

22nd October 2009

## **Chairman's Report**

I'd like to thank our past committees and all our members who have made our U3A what it is today. We are now entering our 9th year with a membership total last year of 143 which is a small reduction in membership from the previous year.

The National AGM was held this year at The Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. Rather a long way from Cornwall so no representatives from Bude attended although two members from South Molton did and had an excellent time.

Our Christmas Lunch last December at The Falcon was greatly enjoyed as usual - a very successful raffle which raised just over £86.00 after expenses had been deducted. Thanks to Pat Netherton and Celia Sousek for selling tickets and Brian Leonard for dishing out the prizes. Entertainment was provided as usual by members - particularly the Singing for Fun Group and Kate Peardon reading one of her own poems and Lucille Opie reading an old Cornish monologue - both received a long round of applause!. The arrangements for the lunch were handled efficiently as usual by Audrey Armitage with her roll of wallpaper and with help from Mary Dobson who sorted out the details with The Falcon. We were also very appreciative of Jo Arnold acting as Master of Ceremonies which ensured the proceedings all went smoothly. One of the main changes this year was Eric French resigning at the end of February from the post of newsletter editor - a job he had done very efficiently since our inception over 8 years ago and we owe him a huge debt of gratitude for all the work and effort he put into it.

Sue Evans happily (or should I say Happily, Sue Evans) volunteered for the job of putting the Newsletter together and we have now had two editions trying out different styles and format - Sue is doing a great job. The committee have discussed various options on format with Sue who is also in discussion with Martins as to how we can keep the costs down. It is our intention to try to ensure that the cost of production remains as close as possible to the cost in the past .

Apart from the odd tweak our web site is now a useful and informative introduction to our U3A and we owe big thanks to Mike Roper, who manages it and also manages to put up with me interfering from time to time. For those of you who don't have a computer at home there computers in the Library with free access and help is available on a Monday and Tuesday mornings if you need assistance. Our web site address is on the front page of our newsletters. If you have any photos or reports of activities e mail them to Mike (those of you who do e mails) and he will put them on the web site. The more it is updated the more interesting it is for anyone logging on.

As I get to the bit about reporting our open meetings it is a good opportunity to thank all our volunteer tea ladies for producing the refreshments at the end of our monthly meetings.

This year we have enjoyed a very interesting selection of speakers.

In November there was a talk on keeping bees by our local bee keeper, Alan Pedrick. Given that bee populations world wide are declining I wonder whether he inspired any of us to set up hives....

We kicked off the New Year with a wonderful talk by Abigail Crosby on the Cornwall Wildlife Trust, in particular Looe Island and this culminated in a trip organised by Hilary when some of our members went down to Looe and had a tour of the island led by one of the resident wardens looking at sea birds and being looked at by at least one seal (he could have been following us round the coast line).

The speaker at our February meeting was Jeanne Gimblett suggesting ways we could put the "Bounce" back in our brains and the March meeting was a talk about Sound Waves South West - an interesting talk and demonstration of very specialist equipment used in therapy for all sorts of problems - mental as well as physical and some of us were able to "have a go" our-

selves.

In April our speaker told us about the fund raising on behalf of Cornwall Hospice Care and the vital work that our hospices do. Cornwall is a rather long thin county and we have, at the moment, only two hospices providing 24 beds in total for the whole of the county for people who need specialist palliative care.

We also had our usual Plant Stall at this meeting organised by Marion Hall and her growers and helpers. This year £86.00 was raised for our funds - thank you Marion and all the gardeners.

Our May meeting was supposed to be a talk on falconry but the speaker cancelled quite late in the day and David Polgase from Launceston U3A stepped into the breach and gave us a fascinating talk about a trip he made to study the endangered marsupials of the Victorian rain forest in Australia. He had such an enthusiasm for his subject that his talk was unexpectedly inspirational!

Brian Sheen from the Roseland Observatory came to talk about the work they carry out there in June

and in July we had a marvellous talk about hearing dogs for the deaf, with an actual dog and the deaf lady he helps. Again very interesting and inspirational with some lovely film of dogs working and being trained.

In August we had our very own Antiques Road Show - not with Fiona Bruce, sadly, but with Philip Walters, an auctioneer from Kivells. Not quite in the same glamour league but our members came up with some interesting items from their attics or broom cupboards and were told whether they were of any value (some **were** surprisingly or perhaps not surprisingly?)

At our last meeting in September we welcomed Felicity Derry Thomas who runs the Operation Sunshine charity based in Tavistock. A very inspiring talk about the work all the volunteers do to help the people of East Africa, usually sending about 6 containers a year full of donated goods.

News reports of our OGM's in the Bude and Stratton Post are now organised very efficiently by Lucille Opie with a list of who is responsible for reporting each meeting on our web site and our reports are also on our web site. A big thank you to Lucille and all the reporters.

Bude and District U3A interest groups still number [18 although there have been a couple of changes.](#)

The Canasta group which was run by Christine Davies is now meeting at Ceres Court fortnightly on Monday afternoons because Christine has moved away. Hazel Cook is co-ordinating it and tells me they would welcome some new members. Now that it is more central to Bude maybe there are some more Canasta Players out there?

Holsworthy Miniatures run by June Cann under the auspices of the U3A will not continue under our protective umbrella. June and Albert have decided because of transport difficulties not to continue their membership of the U3A.

We now have a U3A Book Group - the start up was organised by Elizabeth Whattler - many thanks, Liz - and they have read their first book and are onto their second. Books are supplied by the Library. We wish it every success.

Gill Gilkes who runs Scrabble 1 is unfortunately in Derriford hospital. She was having an operation last week hopefully and will go to her daughter's in Oxford to recuperate but is hoping to return to Bude. In the meantime the group is continuing to meet at Mary Norman's house in Creathorne Road in the evening of the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays.

Our Scrabble Group 2 group run by Sue Evans continues to have enjoyable afternoons catching up with all the gossip as well as managing to play the game. They have lost two members - Shirley Hildick Smith who died, sadly, and Emily Welch who has moved to be closer to her

family - play and chat continues and the spare spaces have already been filled.

The Bridge Group run by Richard Evans is also thriving - meeting every Monday afternoon for a relaxed and sociable game or two. They have room for another couple of members so if any of you feel a bit rusty but have played Bridge in the past do get in touch with Richard. His number is in the newsletter.

Singing for Fun has had a long summer break but they are now back together singing some 'new ' old songs which they have kindly been given and Jo has done a marvellous job of printing them out . They do have a new member but would welcome some more. They visit Fairfield Residential home monthly which is greatly appreciated and make an occasional visit to Abbeyfield. And long may they continue entertaining us old folk at the Christmas Lunch in December, we hope, because it is also much appreciated!.

Ros Dolphin who hosts the group would like to thank all the members who make a joyful noise in her house twice a month long may they continue.

The Enjoying Music Group organised by Iwan Davies has had an interesting year with a number of significant anniversaries of composers which has meant that the musical themes have been easy to choose.

The Philosophy Group continues in spite of Jill Davies' illness and is organised and co-ordinated by Pat Berkeley and Kate Peardon. The members of the group take it in turn to present various topics which they all study, discuss and argue about.

Our energetic members who walk twice a month are now being organised by Angie Whitehouse and Chris Simmons. Some of them recently walked the South West Coastal Path (not all of it!) to raise money for Water Aid - a charity supported by South West Water Our Bude members raised £300.00 WELL DONE WALKERS! and the total for Water Aid raised by South West Water was £70,000. 00 They would be very happy to welcome more walkers - the walks are not too strenuous and they always ensure people can keep up.

We are very grateful to Sally Bannister and Trish Parsons who have planned the walks for the last two or three years

Carolyn Merrett's History of Art Group have just completed study of Matisse and the Fauves, Picasso and the Cubists. The members are selecting paintings of their choice to copy and these will be exhibited at a "Fakes" Autumn Art Exhibition 2009 at their October meeting.

From November they will begin to tackle Abstraction in painting, starting with the great exponent of abstract art, Wassily Kandinsky.

A large number of our members thoroughly enjoy the Theatre Trips organised so efficiently by Mary Dobson who books the seats, books the coach and collects all the money. This year there have been a number of musicals as well as the usual dramas. The most dramatic was possibly a drama caused by heavy snow when the group were in Barnstaple to see Agatha Christie's "Spider's Web" when they had to make a detour in order to return home but happily they didn't have to spend the night in a village hall.

Mary also hosts the Play Reading Group which enjoys the hospitality of The Falcon fortnightly. They cover a wide range of plays, some of which have great resonance with present day life socially and politically. Foreign accents are attempted where appropriate and Mary hopes everyone goes away with a smile on their faces to start the week feeling better for their endeavours.

Jo Arnold's Discussion Group has enjoyed its ninth lively and thought-provoking year. Following the U3A principle of co-operative learning, members take it in turns to choose and introduce the monthly topics. In the last twelve months subjects have included various aspects of the political and electoral scene, capitalism, ageing and ageism, as well as the possibility of Moslem rule in Britain. Last month they turned their attention to Time and agreed that sometimes it was beneficial to stand and stare for, as Bertrand Russell said, "Time you enjoy wast-

ing is not wasted time".

Our thanks to Jo Arnold for hosting the meetings and for ensuring everyone gets a chance to air their views.

The gardening group have enjoyed another happy year with some memorable visits and some not quite so memorable. (Marion will, I am sure, know the one I am talking about!) They have welcomed a few new members and some rejoining them again after an period of absence. Their November meeting will be spent at Marion's planning next year's programme with everyone contributing ideas and it is then left to Marion to do all the hard work of arranging the visits to ensure they all run smoothly.

October will see the Poetry 1 group enter its sixth year, hardly believable. Again the past year has seen us share some beautiful language, some unique insights, emotions, 'new' poets and last but not least, laughter. We have, as a group, explored a wide range of themes and enjoyed some wonderful poetry. We realised also that poetry written 'to order' over the last four hundred years, by poets laureate for special occasions, was rarely inspirational, and was much more likely to be fairly run of the mill stuff. Another great year and consequently some peoples' collections have grown from a few books to three or four shelves full, one could almost suspect the books of breeding! Thanks to Linda Farmer

#### POETRY 2

Meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at Peggy Timms house.

They alternate between bringing poems of their choice and poems from a theme. Sometimes members read a poem they have written themselves and this can be an encouragement to others to do the same.

Hearing a poem read aloud gives it a new dimension and there is often a lively debate as people voice different reactions and views about the poet. They also try to find out what they can of the poet's background - and this can result in interesting new information. Introducing a lesser known poet can sometimes inspire more research and again a widening of knowledge.

As always poems can give rise to memories and experiences to share and sometimes be sad about but also more often to laugh about.

#### SERENDIPITY 1

Since the last AGM they have met regularly and tackled various projects. Before last Christmas they made pomanders and also learned to make decorations with salt dough. In the new year they tackled basic T'ai Chi and danced to Mamma Mia in the barn at Liz's. They had a couple of very interesting sessions with members doing their own 'Who do you think you are?', prepared a treasure hunt and planned Beach Combing - but the weather beat both of them so those wait till next year. They also began making shifts for Operation Sunshine.

Elizabeth is taking a break as Group Leader and Celia Sousek has kindly agreed to take it on for a year.

Linda Bunker who runs Serendipity 2 writes that their third year has been as interesting and eventful as the previous two.

They are still only six strong and would welcome any new members. They pursue a vast range of activities - their meetings find them driving over Dartmoor to a gallery in Cornwood, revisiting Castle Hill House and walking in Cardenham Woods. They have tried their hand at spinning on a spinning wheel and they made kites (very small ones), which they then flew. They dowsed at Penhallam Manor, which they thoroughly enjoyed and at their latest meeting they had an old fashioned high tea, complete with cucumber sandwiches and trifle all served on posh china.

Lastly I would like to say a big thank you to all your committee members who give me such a lot of support.

This year we are sorry to lose Brian Leonard our assistant treasurer and Jenny Leyland who

has been our membership secretary but we are very happy to have Ann Tizzard, a new member, offering to take over Jenny's role and she will, I am sure, be successfully voted onto the committee in a few minutes.

Vera Roper, our treasurer, is also stepping down and again we are very fortunate to have Val Kerr stepping up to take on this role. Having received suitable references from Val we have already co opted her onto the committee and her name is up there on the list for voting this afternoon. A big thank you to Vera for all the work she has done on our behalf.

Needless to say we are really delighted that Val and Ann, both brand new members, have offered to join the committee and take on the two posts we were a bit desperate to fill !

Elizabeth Whattler whilst staying on the committee is resigning from the post of Group Co-ordinator because she feels she needs to reduce her commitment. Now that Vera is no longer going to be treasurer she has kindly offered to take on this role.

We are also sorry that Melder Wilkinson is stepping down - she was a breath of fresh air and of fresh ideas while she was with us on the the committee

I owe a huge debt of thanks to Hilary Workman for organising our excellent programme of speakers and also for being my vice chair. She is a great sounding board and an endless source of information as to how things ought to be done and always gives me great support.

I would like to take this opportunity of reminding people that the committee decided not to raise your subscriptions for the year 2010/2011 but we will need to keep the matter under review.

Obviously it will assist our finances if you all introduce your friend to the concept of continued learning and bring them to one of our open meetings and maybe they will decide to join us!

I now have to ask you - is it your wish to adopt this account of our year's activities as an accurate record.

May I have a proposer and a seconder.

Thank you everyone.

The Old Stable and The Hayloft  
[www.crackinggoodspot.co.uk](http://www.crackinggoodspot.co.uk)