Phenomenal Growth For A New U3A!

We are all amazed & delighted that Meopham U3A has taken off incredibly well - it now has almost 250 members! However this astounding growth has brought with it a number of issues which your committee is busily addressing.

PREMISES: We have already had to find new premises as the Village Hall was unable to accommodate our membership numbers by the time of our first Monthly Members’ Meeting in September, hence we have secured the use of St John The Baptist Church for the foreseeable future. Our grateful thanks to all at St Johns for this. After some teething trouble due to our rapid switch of venue, we are assured that the heating will be on & the sound system operating properly at our next monthly members’ meeting on October 6th.

IDEAS WELCOME: If we continue to grow at this astounding rate it is conceivable that we may need to arrange monthly meetings in a format more appropriate for greatly increased numbers or even to find still larger premises - not an easy task! Rest assured that the committee is watching this situation very carefully & will not only keep you fully informed, but will gladly welcome & consider any of the thoughts, ideas, suggestions & innovative solutions which you may come up with as a member of our thriving new organization.

NEW MEMBERS: We want to ensure that all future applicants can be embraced within our U3A family but this may take some time to organise. Currently there are still opportunities for new members to join but new applicants will now need to contact the Membership Secretary for the latest update. This is best done via our website at: http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=793.

GROUPS: We are keen to help all our interest groups to be successful & enjoyable. Members have generally been very patient & supportive as requested whilst groups have been in the process of forming & getting organised, with the result that there are now 30 groups running, with more in the pipeline! All of these now have a group page on our website, & it is intended that, rather than simply contacting group members, group contacts will also make sure that essential information & reports about the group’s organized events are put on to the group page so that the other U3A members will know what is happening. Everyone will want to know what your group is doing, so why not write a few lines yourself for the Newsletter? There is no formal process, anyone can do it, & your contribution will help to share the enthusiasm of the groups. Send it to Chris (meopweb@btinternet.com).

GROUP CONTACTS: The Committee’s Group Organisers have been working hard to find & assist members willing to act as contacts for each group - these are an essential cog in our U3A machine, & we are sure you will join us in extending our heartfelt thanks to all the members who have volunteered to take the first turn in this role.

WHAT NEXT? As you will know by now, U3A is a self help organization which does not offer courses but encourages members to learn together, so every contribution you make to your group will be valuable. We need time for our U3A to settle down & to allow groups to become established & flourish. It is inevitable & desirable that they will grow & change. Perhaps you could start a new group yourself?

FINALLY: As we continue to become more experienced we look forward to seeing more new ideas & activities develop. Some U3As organise holidays, some run ‘workshops’ &/or short courses, & there are also all the activities, courses, conferences & help from the Third Age Trust which can be accessed. Do try to look at the website often (put it in ‘favourites’ in your browser) & let us know your ideas.

Congratulations & Thanks to all of you for the amazing start we have made!
MONTHLY MEMBERS’ MEETINGS

Monthly Members’ Meetings will take place at St John The Baptist Church from 14.00 to 16.00. The current programme of talks is shown below.

**Please remember that this list is subject to change;** always try to check the website for the latest information at: [http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=793](http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=793)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th October</td>
<td>“Weird Wills, Eccentric Epitaphs &amp; Funny Funerals”</td>
<td>Cyril Baldwin</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th November</td>
<td>“An Afternoon With Henry VIII”</td>
<td>Tony Harris</td>
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<td>8th December</td>
<td>“Tom Crean: The Unsung Hero Of Antarctic Exploration”</td>
<td>Michael Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th January</td>
<td>“Petticoat Pilot”</td>
<td>Ann Chance</td>
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<td>9th February</td>
<td>“How To Write Your Life Story”</td>
<td>Jo Livingston</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th March</td>
<td><strong>Speaker &amp; Topic For This Meeting Still To Be Confirmed</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12th April</td>
<td>“My Life as a Tiller Girl”</td>
<td>Jackie Simmonds</td>
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SOCIAL NEWS

We have had a busy & successful month with social events & we are getting to know what Meopham U3A members want.

Our monthly coffee mornings at the Cricketers have settled into a regular feature & following the frantically busy August gathering (63 people) our September meeting was much more of a casual affair with 26 of you popping in for a chat. Make a note of the October date which is Monday 26th.

The first pub lunch organised by Dee Jordan was also well attended with 19 of you enjoying 2 courses at the Ship in Cobham. These lunches will be held on the fourth Friday of each month at a different venue & Dee will be available with her sign-up sheet at the coffee mornings & the monthly meetings at the church. The next lunch is at the White Swan in Ash on 23 October.

34 of us went on our first theatre visit to see ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’ at the Orchard Theatre for the matinee on Wednesday 23 September. Everyone enjoyed the star studded performance & the feedback has been generous & enthusiastic. Sylvia Stickings has agreed to search out another suitable production for us, so once we have confirmation & details of venue & cost it will be put onto the website- please keep checking for updates.

As we are in our first year we decided not to organise a Christmas lunch or hold a coffee morning in December but this will be something we hope to arrange for next year as the planning needs to be done several months in advance.

Following our December 8th meeting in the church we will be serving mince pies with our tea & coffee as a seasonal treat. As always if you have any suggestions about Social events please get in touch through the contact on the website.

Finally, we always gladly accept any offers of help especially with the refreshment rota for monthly meetings. There is a sign up sheet for each month & if we have a lot of volunteers it would only require volunteering once a year.

Carole Sulsh- Social Events

*The views & opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Meopham U3A or any part of the University of the Third Age unless specifically stated. Information in this newsletter is provided in good faith. In using this information, you assume all risks associated with its use or misuse. Although we have taken every care in its preparation, Meopham U3A and/or its volunteers cannot be held responsible or liable for the accuracy of the information, or any errors or omissions that may occur, especially where supplied by other organisations, individuals, or sources. This also applies to our website which can be visited for fuller information & all our recent updates, at: [http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=793](http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=793). (Tip: To find this site more easily in future, add it to ‘Favourites’ in your browser).*
P3

How could I contribute to our U3A?

Here are a few suggestions:

For Meopham U3A:
- Give a short talk at our main monthly meeting in the church
- Serve teas at the monthly meeting once a year
- Help to set up/pack away at monthly meetings
- Think of something I would really like to learn, send in & follow up my suggestion
- ’Buddy’ someone without email for one year
- Assist or guest edit the monthly newsletter
- Attend 1 committee meeting as observer/support
- Serve on the committee for one year July-July

For National U3A:
- Write to 'Third Age Matters' about something my group is doing
- 'Buddy' someone without email for one year
- Attend ONE National Conference & AGM
- Assist or guest edit the monthly newsletter
- Attend 1 committee meeting as observer/support
- Serve on the committee for one year July-July

For My Group:
- Write notes on a group session
- Lead a group session as convener for that session
- Provide the venue for one of my interest group meetings
- Undertake research to bring extra skills & knowledge to my interest group
- Place a report of a group meeting on the website - say what my group is doing
- Be Group Contact for one year
- Send in a short piece of text or a photo about your group’s activities for the newsletter.
- Present a summary of work done in my group to that group / to the rest of Meopham U3A

Our first monthly members’ meeting at St John the Baptist Church - Sept 8th 2015

Over 170 members turned up to enjoy ‘Behind the Scenes of Television’s Golden Years’ - a fascinating talk by our guest speaker, Wilf Lower, who was responsible in the 70’s & 80’s for ‘Scenic Operations’ at the BBC - scenery, props & ‘working’ the shows...everything on screen except performers, costumes & make-up. He gave an entertaining insight into how many of the most memorable programmes were made, including Morecambe & Wise, The Two Ronnies, Terry & June, Till Death Do Us Part, The Good Life, The Forsyte Saga, Pennies from Heaven, When the Boat Comes In; Top of the Pops, Last Night at the Proms; & various Royal events. . . . Truly TV’s ‘Golden Years’.

We had to change to our new venue at fairly short notice, but despite one or two teething problems with our sound & projection systems & a rather chilly hall, the feedback on the event has been positive, & we expect to have them ironed out before our next meeting.

The talk was followed by a social gathering in the adjoining hall; refreshments were available & members were keen to talk & to chat. There was a lot of interest & many questions concerning groups & their organization & we will ensure that much more information is available at the next meeting on 6th October. We look forward to meeting most of you there.

Situations vacant – help needed

As we grow, we will need more Members volunteering to help. Currently the help needed is:

- Assisting the Webmaster & Newsletter Editor - writing & or IT skills welcomed – contact Chris at meopweb@btinternet.com
- Group Contacts – you could assist one of your group contacts, or start off a new group.
- Any member who would like to help in any capacity – please contact the Chair via the Website.

Newsletter ‘Buddies’

A 'Newsletter Buddy' is a member of U3A who agrees to print one copy of the monthly Newsletter at home & deliver or post it to someone who does not have email. So a big 'thank you' to everyone who has already agreed to be a 'Buddy' - we now have 5 pairs of members linked in this way! At present we have 2 members awaiting a 'Buddy', one of whom lives in Fawkham, so if you could do this for one year for one member please let the chairman or membership secretary know.

This is one way in which you can be an active U3A participant. But remember, you don’t have to do it forever - just one year. That would be ten Newsletters.

Contact our Chair or Membership Secretary in person or via the website. Thank you.
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - At 1st October >>>

Events may change, they may be cancelled or further events may be added.
Group contacts will normally let group members know about last minute changes.
Whether you are a group member or not, remember to check the website for up-to-date information.

http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=793

It's very helpful to bring your U3A membership card to each meeting! Amongst other things this helps us to monitor attendances!

Groups - What’s Been Happening?

The short answer is - quite a lot!
Members were asked to exercise patience whilst the groups got themselves organized & this process has continued at quite a rapid pace given the numbers involved. Have a quick look at the website & the diary list for October on the following page & you will see what a lot is going on.

Most groups have now met & have a group contact with a link from the website, & have organised some meetings. Finding venues has proved to be slightly problematic for some, but most groups have now managed to organise some meetings.

What is now most important is to refine our communication - the recommended method being to add an event on to the website, which means that all members can view the information, not just the current members of a specific group who may be e-mailing each other. Events are automatically removed once the event date is over, so this saves your group contact a great deal of work.

Some groups have already managed this well, but just under half have not yet got their full information out to members, so please, please do ask Chris our web administrator for help if you need it.

It’s also possible to put other things on to your page. Look at ‘Creative Writing’ & you will find a little logo + a link to a meeting report; ‘Walking’ has a report of activities with a photo (see below), whilst ‘Machine Doctors’ has a link to an amusing little animation on You Tube! As more information on your activities appears, we can also get it into this Newsletter.

ITALIAN:
Our 1st meeting took place in Sole Street at 14.30 on Friday 18th September. We started by having a run through the Italian alphabet & pronouncing some random words, just to get the feel of things. It was agreed that we would use the BBC book 'Talk Italian' Book 1, to make a start. (Available at Waterstones or Amazon).

We look forward to hearing from anyone interested. Our 2nd session went well; we certainly got through some of the basics & will be able to greet each other at our next meeting on Oct 30th! If anyone new to the group wishes to get in touch please feel free to email Alex via the website link.

MONEY MATTERS:
The group met at The Cricketers on Wednesday Sept 16th. Some good progress was agreed on the way forward. Peta has agreed to act as group contact & more details will follow shortly.

QUILTING:
For our initial meeting we met together with those interested in sewing & crafts & have divided into smaller groups. This group is now 'Small Project Quilting'. Those at the first meeting have decided to each purchase a small panel to bring along to a meeting on 16th October to talk about quilting & binding. Please e mail Di for venue.

WALKING GROUP:
Many thanks to Fran & Andrew for organising our inaugural walk on 17 September. The weather was kind to us & more than 20 people turned up for a lovely walk from Camer Park to Cobham & back, followed by lunch in "The Railway" Sole Street. Andrew took this photo of the group on Henley Down.

The next walks are on the 9th & 30th October. Details & contacts can be found on the website.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st (Thu)</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Meet in the Committee Room, at the rear of Meopham Village Hall (not the room at the front) at 1.00 pm. We understand that the only access to this room is via the main hall. A baby clinic is regularly held in the main hall every Thursday afternoon from 2.00pm so on exiting our meeting via the main hall, we shall have to be as discreet as possible. If we find it a bit of a squash then another venue will have to be considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd (Fri)</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>14.30 Sole Street. E-mail Alex for details &amp; venue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th (Mon)</td>
<td>Computing Helping Hand</td>
<td>Meopham Library 10 -12 Remember you must have booked a computer. Computers can be booked for 1 hour slots.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th (Tue)</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>09.45 - 11.45. St Marys Hall, Sole Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th (Tue)</td>
<td>Monthly Members’ Meeting</td>
<td>14.00 - 16.00. St John The Baptist Church. Speaker: Cyril Baldwin: &quot;Weird Wills, Funny Funerals &amp; Eccentric Epitaphs&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th (Thu)</td>
<td>Book Club</td>
<td>At Meopham Library 14.00 - 16.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th (Fri)</td>
<td>Machine Doctors</td>
<td>2nd Meeting of 'Machine Doctors' at 09.30am – Blue Cow Coffee Shop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th (Fri)</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Walk from Trottiscliffe. Alison &amp; Paul are organising a fairly flat walk of 3 to 4 miles from &quot;The George&quot; Trottiscliffe. Meet at 9.45 for a 10am start. Please be sure to email Clive if you want to join them &amp; say whether you want to have lunch in the pub after.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13th (Tue)</td>
<td>GROUPS</td>
<td>GROUP CONTACTS &amp; ORGANISERS MEETING, 14.00, Blue Cow Coffee Shop, Camer Parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th (Tue)</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Intermediate group meeting 7.30pm - contact Sue for venue</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th (Wed)</td>
<td>Painting &amp; Drawing</td>
<td>Meeting in the Hall at Hodsell Street. 10 until 12.30. Please bring something for a Still Life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15th (Thu)</td>
<td>Art Appreciation</td>
<td>10am at Meopham Library. Our chosen artist is Turner - please try to bring along a copy of a painting to include in our discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16th (Fri)</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Meeting at Gravesend Library 2-4 pm to decide on a list of topics for discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16th (Fri)</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Beginners group meeting 2pm - contact Sue for venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th (Fri)</td>
<td>Quilting</td>
<td>14.30. For our initial meeting we met together with those interested in sewing &amp; crafts &amp; have divided into smaller groups. This group is for ‘Small Project Quilting’. Those at the meeting have decided to each purchase a small panel to bring along to the meeting to talk about quilting &amp; binding. Please e-mail Di for venue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19th (Mon)</td>
<td>Current Affairs</td>
<td>7.30-9.30pm. Topic: The Paris Climate Change Conference. Please email Current Affairs Group Contact for venue details, giving your text/telephone number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th (Mon)</td>
<td>Family History</td>
<td>2-4pm in the meeting room upstairs at Gravesend Library, Windmill Street, Gravesend. Please book a computer in advance with the library if you wish to use one during this meeting &amp; don’t forget your U3A membership card!</td>
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<tr>
<td>19th (Mon)</td>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>Darenth Valley Golf Course. 18 holes tee times from 12 noon &amp; 9 hole from 2pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19th (Mon)</td>
<td>Computing Helping Hand</td>
<td>Meopham Library 10 -12 Remember you must have booked a computer. Computers can be booked for 1 hour slots.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th (Tue)</td>
<td>Bridge (Intermediate)</td>
<td>Bridge - Intermediate Will be held on the 1st &amp; 3rd Tuesday at 2-4:30pm every month starting on the 20th October.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd (Fri)</td>
<td>PUB LUNCH for members</td>
<td>The White Swan, Ash. 12.30 for 13.00 £12.50 for 2 courses, advance menu selection preferred. Sign up sheet at the September 28th coffee morning &amp; the 6th October Members’ Meeting. £5 non refundable deposit required. Any queries please use the Events contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th (Mon)</td>
<td>COFFEE MORNING</td>
<td>Cricketers Inn, Meopham. 10.00 to 11.30am For Members &amp; Prospective Members. Event is FREE TO ATTEND, but there is a charge £2.75 for a cup of tea/coffee &amp; biscuits</td>
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<tr>
<td>26th (Mon)</td>
<td>Computing Helping Hand</td>
<td>Meopham Library 10 -12 Remember you must have booked a computer. Computers can be booked for 1 hour slots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th (Wed)</td>
<td>Painting &amp; Drawing</td>
<td>Meeting in the Hall at Hodsell Street. 10 until 12.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>30th (Fri)</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Walk from Harvel. Sue &amp; Peter are organising a walk of about 3.5 miles from &quot;The Amazon &amp; Tiger&quot; Harvel. Meet at 10 for a 10.30 start. If you want to join them, please be sure to email Clive, saying whether you want to have lunch in the pub after.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th (Fri)</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>14.30 at Alex’s (email for venue)</td>
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Our groups list is currently as follows. It is continuing to evolve; some groups are splitting into more than one discipline, whilst one or two are likely to merge. Please check the website for the latest information:

- **Art Appreciation**
- **Book Club**
- **Bridge (Tuesday) (starters)**
- **Bridge (Intermediate)**
- **Bridge (Friday) (starters)**
- **Citizen Science**
- **Classical Studies**
- **Computing**
- **Creative Writing**
- **Current Affairs**
- **Family History**
- **Gardening**
- **Gardens Visits**
- **Guitar**
- **History**
- **Italian**
- **Machine Doctors**
- **Meopham 'Makers'**
- **Money Matters**
- **Music for Pleasure**
- **Painting & Drawing**
- **Photography**
- **Quilting**
- **Sewing/Craft**
- **Singing**
- **Theatre Visits**
- **Walking**
- **Wine Appreciation**
- **French & Bridge Groups**

**Ground Rules For Groups**

A REMINDER THAT WE HAVE SOME BASIC GROUND RULES FOR GROUPS:

- Everyone contributes in some way or another
- Everyone’s contribution is equally valid & useful
- Everyone listens to others in a polite & respectful way
- Everyone learns through the U3A shared-learning model
- Everyone shares responsibility for making the group work
- Members make a small contribution to the host for tea or coffee.
- Members need to inform the organiser or host if they are unable to attend the meeting.

**November 2015**

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| 10th (Tue) | Monthly Members’ Meeting, 14.00 - 16.00 St John The Baptist Church.  
Speaker: Tony Harris: “An Afternoon With Henry VIII” |
| 12th (Thu) | Walking  
Walk from Meopham Green. Ian is organising a walk of 5 to 6 miles, meeting outside the "Kings Arms" at 9.45 for a 10am start. If you want to join him, please be sure to email Clive, saying whether you want to stay for lunch at "The Cricketers" after. |
| 16th (Mon) | Family History  
2-4pm in the meeting room upstairs at Gravesend Library, Windmill Street, Gravesend. Please book a computer in advance with the library if you wish to use one during this meeting & don't forget your U3A membership card! |
| 30th (Mon) | COFFEE MORNING Cricketers Inn, Meopham. 10.00 to 11.30am For Members & Prospective Members. Event is FREE TO ATTEND, but there is a charge £2.75 for a cup of tea/coffee & biscuits. |

**December 2015**

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<th>Date</th>
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| 3rd (Thu) | Walking  
Walk from Shorne - details to follow |
| 8th (Tue) | Monthly Members’ Meeting, 14.00 - 16.00 St John The Baptist Church.  
Speaker: Michael Smith: "Tom Crean: The Unsung Hero Of Antarctic Exploration" |
| 21st (Mon) | Family History  
2-4pm in the meeting room upstairs at Gravesend Library, Windmill Street, Gravesend. Please book a computer in advance with the library if you wish to use one during this meeting & don't forget your U3A membership card! |

Please remember - there will be no COFFEE MORNING or PUB LUNCH this month!

**MORE GROUP NEWS**

Our groups list is currently as follows. It is continuing to evolve; some groups are splitting into more than one discipline, whilst one or two are likely to merge. Please check the website for the latest information:

- **French & Bridge Groups** now have separate groups to cater for different levels of expertise.
- **Sewing, Quilting & Other Crafts Groups** are in the process of forming several different groups to cover various different craft disciplines.
- **German**: It is hoped to form a German Group if enough members are interested.
- **Music for Pleasure**: If you are a real enthusiast for any form of music you are likely to enjoy being part of this group. The main focus is likely to be on classical music but jazz & music composed for the theatre & films will also be covered. Email David to register an interest. Once he has the contact details of potential members we can determine the preferred timing, format & content of meetings.
- **New Groups**: To gauge interest in a new group you would like to see, e-mail our website administrator for advice or speak to one of the Committee.
alone, ie half of our members. It was suggested that U3As
ness needs to be studied. 50% of older people now live
jects
There is a strong emphasis on setting up
about & engaging with contemporary issues.
actively learning what recent scientific developments are
on 'What Growing Old Means' & 'Ageing Well'. Loneli-
ess needs to be studied. 50% of older people now live
alone, ie half of our members. It was suggested that U3As
could have events on Sunday afternoons when many peo-
ple are on their own.
At the AGM, out of a total of 962 U3As, only 22% were
present. 389 U3As voted (209 present, 180 proxy votes) &
573 were not represented at all. This means that about
40% voted, whilst 60% were invisible. The aim for the fu-
ture would be to have 100% representation.
Pam Jones was elected as chair for the next three years,
after a close contest. Look out for her face in 'Third Age
Matters' magazine when it arrives.
Why not think about going to the Conference yourself
one year? It is important that at least one representative
from each U3A goes every year, if only to get a picture of
what is happening in the wider world of U3A, to get new
ideas, & to see how other U3As resolve any problems that
come their way.
Next year the Conference & AGM will be held from 23-25
Aug 2016 at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Not-
ingham University. Take the High Speed train from
 Gravesend to St Pancras, then St Pancras to Nottingham,
& bus/taxi to the University. The accommodation, with
breakfast, was in a 1980s’ student study bedroom, with
ensuite bathroom. Lunch & dinner were served in the Con-
ference Centre, which was 5 mins walk from the accommo-
dation block.
In 2015 it cost about £230 for two nights full board & travel.
Details will appear on the national website, probably after
Christmas. Any U3A member can go. It might make your
brain ache, but I’m sure you would find it stimulating.
Sue Bates 21.9.2015

THE U3A STORY (2)

by Francis Beckett (Reproduced by kind permission of The U3A National Office)

2. The first U3As

Quite quickly, there were three big
U3As. Cambridge U3A had a £20 an-
nual fee, hundreds of members, &
scores of interest groups. London was
doing just as well, with a much smaller
annual fee – just £4 – & a weekly Mon-
day lecture. & Huddersfield had sup-
port from the local authority, hundreds
of members, & a weekly dance.
The word spread fast. Often the na-
tional committee was contacted by a
lone enthusiast, who would be advised
to bring in a few others, enough for a
small ad hoc committee. They were
told to arrange an inaugural meeting &
spread the word through the local
press & radio & with posters in civic
outlets, especially libraries.

Two early U3As started in Hertford-
shire in 1983: Stevenage &
Harpenden. In Somerset, a U3A in
Yeovil affiliated to the national organi-
sation on 22 October 1983. 1983 also
saw the first U3A in Essex, at Saffron
Walden. The first U3A in the London
area apart from London U3A itself also
started in 1983, in Merton. Devon was
another early county, with Totnes &
Barnstaple moving first.
The first national U3A magazine ap-
peared in September 1983. Its first
issue was called The Last Post, a title
which caused an instant outcry. The
second issue in February 1984 was
called Late Extra, & in summer 1984 a
name was found that lasted for a while:
Third Age. In October 1983, the U3A’s
national organisation was registered as
a charity called The Third Age Trust.
Some grants came in during the year:
£4300 from the Calouste Gulbenkian
Foundation, £2400 from the National
Extension College, & the Nuffield
Foundation gave £5,000 to support a
national organiser for two years.
By then, eight U3As were officially reg-
istered with the national office, & 15
more registered between October
1983 & October 1984. They all still
exist. In Surrey, Oxfordshire & Corn-
wall, there were organisations doing
similar work. In Surrey & Oxfordshire,
after some hesitation, they affiliated to
the national organisation, but those in
Cornwall did not come in until 2002.

(To Be Continued)