

## **THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2003-2004**

AS I come to the end of my first year as chairman of Watford and District U3A I can honestly say that I have enjoyed every minute of it. I have a wonderful sense of achievement at all we have accomplished. Not least, the many smiling faces who surge through the doors at our monthly meetings. For me the highlight of these was the presentation at our Christmas meeting 'Musical Squares. by Dr Mike and Wendy Gluyas.

Last May our AGM was on a lovely sunny day and the glorious summer seemed to go on and on from there; ensuring the success of so many outside activities during this last year. Wonderful trips to explore London or Hertfordshire and beautiful walks with our four walking/strolling groups, encompassing picnics and pub lunches. Then there was all the eating done by the luncheon club!

Our academic side has not been neglected with Classics, British and European History; Poetry, Shakespeare, Music and Art appreciation, Italian, Science, Food Nutrition and Book Discussion.

We've chewed the fat and stirred the grey cells at MoneyMatters and Current Affairs, Antiques, Personal Development, Computing, Family History, Foreign Films, Chess and Bridge. This year has seen the development of the Cryptic Crossword brigade to exercise the mind and in contrast to exercise the body the disgustingly fit cyclists have polished up their steeds and sallied forth.

The Performing Arts Group toured their production of Ransome Park to our 'offspring U3As', to great acclaim. Further creativity has been achieved by our Calligraphy, Photographic and Writing and Woodwork Workshops. The Gardening Group skilfully manage to organise superb weather for all their outings and the Needlecraft Group have produced some beautiful work. 'If music be the food of love' long may the Opera, U3A Singers and the Jazz Appreciation Groups continue to nurture our souls.

Our present membership stands at 404 including four honorary members and we still have a waiting list of about 100 people. WU3A has now spawned three other U3As. Rickmansworth now has 500 members and South West Herts has a membership of 400+. This year. Johanna Woodmansterne started Bushey U3A. She was well supported by a merry band of Watford members. It is now well established with over 140 members and 10 study groups.

This year has seen us expand our Almoner care to four volunteers who have kept in touch with a number of our members who have been experiencing difficulty, stress or illness. Please let them know if you know of someone who needs support.

Finally it is with sincere pleasure that I thank all the members and supporters of the committee for a year of tireless effort on our behalf. This year has seen the retirement of Tony Platts as our very able Document Officer. He hands over a very comprehensive file to Peter Andrews who will assume this Role. Janet Carleton is retiring as Study Group Co-ordinator having completed her term of Office. She has done an amazing job encouraging and supporting the groups. She will be succeeded by Arthur Driscoll who has shadowed her this year. Joy Small also retires this year from her role as treasurer. Always smiling, she has managed our funds valiantly, thus enabling us to purchase 'our pride and joy' the Laptop Computer and Digital Projector. Training has already started. Four of our members are themselves, going to be trainers undertaking the work needed, over the next few weeks, to train Study Group Leaders or their representatives.

I wish you all a wonderful year to come

The future is bright! The future is multicoloured and Digital.

**Margaret Thompson            Chairman**