



**The University
of the Third Age**

**WOKINGHAM
NEWSLETTER
NOV - DEC.
2008**

November's Monthly Meeting

Tuesday 18th at 2.00pm

at

St Paul's Parish Rooms

Tales of the Unexpected

Alan Copeland

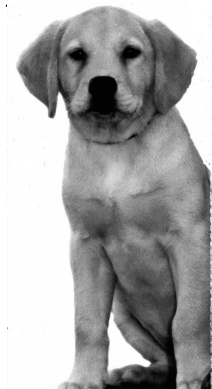
December's Monthly Meeting

Tuesday 16th at 2.00pm

at

St Paul's Parish Rooms

Guide Dogs



A View From The Chair

How to start these notes? Colin has been confirmed as the Regional Trustee for the South East Region of the Third Age Trust, and both he and Janice felt he wouldn't have the time to do both jobs, consequently he has stepped down as chairman and I am privileged to have been invited to return to act as chairman until the AGM next March. He has been an excellent chairman, he will be missed and I am sure you will all join me in wishing him every success in his challenging new role.

During this transition time we were faced with the Third Age Trust putting forward a resolution that the capitation fee we pay for each of you be increased from £2.50 to £3.50 per annum with effect from next April. Your committee were much exercised by this and we decided to contest it in two ways at the National AGM, to support an amendment to postpone the implementation by 12 months, and to try to have the amount of the increase as 25p, rather than the £1.00, and as you will see from the Conference Report elsewhere in this Newsletter we failed to get the amount reduced. This will inevitably have an effect on next year's subscription.

Now, for a happier subject, as I write these notes the planning for the Open House on 21st October is reaching its conclusion and I am confident we shall have a fantastic display of the many disparate activities of our U3A.

After the success of this year's Study day at Wellington College, the questionnaires indicated that you would like another such day, so Patsy Thornton and her Development Group are starting the planning for a possible future event.

Now all the Groups are fully operational again after the break that some have had through the summer(?), I wish you a happy and successful time with all of your U3A activities.

Len Smith

Wokingham U3A

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Jazz Appreciation Group

This has become such a popular group that I have now inaugurated Jazz Appreciation Group B to clear the waiting list. Both Jazz Appreciation Groups A & B are now full, so there will be waiting lists for both groups. Who knows there may have to be a group C in due course!

Wouldn't it be great if we could form a Wokingham U3AQ Jazz Trio, Quartet, Quintet, Sextet or even a full jazz band like some other U3As. Is there anyone out there blowing their horn, strumming their guitar, tickling the ivories, or itching to beat out a rhythm on the drums?

Rosemary Goldschmied 978 1185



Introduction to Philosophy

Whilst philosophy's aim of finding answers to the most abstract, ultimate questions may be unduly daunting, the aims of a U3A philosophy group are rather simpler: to learn about ideas which (however woolly) are knitted into the fabric of Western culture; and possibly even, through the examination and evaluation of these ideas, to each develop our own understanding of the world and our place in it.

A new group Introduction to Philosophy will start with a preliminary meeting at 10 am on November 5th on What is Philosophy? and a discussion on how we shall operate. If you are interested or would like to know more, please phone me or talk to me at the Open House on 21st October.

Hugh Davis 0118 978 6532.

Shared Learning Projects

I participated at the National Conference, in a group covering Shared Learning Projects which I, and many others, had always thought were London centric, but it seems there are projects all around the country and there is a booklet published describing these projects. I have a "soft" copy which I have published on our website. Jenny Clark, the national coordinator for Shared Learning Projects, would be happy to come to Wokingham to talk to us if we are interested. I must say she presents the subject very well.

Len Smith

Life begins at 40, 50.....

You remember that well-known saying - Life Begins at 40. Whether it did or not, I can most certainly confirm that life for me has begun again on retirement. *I have just joined the University of the Third Age.* It's wonderful to meet so many new people, coming from all walks of life, who bring with them an abundance of experiences and talents. They prove to be excellent organisers and many give up their valuable time to start individual groups, in order to pass on their knowledge or share their interests with those members who wish to listen and learn. Above all, I'm having fun.

Joining U3A does however remind me of those days of leaving junior school, when we were the eldest in the school and treated with some respect by the teachers and the younger children, to starting secondary school to find **we** were the youngest and in for a hard time by some of the bigger and older pupils. I have just left full time employment where I was considered quite ancient, though yes, treated with some respect, I suppose. Now, having joined U3A, I find I am one of the youngest!! Fortunately, unlike my childhood experience, everyone is so friendly and welcoming, happy for me to 'join their gang'. It's great. Makes me feel young again and offers me a new lease of life to enjoy for many years ahead - I hope. Can I join your gang?

Sylvia Mason sa.mason@tiscali.co.uk

Communication

Communication with you is something we continually strive to improve. These newsletters are fully informative but are only published two monthly and consequently there are events that arise that don't have a long enough timescale for you be notified in time.

We realise that by no means all of you have access to the internet, but for those of you who do we have made the Home page of our own site (www.wokinghamu3a.org.uk) more visually attractive, but more importantly, we have made a "News" section in the bottom half of the page where we put anything that is of immediate interest there. For example, there is a Thames Valley Network Study Day at Reading University on Climate Change on 12th November that you won't see in this newsletter until late October. So, please, from time to time, take a look at the Home page to see if there is anything new there that might interest you. I hope you have at least added our site to your favourites.

Len Smith

Copy date for the next issue is Friday **28th November**

Continuing Education in the Age of the Internet

For people who wish to continue learning in the comfort of their own homes, the Third Age Trust offers both tutored and untutored online courses. In a tutored course, the tutor sends assignments by e-mail and work is “handed-in” by email. So users get feedback and progress reports on what they do. In some courses, the other students can also give encouragement.

Topics of study with a tutor include Religions of the World, The Evolution of life on Planet Earth, Digital Imaging, Writing for Publication, Genealogy, Writing Short Stories, Literary Criticism, Autobiography & Journalling, The Northern Sky and Writing Family History. Note that tutored courses start on specified dates and last a specified time, usually 9 weeks.

The list of tutored courses is continually changing, so go the Third Age Trust web-site (details below) for up-to-date information. There is a wider choice of untutored courses (including Botany, Garden History, Western Philosophy, Maintaining Independence and - for the adventurous- the southern sky). Untutored courses can start at any time. There are also separate lists of Writing and Art History courses.

Untutored courses cost £8 and tutored courses £15 and both require a commitment of at least 5 hours a week. Payment gives you a username and password that lets you access the online courses.

Make good use of these opportunities by enrolling on a course, go to <http://www.u3a.org.uk> and click on Online Course on the menu on the left hand side.

It's Your U3A

The Annual General Meeting of the Wokingham U3A will take place in March 2009. It's your U3A and the AGM is your chance to make your voice heard.

As you may know, our Chairman, Colin Mitchell, has been elected as Trustee for the South East Region and has decided to stand down as our chairman. The committee has elected Len Smith, our former chairman, as Acting Chairman until there is an election by the membership at the AGM in 2009.

Three other members of the committee are standing down after their term of office, so there are four vacancies. Nominate someone or make it known that you are willing to stand and chances are that you soon find a proposer and seconder. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary.

You can also propose a topic for discussion at the AGM. You will need a proposer and seconder and it should be sent to the Secretary in good time for inclusion in the published agenda. Since the rules say that the agenda must be published to

the members at least 21 days in advance of the AGM, nominations and proposals from members must reach the committee in time for publication in the January-February newsletter, that is before the 28th of November.

The formal notice of the AGM will appear in the next newsletter. So start thinking now how you can benefit the U3A by your ideas, by offering to stand or finding someone who is willing to be a member of the committee.

If you would like to discuss what is involved in being on the committee, please contact the Secretary by e-mail on barry.byrne@bcs.org or by phone 01189785700

Cycling for All



We have been invited by Reading U3A to join in their cycling group. The group meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 2p.m.-3p.m. at the Palmer Park Velodrome. The first meeting will be October 22nd. Bicycles and tricycles are supplied.

At the Velodrome, members will be cycling round the track at their own pace getting some exercise! Consider it as a form of exercise in a safe environment.

So, there is the possibility that experienced cyclists might find it rather dull.

(What are we doing for Reading? They can share our Pétanque group.)

If you're interested please ring Mary Trout on 0149 168 2002. But remember that this is an event where neighbouring U3As share their facilities, so everyone there should be able to produce their U3A membership cards.

2008 National Conference and AGM

The National conference and AGM were held at Swansea University and the opinion of those of us who attended from Wokingham U3A was that it was like the curate's egg, good in parts!

There were good speeches from

Professor Richard Davies - Vice Chancellor of Swansea University

Professor Danny Saunders, Professor of Lifelong Learning- University of Glamorgan

Peter Kingston - Further Education Editor of The Guardian

Colin Mitchell was among those elected as Regional Trustees and will serve on the NEC.

The first set of Discussion Groups considered the theme of the conference "The Complete University - a celebration of diversity", and a review of the outcomes

will be published in due course by a National vice chairman, there are too many varied views expressed to summarise here.

A second set of discussions took place on predetermined subjects and I participated in a group covering Shared Learning Projects which I, and many others, had always thought were London centric, but it seems there are projects all around the country and there is a booklet published describing these projects. I have a “soft” copy which I have published on our website. Jenny Clark, the national coordinator for Shared Learning Projects, would be happy to come to Wokingham to talk to us if we are interested. I must say she presents the subject very well.

Colin attended a presentation and discussion on “On-Line Courses and Open Learning” where Alan Morris, an NEC member, demonstrated how simple it is to take part in the wide range of U3A on-line courses available to members at remarkably low prices. These courses can be either tutored or ‘do it at your own pace’ and Colin promises to prepare a report on these for this or a later newsletter. He will include some details of the vast material that is now available on line to anybody at no charge

And now for the AGM, it was a shambles! The chairman and her committee had no idea how to conduct a meeting with resolutions and amendments. The very first proposal with its single amendment showed us how things would go when there seemed to be squabbling on the platform about procedure while the poor proposer was left at the lectern wondering just what was going on around her. Thereafter, there was barracking from the floor, amendments being withdrawn at the last moment, with no explanation, and generally chaos ensued. We had put in an amendment to limit the rise in capitation to 25p instead of the NEC proposal of £1.00, but in spite of Richard Hughes’ excellent presentation of our case it was defeated, mainly, it seems to me that delegates wanted to get the meeting over, and, possibly due to a misinterpretation by the platform. The only positive about all this, was that the implementation of the increased capitation fee has been deferred for 12 months.

Len Smith

Seventy Years Ago

November 1st. My darling Jim gave me £3, and I went off to 9 Bentalls and bought a lovely brown and camel reversible coat for £3 3s 0d (£3.15) also a hat for 3s 11d (20p approx). Am very pleased with them and everybody liked them.

November 3rd. Lil Messenger was rather snorty as I said I hadn’t time to go to the club tonight, but she can jolly well snort. Emily [her sister in law. R] came this afternoon. She’s still very dizzy and her bad health hasn’t improved her temper, which is naturally sour.

November 5th. I’m going down to Fred’s [her sister Frederica. R] on Monday afternoon; hope it will be bright and fine so that I can wear my new coat. It has

been very mild today; quite as warm as summer and we had no fire as it was too warm. This afternoon I was able to sit and knit in the garden.

November 7th. Wore my new coat and hat to Wentworth and was delighted to see Fred and Mig coming to meet me at the station. We had a very happy walk as far as Keepers Wood. The trees were glorious in their changing colours.

November 9th. Mild and sunny. Emily's birthday. We bought her a bottle of Violette de Parme. Jim finished his gas course by going through the gas van tonight. Now we are both A.R.P. trained and should be getting our badges. Our home nursing class was due for a lecture at the hospital tonight to view the various instruments. I didn't go as I'm very squeamish about hospitals in general. Instead I sat at home with a good fire and did a lot of needlework and knitting.

November 15th. The first November - like day this season. Their persecution of the Jews in Germany continues with increasing ferocity. Surely it must soon end.

November 23rd. Went in the gale to the gas and home nursing lecture tonight and was really interested. Shall have to work hard to get a better result for the home nursing exam than I did for the First Aid.

November 24th. Emily came this afternoon and try as I will I cannot get over a feeling of resentment against her. Dad came bearing a rabbit from Uncle Bill, which I didn't appreciate as much as I should have done if I'd happened to like them. Really my stomach felt quite revolted at the thought of it. I was talking to Dad and looked round to see Emily asleep. I felt that I could slap her fat face to wake her up.

November 25th. I hated cooking the rabbit today.

December 2nd. Went shopping this afternoon and bought a lovely pair of brown shoes at Dadd's 12s 11d [6.5p approx]

December 25th. Snowing hard. Six inches deep. Went by bus to Twickenham. Everything was very enjoyable there but I do feel an outsider. The younger ones treat me as an elderly aunt and the oldsters as a contemporary. Can't get on with them anyhow. Home at 11.30.

December 26th. Deep slushy snow. Cut the feet of Jim's plus-four stockings as wore them over my own stockings: kept them warm and dry. Went to Dad's. David and Mig played violins and Rosemary the piano. The children love Christmas and we love them. Everybody was very well and happy. If only I felt as happy with Jim's people as he does with mine.

Rosemary Goldschmied

Tried one of the online courses? (see page 5)

If you have, please share your experience with others. Please write a short article (50 - 200 words) for the next newsletter. Thanks Ed