

THE BEGINNINGS OF WATERLOOVILLE U3A

Frances Halliday – Original Business & Membership Secretary

In 2004 the nearest U3A to Waterlooville was in Emsworth. I went along a couple of times as a visitor but then had to join a waiting list. After about 3 months I rang to enquire why I had not been contacted, only to be told that there was a 5 year waiting list! I did contact National Office about the lack of a U3A in my area but didn't feel ready to start a new U3A, having recently been widowed.

I joined both Portsmouth U3A, where I belonged to the Architecture Group and Petersfield U3A, where I soon started a Beginners Bridge Group, followed by a Duplicate Bridge Group, both still in existence.

In 2005 Emsworth U3A contacted the 80 people on their waiting list and called a meeting. It became apparent at that meeting that two new U3As would be needed - a second one for Emsworth to be known as Ems Valley and a new one for Waterlooville.

We formed a Steering Committee from those at the meeting and some others who contacted me before our launch in January 2006. We did some advertising and I think I had nearly 100 names on the membership spreadsheet before the launch. Pamela Daley was the first Chairman and I was the original Secretary and Membership Secretary. The Treasurer was a friend of mine, Joan Ricketts, who was a retired accountant.

As reported, 150 people turned up at the first meeting in St George's Hall in January 2006. They were practically hanging from the rafters and we never looked back. The main speaker was Professor David James who had been instrumental in setting up Guildford U3A some years earlier.

Ten years on I have moved to London and started a U3A in Palmers Green & Southgate which is exactly 2 years old and has 300 members. The problems and challenges are just the same as they were 10 years ago!

Pamela Daley – Steering Committee Chairman

I retired in May 2005 and, after a holiday, started looking around for things to occupy my time. I had, for some years, been interested in the concept of the U3A movement which seemed to provide learning opportunities at a time

when Further Education was no longer catering for the more mature learner, together with the chance to meet new people and develop social networks.

Unfortunately, no U3A existed in Waterlooville. I applied to join the Emsworth U3A, but they were full and put me onto a waiting list. By the autumn of 2005, Emsworth had such a long waiting list that their committee called a meeting of all those interested in joining. At this meeting, it was suggested that a new U3A be set up but it was fairly obvious that possible members came from two distinct areas - namely, Waterlooville and Emsworth. I suggested that, maybe, the best way forward was to set up two new U3A's. This idea met with some support so the nucleus of a Waterlooville Steering Committee was born.

I can't remember how many people the Steering Committee started with but we were quite a small group. I became the Steering Committee Chairman, Francis Halliday the Secretary and Alex the Group Co-ordinator. We all worked hard and I believe, by January 2006, we were ready to gauge the likely support in the community. We advertised widely and we booked St George's Hall for the initial meeting. We waited with baited breath to see if anyone would turn up. The turnout surpassed our wildest dreams and we had to consider closing the doors in case we compromised the fire regulations. We didn't close the doors and the support for Waterlooville U3A was overwhelming.

The Steering Committee stayed in place until the AGM in July when Jill Gulliver took over as Chairman, Francis stayed on as Secretary and Alex as Group Co-ordinator. I became Speaker Secretary and Joan became Treasurer.

I am so pleased that we made the effort to get Waterlooville U3A off the ground but the various people who have given of their time and effort to drive it forward have made it the wonderful organisation that it is today.

Jill Gulliver – Chairman 2006-2009

We moved from Lincolnshire to Hampshire in 2005. So that we should be able to continue our very busy retirement lives I perused the local papers and monthly produced informative local directories so as to join associations and societies that we belonged to in Lincolnshire. Nothing for 2 months then low and behold a notification in the Ratepayer announcing that an initial U3A meeting was to be held at the beginning of January 2006. The venue being St Georges Hall in Waterlooville. We duly arrived on the chosen Fourth Wednesday of the month to be only 2 of 170 people who wanted to join. We

enjoyed the talks for a few months when Pamela Daley asked if Anthony and I if we would be willing to be on the committee as from July when elections would be held. After much deliberation we decided to stand for the election. The election was held and guess what, we were elected to be part of the initial committee. I somehow found myself becoming the first Chairman after the steering committee retired. During my 3, not 2 years (nobody was willing to stand for Chairman at the end of my tenure), I found every meeting most enjoyable - we had many and various speakers who spoke on many different subjects. I arranged some coach journeys to London which were very successful. The culmination of my 3 years ended in 2009, during that year we applied to Awards for All for a grant to enable Waterlooville U3A to prosper, expand and include technology in the members lives. Mike Parry was the leading light behind this project. It was long and protracted which needed many meetings on a regular basis culminating in us receiving a grant which was used in the main for purchasing laptops for general use. Still being a member I know how Waterlooville has expanded, broadened its horizons, and in many cases a vital part of people's lives. I truly hope it will continue to do so in the coming years.

John Pope – Original Committee Member & ‘Mr Sound Man’

Back in November 2005, an advert appeared in "The News" suggesting that a new section of U3A might be set up in Waterlooville if enough people were interested. It gave an invitation to any interested parties to an open meeting in St Georges Church Hall.

We went quite early to find many people in the hall and by the time the meeting started, it was full to overflowing. There was obviously a greater body of interest than had been anticipated and, because of the number of people, the organisers (Steering Committee) decided to use the PA system in the hall to make themselves heard. It was very soon apparent that no one was familiar with this equipment or how to use it, with the microphones sited directly in front of the loudspeakers creating the loud screeching noise of "feedback". Having had some exposure to this equipment through my Drama Club experience before moving to Waterlooville, I stood up and lent a hand. My first mistake! - I quickly became "Mr Sound Man"!

The Steering Committee Chairman explained how U3A operates and how all the nearby sections (eg Emsworth and Portsmouth) were already full which had led to the proposed creation of a Waterlooville branch. The Steering Committee Chairman asked for ideas for Special Interest (SI) Groups. Suggestions were made and a list created. Then it was explained that each SI group would need a

leader and volunteers were requested. My second mistake - I quickly found myself Group Leader (now called Group Coordinator) for the Walking Group!

My third mistake was putting my head over the parapet when the Steering Committee, which was set up to start the section, retired and members were asked to support a permanent one!

I say all **these mistakes** in jest, however, as I did enjoy my time as Group Coordinator for the walking group and stayed with it until we left the area to return to North Somerset in January last year.

Looking back on it all, it was a great experience to be part of the early days of this section of U3A and the interesting people I met during that time. I have not gone into names, but some have "gone on" and will always be missed. The section has grown out of all recognition with a current membership about 650 - a number unimaginable in 2006! Interestingly, the Walking Group membership of around 60 is about 10% of this total, about what it was when my wife and I left it. It must be a popular group and I am proud to have been a member of it.

Over the 10 years of its existence, Waterlooville U3A has settled into a steady rhythm. It has evolved from its early monthly meetings in St Georges Church hall into the more modern Sacred Heart Catholic Church hall. The sound system is built in here, so there is no longer a need to set up the heavy loudspeakers on their stands with their cables each time there is a meeting! Waterlooville U3A has bought many items of capital equipment to help the various groups and also has its own video and sound equipment. There is still a need to set up the mixer desk and microphones, but at least there is not so much physical effort involved!

Euan Chalmers - French Language Section

The French language section must have been one of the first groups to get under way in 2006. I remember that on 31st Jan having been given a list of interested people, I had around my table a group of about 12 enthusiasts of which Liz Cordiner and myself are the remaining members. The style of the section has changed principally because we have now four groups (many thanks to the enthusiastic leaders!) at different levels but all sharing the same objectives. We meet people and make new friendships while we each struggle in a very sympathetic and often hilarious atmosphere with the problems of French grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. We also do a fair bit of what the French are good at; namely, talking eating and drinking the occasional glass.

Pam Ambrose – Original Committee Member

I was a founder member of Waterloo U3A. About 160 people turned up to St Georges Church Hall that day.

Ted Packer organised a Modern History group which I joined on that day as did Bunt Davison and others. We are still going strong, having expanded our coverage from mainly 20th century to several hundreds of years before.

I started a Music Appreciation group with four people! A few more joined. It lasted 2-3 years.

Sue Goose and I started a Philosophy group but after about 3 sessions we all decided we didn't have any expertise and it folded. I hope the new group will flourish.

An early Scrabble group only attracted a few and soon, reduced to 3 people, it was abandoned.

Our U3A started with a breakaway group from Emsworth U3A, who lived in the Waterloo area. Pamela Daley and Francis Halliday were strong organisers.

One of our early outings open to all was to the Houses of Parliament. It was a very enjoyable day.

Judith Cook – Book Group

Book group started with an initial planning meeting in April 2006, which led to a first "book" meeting in May 2006. We have had a total of 98 meetings in which we've shared our thoughts on 82 books. We've also shared our summer reading on 2 occasions, and had special meetings on poetry, children's literature, romance, food writing and held a book swap! We've also enjoyed annual Bring & Share lunches which have been accompanied by quizzes relating to the books we've read. Over the 10 years of our existence we've had a total of 21 different members though never more than 12 at a time.

Best reads from the group include "Me Before You" by JoJo Moyes, "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett, "The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry" by Rachel Joyce and "Daughters in Law" by Joanne Trollope.

Authors we would recommend include Joanne Harris, PD James and Anita Shreeve.

Jean Bushby – Founder Member

I was a founder member of Waterlooville U3A. On the first meeting in St George's Church Hall, they ran out of chairs. It did reduce down by the 2nd meeting, suppose it didn't appeal to all, thank goodness or we would have needed 2 groups. Frances Halliday was the first Chairman and was very good at getting it off the ground.

I ran a Group for Beginners Green Bowls, they could be coached for 4 weeks free and then had to pay to join Club. A number did take up that offer and are still bowling at the Club. Havant Council had given up running the Bowls Clubs in the area and each club had to take over their club or close. So it helped the Club and provided an interest for U3A members.

I joined the Photography group run by Mike Parry as I had just been given a digital camera. I have learned so much it has been great. We were fortunate enough to have access to a room of computers at the Wecock Centre and were instructed in using Adobe Photoshop.

Mike Parry – Original Committee Member

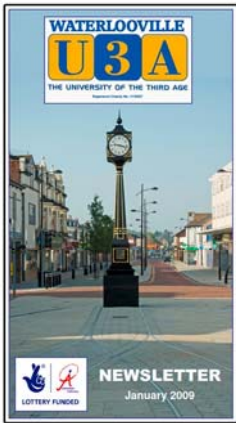
Ten years ago, having moved from teaching art and photography full-time in schools, to teaching part-time in local sixth form colleges, I was keen to fill my extra spare time. I was already aware of the U3A through relations who lived in my home town of Monmouth, where the U3A group is now in its 28th year! So seeing an advertisement for the inaugural meeting of the Waterlooville group, I trundled along to St. George's Church Hall and signed on. The hall was packed by the time I arrived, so I perched on a table at the back. Not quite sure what I volunteered for but it included starting Photography Group 1 and being a member of the first committee.

As part of the committee I steered through a successful Lottery bid for laptop computers, a digital projector and associated equipment. Following the award of the grant, I organized taster courses for group leaders on these, at the time, all singing and dancing machines. Though there was a slight delay on this, when after the local publicity required by the Lottery, all the laptops were stolen from our house in a targeted burglary! Luckily the U3A insurers speedily replaced every laptop, though the break-in was a traumatic event. But who would have

envisaged that over the next decade tablet computers (and smart phones) would banish most laptops to the back of many a cupboard.

Another area of the group I was involved in was the website and the newsletter. I set up the second version of the group website, which was hosted by Hampshire County Council. The newsletter didn't have that many pages but I soon learnt the 'pagination' requirement of commercial printers. Also, more recently, I spent a year or two editing the current website, until handing over to Kevin.

Below, top row: newsletter covers, with the earliest ones in black & white only. Middle row sample pages from the website and newsletter. Bottom row: we've won the Lottery; laptop familiarisation, poster for Photo Group 1 Waterlooille library exhibition.





WATERLOOVILLE U3A
The University of the Third Age in Waterlooille, Hampshire UK

CONTACTS
For details of joining Waterlooille U3A please contact our Membership Secretary.

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PROGRAMME	Webmaster	Mike Parry	webmaster@waterlooilleu3a.org.uk

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Special interest groups 2007

Group	Day/Time	Group	Day/Time
Art History	Monthly - 1 st Fri am	Music App. 1	Monthly - Last Thurs
Bowls	From April	Music App. 2	Monthly - 1 st Tues
Computers	Weekly - Mon pm	Photography	Fortnightly - Tues pm
Computer Forum	As required	Poetry	Monthly - Wed pm
Family History	Fortnightly - Mon pm	Reading	Irregular monthly
Family History	Monthly - 1 st Tues	Science	Monthly
French A	Weekly - Tues pm	Scrabble	Monthly - Wed pm
French B		Singing	W/F varies
Gardening	Monthly - 3 rd Fri	Spanish	Fortnightly
German A	Weekly - Mon am	Tai Chi	Weekly - Friday pm
German B	Weekly - Thurs am	Textile Crafts	As required
History 20 th C	Fortnightly - Thurs am	Theatre Trips	Ring for details
Knitting		Walking	Monthly - Last Friday
Local History	Monthly - 4 th Thurs pm		



