-European labio-velar qu sound whereas Brythonic renders this sound as p. Thus Irish cuig or coo-ig, 'five', corresponds to Welsh 'pump'.*

I get the impression that this was reprinted from an article on the Internet. At least the reference is there if you need to follow it up. It is not typical however, of the general style of this excellent presentation.

The CD ROM: *English, Language of the World*, by Dr Sidney Soclof, is available on request from the National Office priced £5.

In our four groups studying French, many of the participants holiday in France or own second homes there. Their aim is to develop their understanding of the French language and to improve their accents to aid interaction with French people. The groups meet once a fortnight in the morning for between 80 and 120 minutes with a break for coffee.

Group One has been in operation since the setting up of Rutland U3A nine years ago. It is run by a graduate in French who has family living in Provence. She uses Hugo's *Advanced Course* as the basis of the studies but each member is expected to make an oral contribution and to do homework exercises. French crosswords from *La Vie Outre-Manche* are used to enlarge vocabulary. The 12 members are those whose French is quite good.

Group Two has been running mostly with the same six members for four years. This group has the best French speakers who either graduated in French, or who have lived in France.

They meet at the same time as Group Three. It is run by a retired university lecturer who chooses articles from papers e.g. *Le Monde*, to study aspects of French life, culture and attitudes.

In addition, members take turns to present something which has caught their attention, or to describe an experience they have had in France.

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## Learning Spanish

### Mary Havelock: Fuengirola U3A

Total immersion amongst native speakers is a highly recommended way of becoming fluent in a foreign language. But do not think this will automatically happen because you go to live on the Costa del Sol. This is tourist Spain where it is easy to get by without learning the language.

Supermarket shopping is much the same whether in Torremolinos or on Tyneside. Waiters and bar staff know enough English to satisfy your needs. Even the local train announcements are in Spanish and English.

Weekly English language papers report on local events and are packed with details of numerous societies where we can meet other ex-pats. The 'jewel of Fuengirola' is the only English theatre in Spain!

But if you want to feel part of the

# Rutland language groups

## Rutland U3A has 11 language groups, four French, three German, two Latin and one each of Spanish and Italian

### John Bagley: Rutland U3A

Assuming that the grammar is mostly well understood, the stress is on fluency, having a good accent and a wide vocabulary. They also exchange books in French for general reading.

Group Three consists of 11 members who have a background of school French. They meet for two hours using Hugo's *French in Three Months*. It has taken them far longer than three months to follow this course and frequent revision is needed to maintain fluency.

That might be considered a limited diet except that the sessions are enlivened with videos like those of BBC *French Experience* and printed material from France. The approach is oral but written exercises are used for consolidation.

This group is led by a retired librarian who visits France regularly and has contact with French graduates who can help out with tricky aspects of grammar, style and pronunciation.

Group Four was set up 18 months ago to cater for beginners for which there was no place left in Group Three. The seven members did O-level French at school and so are not true beginners.

community; explore wonderful cities; discover the joys of rural Spain; then you need to converse.

Spanish courses are usually fully subscribed, although numbers often drop as the studies become more demanding.

How frustrating it is after hours of learning rules and conjugations to find the old memory lets you down.

The excuses come out: "We never learned it in school", "I never knew what the tenses are in English so how can I learn them in Spanish?"

In Fuengirola U3A, we are lucky to have Patrick Kerschott who leads a weekly class in Spanish conversation. We read and translate stories, attempt quizzes, and practise using our varied levels in a social way.

We try, and I'm sure Patrick finds us trying, but for those taking part it is a happy hour – minus alcohol!

Thanks again, Patrick. Your time and patience are much appreciated.

The core of the course is also based on Hugo's *French in Three Months* but it is freely augmented with tapes, CDs and videos to give the participants authentic accents to copy. This group is led by an ex-Chemistry master who has no French qualification except that he visits France and attends Groups One and Two.

There would seem to be a rationale to re-allocate people between the groups dependent on ability but the groups have each developed an esprit de corps which strongly resists such a step. Therefore the groups happily carry on independently and with enthusiasm.

But when true beginners arrive they find that others who modestly describe themselves as beginners are so far ahead that they get discouraged. I would like to know how others cope with this.

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## Advanced Spanish

### Patricia Burroughs: Guildford U3A

Ours is a small group that has been running for many years. During this time, members have come and gone, and there are now just five.

We meet at my house. It is not often that we attract a new member – most potential Hispanophiles think the 'advanced' sounds rather off-putting and head for the more welcome-sounding Intermediate. It is not primarily a conversation group. Neither do I consider myself as the teacher. We are more or less at the same level.

Everybody contributes something, mainly articles from *El Pais*, topics picked up from the Internet, or material brought back from visits to Spain.

We are also reading *La Cabeza de la Hidra*, a Mexican novel. This is unusual for Spanish writing, having lots of conversation and a quirky storyline that unravels slowly. We also set quizzes and listen to Spanish tapes to correct our accents and pronunciation.

I hope this short description doesn't seem like heavy going. We have great fun, plus the pleasure of becoming proficient in our grasp and enjoyment of a great language.

The last article in *Sources* gave a progress report on London. The Plymouth Project is now under way and some U3A members in Reading are hoping to research aspects of their hometown as a project later this year.

This summer's projects are: at the British Museum – on the Museum's coverage of the period 100BC to 100AD; at the Geffrye Museum – on the presence of black people in London for the last 300 years; and at the National Film Theatre, where a team is looking at films featuring older people with the support of the British Film Institute. This project will culminate in a study day at the NFT during Adult Learners Week in 2006.

In the autumn we'll be working with the Imperial War Museum, researching and talking to the public about some of their exhibits; and at



Jenny: 'I have leaflets that can help.'

the Science Museum on *Unknown Heroes - Women Scientists*, leading to a presentation on International Women's Day in March 2006.

At the Manor Gardens Centre in Islington we shall be working on a permanent exhibition recording the Centre's beginnings as a School for Mothers in 1913.

We are still talking to the National Gallery and Keats House in Hampstead.

In London, we are fortunate to have energetic and

# Shared Learning

## Projects update: Jenny Clark

**These are themed research projects in institutions involving a group of people - each member from a different U3A**

interested Life Long Learning Officers, as well as a large number of national institutions. But I am sure that other institutions, galleries and museums in other parts of the country would be interested in working with us.

The projects provide a team working and researching for the benefit of the hosts as well as the team members.

Not all the projects will be historical. How about scientific or ecological research? What about local

food, agricultural patterns and local music? Whatever they have been working on, the people that have taken part in a project in the past two and a half years have enjoyed themselves.

If you need advice, ask your local Learning Support representative, your Regional contact, or U3A National Office. Also, I have leaflets that can help with starting up and ideas for projects.

Tel: 020 8346 3751

[jenmal@connectfree.co.uk](mailto:jenmal@connectfree.co.uk)

## Shared Learning in Sussex

**Sophie Deakin-Smith: Brighton and Hove U3A**

The Sussex Region started its Shared Learning ventures by following the London pattern.

We worked originally through museums but members found this restrictive and suggested a more flexible approach. They decided to

work with other people on a theme embracing all U3As and members in the county.

The chosen theme was Entertainment. This gave members the opportunity to work as individuals, or in small groups as U3As, or groups within U3As. Personal

The story of a professional dancer - with 50-year-old ballet shoes



choice was the essential element here.

A committee was set up to coordinate the contributions. This did not remove the element of surprise. People emerged with unexpected and welcome contributions.

They were remarkably generous in displaying precious objects: a childhood diary; a pair of 50-year-old ballet shoes; a collection of board games, all of them irreplaceable.

We held an exhibition at Ringmer Village Hall and made an event of the day.

There were speakers on a variety of interests: an introduction by a member who had collected varied objects and files of information; the story of a professional dancer; the history of hand bell ringing, a fascinating piece of research into the seaplane adventures off Brighton Pier; and the history of film making in the area.

Much of this had a personal input adding to the interest.

The exhibition showed a wide diversity of areas of study. To illustrate the collections aspect of entertainment there were pub games, children's pursuits, dances, cricket matches, and research into circuses and pier shows including midgets and how they found a protector.

There were many methods of illustrating the theme. These included folders of writing, photographic records, crafts, drawings, paintings, and using the Internet.

The film talk was illustrated by a film about the industry in Shoreham-by-Sea. Hollywood had nothing on the lifestyle of the London stars that built their bungalows here.

We hope to extend the project into further exhibitions. A number of items will be on display at local events illustrating the many aspects of U3A.

# We do cook!

**Kathleen Kinder: National Coordinator for Cookery**

I was pleased to read Maggie Smith's contribution in *Sources 24* regarding the culinary activities of the Harrogate Vegetarian Cooking Group. It is encouraging to read of their enthusiasm and expertise.

However, Maggie's remark that most of the groups in touch with me 'do not cook' is misleading. I think she means that we do not cook a meal for members at every meeting as the Harrogate Vegetarian Group do so successfully.

There is a difference between Cooking the activity, and Cookery the subject. I disagree that Cookery Groups who are not into regular, on-the-spot, cooking should go under the label of Food Appreciation.

There are people like me who are interested in all aspects of cookery and food, including its history. Under what umbrella should I be put?

There are all kinds of reasons why there is such a wide variety of activity. Numbers in a group, personnel, circumstances and facilities countrywide vary enormously. What should happen and is happening in the majority of cases is that the cookery/food experiences which are learnt in talks from speakers, demonstrations, practical activity, or in conversation in the U3A Cookery meetings, are increasingly influencing for the good, how we cook at home and that surely, is of crucial importance.

Members of small cookery chat groups like my own in the Settle Area U3A often bring the result of their home cooking to the meeting to be sampled. We decide on the dish beforehand.

When we did soups we were intrigued to discover that the parsnip and coriander soup from two of our members differed markedly in flavour.

The day before Shrove Tuesday, in my kitchen we cooked a variety of pancakes from French crêpe to Scotch. We shall cook together again, but only when we choose to do so.

Last September, I sent out my first quarterly letter. I have few who receive by conventional post. Most are on e-mail and are the chief beneficiaries. They are the ones most in contact and who are being made aware of what others are doing in this area.

A topic that crops up repeatedly is cooking for one or two people. I know of two cookery groups that have formed because of people on their own that want help to attempt interesting and healthy meals for one. Surprisingly, there are few recipe books to help them.

I have mentioned what I know is available in book and Internet form in an article *Cooking for Singles and Doubles* on our website.

Another article is on *Salt and a Healthy Diet*. I have been putting recipes for one or two people in our monthly newsletter, when there is a space. These are on the web-site:

[www.SettleAreaU3A.org.uk](http://www.SettleAreaU3A.org.uk)

I will send a copy of an article to anyone not online on receipt of a s.a.e. and two 1st class stamps, but I am encouraging cookery group coordinators with no e-mail to find how to do this amongst their friends.

I have more on how to use e-mail to



Kathleen: 'U3A cookery groups could exert a good influence wider than our membership.'

disseminate information and am gathering a list of topics that have been suggested to me and which I'm prepared to research if the interest is sufficient to warrant my time and effort.

Last year, there was government legislation to try to stop too much salt and other additives being put in the prepared food we buy. The case for more of us learning to cook healthily for singles and doubles and being in control of what we eat gets more compelling every day. U3A cookery groups could exert considerable influence for good, much wider than our membership.

Meantime, all strength to the Harrogate Vegetarian Cooking Group's elbow! This successful group is one example of the amazing diversity and richness gathered under the cookery area's large umbrella.

Tel: 01729 822444

Valley View, Station Road, Giggleswick, Settle, North Yorkshire BD24 OAB  
[kathleen.kinder@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:kathleen.kinder@ukonline.co.uk)

Brian Mee of Watford is full of admiration for the SELCHP plant at Deptford.

Among his reasons are less landfill and less fossil fuel burnt to produce electricity.

I would like to point out that a large proportion of combustible waste consists of plastic derived from fossil fuels.

It takes four times as much energy to recreate the materials that are burnt as can be obtained from their incineration. With more recycling, the percentage of plastic is set to increase.

## A Load of Rubbish, *Sources 24*

Mr Mee is also delighted at the economic benefits of sending the ash to China. Even the bottom ash is toxic and it seems unreasonable to expect the Chinese to build roads from a material that the West considers dangerous.

It is true that such planning applications are opposed by local people. I have been campaigning for 15 years but that is not a Nimby attitude. There is a network of such groups across the country that campaign and support each

other. We oppose all incineration, not just the one in our own district.

Burning waste does not make it disappear. It is sometimes known as landfill in the sky but its potential for harm is far greater. The chemicals affect people thousands of miles away, unlike the local effects of landfill.

The answer, of course, is more recycling, and even before that, more re-use and minimisation.

**Jo Livingston: Bexley U3A**

*(This is representative of other comments we received on this matter. Ed.)*

## English accents and dialects A useful subject for a study group

Regional accents are back in fashion and spoken with pride. England's rich assortment of accents and dialects are featured on a website from the British Library.

Visitors can listen to the incredible variety of spoken English, and hear the sounds and words that define people from all four corners of the country. The site is *nobbut* a mouse-click away at: [www.collectbritain.co.uk/collections/dialects/](http://www.collectbritain.co.uk/collections/dialects/)

It is *wick* with more than 55 hours of recordings, and users can hear how people spoke in the 1950s, and how they speak now.

The words in each recording are explained so that users know what a *stithurum* is, what to put in the *barton-linhay*, how to play *knur and spell* and when to eat *bait*, *bever*, *docky* or *snap*.

The interviewees represent football, farming, steelwork, mining, fishing, shopping and computers. They reflect ways of speaking and ways of life that have changed forever.

The site features pairs of recordings from more than 250 locations in rural England and multiple extracts from today's urban centres. The website will interest allcomers and should prove invaluable to actors for research.

Curator Jonathan Robinson: "The way people speak in England has changed during the last half a century and there is still an incredible amount of diversity.

"The site has been made possible because the British Library's oral history holdings include two wonderful collections: the *Survey of English Dialects*, recorded by Leeds University in the 1950s; and the *Millennium Memory Bank*, recorded by the BBC in 1998/9."

The website sits within the British Library's Collect Britain website:

[www.collectbritain.co.uk](http://www.collectbritain.co.uk)

It contains more than 90,000 images and 250 hours of sound recordings.

**Ben Sanderson: 01937 546126**

The Survey of English Dialects was the brainchild of Harold Orton at Leeds University and Eugen Dieth from the University of Zurich.

From 1950 to 1961, a team of fieldworkers collected data in 313 localities. Their findings, published between 1962 and 1971, continue to be used by linguists worldwide. The recordings are held in the British Library Sound Archive. For full details visit the online catalogue at: [www.cadensa.bl.uk](http://www.cadensa.bl.uk) reference C908

**Nobbut** means only (north), **wick** with means alive with, full of (north), a **stithurum** is a long-winded, dull tale (Lincolnshire), a **barton-linhay** is a cart-shed (Devon), **knur-and-spell** is a traditional game played with a stick and bat (Yorkshire) and **bait** (north-west & north-east), **bever** (south), **docky** (East Anglia) and **snap** (north & midlands) are local names for food taken to work.

## Are the British lazy about languages?

A steady increase in the number of British settling on the Costa Brava has trebled membership of our local U3A. Some newcomers make an effort to learn Spanish before coming, but once arrived, they hardly use it.

Like other autonomous regions of Spain, Catalunya has two official languages – Catalan and Castellano, which foreigners call Spanish.

Because many Catalans dislike speaking Castellano, there is a strong political drive in the region to minimise its use. Schoolchildren and students are taught exclusively in Catalan, and immigrants seeking work need to speak it. Official publications, once printed in the two languages, are now issued only in Catalan.

If you come from a country with several official languages it is not daunting to learn another. But for the monolingual, self-conscious and insular British it is a major problem.

Those with some Castellano who try to learn Catalan get confused and mix the two – to their own frustration and the irritation of the natives.

Catalan is harder to learn than Castellano. Expats who haven't studied anything – expecting English to be spoken everywhere – are ill-equipped to learn any foreign tongue, let alone that.

That, unfortunately, seems true of most older British people, even when they have spent years abroad. Nearly all deny having had an opportunity to study languages at school – or if they did, were completely baffled by them.

More puzzling is the general lack of grounding in English grammar. Weren't we drilled in the basics before we left primary school? How did the system fail these otherwise successful people?

When our U3A committee agreed to provide language classes for newcomers, they opted for Castellano. We asked the Town Hall to provide Castellano classes. The Council preferred them to learn Catalan, but did not insist and found us the teachers we needed.

Most British students drop their classes anyway, before reaching any useful standard, so the same would have applied to Catalan. They then return to socialise exclusively in English company,

**From poor to abysmal. Has English language teaching gone full circle? Why are the English so lazy about languages?**

**Ellen Webster: Palafrugell U3A**

watching only Sky TV at home, unable even to go to the cinema. How do you take part in the local culture if you can't speak its language?

In the 70s and 80s, languages were taught successfully in British schools, in new and exciting ways. It was possible in those heady days to learn Russian, Chinese, and Japanese in State schools.

Unfortunately, the new National Curriculum ruled that French must take precedence in schools that taught only one language. How many languages departments must have suffered from this, as head teachers seized their opportunity to cut salary costs?

As a result of restricting access to so many other languages, is Britain about to export new generations of monoglots to the linguistically versatile EU? How will our young people compete in tomorrow's tougher world?

## The Welsh Language Today

During the 20th century the number of Welsh speakers dropped remarkably. The oratory and hymns of the chapels and churches and the music of choirs gave way to outside leisure interests. Administrators, from kings to schoolmasters, can hang their heads in shame.

The Welsh Not, vehemently objected to, was used as an attempt to deter children from speaking their mother tongue. Anyone caught conversing in Welsh had to wear around his or her neck a board bearing the words Welsh Not.

To be rid of this, the 'culprit' had to name any other child heard speaking Welsh, and at the end of the day punishment was meted out to the hapless wearer. Something similar was used to stop children speaking Afrikaans in South Africa. Many parents and teachers believed that the young would have a better future with an English education.

OM Edwards said that but for the Sunday School he would have lost his culture. Islwyn, in an awdl (a poem) states that everything is sacred, and Rowan Williams in his translation of Ann Griffiths' hymn points out:

*Wonder is what the eyes of angels see.*

It is a wonder how the Welsh language survives. Our pop groups are renowned and the pupils who attend bilingual

## Goronwy Owen: Porthcawl U3A

schools take their Welsh language home to their parents.

One International Eisteddfod and two Nationals raise Wales high in the cultural world. Urdd Gobaith Cymru's efforts deserve an accolade. The Romans tried to destroy the Druids and their influence, but Celtic culture is still the cornerstone of the Welsh.

Today Dafydd Iwan blithely sings:

*Ry'ni yma o hyd (We are still here).*

### Programmes for Teaching Adults

Opportunities to learn Welsh are extensive and varied throughout the country. Colin Williams, the Secretary of the Welsh for Adults Consortium, said:

"The Consortium serves our area with numerous day and evening courses in local towns and villages and in stages up to GCSE and A level equivalent.

"There are websites, radio and TV courses, CD-ROMs, correspondence courses, and Welsh in the Workplace, Open College Network and NVQ units. *Cadwyn* and *Lingo* are magazines aimed especially at learners.

"Weekend residential and summer courses take place in a variety of locations. There are structured courses for individuals, groups and families, while support is offered to schools.

"In my opinion the choice is superb,

# Welsh

both in number and quality, and the choice of reading material is extensive. Furthermore, the University of Wales involves itself in further courses, if any learners hope to extend themselves."

Every Sunday afternoon a special news programme, *The Week*, presents news to learners using simple language. S4C also provides a wide subtitle service on a great number of their projects – simple Welsh subtitles for learners or those unsure of their ability, as well as English subtitles in at least 80% of Welsh analogue programmes.

Porthcawl U3A's Welsh Conversation Group, led by our own members, meets every fortnight. It gives learners and proficient speakers an opportunity to practise their skills by discussing literature and everyday occurrences. It is a small but active group. A number still follow other Welsh courses.

Last year we visited the National Eisteddfod in Newport, and we hope to take part in other outside activities.

Our intention is to give every person self-confidence and the ability to take part in discussions and conversations when the opportunities arise.

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## How to learn a foreign language

### Marion Lyndsey-Noble: Dulverton U3A

We know the stereotype English holidaymakers that flail their arms around or speak slowly to make themselves understood to foreign nationals.

Some have come a cropper when buying cheap houses the locals want to get rid of, simply because they couldn't figure out what was going on. Assuming that everyone speaks English is foolish, particularly when it involves business transactions and money.

So how do we learn a foreign language? Unfortunately not through osmosis. Many of us have spent years learning French, German or Spanish and then forgetting it. There are many refresher or beginners courses at local U3A centres and other adult learning institutes. It is fun to bring it back in equally unconfident company.

Some people prefer teach-yourself

books, video or audio courses. The best are the Michel Thomas tapes. He has been known to teach French to Hollywood film stars in a weekend. He demonstrated his method some years ago with a group of hopeless and unwilling pupils at a London comprehensive.

They volunteered because of the prospect of appearing on television, and the promise that there would be no writing or homework.

Monsieur Thomas encouraged them to forget everything they had learnt as soon as they left the classroom. All he asked them to do was repeat his grammatical patterns and to think along. No more.

After a week, to everyone's astonishment, these ten pupils could hold a conversation in French.

The Thomas tapes are available in bookshops and from the Resource Centre – not cheap but well worth the

money. Another advantage is that there are no chapters, so the learner can switch them off at any time.

Some foreign colleges offer total immersion courses. These are not for the faint-hearted because the staff refuse to speak English. But after a few days, the shock wears off. Reluctance dissolves and speech patterns are absorbed and – oh joy of joys – reproduced.

Precision of language skills tends to suffer, but most of us are happy if we get the gist of things and can make ourselves understood.

As for methodology, I believe in the good, old-fashioned memorising of vocabulary and grammar. They give a better foundation for expressing your thoughts and save you from ordering endless rounds of imaginary croque-monsieurs and cafés au lait.

If all else fails, do what some of my students did. Treat yourself to a holiday abroad and fall in love. Your foreign language skills will improve no end!

## U3A Online Courses

The courses listed are available online. Visit the website, [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) and click on the link to Online Courses.

During the summer of 2005, we are offering one tutored course (fee £15) from our UK list: **Digital Imaging**. This course lasts eight weeks, as do most tutored courses when available.

The other courses are untutored (fee £7.50) and can be downloaded for personal use or for use with a group.

The copyright to all courses is owned by the Third Age Trust or by U3A Online Inc in Australia.

### Course title

#### General

- Ageing and retirement
- Antartica - the frozen continent
- Astronomy
- Autobiography and journaling
- Botany for knowledge and enjoyment
- Continents on the move
- Design in your life
- Digital imaging
- Garden history
- Genealogy
- Introduction to Western Philosophy
- Religions of the world
- The night sky
- (NB: relevant to southern hemisphere)
- The Romans
- Understanding computers
- (tutor available for discussion)
- Writing family history

#### Writing courses

- Creative writing: fiction
- Creative writing: short stories
- (level 2 - requiring some knowledge)
- Creative writing: poetry
- Write to good effect
- Writing for publication

#### Art history courses

- Italian art: 1400-1600
- (level 1 - suitable for beginners)
- Artists of Spain
- (level 2 - requiring some knowledge)
- Venice and her artists
- (level 2 - requiring some knowledge)
- Visiting artists in Rome
- (level 2 - requiring some knowledge)

#### Frameworks: free study material

- Development of lighthouses
- Art, Genetics
- Wartime history/Reminiscence
- Oral history/ Languages
- History/Architecture

## Australian Online Courses

Australian courses are available to U3A members in the UK. See the website for up-to-date details and how to apply.

These can also be found on:

[www.u3aonline.org.au](http://www.u3aonline.org.au)

Click on Courses.

Applications from the UK are made through our own [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

Click on Online Courses.

## WANTED



### Online Course Writers

We want to expand our range of online training courses so we are looking for authors to write them.

We have gained much experience during the last four years and can offer help with structure, approach and level of competence to suit our student members.

Course writers are likely to be the course tutors that will guide the students through their material.

Your hard work would be rewarded by the enormous sense of achievement gained by the participants. Many of them cannot attend normal groups and would jump at the chance to learn from you.

Please contact Ian Searle who will explain the procedure.

Tel: 01209 210220

E-mail: [isearle@btconnect.com](mailto:isearle@btconnect.com)

### Read All About It

You can read classic books for free at: [www.classicbookshelf.com/library](http://www.classicbookshelf.com/library)

Choose an author

Then choose a book

Now, if you go straight to Chapter One you'll get a conventional screen presentation of an e-book.

The trick is to click on the long Open button in the yellow box and reveal the beauty of this website which is that the user can so easily control the appearance of the text – colour, background, serif or sans serif and, above all, size (height).

This is rather useful for the sight-impaired whether they have their own computer or if they trot down to the local library for a session.

*Mike Williams*

## Forthcoming Events

### Summer Schools 2005

28 June - 1 July (Chester)

19 July - 22 July (Cheltenham)

### Science

A three-day seminar at a study centre in Abergavenny in August 2005 arranged by Ken Bates on **Science, Energy and Environment**

Tel: 01159 241156

E-mail: [ken.bates@freeuk.com](mailto:ken.bates@freeuk.com)

### Folk Dance Holidays

26-30 Sept and 3-7 Oct

Join in the dancing and rambling during a week at Halsway Manor, Crowcombe, Somerset arranged by Roy Phillips.

Tel: 01225 420673

### Philosophy

Thursday 28 July at:

The Priory Centre, Abergavenny

Applications: Dr Terry Thomas

Tel: 01873 859454

E-mail: [tthomas@mardy.demon.co.uk](mailto:tthomas@mardy.demon.co.uk)

### From Philip Bristow: Ludlow U3A

I run a group on Horology and would like to know if similar groups exist and if it is possible for me to be put in touch. An exchange of the syllabus details would be useful. Sources of additional information could also be exchanged.

*Phillip Bristow: [pdbristow@bigfoot.com](mailto:pdbristow@bigfoot.com)*

### Free language lessons

Lots at [www.word2word.com](http://www.word2word.com)

[www.studyspanish.com/freesite](http://www.studyspanish.com/freesite)

[www.deutsch-lernen.com](http://www.deutsch-lernen.com)

[www.bonjour.com](http://www.bonjour.com)

<http://assyrilanguage.com>

[www.gaelg.iofm.net/LESSONS/LESSONS](http://www.gaelg.iofm.net/LESSONS/LESSONS)

### Finally:

The *Sources* Team would like to thank those that sent their stories and pictures for this issue. Unfortunately, it was not possible to publish every one.

It is clear from the response that language learning is as popular as ever. This success is largely due to the group leaders whose efforts are the foundations that support our university.

We look forward to preparing the next of our 'new look' issues and receiving contributions from the historians.

*Tony Thornton*