

Chairman's note

Now Easter has passed it is time for us to enter into our summer season. There is much activity for all to enjoy and of course it is time for preparation of our 2012-13 Handbook. See Beryl's reminder on page 3 to GOs about their entry: please return details promptly to Robin Tonge to ease his workload in compilation.

Over the past month or so I have been receiving returns from you: thank you to those who have responded. The information so far gathered is beginning to reveal some trends and if they represent the whole membership then I can see that those of you who participate tend to be very active. Counter to this there are members who through age, mobility or other reasons cannot take part in activities as much as you would like. An interim summary of the findings to date appears overleaf, and I would ask those of you who have not yet put pen to paper, please to do so. Returns can be by hand to the monthly meetings or by post or e-mail if you have the facilities.

One positive note from the information gathered about suggestions for new groups has revealed that there is no shortage of interest areas. A recurring theme has been an interest in Music, Singing and Dancing so maybe we can consider this further and get some new groups established. So overall a very worthwhile exercise: whilst still incomplete it is providing an insight into how we are doing. A full report of the findings will be made in due course.

We are in the process of updating and replacing our existing website. A new website is under test by a group of individuals with the aim of improving its utility for all members. It will contain much more information about our activities and in time it is expected to be built into a more interactive site. The intention is to replace the existing website and go live in the Autumn but if you want to have a look and comment then go to <http://www.7oaksu3atestsite.org.uk>

Bob Ruffles
 ☎ 01732 461348



SEE U3A 2011 - 2012 HANDBOOK FOR FURTHER CONTACT DETAILS OF PEOPLE REFERRED TO IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Meetings open to all

Monthly Meeting **Wednesday 30 May**
 Community Centre, Bat & Ball Start at 2pm

John Singer Sargent: a Personal View
 Richard Ormond

Richard Ormond is an expert on John Singer Sargent, and is also the grandson of Sargent's sister and, as such, will give us an insider's view. He is the author of a number of books on Sargent and on other artists. He is the former Director of the National Maritime Museum; also Assistant Keeper and late Deputy Director of the National Portrait Gallery.

Science Group **Monday 14 May**

History of Fort Halstead

by David Perry.

The growth of activities at the MoD site since its inception.

Oxford Village Memorial Hall, 2pm.

All Sevenoaks U3A members welcome.
 £2 entry includes tea.

Computer Group **Friday 1 June**

**On-line Television
 An Update on Cloud Computing;
 WiFi and Mobile Networks;
 and the Roll-out of Fibre Optics**

by Tony Fishpool

Oxford Village Memorial Hall, **10.30am**.

All Sevenoaks U3A members welcome.
 Entry, £1 on the door, includes tea.

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DAY, DATE AND TIME - THERE WILL BE NO MEETING ON THE USUAL 3RD MONDAY IN MAY!

Car parking is always difficult, both at Oxford and at the Community Centre, so please share cars if at all possible.

Please send copy for the May Newsletter by **Friday, 18 May 2012** to both *Linda Young* and *Magda Sweetland*

News and Views

Articles to Magda Sweetland

Members' Survey

To date 132 responses has been received. The trends that are starting to emerge are as follows:

	Nos	%	Notes
Number of Members	888		
Female / Male ratio		65:35	
Members in groups	121	92	
Meetings attended	111	84	Nos and % figures = responses, not total membership numbers.
Attend Social Events	106	80	
Skills Volunteered	94	71	Number who made comments
Ave # Groups attended	2.68		
No Groups	127		Check latest numbers
Potential New Groups	36		Number of suggested new groups.
Number of Responses	132	15%	

Of the 132 respondents 92% are in groups and it is apparent that they belong to between 2-3 groups each. They also attend social events and meetings.

Those who have responded but do not attend either groups or meetings represent 8% of the membership and comments from these respondents indicate health reasons, mobility problems or caring for others.

It is gratifying that a high proportion of respondents have volunteered to help in some way but few have volunteered for Organising Groups or Committee work.

There is a wide range of interests among the membership and so far some 36 ideas for new groups have been suggested. Amongst these a recurring theme was a desire for more musical activities such as playing instruments, singing or dancing. So this is an area where we may be able to get a new group or groups underway.

All of the information received is positive feedback for the Executive to consider, but there is also some concern emerging from the figures. If this sample is representative of the overall membership then it also indicates that there is a significant number of members who do not participate in anything. The 8% of the respondents in the sample would translate to 74 members of the total membership being non active. Furthermore, if we look at how fully engaged the active members are, then the proportion of members who are non-active could

easily be a lot higher than the 8% already identified. As we are a mature U3A we are becoming more dependent on a small number of active members to support all of our activities.

So a task for the Executive Committee is to look closely at our overall membership strategy and see what the implications are for the future. We do however need more data to improve the accuracy of the statistics so far gathered and provide a reliable snapshot of where we are before we can establish a strategy for the future.

Bob Ruffles

Committee Development

The Executive has spent time looking at how the current Trustees represent Sevenoaks U3A and its charitable functions, and has decided to make some adjustments. From the 2012 AGM, there will be two new Committees, dealing with **Recruitment and Membership** and a second to organise **Meetings**. Together with **Group Development** and **Publications**, these are felt to cover the core functions and each will send a representative to the Executive. The other committees, **Science, Computer, Website, Technical Support** and **Social Events** will continue to work in their usual way, and report to the Executive, but will not have to attend committee meetings unless there is an important issue at stake.

Some local news

The next Kent Network meeting is on 2nd July and several important issues will be raised.

- Should adjacent U3As charge members of another U3A that they have *invited* to join a group?
- Then we will have a progress report from the new Kent Development Committee, made up of the South East Area Trustee, Pam Jones, and Kent Volunteer, Pauline Hawker, founder Chairman of Pembury, sitting together with the Chairmen of Dartford, Gravesend and Medway. As reported last month, there are several new U3As being proposed for North Kent and this team should make strides.

The Malling Chairman, Richard Lea, with three other Malling members, came to Sevenoaks recently to hear how the interaction of shared groups and some shared events works for the benefit of Sevenoaks and Knole U3As. After just five years, they have 500 members and will launch a new U3A by the autumn, so they are curious about how other adjacent or overlapping U3As can co-operate to best effect.



News from the Groups

Beryl Mansell ☎ 01959 525010

Group Organisers

Emails and letters were sent to Group Organisers on 2 April requesting that all entries for the next Handbook should be sent to Robin Tonge at tonge@waitrose.com by 7 May at the latest. A copy of the request is on the website.

Group Members: If your GO is away or perhaps unwell they might not be aware of the request. If so, it would be helpful if another member of the group could submit the group's entry.

If you have not had a request please contact Beryl Mansell at once to avoid missing the deadline.

Money Matters

Shared Knole group

This new group would be for those seeking to make sense of developments in international monetary affairs including such current issues as the credit crunch, the euro and the situation with Greece. We would propose to meet monthly and would welcome as active participants those with either a broad interest or a specialist background. Specific background reading will be recommended to serve as an introduction to the main issues.

Contact: Geoff Dalton ☎ 01732 457822

Family History Group 2 has spaces. The group aims to help members extend their own family trees by developing family history research skills using a range of sources, both paper records and internet sites.

Contact Jean Stirk ☎ 01732 884316

Golf Group

Shared Knole group

The group is now 19 strong and can take more members, as the ceiling is set at 24. This group is active throughout the year; weather permitting we can play all year long at a variety of courses around the county. The date set for the rest of 2012 is the third Wednesday each month. No handicap needed.

To join, contact Trevor Coley ☎ 01732 885598

Indoor Bowling

Shared Sevenoaks group

Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Club has offered all U3A members four 'taster' sessions free of charge: equipment and basic tuition will be provided. This Group will appeal to bowlers who have some experience and also to members who would like to come and try this social game for the first time. We play at the Hollybush Lane Centre, which has a cafe and ample parking. 2nd Friday afternoons. Offer starts Sept 2012.

Contact: Barbara Hine ☎ 01732 459779 or Mike Harries ☎ 01959 532024

London Studies 3 Group's day trip to

Clerkenwell, Smithfield and Charterhouse on Monday 11 June has spaces – the tour of Charterhouse (cost £10) needs at least 15 people. Meet near Farringdon Station at 11am. Explore Smithfield, including the Market and the two churches, St Bartholomew the Great and the Less. Guided tour of Charterhouse after a pub lunch. For more detail, or to book a place, please contact Michael Davies ☎ 01732 762266

Jazz and Blues Group 2

Since its formation three years ago the Jazz and Blues Group has gone from strength to strength. The membership is now uncomfortably large, meaning that a number of U3A members have been unable to join us. Clearly, for those who have been disappointed there is a need for a second Jazz and Blues Group, so Harvey Mahn has agreed to get the show on the road.

Initially the new group would meet in the afternoon of the second Thursday of each month, or other date/time to suit the members. It would have similar objectives to the original group but it is hoped that it will develop a character and programme of its own.

'Jazz and Blues 2' can expect help from the original group including, in its formative period, presentations from the repertoire of Jazz and Blues 1 and to enjoy some common events such as the annual study morning.

Please contact Harvey to find out more and hopefully to join up. ☎ 01732 459295

New publication from Women in the World

The Women in the World Study Group has produced a booklet entitled *Achieving Women*. Members decided that they would like to share some of their work over the last four years with other U3A members. The booklet, costing £1.50, offers extracts and shortened versions of presentations at their meetings. It is on sale at Monthly Meetings, or from:
Celia Smith ☎ 01732 453049
Sue Henson ☎ 01732 455849

Grants for Study Groups

Study Groups which rely on equipment for the day-to-day running of the group may apply for a grant. These come in two forms, a Start-up Grant of up to £75, or a Capital Grant of up to £100 for a group that has been running two years or more, and also requires some additional equipment. The hardware belongs to the U3A, and is returned if the Group should disband. It belongs to the whole group and not to an individual, and should be something that cannot be borrowed eg from the Public Library. If this applies to your group, please contact Beryl, the Group Co-ordinator, for a form.

Social Events News

Pam Walshe ☎ 01732 454769

Here is an update on events in the calendar for 2012/2013. Future trips will be advertised by flyer about 2 months ahead. Please apply asap. We hold applications for 10 days and then allocate places by ballot.

- **Trip to York** 41 members leave 30 April-4 May. This is the longest trip yet undertaken for the U3A, and will influence how we plan these trips in future.
- **London Docklands** 9 May. 52 bookings were received, which means disappointing a handful of members.
- **Titsey Place** 2 July - flyer enclosed. A delightful and little known property on our doorstep. Guided tour, gardens and Church to visit, followed by tea and cake.
- **Trip to Sicily**, 15-21 October, has attracted 37 members.
- **Mansion House and Guildhall Gallery** A double visit is booked for August 8th, as the Guildhall is mounting a special exhibition.
- **Cressing Temple and Ingatestone Hall** Tuesday 4 September - a private visit. To include cream tea, but we will ask members to bring their own packed lunch.

Events still in Planning

- **Architectural Walk round Edenbridge** for the end of September, with guides organised by the Edenbridge Museum.
- A trip to **Bletchley Park** is booked for Thursday 21 March 2013, advertising by flyer next January.
- **Queen's Gallery** for the exhibition *Durer to Holbein* in March/ April 2013.

Events Open to All

Ambling **Wednesday 16 May**

Meet in the car park at Teston Bridge Country Park (GR 708533) in time for a 10 am start. Take the A26 towards Maidstone; after passing through Watlington travel for about one mile and turn right into the B2163, Teston Lane, then turn right after the level crossing into the Country Park. The walk will be about four miles and will be followed by an optional lunch.

Leader: Grahame Lee ☎ 01474 852007

Half Day Walking **Monday 28 May**

Meet outside the Leicester Arms in the centre of Penshurst in time for a 10am start. Parking on street or behind the hotel. The five-mile walk will go through Penshurst Park to Leigh and back along the Medway. It will form part of the Medway Meander which is being conducted by ten different U3As. Optional lunch at the Leicester Arms.

Leader: Nick White ☎ 01959 564145

The Strollers **Tuesday 15 May**

Meet at the car park in Otford at 11am. If the car park is full, you can normally park in Bubblestone Road. Optional lunch afterwards at The Bull, Otford. Leader Penny Watts ☎ 01732 886844

First Friday Lunch **Friday 1 June**

There will be no First Friday Lunch in May.

Friday 1 June: The Plough, Eynsford 12.15 for 12.30. Contact Pat Smith ☎ 01959 523596

Bridge for Pleasure **Wed 9 and 23 May**

The Group plays bridge at Otford Village Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month from 9.50am until 12.15pm. The winner on 28 March was Jean Stackhouse and on 11 April was Franz Berger. The group is an 'Open' group, so any new players can just come along. If you need to make contact, please call Colin and Mary Butson ☎ 01732 458356

Diary

Tues	8	Coffee Morning, The Bullfinch
Wed	9	Bridge for Pleasure
Wed	9	London Docklands trip***
Mon	14	Science Group Meeting
Tues	15	Strollers
Wed	16	Ambling
Wed	23	Bridge for Pleasure
Thu	24	Jazz and Blues Study morning***
Mon	28	Half Day Walking
Wed	30	Monthly Meeting

June

Fri	1	First Friday lunch
Fri	1	Computer Group Meeting

July

Mon	2	Titsey Place*
Thurs	19	Kent Study Day Architecture**

* Flyer this month

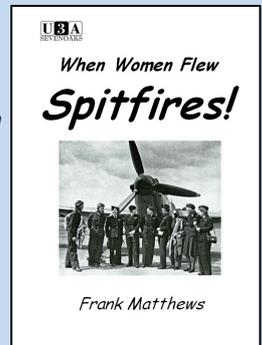
** Flyer in March

*** Flyer in February

As *Achieving Women* goes on sale, we can announce that another booklet about the achievements of women is just going to press.

Frank Matthews' *'When Women Flew Spitfires'* describes the wartime contribution made by women flyers to the work of the Air Transport Auxiliary.

The booklet will be on sale at Monthly Meetings or from Frank Matthews, price £1.



Editorial team: Magda Sweetland, Linda Young, Robin Tonge and John Spurway