

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024

PRESENTED 21 MARCH 2024

For the 3rd successive year, we are delivering the AGM and this annual report live in our regular meeting place with many members also taking part, and voting, via Zoom.

MEMBERSHIP

At last year's AGM we reported a substantial increased membership to just shy of 500 which we thought was a tremendous achievement. This figure has, over the last 12 months increased to an amazing 604 - indeed the highest in Ealing U3A's history. Our thanks go, once again, to Liz Major and Lyn Duffus for the administrative work involving collection of subscriptions and updating membership records.

TERM TIME TALKS

During the year making up this report we were able to provide 27 full Thursday morning speakers among the 30 events held in the meeting place. The 3 other events included our Interest group showcase (see below) photographic competition (see below) and the end of year "In house entertainment event". We were delighted to have 8 of our own members give presentations during this period. A couple of the memorable presentations were Prof. Gale Owen-Crocker and the Bayeux Tapestry and Richard Kornicki and the Polish Air Force in West London during WW11. We must not forget the IT team, led by Phil Broomsgrove, who provided IT video/sound along with Sue Peach who operated the Zoom link to members attending the "live" meetings at home.

The new speaker arrangers were, for this year, Patricia Plummer, Jane Cocking & Jeannine Andre and our thanks for a great series of speakers goes to them. Further mention must go to Jean Newson who managed the Chair team and Sue Sotheran & Margaret Proctor for their contribution to the smooth running of the Thursday morning events.

SUMMER PROGRAMME

Quite uniquely within the London Region of U3As, we delivered 3 talks during July & August with the highlight probably being delivered by Harry Ferguson with his fascinating and revealing talk "Spies-What do spies do?". Harry had never delivered this censored talk to any U3A before or since and our thanks goes to Judith Forward for persuading him to travel to us from Brighton to deliver his talk – we were NOT allowed to record it. Sylvia Stirling and Juliet Edwards took responsibility for booking the 3 speakers.

ATTENDANCES

On average the weekly attendance to our venue varied between 70-110 with between 30-55 joining in via Zoom. Rarely do we have less than 110-120 participants.

COFFEE MORNINGS/TEA PARTIES AT EALING GOLF CLUB/PICNIC IN THE PARK

We held 9 coffees mornings on the 3rd Thursday of the month at our 5 venues around the Ealing borough and these continue to prove popular with 50/60 members regularly attending.

During September 2023 we held 2 Tea Parties at Ealing Golf Club where 160 members attended (up from the 134 from the previous year). Once again attendees contributed only £5 towards the cost and, as usual, seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. Our thanks go to Julia Buckland and her team of volunteers for organising and hosting this popular event.

We also held a picnic in Walpole Park in July with about 40 attendees where they enjoyed a quiz along with food, drink and especially conversation.

EALING U3A NEWS

This monthly newsletter goes from strength to strength and is distributed to all members via Beacon. Paper copies were also sent to non-internet members and large print copies to those members with eyesight problems. The sole Editor for the last 2 years has been Sue Peach, and it is quite amazing that she is providing us with such a superb and interesting resource.

EALING U3A GROUP SHOWCASE EVENT/SOCIAL FACEBOOK GROUP

In June our Interest Group Co-Ordinator, Sue Peach along with our former Secretary Patricia Donnithorne, arranged the annual event in the church. Once again it was very well attended with some 140 members coming along. They were able to speak with most of the interest group leaders as well as enjoying refreshments. We were entertained by displays from the Ukulele Group as well as the Country Dancing Group. Many new members were able to join a variety of these groups which was one of the main purposes of this event.

The Ealing U3A Social Facebook Group continues to be used with an increase of members from 49 to 63 – why not give it a try.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

This year we had some 99 entries, and we were delighted to persuade Ian Richardson to once again be the Senior Judge with Phil Broomsgrove and Derek Atkinson making up the panel. The presentation event, hosted by Ian, took place in late October with our own Jill Thumpston giving us her excellent presentation of “Photography – is it Art?”.

INTEREST GROUPS

We felt that the efforts of our Interest Group Co-Ordinator, Sue Peach, especially during this last year have been very successful. Her (and the Committee’s) remit was to ensure appropriate interest groups were made available to old and especially new members and set up new groups where applicable. We now have some 57 such groups and

growing. The benefits of the showcase event in June have come to fruition which is very much reflected in the great increase in membership. If we highlight just one particular new group, we will say that the EXCURSIONS group has been incredibly successful, and our thanks go to Patrica Plummer for taking responsibility for its administration. Only a couple of groups now meet via Zoom and all the rest meet in local venues such as Public Houses & Coffee Shops (all without charge) as well as members' homes.

Once again, I would reiterate that our Interest Groups are the lifeblood of the U3A. It is where friendships are made and learning, engagement and enjoyment take place. Our thanks go to the 40 or so Interest Group leaders for their continued willingness to undertake this role.

COMMITTEE

We met 7 times these 12 months as well as attending, mostly via Zoom, many London Region and National U3A meetings. We use WhatsApp messages, emails and numerous telephone calls to communicate with each other – the commitment of all the committee members is astounding.

Patricia Donnithorne, our popular, highly efficient elected Secretary, moved to the West country towards the end of 2023 which was a huge loss to us and she is certainly missed. We were fortunate that our previous Secretary, Sylvia Stirling, volunteered to step into this role till the completion of this AGM and prepare all the appropriate documentation for today.

There will be changes to the composition of the forthcoming committee as some members wish/need to stand down and new members are looking to join and add their skills to a future committee.

Our Treasurer will be giving her presentation after this report, and I would wish to reassure our members that our finances are healthy and can accommodate expected financial commitments for the coming year.

THE FUTURE

We are a highly respected and popular charitable organisation within the Ealing Borough and continue to attract new members to our “family”. Once again it is pleasing that relatively younger members are joining.

This coming year will see many changes including a new website when our IT/Website team (Phil Broomsgrove & Jurek Narozanski) will be fully engaged in the migration from Sitebuilder to u3a Siteworks. There will also be an upgrade of the projector and screen to give an improved visual experience to members attending the Thursday meetings.

Be assured that it is intended to retain many of the events from 2023 including the Summer Tea Parties and continued Excursions.

In conclusion may I wish you great fun and enjoyment as well as being educated within the interest groups and by our guest speakers.

Derek Atkinson

Co-Vice Chairman

March 2024