

Milford and District U3A Committee News



From the Chairman

Mike Bakall

This has been a very successful year, with a healthy increase in membership. We have 43 classes running, with a high proportion pursuing academic subjects, and all appear to be well supported. Non-academic subjects also offer both mental and physical stimulation and are a welcome component of the U3A provision. We are limited by the availability of suitable accommodation to place everything that we would like to pursue and have spread our net wider, with classes being offered in Elstead. This may in turn expand our membership as it spreads wider word of our existence.

The contribution of our Group Leaders is highly valued and I must offer our thanks to them for their efforts. There is a natural turnover of volunteers for this work and I am sorry to announce the retirement of Ray Butcher, a leading light of our team of Bridge tutors, who removed to Alton a year ago and is now fully occupied in similar activities there. Members who have any skills that could be used in developing a subject would be most welcome to join our team.

My own role has been involved with the wider U3A, making contact with local, area and regional memberships. These have some input to what we can do, particularly in the provision of Study Day activities.

Finally I would like to thank the small army of members whose efforts in the background keep this U3A functioning. They are far too numerous to mention here, but an exception must be made for John Fairbanks – thanks is long overdue to John for all the posters he regularly produces for us. Also, and far from least, we must all be grateful to the members of our Committee who spend a phenomenal amount of time and effort dealing with the nitty-gritty of the finances, the secretarial work, the membership, the venues, the monthly speakers, the newsletter, and a dozen other administrative facets that underpin this U3A.

From the Treasurer

Tony Kirton

This is a résumé of the report prepared for the AGM in May when the accounts for the year ending 31st March were presented. We are most grateful to Michael Martin for kindly examining them for us.

Most people are only interested in how well, or how badly, we did during the financial year. There was a surplus of £3,676, but unfortunately this gives rather a false impression. Last year we paid £5,467 for venue hire but only £3,378 this year. This is due to the fact that the bill for St Mark's Church Hall arrived very late and was not paid until April which is, of course, in the new financial year. The amount was £2,132 and if you take that from the shown surplus it leaves us with a true gain of £1,544 – which is still very satisfactory.

You may remember that, last year, we were not in such a good position – in fact there was a deficit of £1,722. We took action by raising the subscription and other fees and so there was a substantial increase in those amounts.

Once again more members signed up for the Gift Aid scheme and the taxman gave us £627 this year, an increase of £46. Incidentally, I have sent in the claim for the year just ended and have just received £920. This is a big increase and is due, in the main, to the increase in subscriptions. It is extremely gratifying to receive this help and is the result of some 170 members signing up. If you pay tax but haven't yet signed one of our Gift Aid forms, please contact Rosemary Bryant or me. We will have forms available at the enrolment session in August.

From the Membership Secretary

Rosemary Bryant

When I wrote this piece last year I was able to congratulate us on passing the 400 mark for membership and to say that we had closed the year with 409 members compared with 374 in 2007. Well, we are still growing and at the end of the 2008/9 year we have 448 members. Thank you for continuing to spread the word among friends and neighbours.

Renewal forms are enclosed with this newsletter and programme. The annual subscription remains at £20 and you can still join as many groups as you wish.

I would like to encourage you to return your form and cheque by post, or drop it in to me at Kinfauns Cottage, on the A283 Petworth Road between Rake Lane and 'the tip' (very handy!), so that we can save some of the congestion on Enrolment Day, giving you time to meet and talk with the group leaders with your new 2009/10 number already to hand.

Newsletter Distribution

This year we are offering members the opportunity to receive our Milford and District U3A newsletters by e-mail. As the cost of envelopes and postage is significant, there would be a cost benefit if this option were taken up by a good number of members.

Members who wish to be involved in this will have to OPT IN to receive the E-newsletter. Anyone who does will continue to receive printed copies of the next two editions – thus giving a chance to see if the system works satisfactorily. A link will be added to the branch website <http://www.milford-u3a.org.uk> for members to choose this option.

There is NO intention to discontinue sending the printed version to those who prefer to receive it this way.

The branch receives information about a number of interesting activities open to all U3A members. Frequently the date of the event is too soon to be included in the printed newsletter. It would be interesting to know if members on the electronic distribution list would like to receive this type of update information on a monthly basis.

U3A Milford and District Management Committee 2009-2010

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