

SHEFFIELD

U3A

LINKS



No. 131

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www.sheffieldu3a.org.uk

From the Chairman

The leaves are falling as I write this and no doubt you are all back into enjoying your regular Group activities, perhaps also being tempted by the wide range of special SU3A events and outings.

You will read elsewhere of the enjoyable Ridings Regional Open Day at Askham Bryan. The National Chairman opened the proceedings and was particularly enthusiastic about the recent U3A link up with the Open University. It so happened that my own interest had already been raised in what the OU was doing to expand on-line learning - and for **free!** Some of you, particularly subject Group Coordinators, might like to look at the OpenLearn web site www.open.ac.uk/openlearn for any useful material that can be downloaded.

Turning back to SU3A matters, with our ever increasing membership and steady growth of Groups, it is perhaps time to remind ourselves of the aims and principles on which U3As were initially built and which are an enduring legacy from those who, 21 years ago, founded Sheffield U3A. Although a Charity in our own right, in order to use the U3A name and logo, membership of the Third Age Trust (with an annual per capita levy) is a requirement. Once registered, we are self governing **providing the aims and guiding principles of the national organisation are adhered to.** Recently your Committee had occasion to seek assurance from the Third Age Trust on our interpretation of one of the main Principles –

“Members undertake themselves, without payment, the many and varied tasks necessary to run their U3A. Usually, paid tutors are engaged only when special expertise is necessary to ensure the health and safety of members taking part in certain activities when U3As do not have any appropriately qualified members available.”

Cover Picture: Venezia by Geoffrey Wax (see page 15)

Examples of such activities are yoga, aerobics and keep fit. Otherwise (to quote another guiding principle) -

“By sharing their learning, U3A members help one another to develop their knowledge, skills and experiences.”

And SU3A is so fortunate to have that essential quality in abundance.

Joan Keogh

Committee Report

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 7 September.

Amongst matters arising from the previous meeting, it was agreed that the Travel Group should consider additional pick-up points in other areas of Sheffield should there be sufficient demand. In this context it was noted that any such additional stops added to the costs and journey times of trips. Julian Oakley, SU3A's representative on the City Council Strategic Walking Forum, was to be asked to report back to a planned meeting of Walking Group Coordinators. At this meeting the question of collective donations from Walking Groups to Edale Mountain Rescue would also be considered.

It was agreed that the subscription for 2008 should remain at £7 per member. However our Treasurer, Jim Rowland, indicated that this might have to be increased in 2009.

Peter Barclay reported on publicity events at the Quaker Meeting House, Topley Festival and an Adult Learning Event in Fargate. He thanked the SU3A volunteers who had helped to staff the various stalls. Later in the meeting Shelagh Woolliscroft reported on three planned open meetings in north east Sheffield to promote SU3A, to be followed up by further meetings for prospective members. It was hoped that this would increase membership from this area of Sheffield following the demise of the North Sheffield U3A earlier this year. It was reported that a

further meeting is also being planned by Derek Cave in the Darnall area.

Following comments received from members, there was a full discussion of a recent proposal to establish a new Group using paid tutors. It was agreed that the founding principles of U3A should be reiterated (see Chairman's Report) and that the proposed Group could not conduct its activities as part of SU3A.

Following the resignation of Norman Smith, due to ill-health, procedures for appointing a new Web Coordinator were agreed. Norman was thanked for his considerable efforts in modernising the website. Myra Smith, the Deputy Coordinator, had identified a need for photographs of Group activities for inclusion in the Website and in publicity material. The required emphasis was on the activities as performed by members, rather than on photographs of Group members, and all Groups were asked to submit suitable items to Myra.

It was agreed that the older records and files of the Travel Group should be stored in the City Council Archive, alongside those of SU3A.

Chairman Joan Keogh thanked all those who had been involved with SU3A's participation in the recent Ridings Region Open Day at Askham Bryan. It was commented that despite the wide variety of group activities, SU3A did not have a single group involved in playing music!

John Lees outlined proposals for the next AMM/AGM on Friday 25 April 2008 and these were endorsed. Lars Tharp, a china and porcelain expert frequently seen on the Antiques Roadshow, will be the guest speaker. He will speak about antiques in general and what makes them important or valuable. He will also reveal some of his experiences and light hearted moments from the TV series. Members should note that he will **NOT** be conducting any valuations - so please leave your prospective valuables at home!

The next meeting is on 2 November.

Roger Heesterman

Web Coordinator

The current Web Coordinator, Norman Smith, has had to resign owing to ill-health, so SU3A is now looking for somebody to take his place. The website has been constructed using Dreamweaver ® , so ideally the new Web Coordinator should be fully conversant with this software package.

As it constitutes a major visible face of SU3A, the website must reflect well on the organisation and the Coordinator should be able to design, construct, develop and maintain such a website. The Web Coordinator should be able to advise the General Committee on matters relating to the operation of the website and will be accountable to the General Committee.

A copy of the duties and responsibilities can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Barbara Steel, by e-mailing secretary@sheffieldu3a.org.uk. Letters of application should be returned to the Honorary Secretary, by e-mail, no later than 12 noon on Tuesday 6 November 2007. For an informal discussion, please contact Myra Smith, Deputy Web Coordinator.

Envelope Stuffing

I would like to thank all those who volunteered. I shall be contacting you all soon to thank you personally. In view of the large number of volunteers, I shall initially take up the offers of those who live nearest to me, to reduce travel and SU3A's carbon footprint! *Roger Heesterman*

******* Spectacles Found *******

Found - a pair of metal framed glasses on the pavement at Millhouses Lane / Ecclesall Road bus stop after leaving the coach after the Askham Bryan trip on 23 August . If they are yours, please telephone Julian Oakley.

U3A AGM - 18 September 2007

The 24th AGM of the U3A was held at Tremough Campus, Falmouth. The vast majority of the delegates had disembarked earlier that morning from their conference cruise on board the 'Van Gogh'. This had evidently been a mixed success: the buzz of conversation over coffee in the refectory beforehand was largely to do with the meals on board and the general disappointment that weather conditions had prevented the tenders from taking people to see the gardens at Tresco.

Before the AGM we listened to Professor David Vincent, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Open University, who leads for the OU on strategic partnerships and had been involved in the discussions leading to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the OU and the U3A in May 2007. His pedigree was flawless - a nineteenth century social historian who researched working class autobiographies and the culture of self-improvement. Theory became practice in the eighties when, as a lecturer at Keele, he attempted to satisfy the demands of adult students on the University's extension programme, whilst being constantly badgered by his mother into providing booklists to support her Workers' Educational Association studies.

The love of learning for its own sake grew exponentially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prof. Vincent charted the growth of 'mutual improvement societies', the establishment of the Mechanics Institutes and the WEA. He regretted the steady decline in adult education funding in recent decades and the unnecessary divisions between formal learning institutions and organisations like the U3A. The OU had recently learned that the Government were planning to cease funding for entry level qualifications – meaning that anyone in England who already has a degree-level qualification must pay the full fee of any further courses. The OU was preparing a case and he wondered whether U3As would be interested in raising the issue with their local MPs.

The gloom was tempered by the good news that the OU had completed a major task, funded by \$9 million from a US foundation, to put most of the curricula from its 30 and 60 point courses onto the World Wide Web. This wealth of material is covered by a 'creative commons licence' which means it can be down-loaded, printed and used absolutely free of charge. It is hoped that, as with Wikipedia, individuals or groups will add to the information and upload it back to the OU.

This is the OU's 'Open Learn' initiative, and it was against this backdrop that the MOU with U3A was signed. Both organisations seek to increase participation in learning and to increase access to pedagogy. We should watch this space for evidence of joint activity - a workshop is planned together with a summer learning event for 2008. The OU will be particularly interested to see how its Open Learn initiative is received and what use is made of the materials. Maybe those 'mutual improvement groups' of the nineteenth century are making a comeback!

Prof. Vincent having departed to do battle with Ministers, we turned our attention to the AGM which was ably chaired by Jean Goodeve. She was elected to serve again in the coming year, together with Ian Searle and Meg Shaw as Vice-Chairs and Terrie Hardie as Treasurer. Jean's report covered the devastating fire at Head Office and the sterling efforts of Lyn Jonas and her staff to rescue what they could and keep the administrative show on the road. Jean felt that they have worked extremely long hours for too long and staffing levels would need to be addressed once the staff are out of their current 'shoebox' and back in the renovated building. Another issue that she promised to sort was the relationship between areas and regions - a source of confusion for some time.

Jean said that the theme of this year's conference had been 'Looking Outwards' and she felt that the national committee had all been doing just that. The MOU with the OU was one highlight, but links had been made or strengthened with various Government departments (though she stressed that U3A had not gone cap in hand), officers had attended the Pensioners' Parliament and a conference on retirement. She warmly

congratulated Stan Miller on his election as President of AUITA (the international body of U3As), and Keith Richards who has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Westminster for services to adult learning.

Jean handed over to Terrie Hardie who presented a very clear picture of the annual accounts. These were broken down into the U3A's various roles - support for education, supporting administration, developing new U3As and raising the profile. Terrie noted the surplus of £23k and the reserves of £352k – he felt this was an amazing achievement considering the problems at National Office. Income had risen due to the increased advertising content of U3A News and also due to a 13% increase in membership in the year ending December 2006, when there were nearly 186,000 members in 629 U3As, 17 of which had over a thousand members. Expenditure on raising the profile had risen in the year under review, with other activities being in line with the budget. Insurance had covered 105% of the cost of the fire, but there would inevitably be additional costs associated with the move back into the East Street premises, when it was intended to strengthen the administrative support.

Looking forward, Terrie predicted that the number of U3As would increase to 700 in two years and that membership would increase to a quarter million by 2010. At present the increased income was estimated to cover the projected costs in 2007 and he felt there was no need to raise the capitation fee for 2008. However, in view of the need for structural changes to support the organisation's growth, it was likely to be raised in 2009. In the longer term we can anticipate a rent review at East Street and the ending of the current lease in five years' time - this might be the time to relocate and a decision would be needed as to whether to rent or buy a property.

The AGM closed with thanks to all concerned and a very warm invitation to attend next year's event which will be held at the University of Swansea, commencing on 7 September. Those who would have preferred another cruise will have to console themselves with the fact that Swansea is closer to the sea than any other university in the world!

Shelagh Woolliscroft

Gift Aid Funds

Members will be aware that one of the ways SU3A is seeking to use Gift Aid monies is by enabling members who have mobility problems of some kind, and find it difficult to attend or participate in reading groups and the like, to join in such activities by using telephone conference facilities.

We have used the word disability not only to cover physical or motor disabilities, but also visual impairment and anything else which limits the capacity to get out and about and may make someone feel that SU3A membership is no longer meaningful. The underlying objective is to ensure that such members can continue in active membership.

We must first discover how many such members there are and what they would want SU3A to do in order to help. If you have such a problem of any sort, please get in touch with Roy Darlison or Enid Hirst and let them know what sort of issues confront you and what sort of activities you would like to see provided through the conferencing process.

The process would be one whereby a coordinator worked with the Group and would be responsible for organising the, say, monthly conference and looking after administrative matters such as paying the phone bill. If, in addition, you thought you could take on a role within such a group please say so.

The General Committee is conscious of the fact that some members may find it progressively difficult to get to meetings and events because of temporary disability, more long-lasting infirmity or poor access to transport. Some may even consider not renewing their membership because of such limitations. On the contrary, others might consider joining new groups or attending the Lunch and Lecture, for example, if they were able to access transport. Some of the Gift Aid funds have been identified and set aside to try to help with this in some measure.

Sheffield Community Transport (SCT) exists to provide a service to individuals and groups in the community. At the other end of the spectrum, there may be members who have the skills and interest to work with SCT in order to meet the needs of SU3A members, and perhaps others too, for transport. SCT recruits and trains drivers for minibuses and to act as driver escorts using their own cars taking individuals to meetings or events. It has been agreed that some part of the Gift Aid funds should be used to pay for training SU3A members to work with SCT in meeting the needs of SU3A members.

If you are interested in taking advantage of any of the above initiatives please contact either Roy Darlison or Enid Hirst for more information and to discuss the way forward.

Roy Darlison

Great SU3A Charity Quiz

on Saturday 27 October 2007

at Esporta Leisure Centre, Archer Road, Sheffield

Open from 7.00 pm for quiz to start at 7.30 pm

There are still a few places left for the fun evening with Peter Chatterton. Come on your own or make up a team. A good time is had by all. Entry is by ticket only, so fill in the form at the end of this issue and

send it to

Marion Edmondson

Group News

Theatre Group

After much thought I have decided I am going to give up as Coordinator of the Theatre Group. As you might know, recently there have only been two of us doing the job. We have made this decision reluctantly, partly because it is becoming more difficult to find suitable shows, with the closing of the Crucible not making it any easier, and there are only so many amateur shows around. We also hear that many of you go to the theatre with friends or are members of the Square Circle. Numbers attending have been decreasing over the last year and we feel that as we barely have enough numbers to get Group Discount, perhaps we should call it a day.

We will keep the accounts open until next *Links* in case someone comes forward to continue, so they will have some funds to start with. Anyone interested in taking over as Coordinator should contact the General Coordinator Brian Bezant or myself.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Jean Kendal for her great help and my wife Helen, who assisted in compiling lists and checking my English! Also I would like to thank Betty Ward for all her hard work with Keith Roe's Musical Cavalcades, which she intends to keep doing. Finally I would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the three years we have been organising theatre outings.

Michael Cowen, Coordinator

Discussion Group 2

This new Discussion Group is now up and running. We look forward to new members joining our Group, which meets on a Tuesday morning from 10.00 am to 12 noon monthly.

Subjects discussed so far have included The Right to Life; Family and Kinship in Today's Britain; Freedom of Speech - what has happened to it? and Fashion - is it relevant in today's society?

The next meetings are on Tuesday 23 October (What makes a hero?) and Tuesday 27 November (How has 9/11 affected us?). If you are interested, please contact Mary Alexander.

Mary Alexander , Coordinator

Classical Concertgoers' Group

Our next visit is to the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, on Wednesday 12 December 2007, for a concert given by the Hallé Orchestra, conducted by Edward Gardner, with Henning Kraggerud (violin). The programme comprises the *Snow Maiden* Suite of Rimsky-Korsakov, the Violin Concerto No. 5 (*Turkish*) of Mozart and the 4th Symphony of Tchaikowsky.

The inclusive cost is £28.50 per person and the coach will leave the bus parking bay on Ecclesall Road South, near the top of Millhouses Lane, promptly at 4.30 pm. Bookings may be made using the reply slip at the end of this issue. Please send to Derek Shipley, 40 Wollaton Avenue, Sheffield S17 4LA, with a SAE, **to arrive no later than Wednesday 31 October**. Please include the names and contact numbers of all members for whom you are applying.

Our visits are open to all current SU3A members and no special group membership is required.

Derek Shipley, Coordinator

For your diary: our first concert in 2008 will be on Thursday 14 February at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham. It will be given by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at 2.15 pm. Full details will be in the December edition of *Links*.

Art Group I Exhibition - Reminder

The Group's 2007 Exhibition will be held on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 October, in the Banner Cross Methodist Church Hall, from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Those of you who have visited us in the past will know that there will be a great variety of pictures on show - large and small; watercolour, oil, acrylic and pastel. There will be portraits, landscapes, abstracts, still-life and sketch-books to see. We also hope that Barbara Cassidy will bring along some of her marvellous wall-hangings, as she did last year.

Tea and coffee will be available in the adjoining coffee lounge. Do come along - you will be very welcome.

Ann Ritchie, Coordinator

ICT Group

The next ICT Group will start on 6 November 2007 and the people concerned have already been notified.

I had said that I would re-open the waiting list in November but, for a variety of family reasons, I will not now be able to run the next beginners' course until at least mid April. I be grateful if people would not contact me until I announce the re-opening of the waiting list in the February issue of *Links*. I have had a number of phone calls asking to be put on the waiting list for the waiting list!! - but no such thing exists!

Clare Chiba, Coordinator

New Group

Digital Video Editing for Beginners

Do you own a camcorder or camera that records video clips?

Are you fairly confident using the basics of a PC (i.e. enough to save files, move them around, create and rename folders etc)?

Would you like to learn how to create more professional looking film clips, rather than just playing back the footage you took?

In this course, we will look at how to -

- capture digital video from a camera to a PC
- perform a rough edit to cut out all the bits that you didn't mean to film
- change the order of clips and insert new parts, such as images or text
- add interesting transitions between clips
- introduce special effects
- add titles and credits
- export your finished film to CD or DVD

This 10 week course will run at Hallam City Learning Centre every Tuesday from 4.00 - 5.30 pm from 8 January 2008. The course is free to all SU3A members, but will be on a first come, first served basis. It is likely that the course will be repeated if there is demand.

For further information, please contact Shaun Canning, CLC Manager, Hallam CLC, Notre Dame High School, Fulwood Road, Sheffield or email s.canning@hallamclc.org.uk.

Shaun Canning , Coordinator

Travel News

Travel Organising Committee

Shirley Marney, Coordinator
Ken Parkin, Treasurer
Derek Shipley, Minutes Secretary
Peter Frost
Barbara Robertshaw
Margaret Bullivant

Only members of Sheffield U3A can join the tours/day trips.

Holiday Insurance - In no circumstances will the Sheffield University of the Third Age be responsible for covering claims for loss of life, personal injury, medical expenses, accidents, loss or damage of luggage or personal property, cancellations or loss of deposits. Each person must themselves insure against these risks.

Disabilities - The policy of Sheffield U3A with regard to taking members on trips is to be as fully inclusive as possible. However, our trips and tours contain a full range of activities and need to be considered carefully by individual applicants. The organiser must, therefore, be advised of any health issues or disabilities at the time of booking. This enables the organiser to discuss with the Tour Operator/Travel Agent or the place of interest on a day trip, as applicable, to assess the suitability of the trip for the member, who can then make an informed decision.

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate a disabled person on all social trips, if there is a conflict of opinion for Short Breaks and Holidays the Tour Operator/Travel Agent will make the final decision.

Cancellations - In the case of a cancellation please contact the day trip or holiday organiser or another member of the Travel Group Committee as soon as possible. **Refunds** cannot be given for cancellations unless a replacement can be found.

Please contact the Organiser if you are unable to be at your pick-up point, or want to change it. **Please** do not park in front of the doctor's surgery on Millhouses Lane. When sending a **stamped addressed envelope** it should be no less than 4 x 8 inches, with the new correct postage for its size.

Free Gift for Wheelchair Passengers and Carers

“Mary Mac and Geoffrey Wax are well known amateur artists in their home city of Sheffield. Each has drawn a sketch of Venice and Palma from the Aurora, deck 12. All wheelchair passengers and carers are welcome to a copy of these pictures by asking at the reception desk.”

The above appeared in the P&O Cruise newsletter “Aurora Today”. What a wonderful gesture! I am sure all who received a copy of these sketches really appreciated them.

Mary Mac and Geoffrey have been members of SU3A for 20 years and are well known throughout the city for their great support of St. Luke’s Hospice and other medical charities by the sale of their paintings. A copy of one of the drawings is on the front cover of this issue and both can be viewed on the SU3A website.

Apologies

Unfortunately, I have not been able to book hotels in Salzburg and Vienna for the Austrian holiday for June 2008. Four tour companies have tried, with no success, as the European Cup (football) is being played there. This holiday is now booked for June 2009.

In June 2007 I contacted the tour operator to book tickets for Thursford in November 2008, but the tickets had all been allocated. So we are booked for November 2009 - hopefully!

Art Competition 2008

Please start thinking about your entries for next year’s competition. I am sure the standard will again be very high. The categories will be the same as this year –

- 1 Animals
- 2 Seascapes / Landscapes
- 3 Still Life
- 4 Townscapes

Shirley Marney , Coordinator

Lichfield

Thursday 22 November 2007

We invite you to join us for a visit to the historic city of Lichfield. With a rich and varied history, extending beyond the Norman Conquest, it remains today one of the most attractive cities in our region. It is very compact, with much to enjoy in a small area – and with easy level walking.

We start with morning coffee and a guided tour of the ancient Cathedral. After free time for lunch, we have arranged a relaxed walking tour of the city centre. Afterwards there will be time to explore further one or more of the features which interest you – the Samuel Johnson Memorial Museum perhaps, the Erasmus Darwin House, the Lichfield Heritage Centre or the Cathedral. If you wish, just enjoy the Three Spires Shopping Centre or stroll through one or more of the city parks. The day concludes with a cup of tea in the Garrick Theatre, before we return to Sheffield.

The inclusive price is £21 per person and bookings may be made using the slip at the end of this issue. Please send with a stamped addressed envelope to Derek Shipley, **to arrive no later than Wednesday 31 October.**

Christmas at Castle Howard

Tuesday 11 December 2007

The Howard family would like to welcome you into their family home to experience the magic of Christmas at Castle Howard. The house will sparkle with decorations and the flickering of candlelight. Guides will be located in all the public rooms to share with you details of the decorations, the collections and family history.

A wide selection of menu options in the restaurant and various café's are available at your own expense.

The inclusive cost - travel, admission charges and gratuities - is £21 per member and places may be reserved using the booking slip at the end of this issue. Please send as soon as possible, with a stamped addressed envelope to Peter Frost.

Germany's Romantic Road

2 - 13 June 2008

Come and join us to travel down Bavaria's beautiful and interesting Romantic Road. We fly from Manchester to Frankfurt and stay in three star hotels (12 days, 11 nights). We have a guide throughout, who will escort us on a guided tour of all the towns we visit.

We stay four nights in Wurzburg, The first two days are spent seeing the places of interest in the old town, with plenty of free time to visit the numerous museums. We journey south along the Romantic Road to nearby Weikersheim, visiting one of the finest Renaissance places surrounded by magnificent gardens in Versailles style. We visit the beautiful medieval town of Rottingen and then on to Rothenburg to stay for two nights, in another interesting 14th century medieval town.

We stay three nights in one of Germany's oldest cities, Augsburg, which was founded by the Roman Emperor Augustus more than 2,000 years ago. Then onto Fussen, one of Germany's most attractive holiday regions at the foot of the Alps and Neuschwanstein. Fussen is Bavaria's highest town at an altitude of 800 to 1,200 metres. What maybe the highlight of the holiday is the visit to the fairytale Neuschwanstein Castle. This castle, built from 1869 -1886, with its breathtaking location and fantastic interior decorations, is unique in the world.

Our last two days are spent in Heidelberg, situated on the edge of the Odenwald Forest and famous for its castle. Each town we visit has its own story to tell, so this will be a very

interesting holiday. There will be three free afternoons and the last day in Heidelberg is also free.

The cost per person, is £1,170 (the single supplement is £199). This includes flights, coach throughout, accommodation, half board, a tour guide, entrance fees, plus tips for the guide and the driver - but **NOT** the coach to the airport.

To book a place on this holiday, please complete the booking slip at the end of this issue and send a deposit of £150 per person (cheque payable to Sheffield U3A Travel) with a stamped addressed envelope (9 x 6½ in - 22.5 x 16 cm) to Shirley Marney, **to arrive no later than Saturday 20 October.**

Liverpool and the Tall Ships

18 – 20 July 2008

Join us on a three day visit to the city of culture next year and see the amazing Tall Ships. We will be staying at the Holiday Inn, Ellesmere Port, on a half board basis.

On arriving in Liverpool, we will take a cruise up the Mersey to see the ships at close quarters from the river. The second day is free on the port, taking advantage of actually embarking and looking around the ships, and also to enjoy the atmosphere of the port. The third day will include a tour of Liverpool by coach, before leaving for Sheffield.

The cost of this short break is £190 (the single supplement is £54) and includes accommodation, half board, cruise, a guide for the tour and the coach throughout, with tips for the driver.

To book a place on this short break, please complete the booking slip at the end of this issue and send a deposit of £40 per person (cheque made payable to Sheffield U3A Travel) with a stamped addressed envelope to Shirley Marney, **to arrive no later than Monday 15 October.**

Askham Bryan - 23 August 2007

A transport of delight.... A visit by Sheffield U3A to join the Ridings Region celebrations for the 25th Anniversary of U3A.

Jean Goodeve, our National Chairman, addressed us at the opening ceremony. She has done much to ensure that U3A interacts with other organisations, particularly the Open University. For her U3A should stand for education in its broadest sense and what a diverse range of interests we were treated to at this event.

There was too much for me to fully appreciate so I cherry picked, first hearing an accomplished musical performance by Swanland U3A playing on a wide variety of recorders. This was followed by their choral concert for which the hall was absolutely packed. As soon as they sang it was obvious why. They are simply superb. Singing unaccompanied, they produced the most melodic sound and their *All Through the Night* made my spine tingle. Could Sheffield have musical talent hidden away?

Dance was represented in many forms. Visitors happily joined in the square dancing and I enjoyed Ilkley's circle dancing - a very graceful form of dancing. Tai Chi from Keighley was also fascinating. Originally a martial art, now used mainly for health exercises, it is deceptively gentle and, if set to music, a useful work-out for we seniors. With Line Dancing and Movement to Music following I was suddenly aware of our own shortcomings in the whole field of dance, and yet it is good for us.

SHEFFIELD U3A TRAVEL
PLEASE NOTE THAT
ONLY POSTAL APPLICATIONS
WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR HOLIDAYS AND DAY TRIPS

Calling into Iain Robertson of York's Philosophy Room we visitors soon became engaged in some excellent, if occasionally heated discussion. From Kant to criminality! Very enjoyable.

Visiting a digital manipulation demonstration next, I found Rodger of Wold U3A who was so busy he'd missed lunch. His enthusiastic demonstration of the Adobe Elements software, using a simple image of a bluebell, produced stunning artistic effects which were much appreciated by the visitors.

A walk through the lovely surrounding countryside with a local guide proved to be popular among the more energetic, while we others enjoyed an excellent magic show in the bar.

At our own Enjoying Opera, Tony enthused, inviting visitors to sit and watch an opera on his laptop. What a good idea! I found small gardens tucked away in the courtyards including an aromatic herb garden. The grounds are beautiful and well maintained, as you would expect in an Agriculture College. A fine setting for our celebration and a picnic in the sun was perfect. The ice cream van was popular. A sell out.

Our other Sheffield groups made a strong contribution. The painting demonstration by David and Ann of Art I was popular, as was the display and advice available at our digital photography stand. Both Patch & Quilt and Cards' R' Us had as usual impressive displays, their stands providing a welcome splash of colour. While dropping in on our Scrabble challenge, I saw Liz and Pat at war. During the day they had fun with many challenges from visitors. How good to see Sheffield taking part in the day.

There was much, much more and I must sincerely thank the Ridings Region Events Sub-Committee for a job very well done and, of course, Shirley Marney for the faultless organisation of the trip.

Margaret Briddon

Summer Schools

The National Summer School North Chester University 9 - 12 July 2007

I was the only representative from the Sheffield area to this hugely enjoyable three day course. Chester University offered many choices of study including heraldry, philosophy, French, industrial history and literature; but I chose local history.

An introductory talk and slide-show on Monday evening was followed by visits to Conway and Caernarvon Castles on the Tuesday, Shrewsbury Castle and Abbey on the Wednesday and a walking tour round Chester itself on the Thursday morning.

All the trips were efficiently organised and accompanied by expert guides. Our group (about 20) realised that we had perhaps chosen the best option when we heard others talk about their previous set preparation at home, their “homework” each evening at Chester and their fairly intensive discussions during the days. Our days merely saw us swanning around the chosen places, no doubt absorbing all the information by osmosis, so painless was the experience (except for one poor woman who fell and sprained her ankle at Caernarvon).



The food was delicious, making up for the somewhat spartan accommodation that students' halls typically provide. Two concerts were staged in the evenings, with a gala dinner on the last night.

During our three days from our base in what used to be the Roman fortress Deva, we passed through traitors' gates and murder rooms in castles that used to be covered with white plaster, walked on city walls and castle battlements, saw the only remaining Minerva shrine left in Britain, as well as the largest stone-built Roman amphitheatre in the country. We sat in a Benedictine monks' refectory, walked through cloisters in Chester cathedral and through the precursors of modern shopping malls - the famous Chester "Rows". We saw where the jolly Miller of Dee plied his trade. We also learnt a lot about the Civil War, Thomas Telford, Clive of India, Charles Darwin, Wilfred Owen and Percy Thrower - all with connections in this part of the world.

I came home with a satisfied feeling, having met with many new friends and learnt some fascinating new facts. Next year the Summer School will be at a different venue. I hope at least a few from this area will travel to it, as it was certainly a rewarding experience.

Eileen Coates

(article and photograph)

The U3A Summer School Harlaxton College 12 - 15 July 2007

Imagine a three-day break at a beautiful stately home, with a university-type hall of residence, and where one learns at a relaxed pace with time for reflection, undisturbed by day-to-day routine. This describes the summer school at Harlaxton College near Grantham, where three of our U3A group attended for the course on digital photography and imaging, Ann Heesterman (Coordinator), Anne Butcher (Treasurer) and I (slow learner!).

Harlaxton Manor is the creation of Gregory Gregory (1786 - 1854), for whom it became the purpose of his life. The place fell into disrepair, but was saved from demolition by Violet van der Elst, who made many improvements, including the installation of running water and electricity. Today it is owned

by the University of Evansville, Illinois (USA), who has made Harlaxton its British Campus. Standing in splendid isolation at the foot of a gentle hill, the building is of striking appearance



with domes, spires and turrets, surrounded by a wall at the front and sides surmounted by statues of lions gazing towards the skyline. Opulence but with elegance, grace and taste, characterises the beautiful rooms, variously named the Great Hall, Long Gallery, Gold Room, Music Room and so forth. There are elaborate fireplaces and columns, large heavy decorated doors which move without effort or sound and superbly carved and decorated ceilings, the central one in particular - a heavenly blue adorned with clouds and angels and which stands out in the subdued lighting.

Harlaxton College has about 300 students in residence each year from Evansville and other US universities, who attend for one of the three terms to study British history and related subjects. The summer break is occupied hosting conferences and courses, including two consecutive U3A summer schools, each lasting three days in mid-July, for up to 600 U3A members who gather here from various parts of the country.

The topics in the first summer school this year (8 -11 July) covered Music (specifically Elgar); Art (19th century British art); a more general Art for All, where natural forms like wood and stone are sketched; Eminent Victorians; Computing and George Elliot. The topics in the second summer school (12 -15 July) were equally varied: Paper Craft, Big Bang to Global Warming, Walking, Singing for Fun, In Search of the Green Man (the figure of this legend-wrapped “gargoyle” is to be found all over Europe) and, of course, our own Digital Photography & Imaging. So there is something for everyone.

The place has its oddities, such as no en-suite bathrooms (and being a listed building, such developments are unlikely in the near future) but the rooms are large and comfortable, the residents’ corridors equipped with tea and coffee-making facilities and the meals (self-service) are very good - all reminiscent of university days (and certainly of far higher standard than in my time!). The organisation is very good and is run by the admirable Hendy Farquhar-Smith and her able colleague, Pat Leggett.

It is the atmosphere of the summer school that makes Harlaxton particularly appealing. Our fellow attendees were of broadly similar age, with varied and vast experience of life and their own particular fields. It was fun to learn from the course, but equally delightful to exchange views with other course members in such relaxed and pleasant surroundings. Little wonder then that members return again and again – as I plan to!

Chandu Bardhan

(article and photograph)

The brochure and booking form for next year's U3A Summer School is on www.HarlaxtonU3A.co.uk and if you are interested in going, I would suggest you book as soon as possible, as places go very quickly! By attending I became a "Friend of Harlaxton" and receive the information before it is goes out to all U3As - so you will have the opportunity of making an early reservation.

Ann Heesterman

Members' Contributions

Sheffield U3A Newsletters from 1996

It wasn't until February 1996 that the name "*LINK*" - without an "S" - first appeared on our newsletter number 61. There had been more than 30 suggestions for a new title and the one chosen came from Enid Bennett who was (*and still is - Ed.*) Coordinator of the Poetry Group.

The same "*LINK*", without the "S" was on the newsletter for April 1996, when the SU3A Chairman was Jack Holland, and again on the June 1996 newsletter printed in cooperation with the Sheffield Education Service. That newsletter told us that we had 1,068 members with an average of 25 in each Group. John Roddis, the Treasurer, also reminded us that our subscriptions had gone up by £1 to £6!

It wasn't until August 1996 that "*LINKS*" - with the "S" - first appeared and has continued to the present. Some of the Groups then included Alternative Medicine, Sea Yachting and Stamp Collecting - all now gone. But others such as Scrabble, Coordinator Liz Barber, and Sugar and Spice, Coordinator Eunice Southgate, are still operating now (*with the same Coordinators - Ed.*).

Finally, in the December 1996 newsletter - Number 65 - we were told that this was the 60th issue of the newsletter and the 10th year of Sheffield U3A.

Bob Smith

“ Sheffield steels itself for the future !

Your Editor was recently given a copy of the Summer issue (No. 45) of Third Age News - the then national U3A magazine.

It makes interesting reading, with a major two page spread reporting on how SU3A was getting to grips with the problem of being too successful; following then General Coordinator Barbara Steel's efforts in expanding membership in the SE quadrant of the city, which had boosted membership to over 1,300. At the time there were 101 activity circles, one-third of which were over subscribed and had waiting lists.

The article stated that "There was no rhyme or reason for Barbara's push - simply that it was felt that it would be a good idea to wave the U3A flag in areas of the city outside the SW where the huge majority of existing members are based."

"This all started the General Committee thinking, focusing on three key issues highlighted by a development sub-committee -

- Should SU3A stop expanding and, instead, encourage the untapped areas of the city to set up their own groups?
- Should it have a headquarters building?
- If any major changes are given the go-ahead, how will they affect the annual subscription (at £6 then one of the lowest in the country)? "

Members might like to re-read the Committee Report on pages 2/3 of this issue to see that history really does repeat itself. However, I suspect all subsequent Treasurers were very grateful that the second option was not pursued!

The article outlined the help given by the then Sheffield Polytechnic (now Hallam University, and which continues to this day) and the local education authority, which helped by offering the use of both rooms and computers - some things do change! There were also references to an Investment Club, Sea Yachting Group (see previous article), the then 13 Walking Groups, three crown green bowling Groups, Looking Towards the Mystics, a small Latin Group of five members and Sugar and Spice - which I discover is an all female Discussion Group to which "no man had ever applied to join"! Has this changed?

Roger Heesterman

Digital Photography Group 2007 Competition

First Prize - Peggie Robinson : Eilean Donnan Castle



Second Prize – Jean Maycraft : Passing Storm,
Dunstanburgh Castle



[More pictures can be viewed on www.sheffieldu3a.org.uk]

Sheffield U3A Calendar

2007

October 16	New Members' Meeting
October 25	Literature Network - <i>Shakespeare & Marriage</i> , Shirley House, Sheffield
October 26 - 27	Art Group I Annual Exhibition, Banner Cross
October 27	Great U3A Charity Quiz, Esporta Leisure
Nov 10 -12	Thursford Christmas Spectacular
November 12	Classical Concertgoers' - Bridgewater Hall
Nov 14 - 30	South Africa - <i>A World in One Country</i>
November 22	Lichfield
December 9	Theatre Group - <i>Xmas Cavalcade</i> , City Hall
December 11	Christmas at Castle Howard
December 12	Classical Concertgoers', Bridgewater Hall
December	York

2008

February 14	Classical Concertgoers', Birmingham
March	Port Sunlight
Mar 23 - Apr 6	Winter Warmer, Puerto Pollensa, Majorca
April	Anderton Boat Lift & a Stately Home
April 25	AMM / AGM, with presentation by Lars Tharp
May	Northampton & Canon Ashby House
May 18 - 22	Berlin (Short Break)
June	Quarry Bank Mill & Styal Park
June 2 -13	Germany's Romantic Road, Bavaria
July	Leeds & Liverpool Canal
July 18 - 20	Liverpool and the Tall Ships (Short Break)
September	North Yorkshire Railway & Pickering
September	Suffolk (Short Break)
October	Shibden Hall & Halifax Piece Hall
October	Turkey
November	Settle & Carlisle Railway