

Watford and District U3A
Chairman's Report May 2009

It only seems a short while since I presented my last annual report, but that was twelve whole months ago and what a lot has happened in that time!

Our study groups continue to flourish, new groups have been set up, we now have over fifty catering for the different interests of our members, but all characterised by enthusiasm, a willingness to share knowledge and skills with others and to be actively considering new avenues to explore, including making use of new technologies to enliven presentations. With the latter trend in mind your Executive Committee has been planning ahead to try to ensure that our equipment is kept up to date to meet the needs of our organisation, including the widening range of activity, study and interest groups; to reduce risk of breakdown and also to keep abreast of new developments.

For some time the Committee has used e-mail to communicate and to circulate documents in advance. This medium has enabled us to reduce the number of meetings held this year from eleven to seven without, we hope, loss of efficiency. We have been glad to receive comments and suggestions from members, which are always carefully considered and actioned as appropriate.

We have continued to benefit from courses in computing skills offered by Watford Boys' Grammar School and have now been joined by members of Watford Park U3A. Early next year we look forward to courses in modern languages at the same centre. We also continue to enjoy the use of facilities in other establishments, including schools, residential homes, the Metropolitan Police Sports Club and even the Garston Fire Station(!). This interaction between U3A and the community is greatly appreciated by us and our hosts and also may improve the perception of what the "third age" has to offer.

In the Autumn we were treated to a series of lectures on London Architecture followed by another on the London Underground, both open to all members. These were given by David Burnell, a visiting lecturer from Harrow, and have been so successful that they are now being repeated.

A low point in the year was the death in October of our Founder and President, Reg Cooke, followed in February by that of his widow, Peggy. Reg, and Peggy will long be remembered for their loyal and unobtrusive support of all aspects of our U3A, they represented the quintessence of this organisation.

In order to function smoothly any organisation needs volunteers, the "hewers of wood and drawers of water", who get things done. We have a committee of ten, eleven assistants to the committee, over fifty study group leaders, organisers of book sales, raffles and charitable events together with others who are prepared to step in and help at short notice when need arises. You are too many to name individually, but without you the organisation would not be what it is.

With very best wishes to you all

John Carleton