

FAIRFORD & DISTRICT U3A - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012

I should like to start my first annual report to U3A members with a big "THANK YOU" to John Burrows for staying on as our Chairman until October 2011 and take this opportunity to thank all those members who help behind the scenes, too many to name individually, but without their help the U3A would not run as smoothly as it does. THANK YOU to you all.

Current membership stands at about 325 with an average 100 members regularly attending the monthly meetings in the Palmer Hall. We have 36 activity groups, new additions being the Postcards, Solo and Computer groups. The Biography group will be stopping in early 2012 if a new leader is not found. We also need a co-ordinator/leader for the Walk with a Pub Lunch activity. If you have a particular interest and would like some help in starting an activity group we will do our best to get you started.

During the year we had some excellent speakers at our monthly meetings. Other highlights of the year include the walking tour of Oxford, the day trip to Highgrove, the pétanque weekend on the Isle of Wight and the members' open gardens in August. We enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Crown of Crucis although numbers were down on previous years.

In 2011 two of our long term senior members of the U3A retired from leading their activities, namely Geoff Bishop with the Walk with a Pub Lunch and Don Cobbett with Strollers. My thanks go to both of them for the outstanding contribution they have made over the years. All the walking activities are now being led on a rota basis with a different member responsible for each month's walk.

In April Paul O'Shaughnessy, Pete Evans and Gaynor Williams will be standing down. My thanks go to them for all the excellent work they have done over the years. All other members of the committee have informed me they are happy to serve for another year. Sarah Basley, Nick Stroude and John Higgs have agreed to stand as our Secretary, Treasurer and Vice Chairman respectively and I would like you all to welcome and support them in their new roles, if elected.

From January 1st 2013, it is proposed that the membership subscriptions should rise to £10 for a single person and £20 for a couple. This is the first increase for four years and follows two years where our expenditure has exceeded our income. This increase has been kept to a minimum and I believe represents outstanding value for money at less than £1 per person per month.

My hope is that 2012 will be our best year ever. Our membership is growing and I am sure you will find that the list of speakers and subjects for our monthly meetings is both comprehensive and interesting. I am a firm believer that the more you put into an organisation like the U3A the more you will reap the benefits. I would encourage you to take full advantage of all the activities which are on offer.

Reg Thoburn