

Watford and District U3A

Chairman's Report May 2008

What does the Chairman really do? In short, keep a low profile and try not to get in the way of what is happening! When there is a Committee like ours that works as a team all pulling in the same direction with one major objective – the benefit of the membership, being chairman is not a burden but a pleasure. Inevitably with over 450 members there have to be some guidelines laid down for smooth running and in this we have been helped, right from the start, by the Third Age Trust (TAT). However, these guidelines need occasional fine tuning to reflect changing needs and for that reason we spent some time revising our Regulations, last September. Likewise, although Associate Membership had served well, by enabling us to eliminate a waiting list, when the opportunity arose this year we were glad to be able to offer full membership to all former Associates.

This year we passed our tenth anniversary and TAT its 25th. To mark these events we decided that with so much happening here and with so many people seeking membership in the area that the most appropriate milestone would be to help set up a new U3A, as a result Watford Park U3A was launched and is going from strength to strength.

Our Study Groups continue to grow in number and the breadth of the activities is stunning, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of the members and especially the group leaders. We were treated to an excellent display of many of these activities in the Study Group Summer Fair. The event was attended by the Chairman of Watford Borough Council, Councillor Tony Poole and his Consort, Mrs Sylvia Poole, who spent the entire morning talking to members; another example of the support that we receive from our local authority.

At our monthly meetings we have tried to shorten the business session in order to give more free time for coffee and chatting before the address, which, once again, has been varied, interesting, informative, and enjoyable. The staff at the Police Centre look after us very well at all of our functions and especially so at the Christmas Lunch where the food and service are of the highest order. Our December meeting was "An Old Time Music Hall", very entertaining with sparkling performances - though we did wonder whether some of the acts were evidence of a misspent youth!

I need hardly tell you that time continues to fly by for all of us. There is so much happening here and so many people actively involved that stagnation is not on the agenda! (It is also the reason why it has not been felt possible to name all of the names of folk involved). If further evidence was needed one only need look at our Newsletter, which continues to grow both in size and quality of its pages. But it is not all inward looking, there is much awareness of those in need both within and outside of our membership, this includes direct involvement in helping others and also indirectly by raising funds via the book stall, raffles and by study groups. It has all become part of how you see your U3A.

With very best wishes to you all

John Carleton