

History of Launceston & District u3a

The Launceston & District U3A was formed on August 25th, 1993 by Peter Hart. He was a geography teacher and retired to Launceston in 1991 with his wife Elizabeth. Peter was principal lecturer at Bishops Otter College, Chichester before taking up appointments with several international agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank. Peter also trained as a Lay Preacher and assisted with worship at St Mary Magdalene and St Thomas's.

Back in 1993, he visited the Museum and met Les Richardson. The League of Friends had been formed and he was welcomed on to their committee. A few had already heard about the U3A, but Peter had researched it and was enthusiastic to start a group in the Town. The original meeting was held in the Eagle House Hotel. Peter was encouraged by the objective of the U3A, to keep older people learning, and sharing their own expertise and knowledge with others. Peter immediately formed a group himself, based on theories which helped older people to return to learning. Having the group in different people's homes, made back-to-learning relaxed and members quickly responded to forming other groups. The annual fees were £5 and there were soon 25 members and 10 Groups. **Lunch Club** (Anne Morrison); **Literature** (David Brown); **Philosophy** (Ruth Shepherd); **Religion** (John Clark); **Local History** (Les Richardson); **Music Appreciation** (Sam Lunt); **Creative Writing** (Jill Bettison); **Theatre** (Joan Blackmore); **Walking** (Alan Claridge); and **Travel** (Mr. & Mrs. Kinsman).

In addition to the coordinators, some of the original members were Anne Richardson, Ann Hendry, Margaret Jarvis, Stan & Miriam Mincher, Frank & Barbara Greenwood, Norman Daniel, Betty Hart, Harold Nutley and Evelyn Campbell. The Chairman was Ann Hendry.

In 1994 there were 49 members and new Groups formed – **Swimming** (Lily Ackroyd); **Visual Arts**; **German** (Margaret Jarvis); **Bridge** (Peter Hart); **Chess**, and **Ramblers**. **In 1995** more groups formed –

Computers for Beginners, and **Gardening**. Chairman was still Anne Hendry, Secretary Jake Jackson, Treasurer Iris Curley and Membership Secretaries David Brown and Joan Blackmore. **In 1996**, the first newsletter was published, and there were now 79 members, and with so many Groups, a meeting of Co-Ordinator was held at Lily Ackroyd's house on St. Stephens Hill. She held these meetings until 2008 when she moved away.

On February 18th, 1997, founder Peter Hart was tragically killed in a car accident at Kennard's House and a tree was planted, along with a plaque in his memory on the lawn in front of the Library. The headline article in the Cornish & Devon about Peter Hart's accident read "Crash victim was a true Good Samaritan". Sadly, no photo of Peter is available, and many of those mentioned above have left us, so we pay tribute to their hard work creating this wonderful organization in our town.

***Original article written by Brenda Hooton
Chairman 2005-2008 for our 25th Anniversary in 2018
Reviewed and edited for 30th Anniversary Aug 2023***

