

SHEFFIELD



LINKS



No. 136

August 2008

www.sheffieldu3a.org.uk

From the Chairman

Mixed weather conditions - and some cold summer nights - have clearly failed to deter you from your activities, not the least being the Walking Groups. I recommend all of you with access to our web page to visit the *Walk Sheffield* page and read the day by day narrative account of that week. No prizes for guessing the author of *Writing Through Pictures*.

Twelve of us attended the meeting of Chairman from U3As with over 1,000 members, contributing views from experience on the advantages and disadvantages of being a large U3A. There was also an opportunity, albeit too limited, to share our very varied practices. One or two of the large U3As still have monthly meetings, with a less than 200 attendance of what was described as the *faithful few*. Also, members of one U3A Committee *tell* their groups when it is time to expand and they are split up! *Group Leader* is the most favoured term - some say *Tutor*. Our version - *Group Coordinator* appeared to be unique. And one idea that I guarantee your Committee will not be considering, is for the outgoing Chairman to become *President* !

Those of you who know me well will be surprised to hear that, untypically, I was comparatively quiet during the meeting, mainly to stop myself saying SU3A has "Been There - Done That ..." But as individual SU3A members you are likely to be saying - *Still Going* and *Still Doing* as reading the rest of this issue will confirm.

The slogan **FUN, FELLOWSHIP and FULFILMENT** seems to sum it all up and, in essence, this is what our second round of *FUTURES* focus groups were considering in June. This time we concentrated on the most immediate questions emerging from our first exercise – *New Members and Coordinators* - with some very worthwhile views and ideas discussed. One of the immediate results, as you will see mentioned in the Executive Committee Report, is a decision to hold a meeting expressly for members new to SU3A since October 2007. Plans for this are as yet only in embryo, but there was a potent view that there are different expectations of those already joined from those of would-be

Cover Picture: Walking Festival Baton & new Chairman's Gavel

members still at the enquiry stage. And there are future plans already on the Agenda for early 2009, hopefully of possible interest to Group Coordinators without whom we would not exist.

I was once told that when working with volunteers of all kinds, the most important thing to remember was to say **THANK YOU**, often - **and mean it**. So although too many to name, that's how I am signing off this time.

Joan Keogh

Sheffield U3A News Update

Executive Committee Report

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 4 July. Chairman Joan stunned the members into silence with a strong bang of her new gavel, and which must have come as an even bigger shock for the table! This is to be the long term use of the baton that was carved for use on the recent Sheffield Walking Festival (see front cover and page 8). It is made of Padauk timber, grown on the Andaman Islands and in Burma and tropical West Africa.

Joan's first pleasant task was to welcome new members Ann Barclay (Minutes Secretary), Doreen Bezant (coopted member) and Vera Dyer (our new Secretary) to their first meeting. Tony Allwright had recently stood down from the Committee and was thanked for all his hard work. Joan also drew attention to some recent membership statistics which showed that we now had eleven members aged over 90, four of whom were male!

Vera reported that an updated U3A Directory of Services had been received. It can be viewed on the national U3A website (www.u3a.org.uk - but remember that you first need to register to gain access to the members only area if you have not already done so).

Joint General Coordinator Brian Bezant reported on the latest Group information, noting that we still had 150 Groups, with at least four new Groups hoping to commence activities in the autumn.

However, he also reported that a number of Groups were struggling because participants were not willing to volunteer to undertake their share of the duties of running their Group. It must be remembered that SU3A, as with all U3As, is a self-help organisation and that when we join we are all signing up to this philosophy (although those over 90 might be excused!) – ***the more you put in the more you get out !*** Julian Oakley had indicated that he wished to step down as our representative on the Sheffield Walking Forum and Brian indicated that he would be contacting the Walking Groups to identify a successor.

Publicity Coordinator Peter Barclay outlined the work he had undertaken with Stella Longden and our Web Coordinator Clare Chiba to ensure that a daily diary, updated every evening complete with pictures, of the recent Sheffield Walking Festival had appeared on the SU3A web site. Clare also emphasised that members of SU3A need not wait until the next *Links* to have items published, as they could be incorporated into the web site almost immediately. She would be investigating how a counter might be incorporated to give an indication of how many visits were made to the web site.

Peter Barclay also updated members on recent publicity events. He was given approval to spend an additional £75 for the design of a new SU3A banner, and £400 for additional promotional leaflets, with input from a professional graphics designer in order to improve the quality of our material. He confirmed that a meeting for new members who had joined since October 2007 would be held on Wednesday 5 November 2008 at the United Reformed Church on Norfolk Street (opposite the Crucible Theatre).

A further round of funding requests was received from the Gift Aid Working Party. Recommendations to purchase umbrellas for the Travel Group (£36), a CD player for the Spanish Intermediate II Group (£50), DVDs for the Natural History II Group (£60), a store cupboard for the Monday Afternoon Bridge Group (£170) and laminated maps for Walking Group L were approved. A request for personal emergency equipment for shared use by one of the Walking Groups was not supported, as all members out walking in this area must be aware of their personal responsibility to carry their own emergency gear, which is inexpensive to purchase.

[Members are reminded of the article by Hazel Davies in the December 2007 issue of Links, which listed the steps all walkers should take when out locally. The cost of a survival bag and a whistle, which all walkers should carry, is approximately £2.50. ED.] A further joint lecture with Sheffield Hallam University was also being planned for this Autumn.

John Lees outlined proposals for next year's AMM/AGM. It was agreed that the meeting would be held during the week beginning 20 April 2009 and that a speaker should again be sought. Details of the National AGM had been received and our three representatives (Joan Keogh, Shelagh Woolliscroft and David Rance) were requested to fully explore the reasons behind the proposed £1 per member increase in the national capitation fee, before considering whether to oppose the motion or suggest an amendment.

Vice Chairman Shelagh Woolliscroft reported on recent outreach activities in North Sheffield. The Tai Chi Taster had been particularly successful and a repeat was planned for the autumn. She also reported on a successful joint meeting involving Local History (North), Gardening (Aspen) and Gardening Group D to Wentworth Castle. It is hoped other Groups across the city will also consider such activities.

After some discussion it was agreed to conduct a six-month trial, commencing in January 2009, of a monthly city centre drop-in session for members. These will be held in the ground floor café area of the United Reform Church. It is hoped that these will enable members to bring ideas and questions to Committee members in an informal setting, make the Committee members more visible, to enable social contact between members of different Groups, offer information to prospective members and allow promotion of forthcoming events.

It was agreed that SU3A should purchase a Copyright Licence for Adult and Community Learning. The cost will be £15.30 per annum. This will enable the multiple photocopying and digital copying of books, journals, magazines and other printed material for educational purposes – so that such activities are legally and morally compliant and avoiding the need to seek approval in each

case from the individual rights holder. It was also agreed to investigate the legal and insurance implications for members who car share, or who share petrol costs, on journeys to and from SU3A activities, so that up-to-date advice may be given.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on 5 September 2008.

Roger Heesterman

Sheffield Hallam University Design Project

The bathroom, an essential item in the home, needs volunteers. I am helping with a new university project looking at designing future bathrooms for an older population. Are you interested in helping? If so please telephone and I will provide further details.

Peter Barclay

Publicity Poster Competition

- Fancy yourself as a poster artist?
- Take an active interest in Sheffield U3A?
- Are you creative?

SU3A is offering a £15 prize for the most suitable entry. It can incorporate paint, inks, collage, computer graphics or photography; *but must be A4 size and include one of the following wordings:*

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

WINDOWS ON RETIREMENT

THIRD AGERS DO IT IN GROUPS

Your poster must also include space for the wording *SHEFFIELD U3A* to be inserted later by the Executive Committee. Entries must be received **by 31 October 2008** by post to -

Peter Barclay

Please mark envelopes **Poster - Please do not Fold**. On the back of any artwork, please show your **name, SU3A number and telephone number**. There is no charge for entry and no limit on the number of submissions, but do follow the set themes please. Submitted designs may be used for SU3A publicity purposes.

U3A Shop

The following items are available from the National Office. To order individually and in bulk please send a cheque (payable to **The Third Age Trust**) for the appropriate amount. Send your order, *including your return address, postcode and confirmation that you are a Sheffield U3A member*, to:

**The Third Age Trust, The Old Municipal Buildings,
19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1WE.**

U3A Diaries 2009

The U3A 2009 diary will be available from July and will cost £1.90 each, including postage. The size is 3.5 x 6 inches with a page marker, perforated page corners and mid blue cover. The week begins on a Monday and each double page spread has seven days to the left and a notes page to the right.

U3A Engagement Calendar 2009

The twelve winning pictures from the 2008 U3A Photography Competition have been transformed into the U3A 2009 calendar. The price per calendar is £5, including postage. The theme was *Images of Water*.

Computer Basics for Seniors - A Beginners Introduction to Computers and the Internet

This self-help 192 page course manual is the first product from the EU funded eLearning for Seniors project, in which U3A is a major partner. The book was written by Mike Williams (Bexhill U3A) and Paul Barron (Harrow U3A) and includes an accompanying CD-ROM with additional material. The book aims to provide a basic grounding in word processing, emailing and the use of the Internet. Copies are available, priced £6, including postage. *Our Secretary has a sample copy for inspection.*

Lunch and Lecture

You are invited to lunch at the Sheffield Park Hotel,
Chesterfield Road South, Meadowhead, Sheffield S8 8BW on

Friday 3 October 2008

(12.00 for 12.30 pm)

There is parking and the No.53 Lowedges bus stops at the hotel.

The menu will be

Oven baked supreme of salmon
Profiteroles served with hot chocolate sauce
Coffee and mints
Vegetarian Option
Aubergine and beef tomato moussaka

Cost £13.50 per person

Speaker

Sheila Dyson - Flight of a Thousand Eyes

Sheila Dyson is a keen pilot, mountaineer and traveller with a story to tell. ***Flight of a Thousand Eyes*** is the story of her latest adventure. In April 2007 she set off with two other private pilots in a single-engined aircraft to fly from Netherthorpe Airfield, near Worksop, to Sydney, Australia. Eight weeks and 17 different countries later they made it! On the back of the flight, Sheila and her two co-pilots decided to support the charity, ORBIS, which is an international organisation which delivers ophthalmic training to medical personnel in developing countries.

If you would like to book a place, please fill in the form at the back of this issue to arrive **no later than 5 September 2008**

Barbara Steel

Walking an Eight Day Week

My involvement with WALK SHEFFIELD came about by default, rather than intent – I thought I was volunteering to lead one of the walks! However, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being in contact with so many other Sheffield U3A walkers.

The Festival was officially launched on Friday 30 May from Sheffield Town Hall. Terry Howard of the Ramblers' Association led a group of us round parts of the city centre which had relevance to the Access Movement. Afterwards we had tea and coffee with the Lord Mayor, Councillor Jane Bird.

The first stage of the Country Walk started at Meadowhall in the rain. Our Chairman Joan Keogh handed over the baton (see front cover and right) and we were off!



Those who had not walked by the Tinsley Canal before were pleasantly surprised and, although the route was mainly urban, even industrial, everyone found it very interesting, seeing parts of Sheffield they had never seen before (photograph of walkers at Tinsley Locks on next page).

Stage Two started from Treeton and, after an initial hiccup, when I was waiting to hand over the baton in the wrong place, we had an enjoyable walk to Eckington via the Rother Valley Country Park, which was looking splendidly spring-like.

On Tuesday 3 June I joined members of J and F Groups for the “Challenging Walk” and it was! However, the weather and terrain

were improved by the celebratory champagne on Margery Hill – courtesy of Julian Oakley.



Thursday 5 June was a bright, sunny day and thirty of us had

travelled to Fox House for the 5th Stage of the Sheffield Country Walk to Moscar Lodge, via Burbage Moor and Stanage Edge. Arguably the most scenic section?

The last stage of the walk on Sunday 8 June was from Grenoside Woods and the weather was perfect. Much of the walk was through ancient woodland and yet so near to the City. At Meadowhall I handed the baton back to Joan with some regret. It had been such an enjoyable week.

Congratulations to Clare Chiba, Peter Barclay and others who did such a wonderful job of keeping a web diary of the Festival – with entries appearing almost as soon as the walks had finished. The wonders of technology!

The SU3A's contribution to the Walking Festival – eight consecutive daily sections of the Sheffield Country Walk – attracted mainly SU3A members and very few of the general public at whom the Festival was aimed. It will be interesting to see who participated in other walks in this varied programme, maybe lessons can be learnt for another year?

Stella Longden

[photographs by Peter Barclay]

Walk Sheffield Festival

Sheffield U3A's participation in Sheffield's recent walking festival was a great success as you will have noted from the article by Stella Longden (page 8). Our involvement has placed SU3A firmly on the city's "walking map".

My most sincere thanks go to the Coordinators, leaders and members of the ten Walking Groups who took part and made our contribution worthwhile. My thanks also to the Woodworking Group for designing, carving and polishing the splendid baton that was passed from Group to Group and traversed the full 54 miles around the city's perimeter.

Julian Oakley

Walking in Chatsworth Park Estate

Any U3A Member using the Chatsworth Estate and finding they need help, is invited to contact the main switchboard on (01246) 565 300 or, in a more serious medical emergency, a direct line (01246) 565 399. Their Welfare & First Aid Officer, Kirsty Law, and Fire Officer, Stuart Sutton, will provide a fast and helpful response. I hope this may be of special use to our many Walking Groups who cross the Estate on a regular basis.

Margaret Barlow

Theatre Group

The accounts for the Theatre Group have now been finalised and the balance of £ 235.04 donated to Keith Roe's Fellowship. Keith has offered to top the amount up to £500 through the Fellowship and give to a charity of our choice. After consultation we have decided to ask Keith to donate to the Abbeydale Picture House Appeal, as it is hoped to develop this as a Community Arts Centre. There is already a youth group giving regular performances.

Finally, thanks to everyone who has supported and helped us over the years.

Michael Cowen

Group News

Classical Concertgoers' Group

The next Group visit is to the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on **Wednesday 24 September 2008** for an afternoon concert given by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andris Nelsons, with the dynamic young pianist Simon Trpceski. The programme consists of the *Prélude a l'après-midi d'un faune* of Debussy, the 2nd Piano Concerto of Saint-Saëns and the 2nd Symphony of Rachmaninov. The coach will leave the bus parking bay on Ecclesall Road South, just past the top of Millhouses Lane, promptly at 9.00 am. This will allow free time to spend in the centre of Birmingham before the concert.

The inclusive cost of this visit is £30 per person and bookings may be made using the reply slip at the end of this issue. Please send to Derek Shipley, as soon as possible, including a stamped addressed envelope and the names of all members for whom you are applying.

Our visits are open to all current SU3A members and no special Group membership is required.

For your diary -

Sunday 23 November 2008 -

Birmingham; Chamber Orchestra of Europe; Mitsuko Uchida (director/piano); Stravinsky with Mozart piano concertos.

Saturday 3 January 2009 -

Birmingham; City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; Carlos Kalmar; Viennese New Year Concert; all the favourites!

Derek Shipley

Contract Whist & Double Twelve Dominoes

If you are interested in playing at a time other than Sunday evening, please telephone Gerald Cartwright.

Gerald Cartwright

Archaeology

The programme for the remainder of the year is now available from the Coordinator Kathleen Head

Kathleen Head

Music Appreciation Group

This new Group, which began in March, is in need of new members. If you enjoy good music and are interested in broadening your awareness and knowledge of composers and their works (previous knowledge not necessary), this Group may be for you. We enjoy good premises at Hillsborough Childrens' Library, fortnightly on Thursday afternoons, and we have a good sound system. Our members are very welcoming.

David Andrews

I'm King of the Castle

It was all feuding and rivalry when Local History North, Family History North and Gardening Aspen joined forces with Gardening Group D to visit Wentworth Castle in May. Fortunately this unseemly behaviour was initiated by Thomas Wentworth during the reign of Queen Anne and directed at his relatives at nearby Wentworth Woodhouse – the rest of us got on famously! In the morning we toured the house, moving through the centuries as we explored each wing and tiptoeing sympathetically past the exam students (Wentworth is now the home of Northern College).

In the afternoon our guide was none other Trevor Wilson, from Barnsley U3A, who took us up through the gardens, past the huge conservatory (remember Restoration X 3?) to the Wentworths' folly, Stainborough Castle. Stainborough served two purposes – it was a play-castle for the children but, from its superior position on the highest piece of land around, it also enabled the Earls of Strafford to cock a snook at their rivals. The restoration work on the estate is gathering pace now and there are excellent facilities for visitors – we enjoyed our visit immensely.

Sheila Woolliscroft

Walking Group L - with a little help from their friends!

On a sunny February day, Paddy and Barbara Cassidy opened their home in Dore to hold a coffee morning and quilt exhibition to raise funds for the Edale Mountain Rescue team, who are all volunteers. Neil Roden received cheques amounting to £525.00 raised from the event.

Family members, friends and neighbours gave support along with members of Sheffield U3A, Walking Group L, SU3A Patch and Quilt Group, SU3A Quilt Hive Group, Dore Quilters and the Quilt Time Group (Stannington). Visitors enjoyed viewing a display of quilts and wall hangings made by Barbara as a member of these groups. The Edale Mountain Rescue team on behalf of the rescued public extended their thanks to all who were involved.

Barbara Cassidy

Return on Investment ?

On Thursday 15 May we had to call on the services of Edale Mountain Rescue for a member of Walking Group L. The Group were walking up a ravine footpath near to the Hallamshire golf course, beside Rivelin Valley, when a member slipped on a rock and fell between two stepping stones, injuring her foot. Her fellow walkers managed to help her up from the rocks and send for the rescue team. Within 20 minutes Niel Roden of the EMR team and two paramedics were attending her. They were later joined by seven other EMR team members who strapped her onto a stretcher and carried her across the golf course. In hospital it was found that there were three fractures to the bones in her ankle which required surgery. Now recovering at home, she extends her thanks to Neil, the paramedics and the Edale Mountain Rescue team for their sterling work.

Walking Group L held a picnic for Edale Mountain Rescue on 3 July, as we did last year and the year before, raising a further £188.

Barbara Cassidy

New Groups and Short Courses

ICT Course

An ICT course for people who are self taught or have already attended a basic beginners' course will be starting on Tuesday 30 September 2008 at Notre Dame School. The sessions will run from 4.10 pm to 6.00 pm. If you are interested please email me on clare.chiba@btinternet.com .

Clare Chiba

German for Beginners

This Group now has three willing tutors and 14 potential learners, so it looks set to start in September, based in Dronfield. I shall arrange a planning meeting in August in order to agree the programme. If anyone else is interested, please let me know by the end of July – I would be reluctant to accept new members after the Group has got underway, as it can be difficult to catch up.

Shelagh Woolliscroft

North West Sheffield New Members Meeting

An open meeting for prospective members will be held at Stocksbridge Library on Thursday 25 September, commencing at 2.30 pm. Existing members from this area are welcome and are encouraged to attend.

Shelagh Woolliscroft

Walking for "Owls"

Are there any other people out there who enjoy walking, but tend to live their lives out of sync with the norms, i.e. get up later? If anyone is interested in regularly walking about five miles but starting later than everyone else (time flexible) please email me on jillwhyms@talktalk.net or telephone Jill Whyms.

Tai Chi

The group has moved on from the taster session in June and have a six week booking, which to date is going well. We are all new to it and the leader is fully qualified and very patient. Tai Chi is a gentle exercise with no apparatus. All you need is loose clothing.

We will be starting another six week block in September. This will commence on Monday 1 September 2008 from 10.00 to 11.30 am. This includes a one hour lesson with tea/coffee and biscuits after. The cost will be £21 for room hire for six weeks, payable at the first session (i.e. £3.50 a session). It is open to new starters, both men and women - give it try. I did; it's good fun as well as being healthy.

The sessions will be held at St Saviour's Church Hall, Mortomley Lane, High Green; on the 76 & 88 bus routes (every 10 minutes or so). There is also car parking in the church car park nearby.

If you would like to attend, just turn up or give me a ring or email jmargaretpeter@talktalk.net .

Margaret Johnson

Sustainable Development

Are you interested in Green issues? Are you concerned about saving the planet for future generations? Do you have an allotment that is too big for you, but which might be shared by others? Would you like to find out where you can buy products and services which are 'ethically sourced' – i.e. which don't involve exploitation or don't contribute to global warming? Do you like to think that older people could be a force for change in relation to the environment?

**Are you
interested
in Green
issues?**

If so, you may be keen to start a debate, or even a new Group within Sheffield U3A, that could lead to a better understanding among members and maybe some positive action. Please phone Shelagh Woolliscroft to discuss.

Letters to the Editor

My minor plea / rant (whichever you prefer) in the last issue has prompted two members to reply - many thanks for taking the time. I will respond when more letters have been received - either in response to my initial comments or in response to these letters. Do you agree with these two respondents? If not, write to me and suggest alternative views. If you do, then give them support.

Dear Sir, I have been a member of the U3A for only one year and I have a couple of thoughts about SU3A.

Firstly the *Links* magazine: on speaking to members of my Groups, it's obvious that many of the articles in *Links* are missed. My feeling is that the boxes containing important information make it appear a little disjointed. I think that rather than these drawing attention to the information, the information is missed. Secondly, the travel application forms do need to be completely separate, to avoid losing any other information when the form is removed. Finally, if photographs are to be used, they need to be in colour.

The AGM was very interesting and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Is sponsorship out of the question? People will always attend if there is a free lunch.

I hope these points are helpful and that you don't think I am too new to know what I'm talking about!

Kath Parker

Dear Sir, I think you'll find that AGMs are never the most enticing of occasions - speaker or no speaker. It's not just a SU3A problem! Maybe the Library Theatre isn't the most appropriate venue. It's not easily accessible: two flights of stairs down, then another flight up into the theatre, and further steps down to seating. Wheelchair users have the excitement of finding their way to the back door, being escorted through the library's basement book stacks and a hair-raising ramp down into the auditorium.

What about using a Millennium Gallery room? Light, airy,

accessible, with space to mingle and display information from Groups - as well as for the legal business. Catering also likely to be more efficient and comfortable. More inviting, more costly - a good use of Gift Aid money?

Rose Tanner

Situations Vacant

Equipment Officer

After many years of invaluable service, John Brooke has decided that it is time for him to hand over his duties to another member during the next 12 months. John was thanked for his role at a recent Executive Committee meeting.

The role involves the storing of a small amount of equipment (computers and digital projectors etc.) and arranging for its loan out to and return from SU3A Groups (with the Groups arranging for collection and return). If you are interested in taking over from John, please ring him for further details. Some basic IT skills are desirable. This is a role that might also be shared by two members.

Publicity Coordinator

Peter Barclay will be coming to the end of his period of office next Spring. It is hoped to appoint his replacement well before then, so that his successor can join the Editorial & Publicity Sub-Committee to gain some experience before the handover.

The role of the Publicity Coordinator is to promote awareness of SU3A throughout the area defined as our boundary and to maintain the profile of the organisation as a successful contributor to the lives of older people in the city. If you are interested in taking over from Peter, please ring him for further details.

Travel News

Travel Organising Committee

Shirley Marney, Coordinator
Barry De Roek, Treasurer
Derek Shipley, Minutes Secretary
Margaret Bullivant
Peter Frost
Ken Parkin
Barbara Robertshaw

Only members of Sheffield U3A can join the tours/day trips.

Holiday Insurance - All members travelling have full responsibility for arranging their own Travel Insurance. In no circumstances will Sheffield U3A be responsible for covering claims for loss of life, personal injury, medical expenses, accidents, loss or damage of luggage or personal property, cancellations or loss of deposits. Each member **MUST** insure themselves against such risks.

Disabilities - When sending an application slip for a holiday or day trip, please inform the organiser of any disabilities. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate a disabled person on all social trips, if there is a conflict of opinion the Tour Operator / Travel Agent or day trip venue will make the final decision.

Cancellations - In the case of a cancellation please contact the organiser or another member of the Travel Group Committee as soon as possible. **Refunds** cannot be given for cancellations unless a replacement can be found.

Pick-up Point - Please contact the Organiser if you are unable to be at your pick-up point, or want to change it.

Envelopes - Please ensure that you attach the correct postage when sending applications. Envelopes larger than 240 x 165 x 5 mm (approx 9.4 x 6.5 x 0.2 in) require a large letter stamp. When sending a **stamped addressed envelope** it should be no less than DL size - 220 x 110 mm (8.6 x 4.3 in), with the correct postage for its size.

Please do not park in front of the doctor's surgery on Millhouses Lane.

Travel Excursions and Holiday

Rising Costs

As you will realise, the cost of fuel is rising continuously and this is having an effect on the cost of our trips. We are doing our best to keep the cost down and will always strive to give value for money.

Winter Warmer 2009

Unfortunately we have been unable to book a Winter Warmer for next year. Due to the cut back on flights in 2009, no company will hold flights for longer than a few days. To book a holiday for SU3A, we require flights to be held for at least a month. It takes two weeks for *Links* to be printed and completed booking forms then have to be received to enable details to be given to the tour operator, before the holiday can be booked.

Shirley Marney

Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire

Wednesday 17 September 2008

The highlights of this experience will include a visit to the historic mansion; 50 acres of award winning gardens, including the beautiful Japanese Garden and the parkland to explore at one's leisure. A two course ploughman's lunch will be served in the Stables Restaurant.

The total cost including visits to the mansion, gardens, parkland and lunch will be £28 per person or £25 if a National Trust member.

To reserve a place, please complete the booking form at the end of the August issue of *Links* and send to Peter Frost. **Please note National Trust members must show their card on the day.**

Colour Museum, Bradford, and Temple Newsam House, Leeds

Wednesday 8 October 2008

Explore the world of light and colour in the award winning museum. It is the world's only museum dedicated to colour and is an educational resource of the Society of Dyers and Colourists. We will have coffee on arrival, at about 10.00 am, followed by a guided tour and a chance to explore the interactive displays.

We leave the museum about 12.30 pm for the short journey to Temple Newsam House. One of the great country houses of England, this Tudor-Jacobean mansion was the birthplace of Lord Darnley, husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, and was home to the Ingram family for 300 years. In newly restored interiors there are fine examples of silver, ceramics and paintings, textiles and Furniture, including Chippendale. The house is set in Capability Brown parkland with formal and wooded gardens and national plant collections. We will have a lunch of soup and sandwiches before taking an audio tour of the house.

The cost is £27.50 per person. This includes coach, tip for the driver, entrance to both venues, coffee, lunch and a cup of tea before we leave for home at 4.45 pm.

To reserve a place, please complete the reply slip at the end of the August issue of *Links* and send with a DL size (110 x 220 mm - 4.3 x 8.6 in) stamped addressed envelope to Margaret Bullivant, to arrive no later than 14 September 2008.

Short Break in Northumberland

10 - 14 May 2009

The North East of England combines beautiful rolling countryside with a turbulent history and we shall have both aspects. Our Blue Badge Guide will take us on a Tyne Valley panoramic tour. We shall go to Craggside (National Trust), former home of Lord Armstrong -

the famous Victorian industrialist, inventor and landscape genius - the first house in the world lit by hydro-electricity. Alnwick Castle and Garden are another treat. The garden, with its fabulous new water features, is the inspiration of the current Duchess of Northumberland, offering a combination of traditional and contemporary. We shall also visit Holy Island with its Priory (English Heritage) and the castle (optional – National Trust), not forgetting the Grace Darling Memorial Museum in Bamburgh.

On the way north, we shall call in at the Hartlepool Maritime Experience, and HMS Trincomalee; and we shall be returning via Durham, with free time for the Cathedral or Castle (not included) and a visit to the Durham University Oriental Museum.

For this short break, we shall be staying at the Holiday Inn, Seaton Burn, Newcastle. The cost is £350 per person (single supplement £68) and includes bed, breakfast and evening meal in the hotel, coach throughout and all gratuities and entrance fees, except for National Trust properties.

Members must arrange their own comprehensive travel insurance and send a photocopy to the organiser as soon as possible.

To reserve a place, complete the booking slip at the end of the August issue of *Links* and send it with a deposit of £35 per person and a C5 size (162 x 229 mm - 9 x 6.4 in) stamped addressed envelope to Barbara Robertshaw, to arrive no later than 15 August 2008.

SHEFFIELD U3A TRAVEL

PLEASE NOTE THAT

ONLY POSTAL APPLICATIONS

WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR HOLIDAYS AND DAY TRIPS

***PLEASE ENSURE YOU USE THE CORRECT POSTAGE
and include the SAE envelope size requested***

Holiday Review

Germany and the Romantic Road

At the beginning of June, Shirley Marney led a party of “recycled teenagers” on a tour of Bavaria’s Romantic Road. Arriving at Frankfurt we were met by Caroline, our Tour Manager, and Ricardo who, despite his name, was our genial giant Bavarian coach driver. Twelve days and 760 miles later both had truly become our friends.

Our first destination was the historic UNESCO World Heritage city of Würzburg, where we stayed for four nights. During our time there we visited the impressive fortress Marienburg, high above the city across the river Main, and the Residence Palace, former home of Prince Bishops. A trip to nearby Weikersheim revealed a castle that appeared to have been home to a few generations of dull, moon-faced aristocrats (or the artists weren’t up to SU3A standards). But they left behind splendid Versailles-like gardens.

The trip ended at a nearby local family winery where we diligently slurped different samples and all reported the wine seemed to get better!

The evenings belonged to the Würzburgians happily grazing and quaffing the local tippie in celebration of their Wine Festival – a far cry from an evening in 1945 when earlier visitors in Lancaster bombers almost totally destroyed the city. Such events must never happen again.

Obviously Würzburg couldn’t be left without a couple of interesting facts being checked – a local physicist had discovered X-rays and the 400 bed hospital had vast wine cellars (complete with guided tours!).

The medieval world-famous walled town of Rothenburg, built over centuries with jigsaw makers and artists in mind, was our next destination for two nights. A splendid and ideally located centuries-old hotel was perfect for wandering around this gem of a town’s narrow cobbled streets, gates, defensive towers and

superbly preserved defensive wall. A memorable evening was spent with a humorous night watchman, complete with his lantern, guiding us around hidden back alleys.

Augsburg, a city founded more than 2000 years ago by the Roman Emperor Augustus, was resplendent with Renaissance and Baroque facades of patrician homes and palaces along its grand Maximilianstrasse, reflecting wealth accumulated over the centuries. The most wealthy family was the Fugger family and the wealthiest Fugger of all was somewhat unimaginatively called Fugger the Rich. But he was clearly a decent egg at heart because he founded the world's first social settlement in 1521. An interesting tour of The Fuggerei, still functioning as a sort of sheltered housing for 150 persons or, as they described it, "a city within a city" where the annual rent is a nominal 0.88 euros (about 70 pence) plus three prayers a day for the founder and his family. However, it's no use putting your name down; rules dictate a person must have lived in Augsburg for at least 20 years. Pity!

By now the scenery was getting even more impressive with the Austrian Alps beginning to make themselves known as we approached Fussen, the final town on the Romantic Road. Interesting diversions took us first of all to the world famous Wieskirche (the church in the meadow), an architectural gem harmonising perfectly with the surrounding landscape. Plain white outside, inside a feast of rococo frescoes.

Our next stop was Oberammergau famous for its Passion Play performed by the villagers every 10 years.



*Neuschwanstein Castle
[photo by Myra Kirkpatrick]*

Pretty in a touristy way, but with splendidly decorated orphanage houses revealing the skill of the local fresco artists. Then on to Linderhof Palace set in superb parkland. Reaching Füssen that evening we had crossed and recrossed the invisible border between Germany and Austria.

Füssen provided the highlight on its doorstep, the world-famous fairytale Neuschwanstein Castle built by the mad King Ludwig II. Called mad just because he couldn't stop building castles – but as Lady Bracknell said “a man should always have an occupation”! Millions of tourists since have marvelled at the fantastic theatrical pile begun in 1890 high above a rugged gorge, with its slender towers piercing the surrounding Upper Bavarian landscape. A fitting climax to the Romantic Road, because now we were off to Heidelberg, on the river Neckar, for the final two nights.

In Heidelberg we had a conducted tour of the old city and were then free to wander around the impressive remains of the castle, a mix of styles from Gothic to Renaissance, various colleges of the University founded in 1386 and the oldest public library in Germany dating back to 1421 (no threats of closure there please note). A wonderful lively city – but our real purpose was to allow our ‘culture vultures’ their dose of opera, a performance of Idomeneo. Naturally enough

Mozart's music and the singing were superb, but they returned a wee bit miffed by the minimalist staging: what did they want - real sea monsters and a genuine sea



Heidelberg [photo by Andrea Buxton]

storm! Other less highbrow types made do with watching Croatia beat Germany on the box

The holiday had provided wonderful European history lessons, thanks to Caroline's inexhaustible knowledge. We learnt about the intrigues and rivalries during the Holy Roman Empire; and of the dukes, princes, bishops, kings and assorted minor rulers both spiritual and worldly who, when not fighting and plotting, were marrying each other.

It also provided a couple of newcomers to SU3A Travel with many happy memories of a super holiday with a great group of people.

Beryl and Ted Forrest

Brief Encounter - from a Train

It's an odd thing about a rail journey, how similar it is to travelling through time. Time in the sense of years, decades even, rather than hours and minutes.

Journeying on the Settle to Carlisle line on 14 May brought back to me so many memories. Youth hostelling in the Three Peaks after demob, camping with my wife in the Valley of the Eden, a disastrous weekend in Carlisle on a badly organised coach tour! Not so with SU3A. Thanks to immaculate ground work by Peter Frost

everything on our day out worked well. The sun shone, the mists cleared and Eric our smiling guide bobbed along the rail coach with a constant supply of local information.



[photograph of a fortified farmhouse near Carlisle]

Who can forget that Brief Encounter station where Eric told us about the staff dressing as Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard? How we laughed when 'Trevor' looked into her eyes and said, 'It's time to go, darling,' then popped into the back to bring out tea and coffee for the bemused tourists. Could have been us – right?

Unlike my previous visit, sunlit Carlisle was a joy. Time for lunch and a stroll round the red stone walls and pretty flower gardens. Yes Peter, you planned it so well; and of course our thanks to Derek and Maureen Shipley who made our day with the Travel Group such a success.

Brief Encounter? More of a Memory Lane: surely.

Peter Barclay