



Chairman's note

There has been a lot of U3A activity over the last month. The Arts Exhibition at Knole Academy was an excellent display of our members' talents, and attracted many visitors. I would like to thank Pamela Murphy and the Arts and Drama team for organising this event to mark the start of our Anniversary year.

The five-day visit to Normandy, reported below, was an enjoyable and well organised trip. I would like to thank John Dean for the excellent organisation, and Jenny Smith for chaperoning the group on the visit.

Included with this *Newsletter* are the Agenda, Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts for our Annual General Meeting. It is important that enough members are present for the meeting to be conducted in accordance with our Constitution and I would urge as many of you as can to attend.

We have been working on a revision of our Constitution to bring it in line with the Model Constitution recommended by the Third Age Trust. The revisions are summarised below.

We will be electing new Trustees to the Executive Committee as some members have completed their respective terms of office. We still need a nomination for the post of Treasurer.

As we head towards the end of this season of activity the Anniversary Committee will continue planning the party on **Saturday, 20 September**. This event will replace the Open Afternoon this year: it will provide an opportunity for Group Organisers to advertise and display activities within their groups. Space for exhibits will be limited, but more advice will be given in later Newsletters. **Please make sure you apply early for tickets** as the Committee needs to plan for numbers attending and to ensure we do not exceed hall capacity.

The Executive Committee met on 8 May: key issues arising are reported in this *Newsletter*.

Bob Ruffles

☎ 01732 461348 ✉ chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Please send copy for the June Newsletter,
**including your dates in both
July and August,**
by **Friday, 13 June 2014**
to Magda Sweetland and Linda Gilbert

Meetings open to all

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 25 June

Community Centre, Bat & Ball Start at 2pm

Draft Minutes of the 2013 AGM are on the website, and will be placed on chairs at the AGM. The U3A Constitution is on the website, as is the draft revised Constitution for members to read before the AGM. A note about the revisions will be placed on chairs at the AGM. Paper copies of any of these documents can be supplied ahead of the AGM by the Secretary on request:

☎ 01732 464218 ✉ secretary@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

After the AGM, **Brian Freeland** will speak for about 40 minutes on

Women of the Raj

Brian writes: When the Colonial Administrators arrived to take over from the East India Company and the Army, they were often accompanied by their wives: wives who spoke only English, who mixed only with the other wives, and who couldn't even communicate with their household staff. As one Indian wrote later, *'I don't think they realised what a menace they were. If the memsahibs had stayed in Britain there might never have been a Mutiny'*.

Brian has been working in theatre since 1959 for such illustrious companies as the RSC, Bristol Old Vic, Sadler's Wells and many more.

Election as Honorary President or to other Executive posts at the AGM, 25 June 2014

If any member would like to stand for election to the position of Honorary President or to the Executive Committee, please complete the form at the bottom of the **Notice of Annual General Meeting** included in this Newsletter. Return it to the Secretary (address in Handbook) not less than fourteen days before the AGM (i.e. by 11 June 2014). Rôles on the Executive Committee can be found in the Handbook. (NB Members may also volunteer to join other committees at any time; please talk to a member of the EC.)

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

Proposed revisions to the Constitution

Last autumn, the Executive Committee set up a working party to bring our Constitution into line with the U3A Model Constitution issued by The Third Age Trust. In summary, the proposed revisions are as follows (Clause numbers refer to the revised Constitution):

6 ii Executive Committee. The minimum number of members will stay at five, but the maximum will increase from ten to twelve. Even though we do not need this many at present, it allows for flexibility in the future.

6 v Terms of Office. Committee members will be elected for two years instead of one and will be able to serve for six years in total instead of four. They will be required to stand down after six years, but will be able to stand for further terms after a gap of one year.

7 ii Honorary President. In the existing constitution there is no requirement for the Honorary President to be nominated. The revised wording requires prior written nomination by a proposer and a seconder from amongst the Executive Committee.

10 viii Sub-Committees. In the past, all sub-committees were required to have a member on the executive committee. In future only Core Committees, but not Supporting Committees, will be required to have a representative on the Executive Committee. (Core Committees are: Publications, Membership, Group Development, Monthly Meetings; Supporting Committees are Science, Computing, Arts and Drama, Social, TSG and Web Team). Assuming the proposed revisions are agreed by the membership, the Social Committee will change its status from Supporting to Core Committee following the AGM.

15 Special General Meetings. It will be possible for 5% of the membership to request a special general meeting rather than 20% as at present.

16 vi Procedure at general meetings. Under the present constitution the Executive Committee may decide to ask the President to chair a meeting instead of the Chairman. In the revised wording, if the entitled Chairman of The U3A is not present the Executive Committee members present will have the power to elect a Chairman for the meeting.



From the Executive Committee, 8 May.

The main item was preparing for the forthcoming AGM. The results can be seen in this Newsletter.

This year three trustee posts will need to be filled. The Treasurer, Jim Purves, the Chair of the Group Development Committee, Beryl Mansell, have completed their respective terms of office under the Constitution, and John Spurway, the Trustee representing the Publications Committee, is not seeking re-election. In all cases the Executive expressed their thanks to them for their dedication and work put into the U3A on behalf of our members.

All our Committees need new members: in some cases existing members have worked for a number of years and wish to stand down. Finding successors has proved challenging. To date, twelve new members have been identified, but more are still required. To seek to maintain succession to committee posts, two initiatives will be put in place. The first is to revise the joining process to learn more about the skills that potential members can bring to the U3A; and to emphasise to new members that it is a partnership, with all expected to play a part in supporting ongoing activities. The second approach is to add suitable new members to committees to shadow key roles so that there is always a steady supply of new talent available.

20th Anniversary Planning - The 2014 calendar, issue of the Anniversary Booklet and Arts Exhibition have been successfully completed and emphasis is now on the Anniversary Party. Volunteers will be needed before and on the day to help with setting up and running the event. Adverts for help will be placed in future *Newsletters*.

Newsletter distribution - It is obvious from our accounts that one of the major items of expenditure each year is the distribution cost of our *Newsletter*. It amounts to approximately 30% of our expenditure, and the impact of the revised 2nd class post will increase this expenditure. A Working Party is being established to explore the electronic distribution of the *Newsletter*. A period of testing will be implemented to ensure the system works effectively. Once the Working Party has presented its recommendations to the EC, a switch-over point will be determined for those members opting for this distribution system. The existing distribution of paper copies will continue for as long as necessary for those who prefer this, or do not have IT facilities.

The next EC meeting will be held on 3 July and will be reported in the August *Newsletter*.

- Bob Ruffles



News and Views

Articles to *Magda Sweetland*

Social Events Committee

For a number of years, there was no dedicated committee as such in Sevenoaks U3A, although a number of members organised events and outings independently, and simply liaised with each other by telephone or email. They were Bryan Richardson (theatre trips), Jean Stewart (day visits) and Magda Sweetland (galleries) while Bill Taylor acted as Treasurer and he also, in the time that he was Executive Chairman, ran the Christmas Lunch. Later he was helped in this by Margaret Floydd and then by Lynda Alleeson. Mike Dudding took over the Treasurer's role in 2009.

At the beginning of 2007, we decided it was time to set up a more structured team, led by Pam Walshe, our all-seeing and supportive Chairman: events were becoming popular and considerable sums of money were involved. Jenny Smith joined at that point and we were a working group of six. Jean Stewart had laid down a good programme of day trips and Jenny Smith tended to follow in her footsteps: the great success was perhaps the Legal London visits, which we have now run six times, with a full coach and a waiting list every time.

Of course, we never know until the applications come in whether we have a hit on our hands, or a flop! Fortunately, it's more often the former, but that is frustrating too, having to draw a ballot and return cheques to those on the waiting list. We try to run a varied programme but, over time, have located some useful indicators: members like a journey of under two hours, prefer it when coffee and lunch are included, if affordable, and enjoy hearing a guide. Jenny has found ***City and Village Tours*** excellent value, as they use Blue Badge guides and, through their agency, she was able to run several trips to the Olympic sites in 2012.

Pam and Lynda also ran some notable visits, several of which - such as the Salutation Gardens in Sandwich paired with the Turner Gallery, and Cressing Temple together with Ingatestone Hall - we are currently repeating. Mike was ever a fount of good ideas, inspired by the trips made by his own Local Studies and London Studies groups. Our discussions have always been eclectic and therefore highly entertaining!

Since 2002, Lynda has been responsible for the Christmas Lunch which used to attract 130-140 members to Westerham Golf Club, and also the Group Organisers' lunch in the summer, using a variety of venues. Both of these events are under review: members' priorities change over time and, in a simple feedback sheet we put out last summer, it was clear that the preference now is for simpler, low-cost social events.

John Dean added a whole new dimension to the programme when he started to introduce travel abroad. The first trip in 2008 was to the Loire valley, a wonderful tour of chateaux, cathedrals and breathtaking scenery. The major event however,

was when the driver crashed into a lamppost, broke his foot, and also caused a power cut to about half of the city of Chartres. Luckily, we were not on the coach at the time. John, as ever, did not lose his *sangfroid!* Other splendid visits have been to Salamanca and Madrid, Northern Portugal, Croatia, and Sicily, while a party has just returned from a trip to Normandy. John also led a tour to the Scottish Highlands.

We also began a series of visits in the UK, and these always filled to capacity. The first was based in Elcot Park Hotel, west of Newbury, and the second at Newton Solney, not far from Burton-on-Trent. The third was taken at The Swan at Lavenham, unforgettably, followed by a longer trip to York and then to Gloucester, which was hugely popular. The day visits in these trips were very good: Chatsworth, Kelmscott, a free concert at Long Melford Church, Waddesdon Manor, Castle Howard and Rodmarton Manor. But the favourite was probably the Claymills Pumping Station, restored by volunteers young and old. They went to enormous trouble to welcome us, and the beam engines were steam powered for our visit. All these trips in the UK and abroad carry precious memories of members.

Visits of this type can now be organised by commercial companies along exactly the lines that our own members enjoy, and the cost is still moderate, since agencies have greater bargaining power when it comes to arranging long distance coach travel and hotel reservations. It is probably time to hand the event over to the professionals.

Seven years have gone by very quickly, and enjoyably, but this spring Jenny, Mike and Magda decided it was time to leave the committee and allow others to develop a programme in line with the preferences of current members. A committee is rather like a study group: however well suited or hard-working the members, there is a need for new ideas and personalities to inject a sense of progress and development.

We are very lucky to have recruited three new members to the Sevenoaks team, Sue Christy as Treasurer, plus Joyce Allen and Rosina Cole, who will organise day trips. A further member may join in the autumn. Lynda means to leave once the newcomers have settled in. Pam Walshe will stay on as Chairman and John Dean will go on planning voyages of delight.

The departing members wish the team every success: this has been the most enormous fun, for us as well as for the members of Sevenoaks U3A who came with us on the journey.

Magda Sweetland

Social Events News

Pam Walshe ☎ 01732 454769

- A flyer is enclosed for our visit in August to the Turner Gallery in Margate exhibition, combined with a visit to Salutation Gardens at Sandwich on Wednesday 20 August.

- We still have a few places for our forthcoming trip to Cressing Temple Barns and Ingatestone Hall on Tuesday 3 June. Contact Joyce Allen: ☎ 01959 522915
- There is a flyer for the last of the Kent Study Days, to focus on the role of Kent in World War I. Monday 8 September at Salomons.

Visit to Caen, 1-5 May

This outing was a great success and much enjoyed by all. The weather was kind, the Normandy countryside superb, with fat cows grazing under apple trees in full blossom.

We visited some of the 1944 invasion beaches including Arramanches, where remains of the artificial Mulberry harbour, floated out from England to aid the disembarkation of supplies, were still visible. Other related sites visited included Pegasus Bridge, where we learnt about the exploits of the 6th Airborne division who prepared the ground for the invasion, and we visited American, Commonwealth and German cemeteries. It was all very moving and clearly still fresh in the minds of the local inhabitants. I was surprised to see a street named Rue le Devonshire Regiment!

Amongst all this we fitted in a visit to the Bayeux tapestry which was very well displayed with an excellent audio commentary. We also spent time in Rouen, where we wandered the ancient streets and visited the cathedral and the very modern church dedicated to Joan of Arc.

Following this we went to the pretty little port of Honfleur and the resort of Deauville, where the rich and famous hang out and the racehorses exercise along the shore at low tide.

Paul, our driver, was very skilled and helpful. Rose, our French guide, was charming and extremely knowledgeable. Our grateful thanks go to John Dean for organising such a splendid holiday and to Jenny Smith who liaised so discreetly with the driver, guide and hotel, and generally looked after our welfare with great thoughtfulness.

Rosina Cole and Pam Walshe

Events Open to All

First Friday lunch **Friday 6 June**
12.45 for 1pm at 'White Horse' Sundridge.
To book, ring Sally Coston ☎ 01322-866102.

Bridge for pleasure **Wednesdays 11 & 25 June**

The Group plays at Otford Village Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month from 9.50am until 12.15pm. The winner on 23 April was Bill Taylor and on 14 May was Denise Record. We are an 'Open' group, & new players just come along. If you need to make contact, call Colin and Mary Butson on ☎ 01732 458356

The Strollers **Tuesday 17 June**
The walk is from Leigh, starting at 11.00. Meet at the village green in the centre of the village. Park around the green. Optional lunch afterwards in the nearby Plough.
Leader: Jo Berger ☎ 01732 457736

Ambling **Wednesday 18 June**
Meet outside the Greyhound pub at Charcott, (Post Code TN11 8LG; GR 522472) in time for a 10am start. Take the A2027 from Hildenborough to Leigh, half a mile after passing through Leigh take a right turn onto Compasses Road and at the T junction left into Camp Hill. Take the next right to the Greyhound. Please park considerately on the road outside the Greyhound. The walk is followed by an optional lunch. This is the walk that was cancelled in May. New walkers always welcome.
Leader: Grahame Lee ☎ 01474 852007.

Half Day Walking **Monday 23 June**
Meet by the entrance to Dryhill Nature Park in Dryhill Lane, Sundridge, Grid Reference 497553, in time for a 10am start. A five-mile circular walk to Shrubs Corner, Brittains Lane and Bessels Green. Optional lunch afterwards at the White Horse in Sundridge.
Leader: Nick White ☎ 01959 564145

Diary

June

Tue	3	Cressing Temple Barns and Ingatestone Hall trip**
Thu	5	Knole Science trip to Faversham
Fri	6	First Friday Lunch
Wed	11	Bridge for Pleasure
Wed	11	Science Study Day 'Future Agriculture and Food Security'**
Tue	17	The Strollers
Wed	18	Ambling
Mon	23	Half day Walking
Wed	25	Bridge for Pleasure
Wed	25	AGM

July

Mon	8	Kent Study Day, Chatham: 'Aspects of World War I'**
Tue-Thu	15-17	Science Group visit to CERN

August

Wed	20	Salutation Gardens, Sandwich and Turner Gallery, Margate*
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Sept

Mon	8	Kent Study Day: Kent in WWI*
Sat	20	20th Anniversary Birthday Party*

Flyer enclosed*

Flyer sent previously**

Editorial team: Magda Sweetland,
Linda Young, Victoria Baxter
and John Spurway