

Chairman's note

We are now embarking on a new season of U3A activities. I trust you have enjoyed the summer break and are refreshed and keen to engage with the programme. You will have received the new Handbook for 2011-12 detailing the wide range of Study Groups on offer.

This Handbook has undergone significant revision from the earlier version, but is still a compact and concise booklet packed with relevant information, and I pay tribute to the team involved in its construction. The Handbook contains email addresses and private details so, in the interests of data protection, we ask that you destroy earlier versions.

I am also announcing that a Technical Support Group has been set up to help members with the Media kits and to provide initial points of contact for discussion of computer software problems that we encounter from time to time. Details of this new service are posted on the Website.

We have just returned from the U3A trip to Suffolk which was enjoyable and informative. The trip allowed us to explore historic sites in East Anglia including Lavenham, the Anglo-Saxon Burial Site at Sutton Hoo, Bury St Edmunds and parts of Cambridge University. These events are valuable in adding context and life to study activities and I would encourage all of you to participate in outings of this nature. Once again thanks to the Social Committee and the organisers of these trips.

Bob Ruffles

Meetings open to all

Monthly Meeting Wednesday 26 October
Community Centre, Bat and Ball, start at 2pm.

**The Grand Canal of China:
its history, geography and society**
by Liam D'Arcy-Brown.

The Grand Canal of China is the world's longest and oldest man-made waterway. For centuries it made possible the great dynasties of imperial China, and today it is a vital part of the People's Republic of China's economic miracle. In 2006, travel-writer Liam D'Arcy-Brown became the first Westerner in modern times to travel the length of the canal from Hangzhou to Beijing. This fully illustrated talk covers its history, geography and society and ponders its future as the Chinese Communist Party reinterprets the nation's past.

Science Group Monday 10 October
Forensic Investigations

following the 2008 Tsunami
David Tadd will talk on the problems of identifying Thai victims of the Boxing Day disaster.
£2 entry at the door includes tea.

Computer Group Monday 17 October
Keeping in Touch: Skyping and Photosharing
by Celia Smith

£1 entry on the door includes refreshments.

All members of Sevenoaks U3A are welcome to both these meetings, which are held in the Otford Village Memorial Hall Club Room at 2.00pm.

Car parking is always difficult, so please share cars if at all possible.

Digital Photography Workshop

Date: Friday 14 October
Time: 10am to 12.30pm
Venue: Otford Village Memorial Hall

A follow-up to Gavin Hoey's workshop last year: Gavin writes regularly for photo magazines, particularly *Digital Photo*.

Session 1: Getting to grips with your camera
From compact camera to digital SLR, Gavin will look at which features you need to know in order to take great photos in a variety of situations. There will be plenty of hints, tips and even a live demonstration or two.

Session 2: Working with Photoshop Elements
Restore old photos, make panorama images, add colour to blank skies and other fun techniques, and a very basic look at RAW.

£1 for entry to the workshop. Afterwards, Gavin will have a DVD for sale on the workshop topics.

All Change in the Middle East?

Friday 21 October 2011, 9.45am-1pm
Main Hall, Otford Village Hall
Cost: £4 a head

A Knole U3A Study Day about the Arab Uprising, now open to members of Sevenoaks. The speaker is Dr Brian Beeley. Please ring Judy Bunn ☎ 01883 723370 if you wish to attend, to help us with coffee numbers and general organisation.

Please send copy for the October Newsletter
by **Friday, 14 October 2011**
to both Linda Young and Magda Sweetland

News and Views

Articles to Magda Sweetland

The Kent Network - new developments:

There are 17 U3As in Kent, from Dartford down to Thanet and they have a combined membership of about 7,000. Three times a year, the Chairmen meet to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern, and the same informal system - roughly speaking - has been in place for 15 years.

At the meeting in July 2011, however, a change to a more formal structure was made, with the adoption of an '**Agreement**', and the election of a small Committee of three Officers. This is not earth-shattering stuff, but it indicates the slow metamorphosis felt by U3As up and down the country. Nobody anticipated nearly 30 years ago that the U3A would turn into the popular and indeed landmark organisation it is today. The rather casual structure which we all relish, because it allows local variations to thrive, starts to break down when the numbers become very large and unwieldy, and at that point more in the way of local organisation is called for.

Nowadays, questions that beset National Office, and the Network U3As, are:

- Who is to start up new U3As and be responsible for seeing that this is done correctly? (Legal, banking and Charity Commission requirements are rather more stringent than they used to be.)
- How are 'overlapping' U3As to be managed?
- How can National Office keep in contact with 35 Networks and nearly 800 U3As without more help on the ground?

To assist with the dramatic growth of U3A membership, more funds are being channelled directly to the Networks, for 'training' purposes for example, or local Conferences, and all of this means that some structure is essential. Hence the formation of a Kent Committee with a Constitution, albeit a loose one.

How U3As in a Network co-operate:

Kent is lucky. It has fostered good working relationships between U3As for a long time and the benefits of co-operation are clear. The most obvious is exchanging details on suitable speakers for the Monthly Meetings, but we also want to extend this to suggestions for Visits and Study Days. Some events can absorb a large audience, and in West Kent we have successfully advertised spare places to the adjacent U3As.

Best practice can also be shared, for example advice on applying for Gift Aid (one U3A Chairman said in July that she had never heard of it!) or how to manage the database with an ever-increasing membership. Hearing about other approaches is always interesting. Canterbury continues to run most of its Study Groups on the basis of joining for a single year, like an Adult Ed or WEA course:

members apply by post, with a cheque enclosed to pay for each subject, and an impressive allocation system begins whereby everybody gets ONE first choice! However, those of us who adhere to the 'continuing membership' school of thought still feel that *belonging* to a U3A Study Group is part of its special nature.

Of course, the **Kent Study Days** are the best instance of co-operation across the board. These have proved to be very successful, are open to everyone in Kent, and are an attempt to offer properly academic events to U3A members on a range of topics. The funds they have generated may be used to support the general Network meetings, as happens elsewhere.

Other Events:

Kent, with Surrey and Sussex, is part of a larger regional network called the **South East Forum** and it organises several events throughout the year, Seminars (there is one in Tonbridge on Wednesday 26th October), a Conference in East Grinstead each spring, and the annual Summer School in Chichester. Watch out for details of these in U3A News and our own Newsletters.

New U3As in the pipeline:

In July, it was agreed to start a new U3A in **Paddock Wood**. The adjacent U3As, Malling and Tonbridge, welcomed this since they are under pressure of numbers, as Sevenoaks was when it prompted both of those U3As into life. The Kent Volunteer (responsible for working with new U3As at the set-up stage) is **Pauline Hawker**, the founder Chairman of Pembury U3A. **The launch meeting is Thursday 3 November 2011 at 2pm in St Andrew's Church Hall, Paddock Wood.** If you have friends who would like to join or assist this new U3A, they should contact Pauline on ☎ 01892 824327.

Other centres are Gillingham & Rainham (as a splinter from Medway), Sheppey & Swale, and possibly Ashford, currently being 'minded' by Wye because a first run at starting a separate U3A there didn't take off. Again, if you have friends who might generate interest in these locations, they should get in touch with Pauline Hawker.

Does this matter?

We have all learned that the U3A community creates a culture which is social as well as intellectual, and this precept doesn't stop at the town walls! Those who have read the **Objects and Principles** of the U3A will have been inspired by the broad and selfless aims of the organisation. So a healthy context for new and existing U3As is of benefit to all the members.

Magda Sweetland

News from the Groups

Beryl Mansell ☎ 01959 525010

Cycling The cycling group is a friendly bunch of people, of varying standards of fitness and cycling experience. They have quickly discovered that regular cycling improves fitness, and the fitter you are the more you enjoy it. Each member plans and leads rides which are normally a couple of hours either side of a pub lunch. Most start and finish in the Sevenoaks area, though we have had two trips on coastal cycle ways along the Kent coast. We get ever more ambitious and are even talking about taking our steeds over the Channel! Why not come for a trial ride. We meet on the first Wednesday and the third Tuesday of each month. Contact Jim Purves on ☎ 01732 463041.

Sevenoaks Archery Club This is an open club, costing about £50 a year, and would welcome members from Knole and Sevenoaks U3A. Play is on Wednesday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday. Sessions for beginners on Saturday mornings. Contact Michael Davies ☎ 01732 762266.

Family History Study Day A Study Day is being organised for 15 March 2012, at Ash in Surrey (for directions, the postcode is GU12 5DP, and Ash parish website is www.ashpcsurrey.gov.uk) The application form and details are on the Sevenoaks website (as page 1). Alternatively, for an email copy contact Magda ☎ 01732 461901.

Open University materials Some OU course material on Industrial Heritage, Music, Literature, Mathematics, History, Comparative Religion and French can be made available on loan. To borrow these, contact Beryl Mansell ☎ 01959 525010 or Bill Sherratt ☎ 01732 762328.

National Events National Office has alerted us to future events:

- Thursday 17 November, 2.00pm **Curses and benefits of 'parasites.'** Afternoon lecture at the Medical Research Centre, Mill Hill, London NW7 1AA. Free admission by booked ticket.
- Wednesday 14 December, 2.30pm St Johns, Waterloo, London SE1 – **First U3A Christmas Concert** with traditional carols and mulled wine featuring the Mosaic Chamber Choir and Brandenburg Brass and Organ – Tickets £16.00.
- Tuesday 17 January 2012, 12.45-4.45pm **The Marriage of Figaro** Opera screening at the Odeon Cinema, Shaftsbury Ave, London. £12.50.

Flyers on www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk or contact National Office: ☎ 0208 466 6139 or national.office@u3a.org.uk

Computer Group Developments

New Group - Apple Mac, iPad & iPhone

Do you own an Apple Mac computer, a new iPad or an iPhone?

- Two members are starting a new group to help you get more information and share the best ways to use this wonderful technology. Some ideas are to explore iWorks on the Mac, iPad and iPhone.
- Transferring data from your computer to your iPad and getting the maximum from your iPhone camera as well as selecting the best apps for the iPhone and the iPad.
- The initial proposal is to meet once a month on the second Monday in the month at 2pm at Dave and Shirley's house at 22 Witches Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 2AX. Please call Dave Simmons or Shirley Anderson on ☎ 01732 452032 if you are interested in joining.

Software for Students

Sevenoaks U3A has registered with www.software4students.co.uk, enabling members to purchase software at attractive prices. Microsoft Office 2010 Professional Plus is available for under £40, as against the RRP of £430. Software for the Apple-mac is also available at similar discounts.

The registration process is simple, as follows:-

1. Go to www.software4students.co.uk
2. Click on 'Register'
3. Insert 'Teacher/Student' into the first box
4. Insert your email address, create and confirm a password in the next boxes
5. Insert your name in the penultimate box
6. For 'School Name' type 'U3A Bath BA1 0EJ'
7. Click on 'Continue'

Technical Support Group

Sevenoaks U3A has kept up with new technology to help the Study Groups, and we now own a large stock of equipment which is lent out to members who wish to make presentations. This calls for a more formal organisation, with a new Technical Support Group to be overseen by the Computer Group Committee.

This group will hold a list of equipment, and ensure that it is tested and maintained. It will provide set up at Monthly Meetings and also hold machines to be borrowed by members for their Study Groups. It aims to support those who have problems with software, but general 'teaching' will be dealt with by the Computer Group.

The support is provided in three tranches:

- Technical Support
- Software Support
- Custodians

Additional information and contact details can be found on our webpage www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Social Events News

Pam Walshe ☎ 01732 454769

- Enclosed is a flyer for a visit by coach to the forthcoming landmark exhibition **Leonardo in Milan** at the National Gallery. Demand is expected to be high so please apply at once.
- Following the very successful visit to Suffolk this month, we have booked a trip to York for five days from 30 April to 4 May 2012, including visits to Burghley and Hardwick Hall en route, plus Castle Howard. Two full days in York. Flyer with the October newsletter.
- There are a few spare places on the coach trip to Brighton Pavilion and Preston Manor, on Tuesday 18 October. Contact Lynda Alleeson ☎ 01959 534501.
- Gravesend U3A is organising a trip to the 2013 Floriad, the World Horticultural Expo held every ten years in Holland, and has offered spare places to adjacent U3As. Dates are 21-25 May and the cost is £419 for half board 3-star. Flyer and application form on the Sevenoaks website. For details and queries, contact Liz Whale ☎ 01634 724599

Events Open to All

Christmas Entertainment

Our Western Hoedown evenings went well (see website for report and photos.)
The Drama group has decided to rehearse for a
new programme
suitable for a

Christmas Entertainment Evening!

The date will be Friday 2 December
in St Edith's Hall, Kemsing.

Details and booking forms in October.

In the meantime we would like to invite a few
other members to join rehearsals – we have a lot
of fun, and everything we do is 'Different'.

Contact Pamela Murphy on ☎ 01732 365484.

Half Day Walking Monday 24 October
Meet at the Blacksmith's Arms, Cudham for a 10am
start. (GR 447597) The walk will be five miles,
followed by an optional lunch at the Blacksmith's
Arms. New walkers are always welcome.
Leader: Sheila Bent ☎ 01959 532342.

Strollers Tuesday 18 October
Meet at Penshurst in the lay-by at the end of the
B2176 just before the junction with the B2188, for
an 11.00am start. The walk is about 3 miles, with
2 stiles and a few slopes. It will be followed by an
optional lunch at The Leicester Arms.
Leader: Anne Gutteridge ☎ 01732 454923.

Ambling Group Wednesday 19 October
Meet at Ightham Village Hall car park (MR 593566)
for a 4¼-mile walk starting at 10am. On the A25,
from Sevenoaks towards Borough Green, turn right
after the footbridge, signed **Ightham**. Car park is
100m on the left, behind the Village Hall, under a
green height barrier. The walk is followed by an
optional lunch at the Crown Point Inn. Leaders:
Robbie and David Hill ☎ 01732 453185.

Bridge for Pleasure Wednesdays 12 & 26 October
at Otford Village Hall from 9.50am to 12.15pm.
The winner on 27 July was Bill Taylor. The group is
an 'Open' group: new players are always welcome.
Contact Colin and Mary Butson ☎ 01732 458356.

Friday Lunch Friday 7 October
The Bricklayers Arms, Chipstead, 12.15 for 12.30.
Contact Fay Plant ☎ 01959 522127 or Pat Dallas
☎ 01732 456714 by Wednesday 5 October.

Joyce Shaw

Joyce, who ran the Sevenoaks U3A Sunday Club
for some years, and lived in Otford for a very long
time, has now moved to the town of Bradford-on-
Avon, not far from Bath. She reports that she is
enjoying her new surroundings, and lives in a flat
in a converted millhouse in the middle of town.

Apart from being at the foot of a dramatic gorge,
and built in that handsome yellow stone, Bradford-
on-Avon is blessed with good shops and many
amenities. But not a U3A! Joyce is still looking for
the nearest one. She would very much like to hear
from her friends in Sevenoaks U3A and will happily
lead anyone on a guided tour of her new home
town if they care to visit. 19 Lamb Yard, Kingston
Road, Bradford-on-Avon, BA15 1FG.

☎ joyce.shaw@otford.net ☎ 01225 865833

Diary

October

| | | |
|------|------|----------------------------------|
| Thur | 6 | Dover Castle visit (Knole) |
| Fri | 7 | First Friday lunch |
| Mon | 10 | Science Group Meeting |
| Tues | 11 | Coffee Morning, The Bullfinch |
| Wed | 12 | Bridge for Pleasure |
| Mon | 17 | Computer Group Meeting |
| Tues | 18** | Brighton Pavilion+ Preston Manor |
| Tues | 18 | Strollers |
| Wed | 19 | Ambling |
| Fri | 21 | Study Day: Arab Uprising (Knole) |
| Mon | 24 | Half Day Walking |
| Wed | 26 | Bridge for Pleasure |
| Wed | 26 | Monthly Meeting |

November 20* Wallace Collection & Leonardo
December 4* " " "

* Flyer this month

** Flyer in August

Editorial team: Magda Sweetland, Linda Young,
Robin Tonge and John Spurway