

## **OCTOBER 2006 – NEWSLETTER EXTRACTS**

### **Report from this year's U3A Conference and Annual General Meeting**

Your Secretary, Janet, and I attended this year's Conference and AGM, which took place at the very convenient location of the University of Chester on September 3rd–5th. After a brief welcome by our National Chairman, we were split up into groups and were asked by the National Executive Committee to discuss three vital questions about the future of the U3A. Unfortunately we could not attend the final day when all discussion group conclusions were discussed, but the information below gives the results of the discussion group which I attended.

(1) "Could the U3A fill the gap left by Government withdrawal of funds for courses designed for non-vocational learning?" It was felt that we could only partially offer the range of interests covered by colleges, etc., but nevertheless our range of possibilities was vast.

(2) We were asked for our views on restructuring the U3A by having more elected area representatives and thus creating a greater sense of belonging and possibilities for influence. Our group felt that the trust was running well at the present and there appeared to be very little need to change. A consultative document is, however, to be prepared for consideration, and we would reserve judgment until then.

(3) We were asked to consider the implications of increasing membership as we were a very positive organisation for older people. Overlarge U3A's have met the challenge by splitting into smaller groups with a free interchange of members, for example Birmingham has seven smaller groups of about 200 members. With this in mind we are hoping that Wrexham U3A will join us in certain activities.

Regarding individual groups within a U3A, it was considered that when a group gets too large encouragement should be given to the setting up of a similar group, which is what we have done in Flintshire. It was also suggested that perhaps we should encourage groups to have deputy co-ordinators, who could help the co-ordinator and split off into another group if numbers demanded.

Each group should respond how best it can. If anyone has problems on this score please let me know – we have a very helpful booklet which may provide the answer.

The AGM itself was principally involved with the voting in and confirmation of new members and the retiring Chairman's Report.

**All of the above and more will be included in the next Third Age News.**

Something of interest arose during our discussions, and this was the question of what we should do if someone is taken seriously ill during a meeting/walk etc. Rather to my dismay, we were told that we should do nothing except summon medical help immediately.

It was suggested that if any member had a serious medical condition then they should inform their co-ordinator in confidence so that they can take appropriate action in an emergency – it may be just to inform medical help of the situation when it arrives, or to make sure the individual concerned is able to take the appropriate medication they have with them, e.g. tablet or spray for an angina sufferer. So I would urge those members with medical conditions to have a quiet word with their co-ordinator if they have any fears.

**Anne Smith**

Over the three days of this year's Conference and AGM in Chester, Tony and I helped as stewards. It was most interesting to meet the people of the National Executive who have been known to us previously only as pictures in *Third Age News*, or voices over the telephone. We shepherded the flocks, looked after luggage, ran errands and did whatever was helpful for delegates and organisers.

The closing address on the Tuesday by Dr. Linden West was exhilarating and inspiring: the Third Age is about CELEBRATING, the speaker said. The stereotype of the over 50s has gone for good and U3A is blazing the trail of opportunity. Learning is fun and playing is life-giving. You will be able to read a transcript of the speech later, when appropriate wheels have turned. Watch for details in this *Newsletter* or the national *Third Age News*.

**Rita Newman**

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### 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Setting Up of U3A in Britain

Next year will be the 25th Anniversary of the setting up of the U3A in Britain and in celebration of this a cruise has been arranged. Although this will not take place until **15th September, 2007** we are advised that it is likely to be popular and members should book as soon as possible. Anne and Janet have further information for anyone interested. The cruise is for 4 days and includes trips to Tresco Abbey Gardens and Le Havre with optional excursions to Monet's Water Garden and Honfleur. The cost for the 4 days ranges between £129 and £899 per person depending on their cabin grade. £50 deposit will be required.

Anyone interested should ring Travelscope Holidays on 0870 062 5014 quoting reference code U3A SGA. Arrangements can be made for coach pickup points or transport from rail stations in Falmouth, where the cruise starts.

**The AGM is on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September** – on dry land at the combined Universities of Cornwall, Falmouth, and of course this is open to everyone.

### FORTHCOMING GROUPS' MEETINGS

**6th December. Our first Christmas lunch** will be combined with the December Groups' Meeting and will be held on Wednesday, December 6th at the Rainbow Inn, Gwernymynydd. The meeting will start at 10.30am with coffee prior to a talk by Professor Bruce Ing who will speak on plants & animals at the festive season. Following this we will have a two-course lunch. The cost per person will be £10. The venue has been booked for 40 places which will be allocated on a first come first served basis, and is open to Flintshire U3A members only.

**Bookings with payment in advance will be taken from 1st November.** Cheques to be made out to Diane Sauvage. Her address is 4 Pine Grove, Mynydd Isa, Mold.

**7th February** Marion MacNicoll who is the assistant County Organiser for Denbyshire and Colwyn National Gardens Scheme will show her wonderful collection of slides at the Community Centre in New Brighton.

### GROUP NEWS

**The Philosophy Group** now has 21 members and every session provides lively conversation, both thoughtful and serious, but by no means lacking in humour and laughter. A member has recently introduced us to *The Pig that Wanted to be Eaten*, described as 'a book of thought experiments', which is proving to be a potent source of subject matter for our meetings. We welcome any newcomers wishing to deliberate in good company on life's puzzling issues. Meetings are on the third Wednesday afternoon each month – further details on the back page of this Newsletter.

*Tony Newman*

**Singing for Pleasure**. At our fourth meeting we were, with Margaret's able assistance, singing Tallis' Canon in 4-parts! And that included one or two who claim they can't sing in time. The will of the Group is that we shall aspire to part-singing as well as unison singing of the old, well-known songs, and we do have fun! Don't think you can't sing – come and join us and discover that you can.

*Rita Newman*

**Walking Group** A new free booklet of walks has just been published by Flintshire County Council's Countryside Service. It contains 25 walks of varying lengths and difficulty in Flintshire. Each walk is described (bilingually) in full colour with detailed route description and clear mapping. There are also excellent photographs and notes on local wildlife and places of interest. Copies can be obtained free of charge at Libraries and Tourist Information Centres across the region, or from Wepre Park Centre, Tel: 01244 814931, email [countryside@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@flintshire.gov.uk) or download walks from the web at [www.flintshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/countryside).

*Howard White*

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### SNIPPETS

Janet has a report "Designed for North Wales" which covers the outcome of the first phase of a major review of health services for North Wales and also the Annual Report and Accounts for U3A if anyone wishes to borrow them. Her telephone number is 01352 758321.

The U3A Trust has organised special rates for home and motor insurance. Janet has a leaflet, or call 0845.3000.327 and quote 92HU293 for a no-obligation quote. Norwich Union will donate 5% to the U3A Trust.

Anne has details of on-line courses, subject network and subject co-ordinators. Ring her on 752881 if you would like to borrow them.

We were pleased to receive publicity of our activities in the *Flintshire Chronicle* in August from which we received several enquiries regarding membership.

### Election of members to the Committee

**Please don't forget that we will be electing new members to the Committee at our February AGM. WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?** Our Secretary, Janet, will be retiring at the end of this year and we are looking to replace her, together with two additional member of our committee.