

Sources 5



CONTENTS

[An Introduction to Opera](#)

[York Early Music Festival](#)

[Literature, Writing and Poetry](#)

[Co-ordinators' Support Group](#)

[Music Groups](#)

[Music Day for U3A leaders](#)

[Science and Technology](#)

[Resource Centre News](#)

[Where can we get ?](#)

[Who does what in Music](#)

An introduction to opera

Opera is one of the more complex of art forms, which besides encompassing vocal and orchestral resources, also makes considerable demands on producers, scene and costume designers, technical and lighting experts.

Unlike several of our European neighbours, who are fortunate enough to have heavily subsidised Opera Houses in many of their towns and cities, the opportunity of attending live performances is somewhat limited. In recent years the position has slightly improved with an important contribution made by the increasing number of touring companies.

It is therefore to audio and video recordings that the opera enthusiast is more than often obliged to turn. There is currently a very large choice of compact discs featuring complete operas and the number of video

recordings available continues to grow. Some of the latter display an inferior sound quality which will hopefully improve with the advances being made with digital technology.

The U3A Resource Centre now stocks video cassettes of over 50 different complete operas, which may be borrowed by music groups.

To put opera into its true perspective and to add to one's enjoyment, I would advocate that background reading and study is undertaken. There has been a substantial number of books written, covering almost all facets of opera, many of which can be found on public library

shelves. There is also an ever increasing number of magazines to choose from, one being the long established monthly *Opera*. A good selection of reference books exists quite the best of these being the three volumes of Groves Dictionary of Opera. This truly outstanding publication will provide answers to many questions.

Many operas, as may be expected, are recorded in the composers' native language. To overcome this problem a booklet is normally included which has the libretto and a translation. Videos will include subtitles. Translations can vary in quality. Some could quite easily be used as a script for a comedy review.

Opera offers considerable scope, ideal as a medium for involving different study groups when seen from an inter-disciplinary point of view.

One of the best study days I have attended was an examination of Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*. Contributions were made by Music, Literature and Social History Groups. In addition to an analysis of the work's musical construction, there were readings from George Crabbe's *The Borough*, which inspired the composer to write the work, and a lecture illustrated with slides about the history of a fishing community which comprises the setting for the opera.

Finally, beware, because opera can be highly addictive and its army of followers have been labelled, 'Opera Buffs'. Once you have become hooked you may well be joining their ranks.

Tony Middleton - National Music Network Co-ordinator



Science and Technology

A useful conference of Sci/Tech study group leaders was held in April at which eighteen U3As were represented. It was questionable whether the broad spectrum could be designated a 'subject' when some groups have a bias towards engineering and others are more interested in the philosophy or history of science. While some expressed a morbid fear of mathematics, others could report successful maths groups.

How can one co-ordinate a geology group with one covering "technology in the kitchen" and another doing mathematics? Nottingham U3A have a group called "Science for the Citizen" and can be found studying geology one week and discovering how a fridge works the next. Nottingham also ran a successful meeting on the atmosphere and photosynthesis using slides on loan from the U3A National Resources Centre.

Cheltenham U3A reported that their science group had held meetings on quantum physics, nuclear power, electron microscopy and radar, and had arranged visits to the Thames Barrier, an agricultural college, a nuclear power station, a water treatment centre and Sandford Industrial Museum.

Lea Valley U3A has fifteen members in their Everyday Science group who firstly look at a simple theory and then see how that is related to the world around and in equipment in the home. This format has led them into global warming, human biology, plant grouping, weather systems, refrigeration and electric bells.

Thirsk U3A have History of Science and Technology group which allows for discussion of some scientific principles without too much technical input yet provides a good understanding of the continuity of science, each new discovery building upon the centuries of previous work. The subjects they tackle include Galileo, Newton and Faraday, radioactivity and the bomb, Classical Greek science, astronomy and the history of medicine.

Lytham St. Annes U3A has a discussion group which includes several retired engineers. They delve into Stonehenge, windmills, how a CD player works, volcanos and earthquakes and the science of cooking.

• *finally a teaser.....from the Science and Technology*

Network Newsletter sent out by the Network Co-ordinator, Ken Bates. (see page 11)

The earth's equatorial diameter is roughly 7972 miles, so its circumference is approximately 25,000 miles. The earth turns completely every 24 hours. Therefore, at the equator, the surface of the earth is travelling west to east at just over 1000 mph. At latitude 30° north it has a shorter circumference so the surface is travelling at 870 mph. Let us guess that the earth's surface is moving eastward along the 55° parallel at 700 mph.

The railway line from Derby through Nottingham to Grantham is roughly 40 miles long and is west to east on the 55° parallel. If we developed a high speed train to travel at 700 mph (only the speed of Concorde) and it travelled westward along that line from Grantham to Derby, we could reasonably say that, from the vantage point of a nearby star, the train was stationary and Nottingham station rushed past at 700 mph.



Music Groups

Pembrokeshire U3A

Can any other U3A match this jazz band? It began as Gerry Attric and the Pacemakers but is now called 'The Celtic Saints Jazz Band'. It has played at conferences in Swansea and Guildford and hopes to present 'A History of Early Jazz' at this year's South Wales and Severnside Annual Lecture, as well as playing occasional local gigs.

The band plays traditional jazz based on the original New Orleans formula. Its line-up is cornet, clarinet, trombone, sousaphone, banjo and drums.

Geoff Nicolle

Cynon Valley U3A

The Music Appreciation Group has enjoyed a series of splendid monthly chats-with-music given by enthusiastic and well-informed member, Phyllis Brace, a retired comprehensive school head of music. Her lounge filled to overflowing as numbers rose to over twenty and now meets in a local chapel vestry.

Subjects have ranged from oratorios, requiems and masses (some linked to local concerts) to Gilbert and Sullivan, Welsh music, opera overtures (*Magic Flute*), to Shakespeare in music. The group leader has a wonderfully calm and informal way of putting over her varied subjects, and plays excerpts through the medium of CDs and cassettes.

Rhiannon Reynolds

Basildon and Billericay U3A

Our handbell group is for people who never had the chance to enjoy group music-making. It may have been lack of opportunity, lack of money, the war years, even perceived lack of skill. The aim is to make music together.

We have mixed abilities but believe that anyone who can ring a bell and count can succeed. Those unaccustomed to reading music follow the colours and gradually learn. We ring different bells to widen our skills. We started in September 1994, planning a few 12-bell carols by numbers. We now use 3 octaves of bells and coloured A3 music. We sit; we can ring with two bells each, off the table or four-in-hand.

We are a self-help group, averaging about eight at meetings. The leader has some previous experience at handbell ringing but no musical qualifications. We all suggest music to play and make use of Handbell Ringers of Great Britain (HRGB), other suppliers, and a computer with an applications package called

Sibelius making it a music processor. While it is fun and members enjoy it, the group will continue.

Penmaenmawr and District U3A

We have three music groups. One a Singing Group, which sings popular songs, ballads, Welsh songs, and Christmas carols in due season. They entertain our own members at Christmas and at least on one other occasion during the year. The group has been invited to sing at Darby and Joan clubs, Ladies Guild meetings and residential homes for the elderly, which we do free of charge. Our next venture will be to stage a Victorian type "Old Music Hall" in the autumn. We aim to give varied programmes of well known and cheerful, music.

We have been lucky in obtaining a lottery grant for the purchase of a keyboard and stand which will mean that our pianist will not have to struggle with a variety of indifferent instruments.

Our second group is a Recorder Group, which has two sections, one for experienced players and the other for learners. This group has just reformed after the death of the group leader earlier in the year. They are meeting fortnightly at present. We are hoping for great things from them for our entertainment.

Thirdly we have our Music Appreciation Group. They meet once a month to listen to a wide variety of music from Baroque to 20th century. Most sessions follow a theme, such as the sea, travelling, the stars, Irish, Welsh, Scottish, English or feature the music of one composer. A number of members had little knowledge of classical music and we do feel that the group has set them on a good learning curve.

J.A.Truby

Taunton U3A

Taunton has two music groups, one dating from 1992 and the second formed last April. When the music circle was established in 1992 the then convenors published details of forthcoming programmes six months ahead, and it proved to be a very successful and enjoyable group.

A monthly pattern of meetings in the morning of the second Tuesday was continued when the succeeding convenor took over in January 1996, meetings taking place in the convenor's home. By popular support it was decided that the members become a participating group, a different member planning and presenting the music each month.

This has resulted in the members listening to a wide variety of composers, from those of the early music period to the classical and the romantic periods and to that of the twentieth century. Those members who have the knowledge and experience play an educative role, speaking about the music, the composers, the soloists, the orchestra and about the times and conditions when the music was written.

Members are all the time extending their experience and most members play their part in planning and presenting a programme. During the time we have been meeting, we have listened to the works of over eighty composers, using mainly CDs and the occasional tape recording, sometimes playing a movement or extract and, at others, a complete work.

The newly formed group is in its infancy and considering the wider field of recorded music, including sessions for lovers of jazz, and perhaps a choir or a simple sing-along group. The convenor of the new group has arranged for the meetings to be held at a centre catering for retirement groups so that it can, and will, grow.

Lorna Moore

Baddow and Galleywood U3A

In order to break the ice at the inaugural meeting of our music appreciation group, and to get to know something about the musical preferences of our members, a 'Desert Island Discs' session was held. Members were asked to choose a favourite piece of music (from the large collection of CDs in the co-ordinator's collection) and to give their reasons for its selection and memories associated with the music.

For the next meeting members were invited to bring along a CD, record or tape, and give a short description of a particular favourite of theirs. In this way it has been possible to get our meetings off to a friendly start. Subsequent meetings have been on a theme basis so as to allow familiar and unfamiliar or rarely performed works to be heard. In general this has been appreciated by the group, and is to be recommended if you are considering launching a Musical Appreciation group.

Michael Aldus

Stockton-on-Tees U3A

The Music group has been meeting for several years, originally in members' homes, now in a community centre. Our aim is to encourage members to listen to music that is both familiar and unfamiliar, particularly to explore 20th century music. Many people seem to be afraid of modern music, yet while some pieces have left members feeling glum and bewildered, there have been occasions when they have been pleasantly surprised.

A new venture will be to explain how composers write their music, concentrating in the beginning on form or structure of works. This latest idea has come from the members themselves.

A. Bainbridge

Epsom and Ewell U3A

We have five very successful music groups. One covers History of Song, another History of Music, a third Enjoyment of Music and two named Music Appreciation. Live music is represented by a guitar group. There are plans to start a handbell ringing group. All groups keep in touch with each other and members of one group will present programmes to the others to make a wide range of composers and types of music available to all.

The History of Music group aims to get all members to lead a session, currently on the late 19th century and early 20th century composers, Francis Poulenc, Frederick Delius, Karol Szymanowski, Loos Janacek, Gustav Mahler and William Walton.

The History of Song group started by covering German lieder but has branched out to cover other works. The Enjoyment of Music group recently had an 'Innocent Ear' when a piece of music was played and members discussed it and guessed the composer of it. This proved an enjoyable way of encouraging others to participate.

Margaret Still

Worcester U3A

Most of our Adventure in 20th Century Music group have been traditionalists, wishing to explore those areas of music from which we usually shy. We meet in the home of our tutor, Leon Britain, on a fortnightly basis, in a study whose walls are lined with serial ranks of CDs and books on every conceivable composer and style of music, a wonderful array of titles as the music unfolds.

It began in September with the Rachmaninov preludes of 1910 and ended in April with Berio's pieces for a solo instrument written in 1958. Our tutor has taken us on a journey through the first half of the 20th century, showing us the profound effect of the two great wars on the compositions of Stravinsky, Strauss, Nielsen and Vaughan Williams. The Stalin era too, with its repressions, handled in different ways by Shostakovich and Prokofiev. But amongst all this pessimism jazz emerges, serial music shows itself, flamboyant Bernstein shouts and Messiaen, after prisoner of war camp, attracts devotees to hear his birdsong in orchestral colours.

It certainly has been an adventure, and has opened our eyes to such a wonderful range of 20th century composition. So hats off to all those well informed tutors who spend hours preparing to give us so much pleasure.

Mark Philpott

West Dartmoor U3A

We have two music groups. The recorder group, with half a dozen members, has been going for over two years. Most of the members were either beginners at the instrument or even not music readers. The group, led by a former primary school teacher, has made good progress.

The Listening to Music groups have been meeting since 1995. The size of the groups is limited to thirteen by the capacity of a sitting room. We meet for courses of six listening sessions of two hours length. Some of the themes which have been explored are *From Dance to Symphony*, *Six Symphonists of the Twentieth Century*, *Sources of Inspiration*, *Musical Instruments* and *Ballet Music*. There has been a session of request programmes and a forthcoming session will be without title in order to include music which does not fit easily into a theme.

In December the U3A monthly meeting is entertained by some of our groups. This is an opportunity for the recorder group to shine and for a group of a dozen members, who are singers with local choirs to contribute to the entertainment.

R.S.Roberts*York U3A*

The Singing Madrigals group started from very small beginnings following an announcement in the Newsletter and then being formulated as a proper group in the course list. It was announced that people would have to be able to read music, and that the madrigals would be taken from the Oxford Book of Madrigals and from Introduction to Madrigals published by Stainer and Bell.

At first we could not really get started as there were no basses, so an appeal went out in the Newsletter: "Are there any basses out there?" Eventually we got a quorum of voices. I never know how many are going to turn up, so we can never prepare a performance; the singing is strictly for fun, and we enjoy it that way. When everyone comes (rarely) there are 18 or so, and our sitting room is packed choc-a-bloc. When only 7 come, we can only sing 4-part madrigals; with more people, we have managed 5 and 6 parts.

We also sing a few well chosen carols at Christmas, and different members of the group bring music they have at home. Some have been music teachers in their professional careers while others have conducted choirs or sung in them since the year dot. I am one of the latter, and as it was my idea, and happens in my house, I wag the finger to keep time, but am very ready to ask help from the ex-professionals in the group.

Elizabeth Dobel

South Lakes U3A

We are a small group of music lovers in our Music Appreciation group who meet monthly bringing a selection of our own music to play and then discuss together. In this way we have a chance, at little cost, to hear a wide range of music in all forms. Not only are we learning to appreciate the music, we are also learning more about the composers and the artists, whilst enjoying ourselves.

Ella Barker

When I became a member of U3A a year ago and enjoyed its wide variety of interests, I realised that, though some attention was given to listening to music in an appreciation session, there was no opportunity to make music. Participation in the aesthetic activity of singing or playing an instrument is a valuable contribution to one's cultural and spiritual awareness. To my suggestion that we should start a singing group came the protests that no-one could sing any more. "Nonsense," I rejoined, "If you sing hymns in church on Sunday, you can sing."

So we started a Sing for Fun group which met weekly to enjoy old-fashioned songs and songs from the shows. We have learned a series of four beautiful songs about the seasons by a South African composer. From five members we now have grown to twelve or more. We have performed at our general monthly assembly, ending with pleasurable community singing. The composer, Doris Fenn, was present and had the joy of hearing a world premier performance of her work.

At our meetings we sing for an hour, have a coffee break, and then enjoy a session of movement to music. At the end we have exercised lungs, bodies and brains, chatted and laughed a lot. Now we intend to venture into part singing and might even be able to call ourselves a choir. There must be some who can play an instrument in our U3A. Maybe we could aspire to organising a chamber music group.

Ruth Gordon

Elmbridge U3A

The choir was started in 1994 by Betty Sear, an experienced choir conductor and retired headmistress, with a handful of members with a yen to sing and willing to have a go. Some of them had not sung seriously since schooldays and most were not sight-readers.

Their first concert of carols and rounds was last Christmas at the U3A monthly meeting in a small low-

ceilinged room, where the sopranos were almost sitting on the laps of the members in the front row! The piano was behind them and could not be moved. That made Betty's task as conductor and accompanist almost impossible, but they got through it. The audience was kind and applauded, and has continued to support their exciting progress.

Since then, they have grown to 26 members, some of whom are retired professionals. The choir now comprises nine sopranos, eight altos, three tenors, six basses and an accompanist, who receives an honorarium, but takes a prime role as the counter-tenor in the Barbershop Quartet. Their annual concert easily fills the hall and they sing for local clubs and groups, meeting regularly throughout the year for practice and coaching.

The *Esher News and Mail* reported in May that the Mayor and Mayoress attended the concert and said that it was clear that the choir were enjoying themselves immensely in spite of all the hard work. "Despite their mature years," he said, "there wasn't a creaking knee to be heard."

Jane Marsh

Crawley U3A

The Bamboo Pipe group started at the end of 1990 with a few people keen to make bamboo pipes and learn to play. Every year since then a "Making" class has been adding new members to the "Playing" class that is now some 20 strong.

Every piper has first to make the instrument to play on. Newcomers spend the whole of their first year in learning to play and read music as the pipe progresses. The instrument is finished with an individual decoration, in colour or in burnt patterns, all according to the best practice of the Pipers Guild. The tone is gentle, and with the four sizes - treble, alto, tenor, bass - which are made by the more experienced, there is a lot of real enjoyment to be had. For many it is a way into music making.

A keen core group also meets weekly in someone's home to practise, which helps the standard of the fortnightly U3A group. Many members now come to the annual Summer School run by the British Pipers Guild.

Renate Warner

Haywards Heath U3A

The Music Appreciation group has grown over seven years into a large and lively body of members who meet monthly to share their love of classical music, presenting programmes from CD or cassettes. Choice of music and subject is left entirely to the presenters, who never fail to impress and surprise us with their knowledge. Recent programmes have been devoted to Elgar and Mozart, American composers, the music of Russia, a trip through "The Living World", and our own version of Classic

FM's Hall of Fame, when the members were polled to find out the most popular music in Haywards Heath. The end result was certainly not identical to the national choice.

At least one member is possessed of a fine baritone voice, which came in useful when he gave a talk and recital of the music of Fred Weatherly, best known for the words of "Danny Boy". We can thus claim a small live music content in our programmes. Several other members sing in local choirs and operatic societies. The group has also become regular attenders of the BBC Concert Orchestra's concerts in Croydon.

The Music Theatre group is much smaller and has only been in existence for four years. Opera was felt to be an area which deserved greater in-depth coverage, though the group has re-invented itself to take in ballet, musicals and even film music. Opera has been represented by studies of early Mozart and Puccini, programmes of "Operatic Farewells", and music associated with characters "Out of this world". Operetta too has had an airing, alongside videos of dance sequences from the movies and a film of the making of *Les Miserables*. The group has had outings to see *Tosca*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *The Flying Dutchman*. Videos and tapes from members' extensive collections are freely loaned to volunteer leaders.

John Goss



Who does what in Music

These are the numbers of groups in U3As studying and enjoying music making together.

Bamboo pipes	1
Concerts	44
Folk music	3
Handbell ringing	8
Instrumentalists	16
Jazz	20
Madrigals	4
Music appreciation	229
Music making	37
Opera	45
Recorder players	1
Singing	69

A total of

477

Music Day for U3A group leaders

On Saturday, 9th October 1999, a day meeting for music group leaders and tutors has been arranged at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, from 10 a.m to 5 p.m.. There is no charge for attendance at this interesting programme.

10.00-10.30	arrival and coffee
10.30-11.00	introduction
11.15-12.00	small group discussions
12.00-12.45	lecture recital by Gordon Heard, professional flautist
12.45-14.00	lunch (cafes nearby)
14.00-15.00	educational approaches to music in the third age, participative learning
15.15-16.00	lecture recital by Angela Youngman-Stewart, soprano and choir musical director
16.15-17.00	plenary session - the future

To obtain further details, contact Tony Middleton, National Music Network Co-ordinator. (see below)



York Early Music Festival 2000

During June and July 2000 the York Millennium Mystery plays and the York Early Music Festival will be celebrating. The festival will highlight music by J. S. Bach and the 250th anniversary of his death.

York U3A has been invited to participate in the planning of a music workshop with a series of introductory lectures to discuss the music. They wish to extend the invitation to other interested U3A members who will find this an enriching experience, linking professional musicians and enthusiastic amateurs. Reduced ticket prices may be on offer.

To show initial interest at this stage, contact: David Hughes, 1c Elmpark Way, Stockton Lane, York YO31 1 DX (01904 422294)



Resource Centre News

Music

Over the last few months a number of U3A members have been advising me on the purchase of Opera and other music videos. I am very grateful for their help and have now a substantial collection in the Resource Centre. I cannot list every opera here but have ordered about forty and we have also had a large collection donated to us. Anyone wanting a full list of titles should request one from me at the National Office.

In addition I have bought a series of eight videos on the lives of great composers from Bach to Wagner. These use film, archive material, music and commentary to place each composer in the context of his age. Each video is thirty minutes long and ends with a summary of the composer's key works. For those interested in the history and structure of music I have Open University pack PA543 - Introducing Music.

For groups more interested in making music than studying it there are audio tapes, with notes, on Singing Rounds made by Chorley U3A Singing for Pleasure Group. If any other groups have material which they have produced for their own music courses and which they would be willing to put into the Resource Centre I would be glad to hear from them.

Antiques and Collectables

I have had a number of enquiries regarding resources on antiques and, following my comment above regarding U3A produced material, it is nice to be able to give a good example of how useful such material can be. A member from the London group offered me the opportunity to copy ten sets of slides (with accompanying notes) which she had produced herself to give lectures.

We now have most of this material available for loan, and, of course, it is unique to the U3A. The series includes European and English porcelain, English silver, Decorative Arts (during various periods of British history) and examples of the work of artists and craftsmen in the 18th century. Later in the year we hope to have a further ten sets of slides and notes produced by the same very knowledgeable lady.

Science Groups

In April this year a meeting was held in London for leaders of Science Groups. Following this a new network has been created with a newsletter which plans to review science material held in the Resource Centre quite regularly and to suggest possible use to Science Groups.

To increase available science resources we have become members of the Institute of Physics Schools and Colleges Affiliation Scheme. This allows any member of the U3A to borrow from the Institute's substantial collection of science videos at no charge to themselves. Lists of the videos available can be obtained from the Resource Centre. All requests for loan material should be made through me. Please do

not approach the Institute of Physics directly for loans.

We will monitor the use made of this service and, if it proves to be popular, will continue to pay the affiliation fees. If it is not used we will cancel it after the first year.

The Institute of Physics also provides a list of speakers for all parts of Britain who are willing to talk on a wide variety of subjects. Any group leaders wishing to see the 'Physics in Person' booklet which lists this information should request it on loan from the Resource Centre.

Foreign Language Material

One of the very common problems facing language groups who contact me is the lack of suitable material available to real beginners in a foreign language, those who are not especially interested in looking at the grammar or structure of a language but simply want to speak it.

I attended the recent Languages Seminar in Peterborough and asked participants there to suggest material which they found useful in this situation. One of the speakers was Joan Keevill from the BBC who suggested some new products which, although very basic, were produced for adult rather than school use.

As a result of these enquiries I have bought some language packs which would be useful either to help leaders produce their own material or which the group members could look at in detail before deciding if they wanted to purchase their own copies for regular use. Most consist of booklets and audio tapes but I have had specific enquiries for videos in German and Spanish. I could also purchase these in French and Italian if groups wanted to use them.

Please remember that all Resource Centre loans are for short periods of three weeks and, therefore, I could not purchase material for groups to use over a full term or a year.

Building Works

Finally, regarding the building works that we expected to disrupt work in the National Office during the summer, these have not yet begun. We had expected to move into more spacious office accommodation but this has not happened. A number of people have expressed a wish to visit the Resource Centre but it really is not possible. We have no space for visitors. I hope this will be remedied eventually when our new accommodation becomes available.

In the meantime please keep sending in your enquiries, which last month reached an all-time high of 95! Groups are also already booking material for use well into the autumn. If you know what you want on loan later this year, please let me know in good time so that you are sure to get what you require.

Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Manager

U3A National Office, 26 Harrison Street, London WC1H 8JG (0171 837 8838)



Co-ordinators' Support Group

Following suggestions made by participants at the two previous events organised in the London area the group has arranged a day aiming to

provide support and encouragement for U3A members who are attracted to the idea of starting an Interest Group but have not yet done so. Some U3As designate them as tutors, group leaders or convenors, others as co-ordinators.

It may prove rather difficult to identify such people but, given such a long period of notice, the Group hopes to attract a viable number. The University of Westminster has offered accommodation at the Regent Street campus on Sunday, 31st October. While the event is being organised as part of the programme of the Greater London Region, other U3As in the South East are invited to participate.

Those interested are asked to contact Keith Richards through the National Office or at his home number (0181/0208 445 6120).



Where can we get.....?

Handbell Ringers of Great Britain

HRGB is the only organisation devoted to tune ringing on handbells, handchimes and belleplates. It has eight regions which organise concerts, rallies and workshops. Its members receive *Reverberations* twice yearly.

Secretary: Mrs. Sandra Winter, 87 The Woodfields, Sanderstead, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 0HJ
(0181 651 2663)

"Papa" - a stage musical

Written by a member of Epping Forest U3A, it is based on the last days of the novelist, Ernest Hemingway. Score, book, tape or CD are available from Ron Read, 13 Brook Way, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6AA

"Mixed Bag" - an anthology

Milton Keynes U3A creative writers have their published work available at £5.99, inc. p&p, from Gloria Issacs, 46 Horsefair Green, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes MK11 1JP

GM foods

Science groups interested in the subject of GM foods can contact Sion Price of Monsanto who makes no charge for speaking to U3As from the company's viewpoint. (0163 0652922)



Literature, Writing and Poetry

Members of the Book group at Lancaster and Morecombe U3A share a wide range of reading, including short stories, letters, novels and biographies. Two recent meetings highlight the group's diversity: a fascinating and illuminating afternoon with William Blake, and another at which humorous poems and stories were read, generating much laughter and fun.

Writing for Pleasure largely lives up to its title. The group has more or less reached its limit at fourteen. Six or seven members will bring stories, articles or poems to read out, based on an idea or title suggested the previous month, and these will be discussed. Inevitably the readings blossom into general discussion, in spite of the co-ordinator's desperate attempts to focus on style rather than substance. In addition to work read at the meetings, we have given more depth to our criticism by asking one member each month to bring along a longer piece of work for all to study at home, ready for more detailed discussion at the next meeting.

Members of our new Poetry group decided they would limit themselves to 20th century poetry. We have looked at war poets and 'Journeys of the Mind' and will be considering the works of Ted Hughes and Philip Larkin. Our experienced co-ordinator has given us a lead, providing copies of poems for reading and discussion. Now members will be presenting their own individual programmes.

The Find Your Voice group began by encouraging people to do just that, but it has gradually developed a more literary bent, concentrating on choral speaking of verse and prose. We produced a tape for a recent exhibition, and have responded to the enthusiasm of an expert leader who has led us along paths some of us are rather surprised to find ourselves traveling.

Jean English

