

## Chairman's Report

AGM May 2011

We have started our 2011 membership year really well with 315 members, about 30 more than at the same time last year. We now have 35 activity and study groups. German and Biography have started recently and we're always on the lookout for new ideas. If you have joined the U3A in the last year or so and have a special interest that you could share with others, please let us know. In addition, in previous years some members have organised holidays in both the UK and on the continent, so again, if you feel you could organise this type of activity, do let us know. We have a lot of experience that would help you get started!

Our monthly General Meetings continue to attract well over 100 members. Helped largely with some excellent speakers arranged by Jean Crowley, we have sometimes been near to the seating capacity of the Palmer Hall. Unfortunately, some members have had problems hearing everything that is said at our meetings but Nick Humphris has been working hard with the Palmer Hall committee to resolve the problems, and, largely because of his efforts, the loop system has been upgraded in the last few weeks.

Since the New Year Nick has also worked hard to completely update our website. It now shows more topical information such as future speakers and additional events including nationally organised U3A meetings and summer school plans. I know he will continue to work hard to ensure that it remains up-to-date and dynamic. Many thanks also to everyone else who has updated or re-written website pages and also to Denis Brophy and Margaret Stickle for their work over many years with managing the previous website.

As many of you will know we introduced the option of obtaining the newsletter electronically last year and we now have many members who access their newsletters that way. The choice of whether you receive the newsletter as a hard copy or electronically remains entirely with you! I must also thank Alison Hobson, who has continued her hard work over the year producing our well appreciated newsletters each month.

We continue to be members of the Cotswold Link network of U3As where members from 16 different U3As get together to exchange ideas twice a year. Last year a new grouping of U3As in the South West Region started but it covers a huge geographical region that ranges from Gloucestershire to Cornwall. Because of this, the region's meetings have had to be split into 2 to ensure that committee members don't have to travel too far. It's still early days, so we'll have to wait and see what benefits we gain from these gatherings.

Last month we were very lucky to get another volunteer to join the committee. Reg Thoburn has been co-opted onto the committee as Vice Chairman and will take over as Chairman later this year. Unfortunately Reg has holidays planned for much of the summer, so I have decided it would be extremely unfair for me to stand-down in May. Consequently, although unprecedented, with your approval I would like to stay on as Chairman until the autumn to ensure that Reg gets a fair handover. He would then remain as Vice Chairman but doing the Chairman's job until the AGM in 2012. All other members of the committee would like to remain in position for another 12 months.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members not mentioned above for their hard work and support over the year. Much of what they do appears to 'just happen' but I know just how much work they have done to keep things on track.

I must also thank all our Group Leaders for their continued hard work and, in many cases, for their long service. I'm sure that all of you really appreciate their dedication.

Finally, I would like to thank several ladies who are not on the committee, but who never-the-less do sterling work for us on a regular basis. Sylvia Jones has been our publicity organiser for a long time, keeping members and the wider community well informed about the Fairford and District U3As activities with well written articles in the local press, and Jean Freeth, Mary Chick and Kath Price for their help at monthly meetings.

John Burrows