

# Sources 6



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## The Arts - a voyage of discovery

Many of us discover the delights of art as children when we spend many hours dabbling with paint and paper. Frederick Noakes, who has spent a lifetime in art and design as a Creative Director, an artist and a tutor, says that he stumbled like a gold miner upon the idea that if you could draw and paint, all things could become visually possible. "A cold winter could be turned into a land of warmth and sunshine, or a feast could be conjured up - riches indeed."

For the academically minded pupil in our schools, art is often pushed aside when the demand of exams requires 'real' subjects. Others, who may be the luckier ones, are still able take art to exam level and beyond, setting out on a life of creativity and discovery. Frederick Noakes considers that if someone is not interested in literature, music, theatre or art, they are spiritually starved, undernourished, and deprived of creative positives - happiness, better sleep, contentment, appreciation of others' talents and association with 'nice' people.

These positively benefit our general health and well-being; one reason for our U3A art groups being so popular. We experience great pleasure, are more relaxed and never lonely among kindred spirits. Some people only discover the delights of drawing and painting when they join a U3A group, while others return to the activity

they once enjoyed. Beginners are, naturally, diffident and lack confidence, but they have a lifetime of experience and have seen great works of art around the world. The potential to create art with paint is, nevertheless, still there.

"How will I know when I start to become good at painting?" ask students of Frederick Noakes. "When you become 'invisible' whilst you are doing it" is his reply. This is the magic. When you survey the experience, look at your work and become aware that something greater than both has emerged. That is reward indeed. I believe the experience is no different from that of a person who carves their initials and date on a rock or a tree. It signifies "I passed this way and this is my mark" - a legacy as proof of existence itself.

It all begins by unblocking the brain. As adults we become conditioned to a pattern of fixed

thinking. Life is easier for us when we harmonise with similar minds but the penalty is that we sacrifice a flow of creativity and a response to instinct, the only reliable counsel

we have. One well known proverb is "nothing ventured, nothing gained", and that is how we should approach painting. If we can regain the innocence, wisdom and unselfconsciousness of

our childhood, life can become very exciting as student artists. Notice how young children, in their wisdom, understand the journey of a drawn

line, hardly lifting the pencil from the paper. No one has taught them to do this but the great masters of art share their understanding.

"My pleasure," says Frederick Noakes, "is when this magic appears for me, but greater is my satisfaction when I encourage others to 'step over the stile', as I call it, and break through the barriers that have been built up. I still get a childlike sense of anticipation when I mix a few colours and paint a few strokes just to see what happens. Try it for yourself and discover this magic." Frederick Noakes' beautiful watercolours will be familiar to U3A members in the Basildon area and his creativity is clearly visible. Creativity can also be seen in the paintings entered for the annual U3A Art Competition, a few of which are displayed at the Artists and Illustrators Exhibition in London. Perhaps U3A art groups around the country will celebrate the millennium by exhibiting their work and sharing this magic with those in their locality.

I have seen the excitement in the eyes of a comparative beginner when they see for the first time their work mounted and framed. This is the magic that keeps us all, even the 70, 80 and 90 year old, young at heart.

*Brenda D. Perkins National Arts Network Co-ordinator in collaboration with Frederick Noakes*

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## Art Groups

### Ludlow U3A

Two years ago at the inaugural meeting to start U3A in Ludlow, we asked the sixty members who attended what interests they would like to pursue. Fourteen folk said they would like to see History of Art. I had last done the subject way back in the 'Middle Ages' in the sixth form. The interest was still there and I felt someone should be encouraged to lead us. On University Challenge later, teams were asked to identify a painter. The teams were baffled but I was quite proud that I could do so (not too difficult really, the painter was from the Florentine School during the early Renaissance). My husband soon brought me down to earth by commenting that if I was that clever, why didn't I run the group in Ludlow? Suffice it to say, no one else from the fourteen wanted to tackle it, so ever open to a challenge, I picked it up.

I was under no illusion that I was better qualified than anyone else in the group. I felt that I could only do it my way so I have used the Observer Book of Painting which has a chronological listing by school and seemed to select artists who had something to offer posterity, apart from being wizards at drawing and painting. I decided to concentrate on Western European artists simply to set a boundary. We started off with an overview of the early Byzantine split from Rome and then settled into studying this end of Europe - Italian, French, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, German and English.

The group is asked to research artists, essentially thumbnail sketches, and present their findings with just *one* painting to discuss in detail (that stops chattering at the back which does occur if more than one illustration is doing the rounds!). Research is based on the background, motivation, aims, patronage, "trademarks", influences and personal observation, which brings in some contemporary history. In a two hour period monthly, we

discuss up to seven artists and with fourteen in the group, participants only have to prepare written work for each alternate meeting. We allow time for discussion and then browsing over a selection of paintings at the end.

Ludlow's Librarian is kept in touch with our plans and books are put on one side for us to borrow. We also have access to the superb facilities of the local College library. During the summer months, we keep in touch on a social basis by trips to galleries and visit special exhibitions in our area. The last meeting of each term varies, with a slide show of the artists covered and over an informal lunch or glass of wine; it's not all hard studying. It is meant to be a pleasurable exercise to encourage us to find out more about artists at leisure. I have heard on innumerable occasions "I have never heard of him", to be followed by "I did enjoy learning about his work."

I keep records of the artists studied on a wall chart and written up in booklet form so that we can refer back and pass on our work, if anyone else should want to start another group in our format. We will move on to studying more obscure facets of the subject - Expressionism, Surrealism, Illusionism, Hermetic Cubism etc.- but that does not prevent anyone new from joining our group. We can, of course, always start all over again!

*Olwen Hughes*

### **Norwich U3A**

When one painting group was full with a long waiting list a second was formed, led by Pat Matterface, meeting fortnightly in a large church hall for studio work. Every session is an adventure, discovering what a paintbrush or

pencil can do. Each member chooses their own subject and works towards their own goal with the co-ordinator helping each to meet their potential and raise their technique.

Problems arise with the use of wet-on-wet washes or "lift off" or dry brush techniques. How to portray tree bark or old brickwork, fur and feather textures require a session or two concentrating on these details and comparing notes. Whatever the subject, a view of Constable country or a barn owl hunting at dusk, the co-ordinator encourages the artists to look about them, to analyse colour and form and angles of light.

Each member is able to develop their own ideas and technique but there is enjoyment to be found in comparing each others' work and searching out new ideas and unusual compositions.

Norwich U3A also has two Looking at Paintings groups. Members not only look at reproductions and discuss them but also videos and slides, even a much-loved picture taken from the wall at home. One group has visited local studios and exhibitions and noted the decreasing number of paintings, disagreeing with the art critic of *The Times* that the "turpentine frenzy is over." The other group has travelled wider, to Birmingham for the Burne-Jones exhibition, and to London to take in the Monet, Millais and Ingre exhibitions all in one hectic day.

### **Aylesbury Vale U3A**

Maybe it would be more accurate to describe our History of Art group as a History of Artists group. We consider the output of individual painters chronologically, their lives and, to an extent, the context in which their whole work was produced. We try also to relate the paintings of each artist to those previously considered - when the memory enables!

This year, after twelve months looking at post-impressionists, we aim to fill some gaps from earlier studies, beginning with the Wilton Diptych in September and concluding with Edward Hopper next July. A complete History of Art in sixteen and a half chapters?

Using reproductions in books brought by members means that everyone helps to prepare for each class, in true

U3A style. This process also draws attention to contradictory comments from different art historians, prompting comments of our own, as do the varying standards of reproduction.

London galleries being so accessible, visits are made outside the group meetings but reported on and discussed. Our fortnightly meetings stimulate interest, widen knowledge and facilitate exchange of opinions, sometimes held earnestly but always expressed with good humour.

*Graham Gregory*

### **Winchester U3A**

The first Painting and Drawing group was formed in 1991 and has met regularly ever since. It is an informal group where everybody follows their own artistic inclination without any formal instruction, although advice is always available from the more experienced members, should it be requested. We have members working in watercolours (including pen and wash), oils, acrylics, pen and ink drawing (including cartooning), and we occasionally try, not always successfully, more specialised techniques such as scraper-board, monoprinting, and collage. We do not work with piles of bricks, discarded domestic items, or dead animals.

We meet in a room at a local church the size of which restricts our numbers to twelve, and we are full. However, last summer, so keen were members to improve their skills that a number of them shortened the normal summer break by meeting in each others' homes. Despite (or, maybe, because of) the competing attractions of coffee and garden tours, all agreed that this proved very worthwhile. We have occasional short exhibitions, usually at our AGM. Our leader and organiser is Mrs. Muriel Clark, who works hard to ensure that the group continues to flourish.

*Bill Hickmott*

The Art Today group, at Winchester U3A, likes to see contemporary art at first hand and we are lucky enough to have plenty of it about us, locally or in London. The group usually meets once a month and, since it started two years ago, has notched up many of the big names. Next year we hope to visit more commercial galleries, although we have already been to Saatchi's and were pleasantly surprised to find how interesting it was and not sensational at all.

This autumn a few of us are going to Barcelona and we are considering a visit to Glasgow in the spring. We have invited an artist friend to a working supper and we have visited another's studio. Subsequent to someone's incautious remark, we all tried to paint a 'Jackson Pollock'. It seemed so easy, until we started.

Our group leader has many years of experience with children and students of art and points us in new directions without influencing our opinions. We are slowly absorbing fresh ways of looking at the world through artists' eyes, although there

has been no sudden flash of enlightenment.

*John Moate*

### **Dacorum U3A**

A small group of people interested in Art Appreciation met in the co-ordinator's house in 1990 and for four years the group had only one presenter, supported by art books and slides contributed by the members. Gradually, as group members became more confident, several did their own research and made presentations. Then the number of members grew sufficiently to justify renting a small hall. Two co-ordinators worked together to give coverage and continuity of programme. The members researched art and architecture from different countries, e.g. Flemish and Spanish.

Local libraries are most helpful with data and more recently the U3A Resource Centre has been tapped for slide material. Occasionally a local expert is invited to a meeting. Information on exhibitions is discussed at each meeting. From time to time small groups visit art galleries and special exhibitions. We are fortunate to be living near London and have visited the Wallace Collection, National Gallery and the British Library.

Artists researched now range from the most popular to the more obscure. The latter are regarded as the greater challenge and a benefit to all participants. Visits to galleries are enhanced by the increasing awareness of our members.

*Diana Bambridge*

### **Grimsby and Cleethorpes U3A**

I have been involved with Art and Craft most of my life but I started China Painting at Adult Education Classes when I retired. I enjoy it because if the stage you are doing does not satisfy you, you can just wipe it off. Our group start off using plain white tiles at 25p for a 6" square tile.

The pictures can be original, although the majority are copied. It is traced and put onto the tile with a graphite carbon paper or drawn on using a special pencil or biro, but not all biros work. Then the outline is penned on using a fine pen and ink which we make up ourselves. When dry we can fill in the surface with colour, shading it carefully. The decorated tile or plate is fired at about 750 to 800 degrees, for about 3 hours and has to cool for at least 12 hours.

The paints are obtained from specialist dealers, sold in powder form, mixed with liquid paraffin into a paste and applied using sable brushes. The gold and silver lustres are sold in liquid form. Members like to make number plates for their houses or as gifts. Commemorative and baby plates are other favourites. Grimsby U3A also have groups for parchment craft, embroidery, patchwork, glass engraving and painting and calligraphy.

*Pauline Shaw*

### **Harrow U3A**

Harrow has two History of Art groups. The aim of the larger group, held at the Harrow Arts Centre, is to show slides and discuss artists currently on exhibition, so that members may be

informed and better enjoy their visits to the exhibition. Certainly some members who have disliked modern painters now have a greater understanding and are keen to view the paintings with a more open mind.

We have also visited the British Museum Print Room and the Courtaulds, among smaller museums. Several trips abroad are arranged, mostly to Europe, but also to the US, to visit exhibitions and museums. For example we recently travelled to Antwerp for the three Van Dyck exhibitions and in October we are off to the Venice Biennale. Day trips are planned to Lewes to see the Rodin sculptures and to Cardiff to see David Hockney's photoworks.

*Daphne Singer*

### **Lytham St. Annes U3A**

For the past three years we have organised groups of about twelve to study the Italian Renaissance. The course is based on the Open University tapes entitled "Art in the Italian Renaissance", supplemented by my collection of slides, photocopies and coloured illustrations. We have had specialist speakers on a variety of subjects: the Sistine Chapel, Classical Mythology in Renaissance Art, music of the period, literature, the role of women and gardens.

This year a group of enthusiasts are coming with me on a week's art tour of Florence and Siena. The period covered is 1400-1600, taking in the principal 'giants' of painting, sculpture and architecture, dealing with humanism and mannerism. Members are also directed to original works and reproductions in our own country. Fourteen miles away, in Preston, there exists a lovely gilded plastercast of Ghilberti's "Doors of Paradise" and two beautiful statues of the High Renaissance by Giambologna. We are not far from the city art galleries at Liverpool and Manchester. Visits to London on a concentrated city break can include Hampton Court with the restored panels, "The Triumphs of Caesar" by Mantegna, the cast room and the Raphael room at the V&A and the Sainsbury wing at the National Gallery.

At the July meeting of all our U3A members, we displayed a beautiful collage of Renaissance works which was much appreciated and has inspired others to join another study group.

*G. Eric Ray*

### **Reading U3A**

The Art History group attracts 25-30 members and has studied the romantic landscapes of Turner in England and Freidrich in Germany, a comparison of portraits by Reynolds and Gainsborough, and bourgeois aspects of Dutch 17th century painting. Another series had the title "Where art meets music" which was well received. Visits have been made to the National and the Tate Galleries, the Ashmoleum in Oxford and Hogarth's house in Chiswick.

*David Merryweather*

### **Harrogate U3A**

The leader of our Painting group, an experienced professional artist, gives us help at our stimulating weekly sessions on a variety of subjects, portraits, landscapes and still-life arrangements.

For landscapes we have organised sketching trips to the East Yorkshire coast, and inland to villages nearby. We have concentrated on studies of buildings and we have painted at Fountains Abbey, local parish churches and town centre sites. We were privileged to sit inside the Harrogate Theatre to sketch and paint details of the stage and auditorium. We have had outings to the Leeds and York art galleries and other exhibitions.

We are a very mixed group, some members having painted for many years, exhibited locally and even sold some of their work. Others are true beginners, but we all enjoy the friendly atmosphere of our classes, learning from one another as well as from our experienced leader, a teacher of art and design in schools.

### **York U3A**

The History of Art group runs an appreciating art course, which from small beginnings, now attracts forty members to its meetings. At first the meetings were held in members' rooms, but as the group increased in size it now meets in local community centres.

There is an introductory course, held weekly for ten weeks, in which the members look at over one hundred European paintings from the 14th

century to the present day, using slides and videos. They learn about the artist and his

patrons as well as the political and religious context in which the works were done.

Members can then pursue their interest further

by joining one of the occasional eight or ten week courses, which have included such topics as Art and Culture

in Renaissance Florence and Venice, Caravaggio and his followers, and Great Galleries of the World.

The group arranges regular day trips to see original works in galleries and exhibitions around the country. Several three day visits have also been arranged to view galleries in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and London, Oxford and Cambridge. More recently the group has had a five day visit to Belgium to see galleries in Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent.

*Terry Gallogly*

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## Craft Groups

### Edinburgh U3A

I convene two small groups, each meeting once a fortnight. Group 1 began in 1994 and has tried crochet, cross stitch, 3D decoupage,

quilling, embossed rubber stamping and raised embossing, encaustic wax, silk and glass painting. Group 2 do first year silk painting.

We use water based silk paints which are fixed by ironing rather than spirit based silk paints which require steam fixing, although various books suggest the latter give the best results. So far we have had fun making small projects for cards, bookmarks, or pictures. Embroidery transfers, glass painting patterns and ideas from silk painting books (enlarged or reduced) are first traced using an air erasable marking pen then covered with a line of gutta. No spaces

must be left or the paint will bleed from one area to the next. Silk paint spreads very easily so you only need a small amount of paint, except when painting a larger item e.g. a cushion, where you would use a foam brush. Chinese brushes are recommended but any watercolour brush will work.

We use different techniques, such as:

Gutta outline, either clear which washes out, or coloured which is then part of the design

Impregnation. (a) salt, (b) salt solution, (c) gutta mixed with lighter fuel, (d) use of hair dryer to stop flow of paint

Glass painting differs from painting on silk in so much as you require a generous brush load of glass paint (water or spirit based) for the paint to flow, stopped by Contour lining paste. Books I would recommend are Jane Venables, *The Silk Painting Workshop*, *Painting, Marbling and Batik for beginners*; Susanne Hahn, *A complete Guide to Silk Painting*; Teaching Art Videos, *How to paint on Silk* and *How to paint on Glass*, Craft Creations Magazine and Catalogue.

I aim to introduce the group to various crafts and then leave it to them how far they develop their new skill. I have no qualification in any crafts, just a love of trying new crafts. I try to be at least one step ahead of my group! I would be very interested to hear from any groups which have tried Encaustic Wax or Painting on China.

*Moirra Peters*

### Northallerton U3A

Soon after our U3A was formed in 1992, several ladies expressed an interest in starting a craft group but there was no qualified person to lead it. We decided to meet fortnightly to do our various crafts and I volunteered to act as convenor. Our work includes cross stitch, tapestry, knitting, crochet and bobbin lace. If we run into difficulties we help each other out. We have displayed our efforts at monthly meetings and, on two occasions, at the Regional Days.

*Marie Daynes*

### **Doncaster U3A**

We have had a needlecraft group since 1994, a steady, regular membership of twelve people meeting every fortnight. Each member brings individual pieces of work to provide starting points for discussion, advice and helpful hints. Members have tried their hands at cross-stitch, tapestry, crochet, tatting, lace making, knitted toys, gold work, ribbon embroidery, and patchwork.

We have had people with particular skills to talk to our group and demonstrate their art. We visit needlecraft shows locally and further afield, but we are a self-help group and mostly learn from one another. We find that if anyone is having a problem with a piece of work there is usually someone in the group who can help.

As Christmas approaches we try to find different articles to make such as Christmas tree decorations, wreaths and toys. For two years we sold these at our Christmas Social as a way of raising funds. Earlier this year we were invited by Age Concern to design a piece of work for inclusion in an exhibition entitled "The Time of our Lives", which was initiated by the Debate of the Age. We made a cross-stitch panel of individual pictures showing the different ages throughout our lives. The exhibition opened in York in August and is to tour the county in 2000.

By attending our group members are given a chance to make new friends, improve their own personal knowledge of the subject and encourages them to attend other groups.

*Barbara Plumb*

### **Carlisle and District U3A**

A Creative Craft group was started in Carlisle in September 1997. The group is divided into three main sections - decoupage, embroidery, Baltimore applique with quilting and patchwork. We offer opportunities to learn other crafts e.g. painting on glass and silk, tapestry, cross stitch, soft toys and box making. Now we will work on Christmas decorations and presents.

We have made several visits to Craft and Quilt exhibitions in Glasgow, Perth and Harrogate and our quilting members have attended lectures in Penrith given by well known American experts. Exhibitions illustrating the full range of our work have been mounted in Carlisle Library, at our own U3A's annual general meeting and, most recently, at the Cumbria Regional Day held in Carlisle, including workshops in which visitors could take part.

*Catherine Edgar*

### **Eastbourne Meads U3A**

The interest in the art of Corn Dollies started when friends were invited to my house for a short talk on the history of this ancient craft of Pagan times. So began the monthly workshops of two hours, with a coffee break, which have now been running for two years. In that time a group of eight members, who had no knowledge whatsoever of working with straw, have learned basic skills and techniques of plaiting and weaving. We are a self-help group and meet in my house where I provide the materials, such as wheat, thread, wire, ribbons etc. with easy instructions and diagrams for both traditional projects and novelties.

A short time ago we presented a display to our U3A new members meeting where each member of the group showed their completed work of Corn Dollies, such as Welsh Border Fan, Suffolk Horseshoe, Mordiford Heart, Glory Braid, St. Brigid's Cross, Cat's Foot Plait, Tied-Straw Angels and Dolls, Bells, Owls, Hedgehogs and Christmas Tree Hangings.

For the millennium display we are making a full size figure of the traditional Ceres. We have now started our third year of workshops and already the group are looking forward to developing their individual styles with confidence and competence. A beginner's class also starts in October.

*Dorothy Poulton*

### **Redbridge & District U3A**

The Art and Calligraphy group commenced in 1995 with a small number of people. The group leaders, Sheila Flashman and Nancy Furlong, were enthusiastic amateurs. The group has moved three times each time because of a growing membership; it meant that we had to have a larger room. We now have one art group which uses oil, acrylic and other media and another art group combined with calligraphy.

The first year is structured for people who have never tried any form of art. They begin by learning to draw, then go on to watercolour. After that they join the rest of the group, trying pastels, coloured pencils etc. In May we held an exhibition of our work in the gallery at the Central Library in Ilford including 100 paintings, drawings and calligraphy. There were twelve pages of comment from the public in appreciation of the content, presentation and high standard of entries.

*Sheila Flashman*

### **South Molton U3A**

The Patchwork group started as a "Sewing Bee" with a few ladies who met in a member's home during the winter. Patchwork soon became the main theme and a young teacher was invited to instruct the group which has now increased in numbers and enthusiasm. As well as visiting exhibitions of the craft, the group has contributed to local exhibitions in the church and museum. As the group increased more space was necessary so meetings are held fortnightly throughout the year at a local patchwork and quilting centre.

Apart from the pleasure of meeting friends with a common interest there is the satisfaction of producing something useful and decorative - quilts, cushions, Christmas gifts - all by our own fingers. Many a grandchild sleeps comfortably beneath our handmade works of art. More recently a Tapestry and Cross Stitch group has been formed as a result of admiring the work on the walls of a member's home. Ideas are exchanged, encouragement given and fingers stimulated into action to produce pictures, cushion covers, church kneelers and greetings cards.

*J. F. G. Mound*

### **Taunton U3A**

An enquiry to learn more about Patchwork and Quilting prompted a group of seven members to hold monthly meetings. Having established how much each knew we drew up a programme of topics. We usually start with a demonstration with guidance notes. We revised the basics of making templates, sewing blocks, mitring and binding, but soon we tackled other techniques and produced work. As this is a self-help group everyone contributes as they can.

A two-hour session passes very quickly as we sew blocks such as Ohio Star, Maple Leaf, Weathervane and Log Cabin. We discuss the critical use of colour. Foundation Piecing has led to the sewing of trees, houses, boats and Secret Garden (a variation of Cathedral Window) and needlecases. Our lovely work has been on display at

our U3A annual open day. To use patchworkers' parlance, we show and tell at our meetings, leading to discussion on members' current or completed projects, always a source of inspiration and encouragement.

### **Leighton-Linslade U3A**

The Needlecraft group began with six members in April 1992 when our local U3A was formed. Since then we have grown and formed a second Group.

In true U3A tradition we share our various skills and in most years, in addition to personal items, we have worked on a new Group Project. Usually one of the group has experience of the chosen topic; if not, we explore the methods together, using sources such as magazines and our local Library.

Together we have learnt the intricacy of blackwork; various patchwork techniques and plastic canvas box making. We honed our skills by making a quilt which we raffled for a local charity.

Currently both groups are cooperating to complete a hanging panel, our millennium project, depicting the many interest groups enjoyed by our U3A. Our design abilities were certainly put to the test when representing some groups but our more skilled members ensured that the final designs were not too complex.

*Diane Everest*

### **Baddow and Galleywood U3A**

Recently we joined forces with Witham & Braintree U3A and organised a Craft Dabble Day. The participants made new friends, met old friends, learned new skills, got messy and went home with a bag of goodies. There were eight crafts offered and each person had the opportunity to partake in four of them.

Plastic canvas work, fridge magnets, dolls house furniture, printing and embossing, painting flower pots, dough craft, napkin folding, and boxmaking. The course was from 10 am to 4 pm. What a bargain - all for just £5 - and a very enjoyable and absorbing day.

*Diana Angel*

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## **Resource Centre News**

Many thanks to all the readers of SOURCES who contacted me to request lists of opera videos and the material from the Institute of Physics which I mentioned in my last article. It is good to know that the material we are adding to stock is useful to so many U3A groups.

At the U3A Annual Conference a new promotional video was previewed. This has been made by the University of Sunderland on our behalf and is a very upbeat and fast moving production which would be ideal for a short presentation to potential or new members.

Many U3A groups agreed to be filmed while taking part in a variety of activities, and a number of individual members give their view of the movement. I have several copies in the Resource Centre available for three week loan. If you would like to view a copy or to use with potential members, please contact me. No copies of the video are available for purchase.

### **Arts and Crafts**

As this issue is focusing on Art and Craft groups it is a good opportunity to mention some of the new material

we have added to stock in this subject area. We have, as most people now know, a considerable collection of slides of paintings by a large number of artists of all periods. In the last few months we have also acquired many videos covering paintings by subject, individual painters, painting techniques such as frescos or portraiture and the conservation of art works. We have bought videos on Spanish and Italian art and painters from the Netherlands. Art and architecture often overlap and we have some slides and videos of the work of the Spanish architect Gaudi and also the Scottish designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Many of our members are exploring other aspects of the decorative arts and at their request I have bought videos about painting on china, Encaustic art (using melted wax), painting with a Chinese brush, calligraphy and etching. For those who prefer to draw we have videos on the use of pastel pencils and sets of slides of drawings by many well known artists and sculptors such as Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and Pablo Picasso.

We have in stock a video on the Design Age project in which many groups are involved, and also a multi-media pack on incorporating age related issues into design courses. In total we have about 400 items for loan that may be of use to art, architecture and crafts groups and plan to continue adding as much material as possible to this very popular subject area.

## Philosophy

Until recently we had nothing in the Resource Centre on philosophy, but in response to many requests from members we now have a set of twelve lectures on audiocassettes with accompanying notes which cover all the major philosophers from Plato to the present day. From BBC Education and Training we have also bought a set of fifteen videos, each 45 minutes long and featuring a contemporary philosopher who discusses the world's most influential thinkers and their ideas. The series begins with Plato and ends with Modern Logic and Wittgenstein. Finally, we have a single Open University course entitled Life and Death which has been used by one U3A group so far and is recommended by their course tutor.

Lists of all the material mentioned in this article are available from the Resource Centre. They indicate how many slides are in each set or, in the case of a video, the running time in minutes.

## Copyright

I am aware that many groups have problems under the copyright law when they want to make *multiple* copies of published material as this is illegal and libraries and copyshops will not allow it. In order to help members with this difficulty the National Office/Resource Centre has obtained a Copyright Licence which allows us to make copies of extracts from certain books, journals and periodicals up to a prescribed limit of 19 per item. The Copyright Office has given us permission to do this on behalf of U3A members. If you need help in this matter please contact me or Lin Jonas in the National Office and we will do the copying for you. This is not a free service and we will have to charge per photocopy but we do not expect it to be very expensive. Please note that all photocopies must be made from a published work and not from another photocopy. The licence does not cover printed music, including words, or newspaper articles.

The Resource Centre has completed its first year as a working unit. There are about 900 items of stock available for loan in many different subject areas and we have been contacted for loans or information by almost half the U3As in the UK and both U3As in Spain. This is a free service, funded by the National Lottery grant. It costs you nothing for the loan and only cost the return postage on the items you borrow. All subject lists you request will be sent promptly without charge and if you have any enquiries about the material on the lists I will be happy to discuss them with you.

Enquiries and loans are dealt with on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Loans can usually be dispatched on the same day as they are requested if you need them immediately. Items can also be booked for future use. We currently have bookings for material as far ahead as June 2000. If you would like to see an item first and then book it for use with a group at a later date, it can easily be arranged. Sometimes there will be a waiting list for very popular items, but we will always try to offer an alternative if you need it in a hurry.

*Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Manager*

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The Editorial Panel of SOURCES has welcomed the contributions from U3A groups, describing the way they have developed the study of the subjects focused in each issue. It is hoped that some have discovered new ideas and others have been encouraged to open up new fields to explore. Now let us hear about the lesser known groups studying subjects such as economics, law, politics, media, sociology or medicine.

