

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## 2024 AGM

The second year of my one year tenure and nothing catastrophic happened! I hope you are all enjoying your U3A membership, it is a place where there is lots to partake of, lots of opportunities to meet people and to learn.

Membership has continued to thrive, after stagnating for several years at under 300, we now have around 330 members, much as we welcome members to the monthly meeting, if everyone turned up, this place would be a little crowded!

Jan has been doing a great job with groups, it is difficult to keep up with all the new ones, we now have over 39, with several more in the pipeline, there is something for everyone. We owe a great deal to our dedicated Group Leaders. I do think U3A is particularly good value for money at £15 a year.

We had an excellent holiday this year to where I call the centre of the universe, the Lake District. Throughout my school years I spent all my time in the Lakes. It was lovely to see it all again, although I can no longer climb the mountains. One particularly great day, we travelled the length of Coniston Water in the Gondola, a steam driven boat 163 years old. We had a lovely hotel; some of us even had a four poster bed and a jacuzzi bath!

Other fun activities were a visit to the Cotswold Wild Life Park (I remember taking our kids there in the seventies, and couldn't understand why we needed a whole day there, Wow, in the end we had to run to get back to the coach in time!

The Picnic in the park in 2022 was so popular members asked for a repeat, so we did a re-run on a slightly smaller scale but it was enjoyed by all.

Mary found a new venue for Christmas lunch, good points and bad points, cons: hard work for us setting up, very slow service (I was on table 1 and didn't think there was any problem!) Pros: food was very good, pleasant room, views excellent, plenty of parking, not too far to go plenty, of space. We can only return this year if they can successfully address the service problem.

We collected £650 for Burnehyll Community Woodland well done everyone. The money will be spent on fruit trees for the orchard featuring local varieties within the woodland.

The food bank is still very important in this area, particularly at Christmas, our November food bank collection 63 kg, a magnificent achievement.

Quite a number of changes of committee members this year, Margaret Herbert had to leave due to illness, she made a great contribution and is sadly missed, Audrey has done her 9 years on the committee, as Treasurer, and the Constitution requires her to step down. I'm not sure if the committee will still work without her! Mary has done more than her share as membership secretary and has for the last year has been training her replacement, Mike Luff is leaving, what a job he has done as programme secretary, we have had some great speakers, and he has always stayed well within budget. He previously served as Web Master and has organised the Photo Competition few quite a few years. Last and not least Doug Irvine is leaving due to pressure of other voluntary work.

I'm sorry for all the pestering emails I have sent you all, but it has all been worthwhile I now have a full exciting committee.

And finally I must thank all of the committee for their hard work during the year, I couldn't have done it all on my own! Many thanks to Janet and Alan Marshall for their steadfast organisation of the raffle throughout the year and thanks also to Sylvia Frydland for organising the refreshments, and to Sue Wylde for arranging the rota. – where would we be without our cup of tea! I must also thank all members for their support during the year the turnout for the last meeting was particularly spectacular.