

Bude and District U3A
20th October 2011
Annual report

Traditionally this is gives me the opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support of this organisation. Some people however are not here now to reflect on our years progress and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to their contributions over the years. Iwan Davies died earlier in the year having been our deputy chairman as well the group leader for the music appreciation group. As speaker secretary I could always count on Iwan to make an appropriate vote of thanks even if he didn't enjoy it much! A special gentleman who will be sadly missed. Margaret Clowes was also a long standing member who had a great knowledge of flowers and is sadly missed by those of us in the gardening group who can never remember the names of things!

For me personally I would like to thank all the committee members for their support this year especially during the time when I broke my leg making it difficult to sit at the computer or get to meetings. I was also left with out a voice for the Christmas lunch where again all the committee helped to make it a great success again.

So I missed a couple of the monthly meeting speakers this year. However these meetings have continued to be popular with about 50% of the membership although I would like to see more members attend otherwise its very difficult to share information about all our activities with everyone.

After last years AGM we had a very interesting speaker who gave us an illustrated talk about the geology of the North Cornish Coast. It certainly made me think that I wanted to learn more.

The subjects as usual have been varied and we began in January with a glimpse of life in the Wild West with lots of visual aids including some very heavy guns!

This was followed by Kim talking about his early life as an actor giving us lots of amusing insights from behind the scenes.

In March the county council driving safer for longer team reminded us all about road safety and offered driving assessments which a number of members took part in.

The April meeting was all about the development of a children's hospice in the South West and Judy Pride demonstrated how happy a place like that can be for all concerned. In May it was time to Reuse, reduce and recycle. Another aspect of our everyday lives where if we look again at our regular habits we can help in a small way to reduce waste in our homes.

In June we visited Poundstock Gildhouse to hear all about its history and share a delicious variety of cakes supplied by our members. Maybe a Midsummer treat to be repeated?

In July we had a highly entertaining world premiere performance of "Murder at the Parkhouse" by the newly formed Drama group and we are still wondering who done it! I am certainly looking forward to their next performance.

In August we learned from Penny and Bruce Matheson all about the fascinating profession of Acupuncture and in September we heard all about the funding and

developments at Stratton Hospital. A subject very close to all our hearts!

I would like on behalf of us all to thank Val Adams for carrying out this years programme, speaking from experience there are lots of things that can go wrong so you spend a lot of time double checking and worrying about the technology. She has copies of next years programme available for those of you who do not attend monthly meetings regularly and who do not use our website.

I would like thank John and Jenny Dabbs for looking after our laptop presentations so well and you will be able to see some of Johns picture record of our activities after the meeting.

We also always submit a full account of our monthly meetings to the local paper which I am sure catches the eye of some potential new members. However these reports need a rota of willing helpers to make the papers deadlines. I would like to thank Lucille and all the reporters for taking on this role and ensuring that each month someone captures the details of the presentation ensuring that we gain some publicity for this organisation. Lucille is looking for helpers to record next years programme now - so please if you enjoy these meetings help us advertise the fact to others in the area. Another important addition to our local advertising is our wonderful website . My thanks to Mike Roper for another successful year

Another valued aspect of our organisation and again something that informs new members is our newsletter expertly and patiently edited by Sue Evans, my thanks to her for another years set of informative newsletters.

Linked to the success of the monthly meetings are the refreshments afterwards so I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has volunteered this year to help. A new rota will be available at tea time so please, if you have enjoyed a cup of tea after the meetings please put your name down to help for one session a year we are after all a voluntary organisation. I would like to thank Sylvia for putting the new system in place and for being a supportive and efficient Vice chair during my enforced absences.

According to our membership secretary we had a total of 145 paid members in August when we sent out our membership renewal forms for everyone to rejoin. Since then we have had a number of new members. Our membership secretary Ann Tizzard has produced some very informative leaflets and membership packs this year which give new members all the information they need. My thanks to Ann for her work this year.

Gina Martin has been supporting new members and ensuring that they find a group that suits their interests. My thanks to her for her efforts behind the scenes this year.

As a committee we are fortunate to have another skilled person working behind the scenes who ensures that this organisation operates on a sound financial footing under the Charity Commission rules that is Val Kerr our Treasurer. My thanks to her and Peter Judson are independent examiner of our annual accounts.

My thanks also to Lynda Savoury who has the difficult task of taking minutes of the for the committee which can be quite complicated when the committee are trying to unpick some detailed procedure from our national office and decide on a way forward

In putting this report together I asked group leaders to help so the next section are their thoughts about their groups year. However before I start I would like to thank Vera Roper who has been group co-ordinator this year and increased the number of groups but she is standing down from the committee this year. As some of you know she has been our Treasurer for some time as well but sadly our loss is the golf clubs gain!

We now have 28 activity groups providing a wide range of activities for all our members and before I go through the brief reports of the group leaders I would like to thank them all on behalf of everyone for their hard work and commitment to this organisation. Nationally we have subject matter support but really its the people who month by month welcome people into their homes creating a warm and relaxed atmosphere which is always the best way to learn .
So in no particular order and with some missing here goes.

Linda Farmer reports that Poetry 1 has been running for 7 years now whereas poetry 3 still needs support from the first group. However she has come to the conclusion that those who attend both need a regular dose of poetry. Both groups have had their emotions roused by the various themes of the poems, often its been laughter sometimes sadness and very occasionally we have been moved to tears. The abiding memory has been the ability of poets who paint so succinctly such wonderful word pictures.

Val Adams says that its been a very interesting first year for the family history group group. After a two day course from Janet Few (a speaker from the previous year) everyone got down to researching their family trees and sharing their stories at the meetings. The group visited Cornwall County record office and over the last few months have explored such subjects as using Parish records, how to record their findings, ancient wills, gene analysis and where surnames were most prevalent in 1881

Carolyn Merret says that members of the history of art group have enjoyed looking at and discussing the work of the pre Raphaelites the Newlyn School, Whistler, Sargent and Steer. Group members will miss Iwans valuable contributions and quiet sense of humour

Cora Stam tells us that the Philosophy group was reborn in february and has met 8 times since then, with a series of discussions and genuine wonderings, with lots of laughter as they tackle any life issues, grand or trivial, big or small, serious or

amusing. The method of philosophy does not mean knowing all the answers or asking impossibly challenging questions it means not taking everything for granted and clearing a space to form questions that make a starting point for sharing ideas and experiencing new perspectives.

Richard Evans reports that Bridge on Monday afternoons is still very enjoyable and a lot of fun. The group now runs with two tables with a pool of ten players. Two players drop out every week on a rota which allows reserves when members are sick or on holiday. Jane Maclure says of another Bridge group that the six people playing are thoroughly enjoying it and are making great progress which is very exciting.

Sue Evans states that she has had another enjoyable year playing scrabble in the company of other enthusiasts. They keep meeting even if numbers are low due to members other commitments. Other addicts always welcome.

A new Creative Writing group this year has a dozen stories already to prove that they have been busy. Lucille Opie says that they started with the basics of Who What Where Why and When. Answering these questions they created new characters, a setting, a plot, a turning point and a resolution to the story. They read out their short stories to each other and make constructive remarks about them. They hope to make a collection of these stories and perhaps make some money for charity

The walking group has completed 14 varied walks this year says Christine Simmonds. In January they explored the fascinating history Launceston. A day walk on a cold March day took them from Daymer Bay across to Rock lunching with Sir John Betjeman in St Enodocs church yard enjoying the views. A more strenuous day was spent walking from Tintagel to St Nectans Glen and back.

This year the Serendipity group spent afternoons on various activities with Celia Sousek which included Yoga, beachcombing, crochet, decoupage, memory aids, mobile phones, and treasured possessions. Several times the plans changed at the last minute but this is one of the pleasures of this group because something always turns up in a truly serendipitous style.

Jenny Leyland says that Discussion group 2 are a small group of friendly tolerant people who think about current issues and enjoy the opportunity to discuss them. They have covered a wide range of topics including the Royal family, assisted suicide, the sexualisation of children, population, prisons and religion

Singing for fun group Ros Dolphin says that they continue to meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays at Joan Rands house. They have welcomed some new members this year and have quite a large repertoire that they keep adding to. They visit Fairfield home once a month to sing with the residents which is enjoyed by all.

The gardening group continues to be popular with most meetings well attended with Marion Hall. In January they always have a shared lunch at a members house and have a seed and plant swap. In February they went to Trelawny garden centre for lunch followed by a talk and demo from one of the centres gardeners. From March to October they visited a variety of gardens and nurseries including a shared lunch in a members garden, the regular plant stall at April's monthly meeting raised £65.00 for U3A funds. Our November meeting will be pooling ideas to plan next years programme and December will be a gardeners Question time at a members house.

The Wednesday book club has enjoyed an increase in numbers (but still room for 2 more) and has read a good mix of books in the year. Linda Mason says that they enjoy the banter and the reviews and always have a lot of discussions and give a great deal of attention to the writing styles. They are now looking forward to next years books supplied by the library.

A new enthusiastic group of French conversationalists have met weekly in blocks of 8 weeks to get to grips with different aspects of the French language. To make meetings worthwhile for everyone from absolute beginners to those with some fluency it will be a slightly changed format next year.

The theatre group and play reading group continues to provide food for thought for all members who attend says Mary Dobson. Each production/play reading is stimulating to members in different ways. Highlight for this year was Kisses on a Postcard?

Jo Arnold reports that their 11th year of monthly discussion meetings have been well attended and at times very heated as they have tried to get to grips with a dozen or more topical and controversial subjects. They have returned to the past - looking into the history and influence of the Jews, International Confederations, the UN's achievements and failures and the management of the UK's financial resources. They have considered the present - the monarchy, Referendums, Obesity, Political and Military Intervention overseas and Euthanasia. And ventured into the future with ideas about transport without the combustion engine, coping with massive population increases, natural disasters and even the possible end of the world. They anticipate more lively gatherings in the months ahead.

Peggy Tims says that its difficult to believe that Poetry 2 has been going for 5 years. For her its been an enjoyable year. She is always surprised and delighted when poets and poems - previously unknown to her are presented and mulled over. Obviously members have different likes and dislikes but theres food for thought when hearing the views and perceptions of others. And of course we sometimes share perennial favourites known since childhood which can evoke fond memories for others too. Some of the group share poems that they have written. Humour and imagination abound. Such talent. I take my hat off to them. So sharing and also learning in an informal and enjoyable way. Thank you Bude U3A.

Reading all these reports made me realise why I am so passionate about the U3A so much variety of activity and such a lot of learning going on so in conclusion I would like to read a quote from a new member

Quote from Jane Maclure to end

I have gained a huge amount from Bude U3A and would join almost every group if there were more than seven days in a week! There is a wonderful range of learning and fun on offer and I for one feel enormously grateful both for this fact and for the truly marvellous experiences and friends that U3A has given me in every single group I have joined.