



# THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE FETCHAM & DISTRICT

No. 1

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2003

## **Chairman Neville Povey's Thoughts**

I am very pleased to be the first Chairman of Fetcham & District U3A. Like so many of you I suffered the frustrations of long waiting lists elsewhere lasting for years. At the time of writing we have 118 members and about 14 Groups; three of these are full with names being taken for second Groups. It is the Committee's intention to engage good speakers for the monthly meetings and to expand the number of Groups. If we find that we cannot raise sufficient numbers for a particular subject we have arranged with our neighbours for our members to attend their Groups if they have vacancies. Hopefully this will not occur often.

Quite naturally in our first years we will be short of cash but since we are a long way from having a waiting list may I ask members to do some recruiting to build up our numbers and raise some more revenue.

I cannot close without recognising the work done by the Steering Committee before I appeared on the scene. Their work in the early days ensured our successful start.

## **You don't have to be an expert!**

It is surprising how easily one can become a group co-ordinator, says Jo, with virtually no expertise! At the October meeting of the U3A, my husband Ernie and I signed up for the wine appreciation group as we both wanted to learn more about this fascinating subject. Our expertise was really limited to whether we liked a wine when we tasted it! As the new group members sat round the table in St Mary's Hall, we found ourselves offering to host the first meeting, mainly because we have some friends who are 'expert' wine tasters and they were due to come for a meal with us the following evening!

So we plied them with endless questions between courses, did lots of research in books and on the Internet, and eventually decided to focus on wines from Burgundy. We had two different red wines from the Pinot Noir grape, and two white wines from the Chardonnay grape to taste. The group all followed the guidance on first looking – we found some 'good legs' on some glasses, then smelling – though describing this proved difficult at times, and finally tasting. It was fascinating finding out about how to run a wine tasting session, as well as learning more about a particular region's climate, soil and grapes. Did you know that the Burgundy region produces an average of 180 million bottles of wine a year?

At the end of this session, we had to nominate a group co-ordinator, and the group kindly suggested we should do this! You see what I mean – it just happens! The group is now looking forward to the second meeting. We are hoping to meet monthly in each other's houses and we share the cost of the wines bought for the session. It's fun – and we are learning at the same time.

## **Anything we can do they can do better?**

"A proverb in China says "Never stop learning in your life". At present there are more than 19300 universities or schools for older people with more than 100 majors which involve about 1.81 million senior students." From message of Mr LI Baoku, President, China Association of Universities for the Aged at XXI<sup>st</sup> International Association of U3As Congress in Geneva, 2-5 October 2002.

## **Newsletter News**

The newsletter will be published in January, May and September. Make sure it meets your needs – why not write contributions on your own special interests and groups; items to Ian.

## **U3A Links with National Museums**

Keith Richards, Vice President of the Third Age Trust conceived the idea for a project with the British Museum in early 2002. He felt that the museum should be keen to extend the range of age groups benefiting from the resources available there. He persuaded Margaret O'Brien, the Head of Lifelong Learning at the museum and together they set up a project involving a number of U3A members from several London groups. The group was given a study room and the opportunity to identify individual objects from anywhere in the museum, which they would then research so that they became the experts, certainly as far as presentations to the group were concerned. The research was carried out over nine days in the autumn and came to a grand conclusion with the presentations in early December.

While all this was progressing nicely, Keith received unsolicited calls from the corresponding Heads of Lifelong Learning at the Science Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Maritime Museum. Obviously good news travels fast on the grapevine. Keith was spreading the word at the Guildford U3A AGM when I met him. Next morning at 9am I got a call suggesting I might like to become Group Co-ordinator for the NMM link. That ties in with my love of sailing so if you are interested to hear more of the link with the NMM please give me a ring. The timing is more advanced with the other two new links with museums which started in January but the NMM project is likely to start with some briefing meetings with curators, while the main project will be run as nine Friday afternoons in the summer. The report on the link with the British Museum is to be produced soon and is very positive about the value of the work carried out. Contact Ian.

## **Prospectus 2003**

A prospectus has been produced that gives the programme for 2003 and the list of groups that have been set up so far. It also gives the members of the steering committee who were approved en bloc at the November 2002 meeting. As the programme of meetings is developed the Newsletter will keep you up to date on all the new talks and also any new groups that have been set up.

The lectures are being advertised on noticeboards in libraries and elsewhere. Copies of the prospectus and a poster with the programme of talks are available which can be used to encourage new members. Visitors are welcome at any of the monthly meetings and hopefully they may wish to join.

A prospectus for 2004 will be produced in the autumn and we hope you will all think hard about taking up some new activities and maybe even acting as Group Co-ordinator – you don't have to be an expert!

## **Outings and Theatre Visits**

Contact Sheila for details of latest programme of events and availability.

## **Open, Sesame!**

Spotted in the Open University Newspaper, Sesame; a photograph of Keith Poulton in his gown at the Paris OU degree ceremony. Many congratulations.

## **Topics for Talks**

Margaret is putting together a lively and varied programme of talks for the rest of the year using all the suggestions the committee has received. If you know any really good speakers or would like to hear particular subjects tackled give Margaret a call.

## **Circulation of Prospectus and Newsletter**

Please help by collecting the Prospectus and Newsletter at meetings and delivering where you can.