

## Chairman's Annual Report for April 2022-MARCH 2023 presented 23 March 2023

Once again this annual report and the AGM is being delivered live in our meeting place and also via Zoom for those who cannot personally attend. We are indebted to our marvellous IT team to allow this hybrid meeting to take place.

### Membership

At the time of the 2022 AGM we were still suffering from the various mutations of Covid and that previous year could be considered a year of consolidation whereby we managed to keep our membership steady at 376. We can now report that our membership now stands at nearly 500, which is certainly above the pre-pandemic level of 458, and this has been achieved in many ways which will be mentioned below. Our thanks to Lyn Duffus & Liz Major for all of the administrative work that goes with membership.

### Term time Talks

We were able to continue to maintain hybrid talks on a fortnightly basis for the Spring term and also for the 3 very popular and successful Summer Anniversary talks (see below). Attendance here in Ealing Green was initially via the use of Eventbrite whereby we could monitor the numbers to comply with the Church and Government regulations with separation of seats and the use of masks and sanitisation. With the start of the Winter term in January 2023 we were able to dispense with registration of attendance via Eventbrite. We had a change of Speaker Arrangers with effect from April 2022 with Sylvia Stirling and Juliet Edwards taking over this demanding role from Rosemary Richardson.

With effect from the start of the Autumn term in September 2022 your committee, in conjunction with the approval Ealing Green Church, took the decision to increase the number of Thursday morning talks from 2 per month to 3 per month. It was also decided to continue to use the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month for coffee mornings in various venues throughout the Borough of Ealing (see below). During the year in question we have been delighted to have numerous talks delivered by our own members such as Jean Brewster, Nigel Clarke, Mike Perry, Alan Donnithorne and Bill Dudman as well as a splendid variety of talks from speakers from outside of our U3A as well as a very popular seasonal entertainment coupled with refreshments in December 2022.

Attendances here have gradually increased and we are now exceeding 100 per week with 30/45 or so still joining in via Zoom.

Before passing on I really must thank Phil Broomsgrove, Jurek Narozanski and the new members of the IT team who manage the complicated IT video/sound system and especially Sue Peach who has never missed a talk whilst operating the Zoom equipment. Our thanks also go to Jean Newson, Sue Sotheran & Margaret Proctor for their contribution to operations running smoothly on Thursday mornings along with the members of the new Chair team.

### Summer Programme of Talks

This year our season of 3 100 year anniversary talks during July and August was spectacular.

We started with a talk, delivered via Zoom, by Stephen Scott- Fawcett on the life of Sir Ernest Shackleton then we had Robert Seatter, Head of BBC History giving his live presentation of 100 years of the BBC. The final talk was indeed special as we arranged for Neil Stevenson (National U3A Subject Advisor of Egyptology) to travel from Wigan to personally deliver a riveting talk on The discovery of Tutankhamun's Tomb. Once again these talks were delivered free to our members.

### Coffee Mornings

The mid month coffee mornings in the 5 locations around the Borough of Ealing have become increasingly popular with an average of 52 attending. Members enjoy an opportunity to sit with other members for

conversation and company for an hour or so. It is also a very good way of introducing new members to Ealing U3A and also a way of obtaining some members views and opinions of the operation of our U3A.

#### Ealing U3A News

You will all be aware that we continue to issue, on a monthly basis, the very popular U3A Ealing News. The information provided covers our own upcoming events as well as those in the London Region U3A s. There is comprehensive news of local and Central London events with many having links to register/book and invariably interesting articles written by our own members on a variety of subjects. Please keep them coming to Sue Peach who, amazingly, manages to edit all of the editions.

#### Ealing U3A Social Facebook Group

This group, initiated in April 2021, has now slowly grown to 49 of our membership (36 in 2022) and is for the exclusive use of Ealing U3A members only. Judith Crowe Forward continues to administer this group- why not join and give it a go.

#### Ealing U3A Showcase

On Thursday, 29 September 2022 we were able to provide a Groups Showcase event at our meeting place where some 130+ members and guests attended. Most of our Interest Group leaders were available to discuss their own particular groups and opportunities. This was a most successful event especially as it had been some 2 years (before Covid) since a similar event had been arranged. We were also honoured to have The Mayor of Ealing, Councillor Mohinder Midha and her consort come along to open the Showcase. Once again our thanks go to Sue Peach and Patricia Donnithorne for making all these arrangements and also to the members who provided refreshments throughout the whole morning.

#### Tea Parties @ Ealing Golf Club

Following the success of the 2021 tea 2 parties we arranged for 2 further Tea Parties in September 2022. Once again these were well attended with some 134 members taking part. In 2022, due to substantial increase in cost per person from 2021, members were asked to contribute £5 a head. Julia Buckland must be thanked for splendidly organising both of these events.

#### Visibility in the Ealing Area

Very much thanks to the drive and effort of our Secretary, Patricia Donnithorne, we were able to have a publicity stand at the Hanwell Carnival in Elthorne Park on 18 June. A very enjoyable time was had for that afternoon and our thanks goes to the 10 or so members who helped to promote Ealing U3A

Over 40 of us attended a Picnic in Walpole Park on 1 June to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the U3A movement. This was a very good turnout considering the awful weather.

For the first time that we can remember arrangements were made to have a publicity stand in Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre on 29 September. Once again our thanks go to those members who attended during the course of 5 hours or so. Some of the publicity material created for the stands is around the hall today. We designed and launched new publicity leaflets and posters during the year. These are available today if you can help distribute them around the borough.

#### Photographic Competition

This year we had 105 entries in 5 categories and the judge, Michael Lurie, was most impressed with the improvement from previous years. The competition was free of charge to enter and M & S gift vouchers were awarded to the winners. Again I must thank Phil Broomsgrove, Jurek Narozanski and especially Sue Peach for setting up the event and putting all the entries onto our website. There will be a change to the judging method for this coming 2023 competition.

## Interest Groups

There has been a determined effort from our Interest Group Co-Ordinator (Sue Peach) to expand the variety and number of groups this year. The intention is to ensure that most members are accommodated within these existing and new groups. There are now some 52+ interest groups (up from 43 last year) and the variety of subjects on offer are certainly attracting new members. Examples of a few of these new groups include Antique Appreciation, Card-Games, Ukelele and Creative Writing, The venues for the meetings continue to be in members homes and many of the public houses and coffee shops in the area- all without charge. A few groups continue to meet via Zoom though most now have face to face meetings.

I say this every year that the lifeblood of our U3A is the interest groups (whether weekly, monthly or bi-monthly) and we thank the Interest Group Convenors who do a marvellous role in keeping us all engaged and entertained-thank you.

## Committee

Your executive committee have met some 6 times in the last 12 months as well as many of them attending more than 25 London Region Special Peer Groups meetings as well as the National U3A AGM via Zoom.

There have been countless phone conversations and over a thousand emails and WhatsApp messages. I am stunned by the commitment of them all to continue to move our organisation forward.

There will be changes to the next committee as some members will need to step aside having completed their allocated period of tenure and we look forward to welcoming any members who are contemplating this interesting, rewarding and satisfying role.

We reduced the membership fee for this current year to £20 as we felt that we were sufficiently capitalised to accommodate the expected increase in church venue and various payments to the National U3A office though future committees may wish to review this fee with further information. Our Treasurer, Liz Major, will be giving the Treasurers report including membership details following this presentation.

I have thanked most committee members already during this report. At this point I would particularly wish to thank Sylvia Stirling who has stepped down after 3 years as our Secretary, a year as Vice Chair and the current year as Speaker Arranger as well as an earlier position as Secretary to the London Region U3A executive committee. She has also agreed (along with Juliet Edwards) to arrange the three 2023 Summer Anniversary talks.

## The Future

I believe that our organisation is one of the most popular and largest of the many charitable organisations in the Ealing Area and is very well respected. We are attracting new members at a speedy rate and it is pleasing that many of these members are relatively young and will (hopefully) provide leadership in the future.

This coming year promises to be just as busy as last year as many of the events from last year may be repeated including the Summer Tea parties and a picnic

May I wish you all further education, great fun and enjoyment for 2023/24 within the family of the U3A.

Derek Atkinson  
Chairman March  
2023.