



WYCLIFFE LUTTERWORTH U3A

WYCLIFFE LUTTERWORTH U3A – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015

Chairman's Report

Some of you who have recently joined us may not know that I have been Chairman for only eleven months, so for me, the last year has been a steep learning curve and I would like to thank the Committee for their continuing support and encouragement and for all the hard work they have done. I think we all feel that the U3A offers a great opportunity for recent retirees and newcomers to the area alike, to take up new interests, expand existing hobbies and above all to make new friends, and socialise in a welcoming environment. We now have 32 interest groups covering a wide range of activities and hope to continue expanding. As an all-inclusive organisation, we do not wish to limit membership of individual groups, but there are obviously practical reasons why many of them can only cater for a certain number of people. In these cases, we are keen to facilitate the setting up of parallel sister groups and to encourage interaction between them. My thanks go to Nigel for all his efforts as Interest Group Coordinator and to all those who run the groups. As Eddie said last year, the groups are the life blood of any U3A.

In December Barbara Ewen stepped down from her post as Refreshments coordinator after four years of splendid service. We thank her for her dedication and also welcome Maggie Rigby who has kindly agreed to take over responsibility for refreshments. On this point I would urge as many ladies and gentlemen as possible to come forward and volunteer to help. The more who volunteer the better, and I should add that this is a great way for new members to get to know everyone, so please get in touch with Maggie if you can possibly help.

There were a number of highlights over the past year. Our thanks go to Mrs Heather Craven for allowing us to enjoy the grounds at Misterton Hall for our Picnic in July which was a very enjoyable day despite a soggy start. Working with the Lutterworth Wycliffe Rotary Club we managed to raise a total of £400 for Rotary Charities.

Our August monthly meeting marked the Centenary of the beginning of the First World War and was based on information researched by our Family History Group, into the lives of the men commemorated on the Bitteswell War Memorial. In addition to dramatised extracts from these histories, poems on the theme of war over the decades were selected and read by members of the Poetry Group whilst the Art Group displayed an impressive collection of paintings on the same theme. With the support of Mike Chapman as Organist, members joined in singing a number of the songs made popular at the time, culminating in an upbeat version of "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" coupled with "Keep the Home Fires Burning".

After the presentation was over, many people stayed behind to view the photographs, letters and other artefacts brought in and displayed by U3A members, which rounded off a memorable and moving morning. Subsequently the Family History Group has produced and sold over 100 copies of their Booklet, and we were also invited by Bitteswell W.I. to repeat the presentation at their meeting in January, at which a collection was made, resulting in a donation of £40 to the Homeless Veterans Charity, which supports veterans from more recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

During the year we have enjoyed many interesting speakers covering a wide variety of topics from cheese making and corn dollies to the invasion of Czechoslovakia and Civil Defence in Lutterworth. I would like to thank the speaker finders sub-committee for their continuing work in booking speakers for the coming year.

At our Christmas meeting the sum of £103.40 was collected and forwarded to the charity Menphys, who look after mentally and physically handicapped children in the Leicestershire area.

Over the year we have enjoyed a number of trips to places such as Gloucester Docks, The Wedgwood Museum and Ely Cathedral and indeed a further two trips are already being organised for the coming months, so thanks to George for his efforts. We have also enjoyed a variety of social events including a Treasure Hunt, Skittles Evening, Quiz Night and our annual Christmas Lunch, which was attended by over 90 people. My thanks go to Julian, Nigel and Ann for organising these events. The Committee would also welcome suggestions from members as to what kind of other events they would enjoy as work on this year's calendar is in progress.

As in other areas of our lives, costs for the U3A are also increasing, in particular hire of these premises and printing the Bulletin., so that the committee has reluctantly decided to propose a rise in the annual membership fee. Whilst I do not wish to pre-empt Bob's report as our Treasurer, who will be presenting the details to you shortly, I do wish to stress that I feel that our U3A membership fees represent tremendous value for money, especially if compared with the cost of evening classes and other local social groups to which many of us belong. A number of individual members have told me how important this organisation has been in helping them to make new friends at this stage in their lives and I hope that, with your support, we shall continue to go from strength to strength in the coming year. Thank you.