



Sources no 15

CONTENTS

[Archaeology](#)

[Isobars, Fossils, Rainfall and the Oceans](#)

[Geography & Geology](#)

[Languages & Computing](#)

[On-line Courses](#)

[Next Issue — The Arts](#)

[Resource Centre](#)

[Standing Committee](#)

[--- the first five years](#)

[Forthcoming Events](#)

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 15 of SOURCES — the first of the New Year 2002.

Thank you for your letters, all of them helpful. Thank you for your suggestions as to how we might improve SOURCES as a means of helping develop groups and activities: that is our objective.

Editor

ISOBARS, FOSSILS, RAINFALL AND THE OCEANS

AN APPRECIATION OF EARTH SCIENCES

If the last educational encounter you had with this earth of ours was at school, the heading above will awaken memories, most likely bringing to mind contour maps, product lists, sketchmaps and regional comparisons such as we met in our Geography lessons of those days.

But today, as a member of a U3A issue, your knowledge will surely which we live -- its origins, past,

Geography, Geology or Earth Sciences Group on which we focus this go wider and deeper with a much greater fascination for the planet on present and even future; what is beneath our feet and all around us.

There is a clear relationship between Geology — (Greek "geologia" = knowledge of the earth) and Geography (Greek -

"geographia" = earth description), both coming together to provide us with the knowledge we need to exist --- where to live, where to work; how to move around; what to grow where, how to find and identify minerals and to forecast and where possible, deal with natural hazards. Today, together, they seek to explain more clearly the nature of this earth of ours --- how it has developed physically; what use we are making of it and the effect we have had and are having on it. Cartography --- remember sketch maps? --- is still a principal feature of the methodology of data acquisition, though the advent and development of information technology has made it a much stronger and more valuable analytical tool along with more accurate and intensive dating and analysis of materials.

Our physical environment brings out a number of other 'ographies' and 'ologies' including geomorphology --the study of the landforms of the earth's surface, their history and the processes that mould them (human activity included), along with the effects of the weather and the major movements of earth; climatology --- going back well into history --- and including today the study of the cause and effects of global warming, and other factors which affect our weather; biogeography, the distribution of plants and animals; hydrology, the distribution, circulation and use of the water of the earth; pedology, study of soil properties and classification of soil types and oceanography, the oceans, their chemistry, biology and geology.

Human geography involves the study of people, where they choose to live and why; how they choose where to work and the form that work should take; the way they use the environment that surrounds them and the ways they move themselves and materials and goods around it.

Today it concerns particularly the changes that are taking place in population distribution, in town and city structures--- for example, the development of out of town shopping areas and their effects; the effect of coastal erosion, sea incursion and flood plains on housing location, and greater housing development in rural areas.

Locational geography, overlapping other elements of the science, examines and compares the features and characteristics of different regions of the earth, assessing the relationships between them, how the physical and human environments have developed, and under what influences; why particular regions are chosen for particular activities --- the availability of certain materials, proximity to markets for specific products, the availability of particular skills or of lower cost labour for products that meet mass demand and the effect of specific natural features, topographical or climatic.

How it started

Curiosity and self-concern must have initiated the first interest in things geographical (and no doubt geological) in pre-history. The first of a form of mapping reputedly dates back to neolithic times but China, Phoenicia, and Egypt were to begin the first real efforts at exploring, mapping and recording of visual impressions, which in ancient Greece later developed the foundations of modern geography. Greek investigations involved also the reasons for earthquakes, along with work on calculating the depth of the seas and the height of mountains, and on climate distribution.

Exploration

In the middle ages there was little activity in

Europe, though geographic knowledge expanded via the crusades and the travels of Marco Polo in the 12th and 13th centuries. The Vikings were active explorers. Islam contributed, more particularly in the field of climate. The 15th and 16th centuries, rightly known as the "age of the explorers", among them Henry the Navigator, Bartolomeo Dias, Ferdinand Magellan and Columbus - saw a spread of trade and Christianity and a considerable consequent growth in geographical knowledge. Magellan it was who began what was to be the first circumnavigation of the globe, so disproving the "flat earth" theory and creating the need for Mercator and his global mapping system.

More Recent Developments

Discovery continued via exploration and observation. Debate and argument developed as in any new field of knowledge. Prominent in the 18th century was Immanuel Kant. He argued that geography and history were the two fundamental sciences of human life; the former relating to space and the latter to time. In the 19th century national geographical societies developed (London — 1830) but it was not until the early 1900s that the first university geography departments were founded. Since then, research has intensified, the development of information technology and radiography, as stated earlier, having a considerable effect on cartography and on geological dating.

Geology

The field of science concerned with the origin of the earth, how it has developed and from what, and how it is reacting to the forces that affect it. It overlaps with other earth sciences and with Geography in the study of the total planet, but concentrates on the understanding of rocks and other materials that make up the outer part of the earth. Apart from its purely scientific emphasis, geology in the service of man helps in the search for necessary minerals and for stable and relatively hazard-free areas in which to build, live and work. Study of the behaviour of the earth helps also in the provision of early warning in the face of threats from cliff erosion to earthquakes and the rarer volcanic eruptions and tidal waves. As the world is old, so is geology. In ancient times exotic reasons were put forward for geological disasters -- enormous underground serpents and animals causing earthquakes: giants and the gods causing

eruptions or structural upheaval; and even the belief that subterranean winds which caused fires and eventually found a way out via earthquakes or volcanic eruptions.

Debate

In the renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci took a share of the development of geological knowledge as did the Danes in the 17th century and the Germans and other Europeans in the 18th and 19th centuries, paving the way for crystallography and the study of sedimentation and stratification.

At this time, debate was almost constant between the contrasting schools of thought — the Plutonists, who favoured the igneous approach; the Neptunists with their belief that a vast ocean preceded the laying down of sedimentary deposits and the Catastrophists who favoured a "big bang" approach via flood, earthquake and volcanic eruption.

Progress in geological thought see-sawed back and forth between Europe, Scotland and England

in the later 18th and early 19th centuries. Glacial theory, changes in the structure of the earth and its major features, and the causes of them, took on more importance. The Wegener Theory of continental drift, named after Alfred Wegener, a German meteorologist, paved the way for the later, more technically acceptable theory of Plate Tectonics (see below)

Many were the principal figures in the development of earth sciences at this time, among them two Scots - James Hutton, one of the founders of modern geological thought, and Sir Charles Lyell, whose *Principles of Geology* made him a leading figure in geological theory and whose work was drawn on by many who followed him on both sides of the Atlantic.

Another Briton, William Smith, was prominent at this time with his study and recording of significant factors relating to the content and effects of sedimentary stratification.

It was only in the 20th century that tools for measuring and observation became readily available to geologists enabling them to work with much greater precision and reliability.

When geologists talk of yesterday, they tend to mean "a few millions of years ago". This is reasonable when you consider that their likely start-point was with the Cambrian Period of some five or six hundred million years ago and that even the most recent "period" -- the Holocene period — is ten thousand years old and part of the Cainozoic Era, sometimes called "modern life" but itself going back 225 or so million years. The Geological Time Scale is itself worthy of study.

It was also at this time that the Plate Tectonics hypothesis brought a major step forward in the study of earth movement, the formation of landmasses and the causes of earthquakes, mountain formation and seabed changes. The theory holds at its simplest that the earth's outer crust (the lithosphere) is divided into rigid plates. Studies have shown that most earthquakes and volcanic eruptions tend to take place along the lines where they meet — e.g. the San Andreas fault up the west coast of America.

T.C.

Ten years of U3A geology

When I first formed a geology group for South London U3A, materials and activities were hard to come by but now there is much to help new groups with leaders who have the enthusiasm to look them out.

Since 1988 there has been a marked growth in the knowledge of earth science. There have been many more television programmes, which have become a valuable resource to group leaders and we have many video-tapes and other materials in the Resource Centre.

To get the most from geology we need to get out and about. That does not mean just scrambling about on a quarry floor, or at the foot of cliffs, which may not suit everyone. A developing interest in building stone has provided a new resource and there are many inexpensive booklets available locally for both ancient and modern buildings. Libraries, museums, tourist offices and bookshops

likely sources and a group could prepare a booklet for its own town. The British Geological Survey produces useful material on rocks, structures and building stones; the Geologists' Association covers the classic areas of British geology and the Geological Society covers the geological situation in areas threatened by flood, landslip or other hazards. Many groups enjoy field trips to such centres as the Yorkshire Dales Field Centre which is referred to elsewhere or visit the south coast, the Welsh borders or other areas where geological guides are easily obtained.

Many groups have enthusiastic and experienced leaders, but I am always happy to help with advice and ideas or, if time permits, to lead a day visit for you. To make U3A geology even more interesting, please share your ideas with me.

Isabel Markham

Geology Network Co-ordinator

Isabel will be tutoring two courses at Yorkshire Dales Field Centre, Giggleswick, North Yorks. On 19-23 Aug. and 4-8 Nov. The centre is a mecca for many geology enthusiasts, close to the volcanics of the Lake District and the Permian sandstones of the Eden Valley

[Return to Contents](#)

More for Resource Centre

Graham Goodeve, Secretary of the U3A, has donated a set of Open University units for the S236 Geology Course along

with a book donated by the OU Earth Science Department entitled 'The Geological History of the British Isles' plus a short set of notes. If any groups want to consider using these materials they can apply to the Resource Centre for the notes, to help them decide if the course would be suitable for their use.

Graham will answer any questions related to the use of this information, and reassures group leaders that the course books are written with the understanding that many of the students will have little prior knowledge of geology.

HELP IS AT HAND

If, like me, you are not well-acquainted with the terms necessarily used by geologists in these contributions and would like to learn more, help is at hand. Isabel Markham, the Geology Network Co-ordinator has kindly agreed to provide a short glossary, obtainable from National Office on 020 7837 8838 ..Editor

Geology and Landscape

Our groups in Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill in Mid-Sussex, focus on the relationship between geology and the physical and human environment. Since I set up the groups in 1996 the total membership has grown to 40. Members' presentations cover such varied subjects as the characters of specific minerals, rock types and fossils, Plate Tectonics, Geologic time and dating. These sessions include use of the internet, BBC Learning, ITV videos and OU course materials.

Day-long field activities include visits to local areas of the Sussex coast, the Vale of Sussex and part of the northern Weald. As a result of a more detailed survey we have helped to set up a permanent display in Cuckfield museum. These outings have led to two 4-day field excursions, the first to Weymouth, exploring Portland, Chesil Beach and Lulworth and the other to North Hill, Malvern.

This Spring will see 40 members at Shanklin on the Isle of Wight.

We are fortunate to be able to take advantage of study days organised for Sussex U3A by the Universities of Sussex and Brighton on topics such as geology of the South Downs, Sussex landscapes and the evolution of the English Channel.

Socially we do well too; Circle Dancing sessions are an essential element of our residential trips!

Mike Hodgson,

Founder and Leader

In the Yorkshire Dales

Two groups — from Oswestry and Macclesfield Rural -- have reported on visits to the Yorkshire Dales field centre at Giggleswick, run effectively and hospitably by Alex Barbour - the owner. Both featured walks in the limestone country around Chapel le Dale and Southscales. It was formed 330 million years ago by a slow deposition of shell debris and chemical precipitates on the floor of a shallow tropical sea. There were white cliffs, bare white rocks, deep gorges and caves.

Climbing to the "limestone pavement", Oswestry *"learned the difference between clints and grykes and micritic and sparitic limestone, followed by a trip underground in extensive White Scar Caves to see stalactites, stalagmites, waterfalls and 'avens'"*

Macclesfield record a visit to the village of Dent to see a huge granite monument to Adam Sedgwick, a local man known as a founder of British geology.

Both groups followed the glacial valley from Chapel le Dale via the 30-metre Pecca Falls, to Thornton Force and were ecstatic over the 'double unconformity' they saw, where limestone joins an underlying slate bed. Audrey Potts from the Macclesfield group writes, "We found the exact place where the two rocks touched. It was very thought-provoking to have your left hand on the slate and your right on the limestone, effectively spanning at least 150 million years"

A 'green slate' quarry was a feature of the visit —the slate formed from volcanic ash laid down 450 million years ago when, it is said, a vast ocean separated what is now England and Scotland and in central Lakeland there were numerous volcanoes erupting lava and ash. In that area "slate is everywhere. You walk on it, sit on it, eat off it and maybe wear it — as jewellery".

The Dales Field Centre is well-known nationally and few U3A geology groups are satisfied with just one trip.

Wendy Clews, Sheila Carr, Margaret

Jones, Margaret Picken (Oswestry)

Audrey Potts ('Macclesfield')

The Welsh Connection

U3A began in South Wales in 1984 and from the start Brecon made geology a regular study. We were fortunate in our leaders — people retired from mining and other local backgrounds. Under the enthusiastic leadership of the first, Professor Dick Owen, then recently retired from the acclaimed geology department at Swansea University, we ranged through South Wales and the Border Country as far as Long Mynd, approaching Snowdonia from our summer base at Coleg Harlech.

In 1996 we extended our membership and John Moyse and I — he as secretary and myself as convenor — formed the South Wales and Severnside Geology Network. When John became U3A Treasurer, Yvonne Thomas took over and is still there.

Graham Goodeve, U3A Secretary and a well-known geologist finds time to lead the group now and again and we are grateful to other geologists who give us of their time, making the subject a wonderful journey of exploration. (Graham gave a talk for the network at Swansea University in January on The Cascade Volcanoes of California)

A reminder :- *When you do travel into the remoter parts of Wales, be sure to carry in your flask your remedy against heat exhaustion or hypothermia: (the pub you had in mind might be closed!!)*

Rosemary Maling

A note also from the secretary of the network who tells us their membership covers the whole of South and West Wales to Chepstow, Monmouth and more recently Malvern and Cheltenham.

"We have never cancelled a field trip because of adverse weather, and have braved force 8 conditions when descriptions of a feature by a leader could not be heard because of the raging wind and rain. We have suffered horizontal rain in Pembrokeshire, got soaked in Carmarthenshire, but enjoyed the most beautiful weather on the Gower, at St. David's Head, the Brecon Beacons and in the Forest of Dean.

We are a hardy bunch with a sense of humour. We enjoy our geology, but do not forget health and safety. We carry a first aid kit and always give advice on clothing, hard hats and stout boots when necessary",

On the Borders

East Berwickshire U3A geology group meets fortnightly at Eyemouth, a small fishing town northwest of Berwick on Tweed and the border. We are fortunate in living in an area rich in geological features such as Hutton's famous 'unconformity' at Siccar Point; a dyke echelon related to the Whin Sill on Holy Island (Lindisfarne) and the lower carboniferous strata of the Northumberland Trough.

Nearer home, spectacular faulted and folded exposures of Silurian 'greywacke' lie to the east, and to the west cliffs capped by bright red rock—an outlier of of Devonian-Carboniferous Upper Old Red Sandstone overlying purplish Lower Devonian volcanic rocks.

This year we are studying the rocks of local cliffs where a recent find was some nodules of malachite in the Devonian rocks.

We are looking at producing a simple visitor-friendly booklet on geology in the area, and a display of specimen rocks for display in the local museum. As a foretaste we are putting on a display for our U3A in April --- a much more worrying proposition!

Jenny Dougal

East Berwickshire U3A

Malta, Gozo and Comino

Bexley U3A geology group were joined by members of the art, architecture and antiques group for a recent visit to Malta.

Why Malta? It is a sandwich of clay between two slices of limestone cut by major fault lines with a cave that produced dramatic fossil evidence of early animal life.

In one week the group:

gained hands on knowledge of limestone clay:

saw how faulting produced the dramatic lines across the island and separated off the smaller islands of Gozo and Comino:

studied the soft, cream-coloured globigerina limestone, packed with microscopic shells of prehistoric sea creatures and easily quarried and carved to provide outstanding prehistoric monuments and ornate buildings at and after the times of the Knights of Malta:

noted the geological differences between Malta and Gozo and:

learned how the varied hardness of different limestones allowed the sea to carve out the huge natural harbours of Valetta.

Dorothea Galewski

Earth and Planetary Science

Lymington Earth and Planetary Science Group like to get 'hands-on' like any other geology group, but so far our fortnightly meetings have been indoors, where I have rocks, fossils, books and other resources readily available. As a fairly new group we have been concentrating initially on tuition but are looking forward to practical outdoor work this year, with excursions and field meetings as our objective. Should the weather prove unkind, we have the option of tackling neglected boxes of rocks, fossils and minerals to complete the, at present, unfinished notes that accompany them. We also have a complex 'geological murder mystery which needs preparation, but looks interesting.

Starting a new Group

Study beforehand is essential these days. In geology, with its recent developments, we do not have the background knowledge we gained at school on enduring subjects such as history or literature. The mysteries of Plate Tectonics, sea-floor spreading and continental drift are more recent.

It would be as well to take a look also at aspects of astronomy, physics and chemistry if we want to understand the structure and development of rocks. It will help if you can plan a curriculum.

Also we all need to pay attention to personal safety and to be aware of the U3A insurance situation.

If you're looking for books, think of Dorling and Kindersley (often on the children's shelves). *Time and Space* by Mary and John Gribbin is a good one — it makes my brain hurt!

For a new group, a good start point could be monumental, ornamental and building stones. Don't forget the kerbstones!

This is a popular field today and information can be found in libraries, museums, tourist offices.

Paul Clasby

paul.clasby@tesco.net

Paul would be happy to correspond with new group leaders, but by e.mail only as above.

For a wealth of geological knowledge he advises you visit [www. soton. ac.uk/~imw/index.htm](http://www.soton.ac.uk/~imw/index.htm). There are maps, pictures, sections and information in profusion. "Beware ", he says, "You might never get out!"

Beside the Seaside

Since I founded Chichester U3A geology group in 1997, when I left Portsmouth University, we have enjoyed a busy time.

An introductory course covered most aspects from minerals, rocks and fossils via Plate Tectonics, to the geological history of Britain. Subsequent years saw follow-on courses in geological structures and maps and the geology of selected areas. An introductory course has started again this year.

Meetings are held at my home where we can benefit from a large collection of specimens, maps and slides, plus a video collection of more than 100 geology-related programmes and geological articles which members can borrow.

The group has examined building stones in Chichester and Bosham and visited the Geological Museum in London. There have been field excursions to the Isle of Wight and the Dorset coast and overseas trips to Tunisia, Tenerife, North Cyprus and Madeira. The choice for this year is the French Alps.

On a volcanic Island

A light walking programme in the sunshine of Tenerife turned into a busy geological field trip when *Mike Bakall*, *Travel Network Liaison Officer* had to call in back-up in the form of Peter Rezin, a keen walker and geologist.

The structure and growth of volcanoes was studied in detail, with visits first to the seven million year old Tena Promontory followed by a visit the next day to Mt. Teide and the 'caldera', a vast sunken basin that collapsed when the main eruptions of 1.3 million years ago took place.

The caldera is 14km. in diameter and some 6000ft above sea level, exhibiting all the characteristics of a dormant volcano, with a number of subsidiary cones representing later eruptions, 'cider cones' caused by hot gas discharges and an escarpment where part of the crater had slid into the sea, causing what must have been massive tidal disturbances.

The walkers saw the 'old' crater of the 1796 eruption and further walks took them to the Anagua Peninsula, a basalt rock formation to the north of the island and the 'cordillera' the long ridge down the backbone of the island, caused by lava welling up through a long surface fracture. "So my 'winter-warmer' of light strolls in gentle sunshine had been changed somewhat", said Mike, "but it is what Travel Network should be about, offering an educational back-up to the theoretical "in-class" work of U3A groups".

More tours

Other forthcoming tours with a geological flavour are Iceland (March), the Dolomites (September) and Tenerife (January 2003) *More information from Mike Bakall, 164 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6PQ 01483 424 94S. For annual tour programme please send a s.a.e.*

Geology and the "eco-bods"

Congleton Earth Science Group came into being after a short ecology course called "eco-bods" and is now two years old with 20 lively earth scientists following a programme on the theme "the present is the key to the past".

Members' holiday photographs have proved a valuable resource, enabling discussions on igneous rocks and volcanoes in Iceland, New Zealand and the Canaries, along with the effects of wind, water and ice in the formation of the dramatic scenery of canyon country in the USA. Affected like many by the foot and mouth disease restrictions, the group's programme was reduced, but a cold and frosty winter morning (and local residents) saw them, lens in hand, examining oolitic limestone and fossil fragments in the building stones around the cash machine at the local bank. Nobody called the police!

The group has had considerable help from the local museum who have made their collection of materials available, enabling them to examine closely excellent examples of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, fossils and minerals. More field trips this year will bring us the added bonus of fresh air and exercise.

Elizabeth Hallam

Group Leader

One, two and now three

Setting up one Geography Group in Milton Keynes in 1997, with obvious enthusiasm but no subject qualification, *Janet George* can now count three in the area.

Her initiative followed an interest in tabletop rallying and its map-reading requirement. Firstly she put together a library of television geography programmes and began two-hour sessions consisting of watching a video followed by a discussion. Brazil was the first major study, followed by earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes and cyclones.

Enthusiasm was such that the group (plus others) met fortnightly during the winter and Janet formed a second group, meeting in the afternoon of the same day with the same programme. She led both.

To avoid occasional clashes with meetings of the Local History Group, whose members were also interested in Geography, a third group was formed (but meeting on a different day!). All the groups are full!

The groups use school materials purchased from the BBC as well as the available television programmes, and members who have been abroad give presentations, Janet's enthusiasm for Geography, what she calls "a multidisciplinary study of our world and its people", is infectious. The breadth and interest of the subject's disciplines would, she says, be obvious to anyone who could attend the geography section lectures of the Annual Festival of Science at Leicester University during the first week of September.

Themes rather than places

Our geography group at Arden (Solihull) U3A welcomes the wide range of subjects involved in the study of geography, making it ideal as a U3A study group.

Formed four years ago, our group quickly grew to 25 members. Contact with the local sixth form college helped us set a pattern to our studies—largely based on themes such as rivers, people and weather, drawing experience from different countries, rather than concentrating on an individual country as our age group might have done in school.

An early theme concerned the way people live in cities and how cities and other areas are changing to meet the competing demands for space and resources from residents, workers and visitors. Examples were taken from Cairo, Rio, New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Paris, Rome and London — and locally, the Black Country. Other themes have included competition for use of water from rivers; the rise and fall of Far East economies; structure of the Earth, introducing us to cutting-edge geology and world climate

changes bringing in global warming, El Nino and oceanography.

The group leader used to introduce much of the study material, but we have become more participative, particularly when handling a major project such as factors influencing the geography of Great Britain today. This year members will make presentations on European countries of their choice.

"U3A has enabled me to indulge my interest in geography after a gap of some 50 years. The fact that 25 other members of our U3A have a similar interest is a real bonus".

Jan Dugdale

Group Leader

From the armchair

Stockton-on-Tees and Horsham U3As study their geography comfortably — from home. Members research a particular aspect of a chosen country for presentation. Subjects at Stockton have included geographical position, topography, climate, history, religion, politics, architecture, art, music, and entertainment, flora and fauna, food and drink and notable personalities, so building up a composite picture of the country. For them, 'on-site' visits to check the results could be the next step. Horsham 'Globetrotters' have got around — "visiting Africa and South America, sailing the oceans and navigating some of the world's great rivers. They've included the Lake District, the world's weather and the journeys of the great explorers.

Peggy Coates (Stockton)

Joan Manvell (Horsham)

Requests for inclusion in the database for free mailing of future copies of SOURCES should be sent to

U3A National Office at 26 Harrison Street, LONDON WC1H 8JG,

giving full name and address, and identifying the U3A of which the applicant is a member.

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation — you are ahead of 500 million people in the world. *If you can attend a church meeting without fear, harassment, arrest, torture or death*

- you are more blessed than three million people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep

- you are richer than 75% of the world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet and spare cash in a dish somewhere

- you are in the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

Collected from the Eden Project, Cornwall

The Story of Progress

"Archaeology", as Network Co-ordinator Lillian Morrow puts it, "is the bridge to our ancestors, the story of man's progress and achievements, without which no other subject would exist"

Existing U3A archaeological groups, some 20 in number and still increasing, cover such areas as cathedrals and chapels, industrial archaeology and Iron age and Roman sites; some go back to the prehistoric period, hunter-gatherers, the Stone age and origins of farming.

Popular Anglo-Saxons

A tie-in with history enables concentration on the Anglo-Saxons, a period popular with a number of groups.

Other areas of interest include forts, defences, ancient weaponry and studies of the ancient world — Egypt, the Levant, Asia Minor, Greece Carthage and Rome, along with lectures and visits to established sites and to museums with an archaeological bias.

Lillian is compiling a data base of U3A groups. Anyone not yet registered with the network or who is interested in starting a group is asked to contact Lillian on 01473 273265 or on e-mail Lrmorro@AOL.com

[Return to Contents](#)

Peter Laslett and Lord Young

Many have been the appreciative comments of the work and influence of Peter Laslett since his recent death, not only from within U3A whose members owe him a lot, but from other areas of learning with which he was connected throughout his life.

Only the other night on the Learning Zone, reference was made to one of his many books on the English family — "The World We Have Lost". Others were listed in his obituary in The Daily Telegraph.

Apart from his concern with family history, with the works of 17th century philosopher John Locke and his interest in earlier government, Peter long had an involvement with education generally.

He was strongly influential in the development of an "open" university — an idea he presented to government, and in seeking the improvement of the educational use of BBC programming. But it is of course, for his creation of the concept of the Third Age and along with the then Michael Young, Eric Midwinter and Diane Norton the launching, developing and maintaining of interest in U3A, a follow-up to their enthusiasm for "self-help learning", that we who read this owe him most.

(As we go to press, we hear of another sad and related occurrence -- the death on Monday 14th January of Lord Young of Dartington --- formerly Michael Young, a companion and close collaborator)

U3A On-Line Courses

-- a step forward

The first On-line Courses Day, chaired by Phyllis Babb, introduced courses currently available, described the work involved in their development and sought volunteers to set up new courses for the future, on the editorial or technical side of the project.

Jean Thompson described how she was inspired to begin work on On-line course development on meeting the President of Canberra U3A, Australia where the idea was first developed to help people in the remote areas of the outback She saw possibilities for use of the scheme to bring courses to the disabled or housebound, to those without access to a particular subject in their own U3A, or for group leaders to download and use in their groups

Members involved in the preparation of the available courses explained the methodology and described what could be achieved.

The Art Course run during last year had been very successful but had proved a great deal of work for the tutor. It was hoped that successful students from that first run would help tutor students during the second. The day concluded with a session on the editing and computer design of the courses.

Interest in the project was keen, and it is hoped that that interest will develop, and be reflected in the number of members coming forward for future course writing, development and design.

If you you're interested, contact Phyllis Babb, Jean Thompson or Paul Baron via National Office at Harrison Street.

On-line Courses available

With an inter-active forum and a U3A tutor: Cost £5 per course of nine weekly units via your computer.

Italian Art — 1400 — 1600: a practical **appreciation**. Started January 2002 for

individuals only; group version later;

information from Audrey Loraine (course now full)

Design in Your Life: (linked to Design Age) Started January 2002; individuals or groups; apply Jean Thompson at

jean.Thompson@pop3.hiway.co.uk

Creative Writing - Fiction: starting early 2002. Individuals or groups. Apply Jean Thompson as above.

From the Australian U3A

Writing Autobiographies and Journals

Tutored. Starting February 2002; a few places

available.

For individual use only — no tutor.

Astronomy, Continents on the Move;

Genealogy; Botany for Knowledge and

Enjoyment; The Romans; Antarctica - the

Frozen Continent; Ageing and Retirement.

More information from Jean Thompson as above

[Return to Contents](#)

A challenge for Sevenoaks

Members of Sevenoaks, Kent, French Conversation group responded last year to the Languages Challenge of the European Year of Languages working through the summer break, and at the end of the year received a certificate for their efforts.

The challenges consisted of: reciting from memory fables by La Fontaine, a poem by St. Beuve, and a monologue from Racine's 'Andromaque'. They told jokes in French and sang French nursery songs ; wrote limericks in French and recited French blessings and graces; translated an English poem into French and, using a French recipe, baked a French pastry for the group to enjoy.

June Farrel

Standing Committee meets

Future expenditure principles were prominent on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Education at its last meeting following the cessation of the national lottery grant.

Guidance notes were formulated for issue to all Network Co-ordinators. A Network Co-ordinators' Day is to be held on 22 May.

The Group Leader Support team has been reformed and will now include Chris Dickson, Stan Miller, Keith Richards, Sophie Deakin-Smith and Shirley Thew, under the joint chairmanship of Elaine Williams and Glenys Tuersley.

The meeting received a report from Phyllis Babb and Audrey Loraine (author of the on-line learning programme — Italian Painting 1400 —1600 and attending the meeting for the item) about on-line learning progress. Matters raised included target audience priorities, recruitment of authors, peer review of programmes, priority subjects, and help for new authors and copyright. The discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Other items discussed included growth in use of the Resource Centre, the Cheltenham Summer Schools, the 2002 conference with the theme of 'Communications', the Physical Activities Network and a proposals for a residential Science/ Environmental issues conference.

Len Street

Computing in Carlisle

Readers may well remember a report in U3A News (winter 1999) of the lottery grant of £132,775 awarded to Carlisle U3A. Well, they've got another — nowhere near so big, and intended to secure the operation for a further three years.

Their programmes consist of initial three-day introductory sessions followed mainly by 6-week modules. Courses are graded (first stage, second stage etc.) and efforts to minimise problems arising from widely differing skill levels are proving successful.

IT Co-ordinator John Eden (in his last year in that role) says that interest has continued with total U3A membership now at

490, 120 or so

up on last year in 40 groups. There is a larger turnover at Carlisle than at most U3As, some people joining just for IT and then dropping out, but others stay.

John Eden

jobareden@netscapeonline.co.uk

The first five years

A report by Len Street, immediate past chairman of U3A, on the first five years of the Standing Committee on Education, will appear in the current issue of U3A News. Dealt with more fully there, the following is still worth recording in SOURCES:

"The Standing Committee has more than adequately demonstrated its importance as a support for peer group learning, the feature that makes U3A's unique educational organisation and it is now firmly established with its very existence embodied in the Trust's Constitution. As to the future, with the enthusiasm exhibited by its members, it will continue to go from strength to strength with greater use being made of the Internet to link subject groups, with further support for study groups coming through local/regional networks, access to the Resource Centre catalogue via the Internet and with a range of On-line Learning packages to help both group leaders and individual learners"

THE NEXT ISSUE

The debate that followed the award of the Turner Prize 2001 should provide plenty of material for the focus on The Arts in the May issue of SOURCES.

The comments and quotes from Audrey Loraine, Art Network Co-ordinator, and Brenda Perkins, which follow, should provide an effective starter" to discussion in these pages.

It will however be all aspects of THE ARTS, not just art, fine or otherwise, modern or otherwise, that we will consider.

What, for you personally, comes within this description — The Arts? The Oxford Dictionary might be a good place to seek a definition that helps us to focus our own view.

How do the Arts inter-relate? Is there a common base - a common factor to them all? What makes art art?

Many people are dismissive of modern art, of modern music, of performance arts, even of Grandma Moses!. Should this be so? The answer will no doubt be subjective, but let us not just be dismissive of something because we personally don't like it; others probably do. The views of U3A's Art Appreciation, Painting, Music, Music Appreciation and other groups should make interesting reading.

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SOURCES - August 2002

The focus subjects will be **Mathematics,**

Meteorology and Astronomy. Copy to the Editor via National Office by 28th June at the latest please.

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As always, your views on anything related to **SOURCES** -- the publication, study group subjects, study groups and how they operate, will at any time be very welcome - from group leaders, groups or members.

The lights and the bluetack

From Audrey Loraine:

Arts Network Co-ordinator

The award of the Turner Prize last year to Martin Creed for his choice of a representative work called "Work 227: The lights going on and off", has excited much comment, mostly uncomplimentary.

I wish I had seen more of his work in an exhibition that had visited Southampton, Leeds, Liverpool and London in 2000 as Sir Nicholas Serota, Director of the Tate Gallery wrote that the prize was awarded for a body of work shown during the year.

As Serota says, "The question is not, 'Is it art?' but 'What kind of art is it, what might it mean and, is it worthy of our attention?'" To Creed his work is about the qualities of 'nothing'. To the judges, the prize-winning work has the qualities of 'strength, vigour, wit and sensitivity to the site'.

Put more plainly, Creed has said that we live in a world full of objects. He wants to make art that does not add to the clutter.

OOoOoOO

From Brenda Perkins (Tewkesbury U3A, responding to a request for comment on Creed's award) "I am glad you asked as this has made me think more seriously about it, rather than dismiss it with a cynical chuckle and forget all about it.

"A bare room with the lights going on and off, might do little for my senses apart from the cynical response, but now the question has been posed, reason comes into play.

According to Alain de Botton (in "*The relevance of Art*", by D. Strachan available from National Office) quoting Schiller, art is 'to satisfy the sensuous side of human nature, the spontaneous emotion such as children show and secondly a reasoned, rational, ordered and logical outlook on the world'.

I doubt whether I shall see this exhibit but at least you have given me a chance to reflect on it".

[Return to Contents](#)

National Conference — Exeter

(30th August — 4th September)

This year's conference is on the theme — "**Do you read me?**" — communication, oral, aural and visual. Presentations will stimulate group discussion on three fronts - firstly on communication within the organisation at local, regional and national level, secondly on ideas for bridging the gap between members with access to electronic equipment and those without and thirdly, overcoming the difficulties of disseminating information at local level.

Please consider these points in your U3As between now and the conference and bring your ideas and experience to the Discussion Groups.

This year's lecturer is Colin Blakemore, Waynflete Professor of Physiology and Director of the Oxford Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience. His subject will be — "Seeing, Touching, Hearing and the Brain". The preliminary social weekend will include visits and excursions around the Devon countryside, selected by the local U3As.

The annual meeting will take place on Tuesday 3rd September.

More information and booking arrangements are in the Spring issue of U3A News.

Brain Awareness Week

Professor Blakemore, speaker at the National Conference (see above) is Chief Executive of the

European Dana Alliance for the Brain and hopes that U3As will participate in **Brain Awareness Week**

(11th to 17th March), held to generate interest in neuroscience.

NEC Chairman Kate Wedd would be happy to hear from anyone interested in taking part. More information can be obtained from Business Secretaries.

[Return to Contents](#)

RESOURCE CENTRE NEWS

For the first time in SOURCES we are including a list of all the Open University Courses available on loan from the Resource Centre in the National Office in London.

Until September last year OU courses were circulated around U3A groups by the Swap Shop system. They were not held in one central location, but passed around from group to group in an effective but fairly informal manner.

Groups holding courses had to retain them until they were requested by another U3A, when they would be forwarded

directly by post.

Swap Shop has now ceased to exist and Open University courses can be borrowed from the Resource Centre where there is a good-sized collection.

A full list of all the titles we have in stock and an explanation of the coded numbers appear below. Courses are for the use of groups, not individual members, and applications to borrow must be made by group leaders. Application should be made by letter giving the full course title and number. Group leaders should include their full address, telephone number and the name of their U3A as well as of the course they organise.

On receipt of the letter we will contact them by telephone to discuss the contents of the course in detail to make sure it meets the needs of their group. It will then be sent by post for an agreed period of loan; either three months, six months or a year. The group will be required to pay outward and return postage on the material (usually between £6 - £12).

Please note that most of the courses are not complete; there may be one or more units missing from the set. These materials have been donated to us by the Open University, but they do not include video or audio tapes — only printed course units.

Courses are at undergraduate level — either first, second, or third year studies - and group leaders should consider very carefully (with their group members) whether they can tackle study at this level. OU courses will seldom be useful to beginner groups in a subject.

All course requests should be addressed to: Elizabeth Gibson, Resource Centre Third Age Trust 26 Harrison Street, London

WC1H 8JW tel. 020 7837 8838

CODES FOR O.U. COURSES

A = Arts Subjects P = Environmental Studies
 D = Social Sciences S = Science
 B = Education T = Technology
 K = Health and Welfare U = Women's Studies
 M = Mathematics and Computing

100 numbers = 1st year studies, e.g. A100 represents 1st year university Art

200 numbers = 2nd year studies

300 numbers = 3rd year studies, S237 represents 2nd year university Science

COURSE NO.	COURSE TITLE	COURSE NO	COURSE TITLE	COURSE NO	COURSE TITLE
A100	Humanities & Civilisation	D207	Introduction to Sociology	S103	Discovering Science

A101	Introduction to Humanities	D208	Decision Making in Britain	S203	Biology: Form & Function
A102	Arts Foundation	D211	Social Problems & Social Welfare	S236	Geology
A202	The Age of Revolutions	D212	Social Sciences	S237	The Earth: Structure, Composition &
A203	17th Century England	D214	U.S. in the 20th Century	S238	Earth's Physical Resources
A205	Culture & Belief in Europe 1450-1600	D301	Historical Sources & Social Sciences	S242	Physical Chemistry
A220	Princes & Peoples: Britain 1620-1714	D308	Democratic Government & Politics	S246	Organic Chemistry
A281	Technology & Change 1750-1914	D314	Restructuring Britain	S247	Inorganic Chemistry
A282	Science & Everyday Life 1870-1950	DA301	Studying Family & Community History 19th & 20th Century	S271	Science: Discovering Physics
A293	The Augustan Age	E262	Education: Language & Learning	S339	Understanding the Continents
A301	War & Society	E271	Education: Curriculum & Learning	S364	Evolution
A309	Conflict in Modern Europe 1789-1970	E325	Managing Schools	SD206	Biology: Brain & Behaviour
A310	Life & Death	E333	Education: Policy Making	T101	Plain English: Foundation
A312	19th Century Novel	E362	Cognitive Development	T102	Technology: Foundation
A3 16	Modern Art	ED356	Race, Education & Society	T236	Thermofluid Mechanics & Energy
A3 17	British & U.S. History	EH266	Learning through Life	T247	Technology: Systems
A3 18	War & Social Change: Europe 1900-1955	K263	Managing Roles & Relationships (Health)	T264	Design: Practice & Principle
A341	Beethoven	M101	Mathematics Foundation	T293	Communication Technology
A353	Art in 15th Century Italy	M205	Computing Fundamentals	T301	Technology: Complexity, Management & Change
A361	Shakespeare Plays	M351	Numerical Computation	T322	Digital Telecommunications

A362	Romantic Poetry	M353	Programming Languages	THD282	Information Technology & Society
AM289	History of Mathematics	M355	Software Engineering	TM282	Modelling with Mathematics
A5283	Science in Europe 1500-1800	ME234	Using Mathematical Thinking	U205	Health & Disease
D101	Making Sense of Society	MS284	Introduction to Calculus	U207	Women's Studies
D102	Social Sciences Foundation	M5T204	Mathematical Models	U208	Third World Development
D103	Society & Social Science	MST282	Mechanics & Calculus	U221	Changing Experience of Women
D201	Urban	P101	Practical Conservation		
	Development				
D204	Human	S102	Science Foundation		
	Geography				

Forthcoming Events

National Conference and AGM 2002. Exeter University (30th Aug. — 4th Sept)

(see page 13 and U3A News)

Fourth Annual Summer School

Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education — 24th July to 27th July (Architecture, Classics, Earth and Space Science, Literature, Philosophy, Portraiture, Watercolour painting and Website Design) and 31st July to 3rd August (Art History, Bird Watching, Botany, Embroidery, History, Mixed Media, 19th Century Poetry, Hands on Science and Writing) Further details from Business Secretaries.

Art Appreciation Study Day

"**The painter's eye on portraiture**", Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

Wednesday April 17th". Total cost approx £20. Short tours available from 10am. First lecture 11.30 am.

Apply U3A secretaries or National Office.

Science at the Royal Institution — Monday 22nd April

Lectures by Prof. Richard Callow, Director David Faraday Laboratory; Prof. Chris Budd, Professor of Applied Maths, University of Bath; Dr. Jordan Raff, Senior Research Fellow, Wellcome Cancer Research Institute, Cambridge. Cost £11. Cheques to National Office, payable to Third Age Trust (sae)

Two-day Learning Event (Northumbria U3A)

"Religions and Romans in the North of England" (9th evening, 10th & 11th July — cost and

information from e.mail newcastleu3a@hotmail.com or phone 0191 2304430

U3A Plymouth University Conference

"What makes the West Country?" 5th & 6th April. £13 per person per day: climate, regional identity, farming, tourism and the environment. Application forms from business secretaries.

Geology Group Leaders' Meeting.....final notice

National Office, Harrison Street, LONDON; 27th February; 11am to 1pm with optional visit to Natural

History Museum Earth Laboratory. Contact National Office 020 7837 8838, if attending.

Potential new geology group leaders welcome!

Yorkshire Dales Field Centre

Two Geology Courses; August 19th - 23rd and November 4th to 8th. Contact Alexandra Barbour

on 01729 82418 or e.mail Yi67@dial.pipex.com (see note on page 4)

Guinness Cork Jazz Festival

If you're interested in a trip to the 25th Festival. 25-28 October, note it in your diary. More details later from Bob Jones, Network Co-ordinator.

Languages Study Day

At Godalming College on 4th April 2002. Booking forms available from Network Co-ordinator Gloria Blackburne, 20 Abbey Mill, Church Street, Bradford on Avon BA15 1HB (please include S.a.e.).

Guest speakers, Rosemary Bradley, General Manager, BBC Languages; David James, Professor of Adult Education, University of Surrey.

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[Return to Contents](#)

