



FLEET AND DISTRICT REVIEW

1998 TO 1999

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

By the time you read this, we will be nearing the end of our fifth year. Numbers have increased steadily until we have over 640 members. This successful growth has been in large part due to the guidance and enthusiasm of our first chairman, Gerard Walton, to whom our thanks must go for having laid a solid foundation on which we can continue to build.

Along with this increase in numbers goes a growing choice of groups. With 42 subjects on offer it is impossible to review all of them in this newsletter, so only those courses, which were new, this year, or ones which were not reported on in 1997/1998 have been approached. If your group has not received a request for a report this time, do not worry; your turn will come.

We have several exciting new courses in prospect for the autumn session. You will find details of some in this newsletter. If you cannot find anything of interest but you have an idea for a group, please telephone Dorothy or any committee member; we do try to satisfy your requirements. Also, we are hoping to develop ways of using the Internet in future, so watch for information on this front.

You will be aware, from reports in the Third Age News, that changes are afoot in the Third Age Trust. You may be assured that your committee is watching developments very closely and we will, naturally, keep you informed of anything which affects our future.

And finally...my thanks to committee members for their assistance, to group leaders and secretaries for all their work and to you, the members, for your continued support; without you there would be no U3A.

Janet Pulley

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Current Affairs Group meets on the first Monday of the month in the Methodist Church on Reading Road South to discuss the issues of the day. Although we do not normally reach the level diplomatic circles regard as, "a full and frank exchange of views"; discussion is robust and challenging.

There are two principal formats. Newspaper articles of the day are analysed by the group in impromptu discussion, and major events of national and local significance are raised. We find it impossible to ignore election results!

Sometimes a member of the group prepares a short presentation on a subject of more general interest. This leads into a general discussion. Recently we have considered medical ethics and risk. The high light of the present session, however, was undoubtedly Hans Dumoalin, a Dutchman and a member of Farnham U3A, who gave us a fascinating insight into economics and the European Monetary Union. Unlike Sir Anthony Meyers at a recent monthly meeting, he was rather anti-, despite having been a strong advocate of the original Common Market as an economist then in its employ. He argued cogently, and at a level of

debate that I have not seen elsewhere, that the EMU puts individual governments in a restricting and potentially damaging economic straitjacket.

Come along, join us, and contribute to our debates.

Jim Russell

PHOTOGRAPHY

This group has now been running in its present form since last September and has been ably supported by some 10 or so people. During this time students have all taken part in portrait sessions and most have produced very creditable results, some of which were shown at the September 21st meeting.

Because the Friday meetings (2.00 PM in the WRVS Hall) have taken place during the winter season all activities have been confined to the hall however it is hoped that now the better weather is coming (?) the group will be able to make field trips.

The aims of the course is not to produce super photographers, but rather to raise general awareness of the photographic process leading to a higher percentage of successful pictures. The group secretary is Michael Jones who has

performed a splendid job for the group, which in its present form was largely inspired by Bert Jennings. I offer my thanks to both of these gentlemen. I am also delighted to see that we have a good proportion of lady members who are all taking a very active part in proceedings, as I am anxious to dispel the camera as "male jewellery" but rather to use it for its design function i.e. to take pictures, to this end I encourage ALL types of cameras from point and shoot to the latest all singing all dancing models.

Ted Clark _____

GERMAN I AND II

We began the year as a single group of ten and it soon became obvious that, with our very varied knowledge and experience of the language, we would need to divide into two groups to allow for more individual help. With Hilde's support we have managed to read and translate "Der Dieb" and "Emil and the Detectives", plus various newspaper reports and comic cartoons, thus softening the blow of prepared grammar exercises and verb tables! Our conversational skills are improving and several of us have been happy to join in exchange visits to Oberursel, near Frankfurt, where firm friendships have been formed.

Pat Davis _____

GERMAN CONVERSATION

Another year of German conversation has passed with discussions on such diverse subjects as families, politics, holidays, food and the economy, sometimes in the form of a poem.

Interesting newspaper articles about various aspects of life in Germany together with a book of criminal stories and crossword puzzles have been the mainstays of our discussions and reading, with particular attention to pronunciation.

Much laughter is always present as we somehow manage to convey to everyone around the table the sense of what we are trying to say, despite our many grammatical mistakes and lack of vocabulary.

Some members have other U3A interests, causing our numbers to fluctuate, but Hilde and Dennis manage to maintain continuity of interest from week to week, and their hospitality adds to the enjoyment of a pleasant afternoon.

John McVie _____

PETANQUE

1998 was the third year of playing Petanque and looking over this period it has proved to be a successful group. On average, 14 players have attended on alternate Monday mornings. With the standard of play improving all of the time, we would expect to beat any other U3A Group in the Country. So many group members became interested in this fascinating game that they joined the Crondall Petanque Club (CPC). As a result more than half of our Monday Players are both members of CPC and U3A. The Terrain at Bowenhurst Golf Club, where we play is one of the largest in the Country; it is even suitable for International games. CPC have 18 pistes so we have plenty of space for new players. If any U3A members are interested please come along and give it a go. New members will always be welcome you do not need to know anything about the game all equipment will be provided at a small cost. You will meet lots of friendly faces and with a bit of luck, enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. I would like to thank all members for their support during the past season, especially Barbara, Graham and Mireille who kept the group going whilst Margaret and I were visiting our family in New Zealand.

John Le Hardy _____

HISTORY

The set theme for the History group this year was the '18th Century', but to add variety we also included some ancient and modern historical variations. Peter Smith started the year with an introductory talk, resulting in a number of willing volunteers offering to prepare and present papers. In three marathon consecutive presentations, Peter Friggi gave a detailed and extensive overview of life in the '18th Century', he also gave an excellent talk on the 'Holy Roman Empire', from which we deduced, it wasn't so holy. Peter Smith read a paper on the 'Duke and Duchess of Windsor'; highlighting details that the 'Establishment' has tried to suppress. Elsie Russell treated us to an amusing talk on the 'Mistresses of Charles II', (As seen on the wrong side of the blanket). Philip Gething presented an interesting and detailed talk on the life and scientific achievements of 'Isaac Newton'. Bill Ralph presented a detailed account of the life and engineering feats of 'Isambard Kingdom Brunel'. Neil Paxton whose hobby is military history gave two very professional talks on the 'Zulu Wars' complete with slides and sound effects, these were the 'Battle of Isandwana'

and the 'Battle of Rork's Drift'. John Davis as a guest speaker gave us an enthusiastic and interesting presentation on 'Bletchley Park'. Subjects for presentation during the summer term are, 'Jane Austin', 'The Jacobites', 'The Fifth Man', 'The Life and Times of Mussolini', and 'The Bombing of Dresden'.

As leader of this enthusiastic group I would like to thank all those members, who contributed very professional presentations which they so successfully managed to spice with humour, and to those below deck who toiled in the heat of the galley.

Peter Smith

BRIDGE

It is cosy in the beginners' class. We chat freely on subjects totally unrelated to bridge, secure in the presence of our teacher, Mary, to give gentle advice as to what to bid and which card to lead. There is silence from the improvers' next door. After a while the noise level increases as hands are completed, then silence again as bidding restarts.

It was a little overwhelming when my wife and I moved to the improvers' class. So much was unfamiliar; bidding boxes; who moved, when and to where; and when, if ever, may one speak?

Fortunately, everyone was friendly and welcoming. We soon relaxed. On our first hand, I hoped for a poor one so that I could opt out of the bidding - No such luck! I had an excellent hand. Remembering Mary's teaching I opened the bidding. It was a relief to learn from John and Gerard, who had been keeping a benevolent eye on us, that we were in the correct contract.

The bridge group is thriving. John's teach-in at the end of each session is particularly useful to us. We really look forward to Thursday afternoons and are fast becoming addicted to this fascinating game.

Mike Brown

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

We have been entertained by guest speakers and from the membership. Topics have covered most of the alphabet from Air Traffic Guidance Systems to Water in the Middle East. There are more than sixteen talks planned for the future and proposals for new topics are warmly welcomed; especially if the proposer will give the talk.

John Davis

COOKERY FOR MEN

The aim of the course is for the participants to gain sufficient knowledge and experience of cooking simple savoury foods to have the confidence to continue cooking and to learn more about it. It is aimed mainly at beginners. The course is run in the domestic science laboratory at Courtmoor School, starting in October and finishing in March. There are ten sessions, which take place on alternate Wednesdays from 3.45 to 5.45 PM. There are some demonstrations but most of the work involves members doing their own preparation. Usually the cooking is finished at home.

We start with making minestrone soup and boiling an egg, which seems trivial but introduces the important question, which is fundamental to the course: "How do YOU like it?" There are no hard and fast rules: members are encouraged to vary quantities and ingredients and to learn from experience. We also cover general topics such as safety, hygiene and nutrition.

There are sessions on curries, herbs, and roasts; we cook lamb, pork, chicken and fish, and among other dishes, spaghetti Bolognese, mousaka, pancakes, pizza and kebabs. We finish with boeuf bourguignon, which gives an excuse to take a bottle of wine.

Chris Garnett

FLY FISHING

Meetings were held in member's houses and after sharing our knowledge we are ready to test the local waters. Ian Stephenson our novice is kitted out and we are all hoping his first trout is a three-pounder. We are not a fishing club and welcome novices and experts to join. Many thanks to those members who provided refreshments and hospitality.

Dave Coburn

FRENCH BEGINNERS

On alternate Monday mornings, an industrious but cheerful group has met either to dredge vestiges of remembered French from their schooldays, or to learn the language from scratch.

Most have been delighted to find how much has been retained and how quickly they have progressed to animated dialogue on the subject of food, family, life-style and shopping.

We have used the BBC French experience 1 with tapes for listening practice, written work sheets and cue cards and pictures to promote oral work.

As we are only on Unit 5, we hope to be able to continue with the book during next year's sessions.

Rosalind Kemp

DANCE FOR FITNESS

Two groups meet on alternate weeks but we hope from September each group can meet weekly. The movements are a mixture of dance and keep fit using various styles of music. We demonstrated a routine at the monthly meeting on April 21. The groups are open to mixed ability men and women. I have enjoyed leading the group and I believe the members have all enjoyed the meetings.

Jill Evans

THEATRE VISITS

Formed in March 1998 16 visits have been arranged covering a varied programme from Shakespeare and Ayckbourn to musicals and light classical concerts. Future visits are displayed at each monthly meeting or details by ringing me on 0118 9730107.

Liz Denley

VISITS

Visits have covered two art exhibitions, a power station, a mansion and West Wycombe. Planned visits are the Hindu Mandir in July and Corsham Court in August. For more details and especially if you would like to lead a visit, phone me on 01252 613147.

Betty Fox

COMMUNITY GROUP

The first meeting was in April. The objective, "To undertake projects that benefit an individual and the community in general", in the Fleet area.

Planned projects, starting in September:

1. Helping in the classroom by listening to secondary school children reading.
2. Providing in schools, a German reading and conversation group.
3. Help with business advice to "Young Enterprise"; a National Competition for 14-15 year olds running a small business.

We are considering a project in June to provide a day's outing for housebound elderly persons as part of 'Make a Difference Week'.

If you have an idea for a project or would like to work with us on existing projects, please telephone Dorothy Brookman or myself.

Ian Stephenson

T'IA CHI

T'ia chi is a Chinese system of exercise and self-defence in which good use of co-ordination and balance allows effort to be minimised. If you can pat your head and rub your stomach at the same time then you are in with a chance. During the class, you do a series of exercises with names like 'Iron Shirt' and finish up with 'The Form'. For those who stayed the course, I think it has proved instructive, energising and enjoyable; thank you Jos.

Jean Alexander

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Soon it will be time to renew your membership and I would like to make some suggestions. Membership forms will be sent to you, with the Newsletter in June and I would appreciate it if current members would send their subscriptions to me, by post, with a S.A.E. Cheques can be post-dated September 1. Membership cards and programmes will be distributed by the end of August; this will leave Enrolment Day on Wednesday September 15 largely for New Members. Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Sheila Williams

FUTURE GROUPS?

Interest has been expressed in;

Breeding birds

DIY

Growing orchids

Bell ringing

Wood carving

Antique tools

Jogging

Scottish dancing

If you are interested; please contact Ian Stephenson or the Editor and we will see if they can be organised.

Brian Greener Editor