



SOURCES

An Educational Bulletin

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MUSEUMS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Museums are often considered to be storehouses of treasure in which staff research, preserve and display objects. But the vision of the museum as a centre of learning for all is also an important part of our collective history. In his will in 1753 Sir Hans Sloane described his hope that the British Museum would be "to the manifestation of the glory of God, the confutation of atheism and its consequences, the use and improvement of physic, and other arts and sciences, and the benefit of mankind". To which the Trustees added that it should be open to "all studious and curious persons".

The emphasis on public access and learning in museums, however, has had an uneven history. Despite the fact that over 70% of museum visitors are adults, museum education is still largely associated with schools. And where adult education does take place it follows a model of learning which elevates the role of the expert as dispenser of knowledge and rarely strays beyond the offer of formal courses, lectures and study days.

The new museum lifelong learning agenda, encouraged by government initiatives which emphasise social inclusion and life skills, is about more ambitious aspirations. It starts from the premise that museums, large or small, national or local, offer common opportunities for wider learning. It is precisely because museums are public, civic spaces and cultural centres wherein learning and leisure are combined, that they can encourage adults who find formal education intimidating to take a first step towards self directed learning. Moreover, the special circumstances of engaging with real objects, which offer so many pathways into the past, can inspire creativity, curiosity and further study.

It is this philosophy which underpins the broad adult learning programme at The British Museum. We offer drawing in the galleries and creative writing as well as Archaeology and the Bible and ancient Egyptian Art and drop-in computer sessions in the famous Round Reading Room as well as pre-holiday sessions for those travelling to

the great cultural destinations of the world. Some courses e.g. African Art and Religion or Icons of Britishness are developed in partnership with other adult education organisations such as the Workers Education Association and Birkbeck College.

We welcome visits from U3A groups and can offer advice on making connections between your area of study and the diverse collections of The British Museum. We are also planning a joint U3A/British Museum research group to be launched in the Autumn of 2002 which will explore, through a group project, how older adults can extend their skills by learning through objects. If you are interested in receiving more details of this project contact Keith Richards, Chairman of the SCE, through the U3A National Office.

To find out more about the museum's adult education programme, its collections and the database of online objects visit its website www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

For links to most other museums in the UK and beyond visit the 24-hour museum at www.24hourmuseum.org.uk

Margaret O'Brien

Head of Lifelong Learning

The British Museum



YEAR ONE FOR AN ARTS GROUP

Broxbourne U3A was formed in February 2000 and, whilst on the Steering Committee 1 had managed to organise a early one-off visit to the Gilbert Collection in May, there was no group

established that covered the wealth of local and London cultural events, and more importantly, there was no forum for discussion about any that were seen. After I had spoken with some other members at the end of the year it was decided to form a general 'Arts' Group. The title chosen, 'The Arts', is not limiting; the dictionary definition of "art" has breadth and can include a wealth of events, being nicely inclusive rather than exclusive. We are all still learning, as the Christmas Quiz based on our visits proved, but there is a pleasantly social element to the group. At first, a monthly Museum/Gallery visit and a separate discussion meeting was planned, but by February the possibility of including theatre visits was being discussed.

Written sources are continually surveyed to discover which best provide the information generally needed by the group to plan each month's events, e.g. the BBC History magazine provides some excellent sources of information about radio, television and countrywide museums and galleries. The net is widely cast for written, oral and Internet information about all types of events and performances from the stage to the screen, e.g. a lecture on the NADFAS programme on African art had relevance to the 'Ingres to Matisse' exhibition. The production of a monthly sheet of a selection of the main Museum and Gallery exhibitions, looked at in conjunction with newspaper articles, enables the group to decide at the monthly discussion meeting where our next visit will be. Reviews in the press brought in by members, also provide drama reviews that can provoke a lively debate at this meeting. We include in our discussions every 'Arts' function that any member of the group has visited that month whether with the group or not. Members have recorded television programmes, which have relevance to what we are planning to see, for use by those who may have missed the programme.

With the help of priority booking facilities we have managed to see a range of performances but it emerged that programme planning too far ahead can be counterproductive, particularly in the summer months, when there may be a special event that a member feels should be included. The official summer social group event, on a warm sunny evening late in June, to a local National Trust 'open-air-theatre-with-supper' production was a great success. August was at first left free but when a review about a new exhibition of Henry Moore's wartime drawings was mentioned, a visit to Perry Green Museum and its gardens was quickly arranged. As the U3A is an educational organisation all entry fees were waived and we rounded off the occasion with a lunch before and afternoon tea to complete the visit. The Vermeer exhibition together with a visit to the Globe to see Cymbeline similarly made another August day memorable.

The Group is learning and evolving; gaining confidence from its Gallery visits and has started planning its arrival time to take advantage of the many free Gallery talks. Part of the group's strength lies in the fact that we do not necessarily all have to visit a gallery on the same day; members that are on holiday visiting at other times as they can, e.g. Tate Britain repeats its 'Painting of the Month' talk on eight occasions each month, and a printout from its website allowed the group to see which work they would be hearing about, ahead of their visit. We will often arrange to see more than one exhibition at a particular venue, which fits more events into our calendar and can save time and entrance fees.

A visit to the British Museum to see 'The Jewelled Arts of the Moghuls' and later to the Agatha Christie exhibition where discoveries from Ur were displayed (and where some members also bought copies of her novels to read) recently linked with a newspaper cutting of an article about the discovery of new sunken city off the East coast of India, which will appear as part of a Channel Four programme in February, has now revealed an interest in archaeological sites and artefacts. We have yet to go to a concert or to a ballet but this is actively under discussion. For any group to prosper it must continually evolve and change to meet the needs of its members; I shall be delighted to share and exchange ideas with any other similarly broad-based 'Arts' group.

Lesley Walne: lesley@rwalne.freeserve.co.uk

In the next issue

The next issue of SOURCES will be mailed to those on the database in November and will have Astronomy, Meteorology and Mathematics as its focus. Contributions from U3A groups on how they pursue these subjects should be submitted to SOURCES at the National Office not later than 31st August 2002.

Despite the fact that SOURCES is always declared as having an overarching theme for any given issue, prospective contributors should not feel discouraged from sending in their offerings. The Editorial Board will always welcome articles of interest that will serve to vary the diet on offer and make each issue a little more wide-ranging than the thematic approach might imply.

U3A members may receive SOURCES at home, free of charge, by sending their full name and address (in capitals) with postcode, plus the name of their U3A, to the National Office.

For technical reasons, the Editor will be more than grateful for contributions that take the form (in order of preference) of (a) a file on a floppy disk (b) an email (mikandel@tesco.net) or (c) clean typescript suitable for scanning – but please do not feel bashful about submitting other forms of contribution. It may not always prove possible to send out an acknowledgment, though every effort will be made to do so. Contributions are considered for inclusion by an Editorial Panel (including the Editor!).



U3A STUDY TOURS WITH ART & ARCHITECTURE AS THE SUBJECT

The U3A Travel Network runs tours with a study content which includes art and architecture. Some are specifically aimed at the art lover with art as the major objective. Some of the study tours planned in the next 12 months include Paris, Cyprus, Spain (Bilbao) and Italy (Veneto).

These and other tours are available to all U3A members. Further information can be obtained from the Network Co-ordinator, Dennis Johnson, or Tom Warren whose e-mail address is shown on the Travel page of the U3A web site.

Readers may be interested in the account that follows of a visit with the Travel Network that had a strong Art & Architecture component.

Ancient Treasures of Jordan

U3A Tour of Jordan in the spring of 2001 gave 30 members an opportunity to study the Greek and Byzantine history of the Eastern Mediterranean area. We were led by Ron Gate, the Travel Network tour organiser with local guides to explain details as we went along.

We flew into Amman, the white city and capital of Jordan. It was interesting to see signs in Arabic and English throughout the country. We were given a very comprehensive tour of Jordan ably guided by Philip, who spoke excellent English, as did most of the Jordanians we met. Our driver, Hussein, was most efficient, giving us a comfortable ride all the time.

The country has the most spectacular scenery, formed by earthquake activity many millennia ago. The landscape ranged from extremely fertile areas in the north and west to desert in the south and east.

Our tour took us to a number of castles, and to Greek, Roman and Byzantine towns, most of which are mentioned in the Bible. We needed to be fairly fit to cope with these sites, although we did have one intrepid lady with two walking sticks who coped extremely well. We got plenty of exercise with all the steps!

Jordan has five internationally recognised holy sites, marked by modern churches built over intricate Byzantine mosaic floors. The skills employed in making these floors was impressive, they must have been gorgeous in their original splendour. The Jordanian government and the Franciscan monks who care for the churches are keen to preserve these and open up more sites for tourism.



We enjoyed our visit to the Red Sea. Most went in for a dip; you do not need to swim; because of the salt content of the sea you just float! We also enjoyed our stay in Aqba, Jordan's only port, on the Red Sea. During the long drive through the desert to reach the Red Sea we saw magnificent scenery all the way. Aqba is a very modern town, with widely spaced gleaming new buildings. Here we went out in glass-bottomed boats to see the coral reefs. Afterwards some went swimming while the rest visited the citadel, which features in the adventure of Lawrence of Arabia.

One of the highlights of the trip was bouncing about through the desert in ancient jeeps, to ride on camels and drink tea with the Bedouin family we visited. The desert is awe-inspiring.

The final visit was to Petra, which is full of temples and tombs carved into the cliff faces. We could have spent a lot more time there it was so interesting.

And our memories? Bargaining for good value products, pictures of Kings Abdullah and Hussein everywhere, flash floods in the desert (yes, we brought rain with us) people in traditional and modern dress, clear colours, empty country roads, the kindness of the people and the unspoilt countryside.

Geraldine Taylor

VISITING MODERN ARCHITECTURE

This is a wonderful time for good modern architecture in England. After the war many of the wrong architects seemed to get commissioned and our best ones often did their work abroad. Much of our effort went into cut-price housing which became politicised rather than designed. The Prince of Wales muddied the water – with weird results – but a more enlightened breed of client has now emerged and we are seeing the results now. We have never had it so good!

The result in London is such that I have been able to take Merton Architecture Group to see something good and new once a month for three years. Architecture is an art form that needs to be experienced first-hand but is so often judged via the art of photography – which can be very deceptive. There is no substitute for the real experience. For me it's more spine-tingling

than music.

You need to walk around and to go inside. The outside is usually no problem whereas getting in often is. Annual Open Days mean heavy demand (you have to telephone at the first opportunity to book into the most popular buildings, such as The Ark in Hammersmith). Many buildings mount regular tours (e.g. the National Theatre), but most commercial buildings are inaccessible. As a young architect I used to walk onto promising building sites and persuade the Site Agent to let me look around, but this relaxed attitude has long disappeared, and parties of U3A people would be considered a Health & Safety hazard on building sites! We only tackle occupied buildings these days.

There are books listing good buildings in London, but they quickly go out of date. My technique now is to scour the architectural journals (Building Design, Architecture Today, etc.) in the library for promising new buildings and to ring up the owners with a discreet enquiry as to whether a small group of "mature architectural students" might be allowed to visit. This works in most cases, particularly where the organisation is large and accustomed to handling inquisitive architects, builders and amenity groups. Large commercial firms, health authorities and educational establishments have proved quite keen to show off their new acquisitions to the U3A, and usually provide a publicity or works person to show us round.

I can see no reason why other U3As should not tap into this resource, and it doesn't have to be an Architecture Group. Merton has a Visits Group that usually goes to historic monuments but can go anywhere.

My practice is to prepare an A4 handout based on the magazine article, including plans and my critique. I also locate toilets and somewhere for coffee! Details of our London selection are available on request, but if you are out of London you will be making your own discoveries.

Martin Funnell, Architecture Network Co-ordinator

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U3A ART ON-LINE

[Audrey Loraine, Co-ordinator of the Arts Network and author of one of the groundbreaking ventures into On-line Learning (Italian Renaissance Painting), provides some background to the course.]

I wonder how many U3A members now own a computer? The number, which is likely to increase in the future, must be quite considerable. Some of my friends who have not joined the so-called "silver surfers" ruefully confess to feeling that they are falling off the planet.

My first reason for buying mine was on becoming secretary of my U3A and the need to fulfil all the functions of that position. A secondary reason for my entry to the electronic medium was the thought that I may be especially grateful for it in the future. If I were to become housebound, I should still have access to the world of information and easy communication. It is possible to play games, too, not perhaps those our grandchildren enjoy, but traditional (quiet) ones like chess and mah-jongg. Soon there will be more books on-line, not only the well-known Encyclopedia.

Housebound members are one of the target groups for whom on-line courses are prepared. Physical limitations do not mean that there is necessarily a loss of mental agility. To be able to

find stimulus via the computer offers isolated third- and fourth-agers a way to learn at home and to be in contact with others. As an author and tutor, I have found that the interaction with the participants of a course has been a great pleasure. There are a number of people here and in Australia with whom I have corresponded and grown to know and like, through sharing our interest in a subject.

What is their experience? Firstly, they read about a course, decide to take it and pay a small fee of £5. (Compare that price with any other supplier.) They then receive instructions which give the password and the way to access the course. It appears on a "closed" site, not available to non-participants.

At a regular time each week, a unit of work (e.g. Fresco, Tempera) is released onto the computer screen. A week's work includes reading, going to internet links in the script for extra information, engaging in the various "activities" based upon the subject of the unit, and then emailing the answers to the tutor. The tutor comments upon the answers and sends back an email which contains both answers and comments.

There is also a forum on which "students" can exchange messages with each other, often offering useful advice.

The time spent working through the course varies with the individual but is usually between three and four hours weekly.

Many participants print out the course notes and the message exchanges, to form a complete record of their experience. All through the weeks, there is personal assessment to monitor progress. I can say that, of the forty "students" to date, all but one has enjoyed working in this way. The odd one was not happy using the computer, rather than the course itself. For the rest, it has been an opportunity to learn in a more concentrated way than is usual in a U3A group, with a one-to-one contact with a tutor. The students' comments indicate how they felt about the course: "thoroughly enjoyed it", "I am grateful for the wider knowledge provided", "found it immensely stimulating" and "when is the next one?"

So when will you venture into the future? Titles of all courses available can be found on the U3A website at www.u3a.org.uk

Audrey Loraine

NATURE IN ART

(a gallery with a difference)

Wallsworth Hall, Twigworth, Glos.

This C17th mansion, set in the rich farmlands of the Severn Valley, is a kaleidoscope of colour, containing paintings and sculptures inspired by the beauty of nature the world over.

In the grounds, dragonflies hover over the ponds; butterflies crowd the buddleias and wild flowers. There are exotic sculptures of insects, beasts, birds and even plants in the wildlife garden, overlooked by the dove-cote and its snow-white inhabitants. You are never quite sure what you will meet as you wander round.

The education block is a busy place. Artists in residence demonstrate in the studio and talk to the visitors about their work. Excited children's voices can be heard as beasts or butterflies take shape on their paper. Older voices are heard as they, too, discover new talents or admire the work of local artists, work inspired by the wildlife and beauty of the local landscape.

Inside the mansion, the galleries are hung with the paintings of our great wildlife artists. Here can be seen Peter Scott's birds, Simon Coombe's and David Shepherd's great cats, and paintings by artists from many other lands. There are delicate Japanese and Chinese paintings of fishes and birds; great eagles look down on you from high mountain peaks; there are inviting forest paths, great elephants, grazing deer and leopards ready to pounce. Brilliant colours shine from a mighty canvas of flowers on the staircase and there are paintings of windblown grasses and swirling streams.

Nature is everywhere, and one departs with a lighter step, the clouds swirling overhead, the avenue of trees in summer dress or winter nakedness. Is Nature In Art special, for special people? By no means; it is there for everyone, young and old, bringing peace to the soul and warmth to the heart.

And, yes, there is a delightful café!

(Submitted by *Brenda Perkins*, who suggests that the gallery might make an interesting visit for delegates at the Cheltenham Summer School.)



THE ARTS IN CONTEXT

Two Approaches with a Difference

1 WORDS & MUSIC

Nothing is new under the sun and it is more than likely that what follows has been thought of – and carried out – before now. When a new group was proposed in Hastings & Rother U3A with the title *Words & Music* it immediately attracted a good deal of interest. It was billed as a Music Appreciation group with a twist. The extra element – *Words* – would simply mean that members of the monthly group would contribute readings or pieces of research on *non-musical* topics that were in some way related to the music on offer.

Often, it was felt, music is listened to ‘out of context’, as it were, unrelated to the personality or personal history of its creator, or to the social and political events of the age. And so we have tried, at our meetings, to introduce elements such as these which seek to ‘contextualise’ the music that we have chosen to listen to.

Beethoven provided an opportunity for a glimpse of the ‘Sturm und Drang’ movement in German literature and the contemporary poet, Goethe. A session on Elizabethan music was accompanied by fascinating details of life for the common man in those days. Interesting parallels were found in the lives of Clara Schumann (music) and Elizabeth Barratt Browning (words). A presentation of the history of jazz piano provided an opportunity to consider aspects of the slave trade. These are just some examples of how the group operates. Rather than distracting from the music, this approach seems to add a layer of interest which enriches the shared experiences within the group.

Elaine Williams

2 HISTORY THROUGH ART

The idea seemed so simple and yet, as far as could be ascertained, no one had thought of it before.

This was to be not ‘History’ and not ‘Art’ but a way of *looking at History through Art*. And, in accordance with the U3A spirit, it would allow members to choose their subject or period, do the research, obtain slides from the Resource Centre or by other means, and then give an illustrated talk to members of the group. Sometimes two or even three people will give a combined presentation, and all are encouraged to discuss points as they arise.

At present the group meets every four weeks for a two-hour session. Attendance averages about 25 and has grown steadily since it all began in January 2001. To our surprise, we have not yet had to twist arms for speakers, as volunteers receive all the help and encouragement we can give.

As we are not looking at 'History' or 'Art' in chronological order, we find perhaps the Industrial Revolution being followed by Medieval Life, and the French Revolution by Paleolithic Art. Our future programme will, in its diversity, include The Pre-Raphaelites, Goya, Medieval Women and Japanese Art & History.

By taking this approach, we have all become more aware of outside influences on the artists, of hidden messages, of political or technical restraints, and also of the influence exerted *by* the artist, both then and now.

Because both History and Art are subjective, we respond to them in different ways according to personal experience. Therefore, there are no limitations to the way we interpret them, and this makes for excellent discussions.

Betty Collings



A FRUITFUL APPROACH

In this spirit of 'crossover' – which seems to yield some very worthwhile insights – I am reminded, as perhaps other readers are, of an excellent regular feature in the BBC Music magazine. Entitled *The Art of Music* the feature explores each month the inseparable links between music and art by basing an article on a particular work of art. The March 2002 issue carried an article inspired by a statue of Orpheus attributed to Cristoforo Stati, while the previous issue took as its starting point an oil painting entitled *At the Organ* by the French painter, Henry Lerolle. Worth a look.

The Editor



NOTHING

[U3As may wish to bear in mind that curators of museums and galleries are becoming more and more co-operative in supporting learning activities, as demonstrated by the following article.]

North Cotswold's Art Appreciation Group formed in 1996 recently paid a visit to the Exhibition *Nothing* at the Mead Gallery, University of Warwick Arts Centre. Persuasively introduced by the Director and co-Curator, Sarah Shalgosky, the show confronted members with minimal and conceptual pieces in various media. In particular, Sarah placed the show in the context of today's questioning of the commercial values placed on works of art, and the changing role of patronage over the centuries.

John Busbridge, Convenor, has provided an interesting summary of members' reactions and comments.

Some of the 'concepts' which stimulated the pieces are too private and/or too banal to engage the viewer, and the results do not therefore register as being of any artistic worth or interest.

To invest time in viewing or listening to a video or audio piece is to take a risk; the reward or interest may be negligible. This may discourage further sampling, especially with pieces running for more than a few minutes. In a conventional exhibition or gallery of pictures and sculptures one can choose how long to spend with any one piece, returning to it repeatedly if one wishes.

Audio-visual pieces with accompanying sound tend to impinge on, or to interfere with, one another in the gallery, more seriously so than is the case with conventional pictures or sculptures where, even so, a 'hang' can be sympathetic or insensitive. Is a gallery, then, the best place to exhibit such works?

The presence of other viewers may also be distracting, even more so than in the traditional context. The ideal might be to savour each piece on one's own but ...

The *Times* critic, Richard Cork, admitted in the course of a symposium at Warwick Arts Centre on 2nd March that the critic is often in a privileged position in this regard, viewing a show privately. He also mentioned that, at the Venice Biennale last year, limited access to certain exhibits resulted in would-be viewers queuing, for up to three hours in one case. One participant mentioned that, at last year's Turner Prize Exhibition, the queue for one piece was so long that it intruded into the winning 'lights on/off' room by Martin Creed, whereas Cork had been able to stay on his own in the latter space for a considerable period of time.

LISTENING TO MUSIC WITH LEA VALLEY U3A

We are most fortunate to be so near London which offers easily the greatest selection of concerts, recitals and opera in the world and certainly at the most reasonable prices. Berlin, Chicago, Amsterdam and Vienna may individually have a better orchestra but at least three London orchestras would run them close and you only have to see what is available every night in London to realise how well off we are.

We organise something like six trips a year although in the summer we have the supplement of the Broxbourne Arts Festival which may easily double our opportunities. In the past two years we have been at the Barbican to hear the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Slatkin perform Prokofiev's music for *Alexander Nevsky* with the bonus of Joshua Bell playing Barber's Violin Concerto. We have been at the Festival Hall for a visit from a Japanese orchestra, but this all went wrong with the events of September 11th and the Japanese orchestra did not travel. However, we were blessed with an excellent concert by the Orchestra of the Royal Colleges of Music who, under the direction of Sir Colin Davis, played the Sibelius 2nd

Symphony so well that one of our number remarked "London's music is in good hands for years to come."

We sometimes forsake London. Westcliff in Essex has particularly good concerts and recently we went there to hear the Northern Sinfonia with that astounding musician, Evelyn Glennie, who played the bagpipes in Maxwell Davies' *Orkney Wedding and Sunrise* and almost every percussion instrument in Macmillan's *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*.

In our own little hall in Hoddesdon we enjoy a diversity of record programmes. We are a group of about 50, of whom about 35 usually attend each programme. Our group includes some very interesting people now retired from the musical world. One worked for years in the Music Department of the BBC and remembers working with Richard Tauber. Another managed the Philharmonia during the time with Klemperer and Barbirolli. Another was Director of the Broxbourne Arts Festival for many years and, as a friend of the great accompanist, Ivor Newton, met singers such as Jussi Bjørling and Kirsten Flagstad. Recently, Len Street, the former Chairman of the NEC and a founder-member of our group, gave a talk entitled *A Physicist Looks at Music* and came along armed with a variety of instruments including a glockenspiel, a block of wood and a milk bottle!

Although many of us either play instruments or sing in choirs, there have been no plans for live music in our group yet, though that could emerge as a separate group if enough wished for it. As yet, we leave the music making to the world's greatest and feel very privileged to be able to do so.

John Edwards

Lea Valley U3A



A LISTENER'S GUIDE TO MUSIC 1

(The background to a successful publishing venture)

Having retired as Head of Drama from Brynteg Comprehensive School, Bridgend, in December 1998, I joined the Porthcawl U3A, where I already found a number of friends and acquaintances as members.

These same members approached me about starting up a Music Group for our U3A and eventually on April 13th 2000 the first of four monthly meetings were held to test the level of interest. My diary records twenty-eight people at that first meeting with similar interest shown for the remaining meetings. Since then the popularity of this group has grown to such an extent that recently we have exceeded fifty on more than one occasion.

Having prepared my own notes for each session, more than was necessary for each meeting, I was approached by Doug Jones, our Chairman at the time, about turning them into a book and it was he who approached the Community Education Unit at the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Glamorgan for funding for such a project.

They readily agreed to publish the first volume for us free of charge on the understanding that the money we made from the sale of these books would be re-invested in the publication of subsequent volumes. An initial run of two hundred books was printed and local sales were quite pleasing, but it was not until Lin Jonas at National Office, after consultation with a musically minded colleague, agreed to send out copies of my flyer to all U3A branches that interest in the book really blossomed. As a consequence we were able to publish Volume Two of the Guide ahead of the projected Easter release date.

Volumes Three and Four have been written and are now ready for printing when the time comes, but the level of sales for Volume Two needs to match that for Volume One before we can proceed any further. Volume Five, the last in the series, has been planned and is awaiting text.



A LISTENER'S GUIDE TO MUSIC 2

(A reader's appreciation)

This is less in the nature of a 'book review' as such and more in the way of a recommendation from a reader.

Volume 1 of Harry Lowman's five-volume series in A4 paperback format is a stunningly produced guide to an Introductory Course for a music appreciation group (4 sessions), followed by a guide to a whole year's listening (21 sessions). Each session contains the pieces recommended for listening, biographical notes on the composers and a discography. The whole is backed up with two Appendices – a summary of the "concerts" and an alphabetical list of the featured composers, together with the musical item.

Volume 2 which maintains the same high quality of presentation, takes an entirely different approach to a year's appreciation of classical music. This time 21 sessions take listeners on an alphabetical journey beginning with Adams, Arensky and Alfvén and ending with Xenakis, Youmans and Zeller. Handsome appendices are once again in evidence.

Irrespective of whatever delights are in store with Volumes 3-5, taken together these two volumes provide endless inspiration and background information for any U3A with a thriving recorded music group.

Enquiries to Harry Lowman on 01656 663353

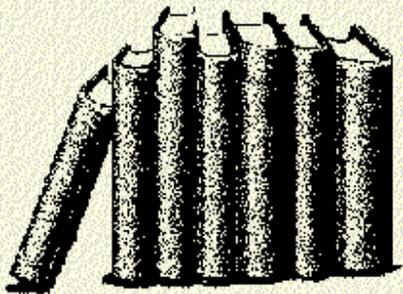
SOURCES PUBLICATION DATES

Readers have become accustomed to receiving their copy of Sources four times a year, with publication dates in August, November, February and May. For a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the increasing cost of distributing Sources free (a consequence of its popularity!), the decision has been made to publish three issues annually. At present, it is envisaged that these will appear in November, March and June.

ART CIRCLES

(MEETINGS WITH ARTISTS)

1. The U3A Perspective



This issue of Sources, with the Arts as its main theme, provides an excellent opportunity to report on an unusual venture from which Hastings & Rother U3A has benefited over the past few years. It all started with a chance meeting in Bexhill's De La Warr Pavilion with the events manager at the time who let drop the casual remark that "we really ought to be working with the U3A".

As a result of that chance meeting, we were, as representatives of our U3A, approached one day by a charming former ballet-dancer by the name of Clare Whistler with what sounded like a uniquely interesting proposition. Clare freelances as a teacher, animator and performer over a fascinatingly wide range of activities that take her into such places as Glyndebourne (advising on choreography), the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill (mounting performing arts events), local schools, prisons, museums and galleries.

Her work has brought her into contact with artists of many different disciplines and has made her many new friends into the bargain. What she suggested, over coffee on the first floor of the De La Warr with its magnificent view over the Channel, was a series of meetings with her artist friends, providing an opportunity for small audiences to gain insights into the works and the minds of creative artists and to chat with them in an informal setting.

This model proved immediately successful and, over a period of four years, in small groups of up to 20 participants, we have been privileged to listen to and converse with musicians, poets, writers, painters, sculptors, dancers, actors, singers and composers. It has been a most exciting and rewarding experience and has enriched our appreciation of the arts immeasurably.

In some cases we were encouraged into being a little creative ourselves and took tentative steps towards drawing, poetry writing, ensemble musicianship and performance art. At almost every meeting, which Clare and her friends planned with much thoughtfulness and humour, we have been treated to a finale of a dance piece by Clare herself inspired by the theme(s) presented by her colleague for the day.

The current series has just drawn to a close and we are keeping our fingers crossed that Clare's busy schedules will once again allow her to devise yet another entrancing programme of "Art Circles" for our enjoyment and enlightenment this coming autumn and winter.

Mike & Elaine Williams



2. The Artist's Perspective

My friends...artists of all sorts...have been coming to the De la Warr Pavilion for four years to meet with members of the University of the Third Age. A morning each to share their art, their life stories and struggles, to collaborate with the participants or with me, Clare Whistler, a choreographer and performer.

I treasure these mornings for their insight into how an artist thinks and feels, a sense of understanding of where their art comes from, and a wonderful sense of intimacy in our shared conversation, not always in words. The weather illuminated each session, with the sea, seen through the windows in all its different aspects, playing its own integral part.

We have cried and laughed, been challenged, and there has always been a wonderful sense of communication and experience that is beyond words. Communication is such a huge part of art and often I felt it happening.

I have many treasured memories: for example, Joanna Parker, so enthusiastic about her violins - playing a piece from the period of each one; then Jonathan Dove, composer, the first time backstage on the piano, the second time a workshop making music, making songs, then making movement for it. We all made a performance together; and Ali Campbell with his special quality of finding the artist in everyone - writing flowed out and became images to perform.

These three and so many others providing the memories and experiences, these Tuesday mornings have had a special meaning for me - art and connections in the moment, a hint of risk with each meeting - a proof that art is in the communication.

And people from the U3A like Mike and Elaine, the Fishers, Rose, Pam, Sylvia and Gill among many others - my listeners, my watchers - my collaborators!

Clare Whistler

PHOTOGRAPHY SPIRE U3A (SALISBURY)

It was in 2000 that we started a group for beginners in photography. We had been enjoying our hobby of photography for a number of years and given lectures to camera clubs but had little or no experience of teaching a small group. I think I can safely say we have gained as much from the challenge as our students.

Starting with the equipment they had, we found out what each member hoped to achieve and any particular subjects they wanted to cover. Armed with this information we set about teaching them basic camera use, followed by simple composition. We used our own resources in the form of our prints and slides to demonstrate particular points. We would, for instance, get out photographs to show differential focussing or landscape composition. We took them out to actually practise what we had taught and included the subjects they had requested. Bad weather days gave us a chance to try indoor subjects such as still life, close-up and portraiture and methods of lighting. Constant opportunities to look at each other's work and that of well-known photographers, helped to instil an awareness of composition. Coming fortnightly, a new subject or challenge could be set and discussed the following session. This kept them on their toes and also fed their enthusiasm while teaching them to develop a seeing eye.

We must have achieved our goal as when the proposed number of meetings drew to a close they asked to continue, and so we took on another programme of challenges.

Alternating with this first group we now have another group and can use our experience to find their hidden talents. Trips out are important, we have visited Bluebell woods; castles; markets; villages; exhibitions and tackled night photography, firework displays and the differing seasonal changes.

Now the first group are branching out with the new technique of doing their own printing using computers. This means another group has been set up and we have to keep a step ahead of them all the time! As with their cameras, composition and artistic ability is all important, but also they have to learn about the use of colour and the correct use of all the magic possibilities a computer can achieve. Their original pictures being correctly exposed and composed remain all important to producing the end result to their satisfaction.

Each year we have shown their work at the Christmas U3A party. This requires them to learn presentation skills and at the same time stimulates a great deal of interest amongst the other U3A members.

We have learnt a lot from leading these groups. We have been asked questions we could not answer but have found the means; looked at other artistic examples; searched books; found subjects to set and places to visit. Our own photography has been challenged and at the same time we have found new friends and filled our days with new adventures in the art of photography.

Sheila and Peter Read



OSWESTRY U3A WATERCOLOUR GROUP

This group has been meeting fortnightly for many years. We have about fourteen regular members and we range from absolute beginners to experienced painters. We are a self-help group and we find that, as we know each other so well, we can give advice and criticism on the work of others, and this has proved to be most helpful. The improvements in our work are marked. In just a few weeks, members learn to lay washes and how to use watercolour. Some of us exhibit locally, and we will be mounting a U3A exhibition shortly at our Group Display Day. Some members use mixed media-watercolour pencils, acrylic and gouache, even applying metallic threads and glitter on occasion. This is a happy group and one which shows a U3A group at its best. In the summer months we work outside in members' gardens or at local beauty spots. The group has been led for some time by Dolly Cowper.

Vivienne Stokes

LEA VALLEY POETRY

I have the title of Leader for the Lea Valley U3A "Poetry Pleases" Group. I am unqualified to teach or advise, but I do know how to book a meeting place and have a great love of the English language, and the rhythm and sounds of verse appeal to me enormously. There appeared to be a demand for a poetry reading group rather than one that sets out to dissect and analyse every work.

As a result, in February 1996, a few like-minded members formed the group. We select in advance a specific poet to read at each meeting, or it may be a mood, a season, or a category such as home, wild life or places. We have dipped into a very wide range of established poets, some very well known and some less so. On occasion we have a free meeting when we each bring along works that we have loved and always get pleasure from reading again (and again) and sharing with the group. Some readings demand discussion afterwards and some we are just prepared to listen to and enjoy. We are fortunate to have a member who no longer teaches but is prepared to share her expertise with the rest of us.

A trip to the Library of Twentieth Century Poetry at the Royal Festival Hall proved most interesting and we were made aware of the poetry readings taking place there, frequently featuring

the poets reading their own works. Unfortunately, these were all evening events, which proved difficult for the group as a whole to be accommodated. It was, however, an introduction to what is available. We have also been most fortunate to get a local published poet to join us on several occasions and he encourages us to write our own verse, free or rhyming. There is a very vibrant Arts Festival held in Broxbourne each year and we are delighted when there are poetry readings organised at a local school. The local Library also hosts the occasional evening of readings.

We borrowed a selection of videos of lives of some poets from the U3A Resource Centre which had to be circulated to members, kept track of and eventually returned to the Centre. These proved an entertaining addition to our own personal research. Although reading poetry is our main object, a meeting never goes by without members offering details of the poets' lives.

We are now in the sixth year of a group I thought would last for perhaps two at the most. Our monthly meetings have been most rewarding and well worth my original expertise of "booking a room".

Frances Martin

SCE REPORT - FEB 02

Report of the Standing Committee for Education Meeting of 5 February 2002

In his opening remarks the Chairman, Keith Richards, outlined the further steps that were being taken to make sure that the members' ideas that had arisen during the course of the discussion group sessions at the Manchester Conference were not lost. He also reported on the contact he had made with the newly appointed Head of Lifelong Learning at the British Museum.

The SCE then went on to discuss a number of ideas for the development of the work of the Group Leader Support Team. There was general agreement that when the developmental ideas have been worked on there was a need for the work of the team to be publicised more widely, in particular, within the Subject Networks and through linked regional activities.

A review of the Subject Start Up leaflet series had been deferred from the previous meeting and after discussion the paper on general guidelines for future editions was accepted. It was also agreed that new or revised leaflets should be subjected to an initial peer review before issue as well as dated and programmed for periodic revision. Another item that had been deferred was a discussion on the suggestion that U3A members could be involved in local research projects. Some examples were cited and it was agreed that Glenys Tuersley would prepare a short note for circulation to all U3As.

The progress made by the On Line Group was reported which included work being undertaken with copyright procedures, briefing notes for new authors, priorities and reviewers. Also reported were developments in the Subject Networks with new networks for: Antiques and Collectables; Law and Government; Architecture; Storytelling and Photography being formed. The growth in the use of the Resources Centre was reported and the final item of business was a review report from the IT Awareness Team covering activities over the past two years. In that time it emerged that over 2000 individual U3A members had attended one of the 50+ presentations with 90% rating themselves as beginners or post-beginners. The survey showed that Internet and Email were rated as the most interesting with Word Processing close behind and 69% rated the presentations as 'excellent'. The Chairman congratulated the Team on a tremendous achievement with particular mention of Paul Baron and Mike Williams who between them had been involved in over 80% of all the presentations.

Len Street

U3A Learning Support Group

The Group Leader Support Group – a subcommittee of the SCE - has recently been through a process of reviewing the work that it does. One result of this review is that the Committee has decided to change its name to "U3A Learning Support Group". This change of name reflects a change of focus in the work of the Committee.

The U3A is growing rapidly but this very welcome expansion does bring with it new challenges. One of the biggest challenges facing U3As is a shortage of "group leaders" and many U3As are struggling to find enough group leaders to satisfy demand. There is perhaps a need for some lateral thinking. One way of meeting the challenge is to look at imaginative ways of sharing the "tutoring" load. The Committee has decided, therefore, to try to focus much more on the participative aspects of U3A Learning Groups. For the moment the main thrust of our support will be in this direction.

The Committee hopes to publish a fuller report of its work in the next edition of SOURCES. We will need to work as closely as possible with Network leaders and also with willing contacts in different areas of the country. But to help us in our thinking we would like to hear from members themselves. In particular please:

Let us know about the difficulties you face in finding group leaders/convenors.

If your U3A is successfully running any learning groups without an obvious tutor/leader, then please share your experience with us. We would like to be able to disseminate your good ideas as a way of offering help and support.

Elaine Williams is at present the convenor of the Committee, so please send your ideas and queries to:

Elaine Williams, U3A Learning Support

The Third Age Trust

26 Harrison Street, London WC1H 8JW

Or e-mail: u3alearningsupport@tesco.net



RESOURCE CENTRE NEWS

This issue of SOURCES focuses on 'The Arts' and the many groups in U3A who study subjects that come under this general heading. The stock of the Resource Centre includes much material that will be of use to Art, Music and Literature groups.

We have continued to add to our art collection with the purchase of slides-sets on art in the 1950s, 60s and 70s and some new sets of the paintings of Dali.

Many groups ask for videos on the creative aspects of art: how to draw or paint in a particular medium for example. I have therefore purchased the three videos of 'Crawshaw's Sketching and Drawing Course' and also 'Drawing Problems and Solutions': two videos illustrating working from life and photos, and working from the imagination. There are also a number of other videos in stock on landscape painting, working with pastel pencils and so on and I will send a list of these practical videos to anyone who would like to see a copy.

Another very popular arts subject in U3A is music and I have continued to add to our collection of opera videos at the request of group leaders. I have recently

purchased two opera DVDs (Aida and Il Trovatore) and will be interested to see how many groups would like to use these discs in preference to videocassettes.

GARDENING

We have been very fortunate to receive a large donation of slides relating to historic gardens in Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire, other counties to follow! Each slide-set covers an individual garden with notes to accompany the sets.

We have just acquired a set on Japanese gardens from a U3A member who recently visited Japan. (She also, incidentally, created three further sets of slides on modern and old Japan which would be of great interest to any groups studying the country and its culture). A new gardening list is available containing all our recent additions and they also appear on the travel list as do new slide-sets on individual British cities and many Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) across the British Isles.

CLASSICS



On the advice of the Classics network co-ordinator I have purchased a number of videos on ancient Greece and Rome and important classical figures such as Julius Caesar and Alexander the great. There is also a video in Latin - with translations in English - the only one I have ever found for sale! I have been asked for resources several times by groups studying Latin but have had difficulty in discovering non-book material. As well as the above-mentioned video I can now also offer an audiocassette on Latin pronunciation with an accompanying book 'Learn Latin' by Peter Jones.

SCIENCE

We continue to add to our science collection with some videos from the University of Leeds. They include 'The Delights of Chemistry' with exciting demonstrations of numerous chemical experiments in front of an audience of GCSE and A-level students. There is a very useful booklet with this video as well.

Another title from the same stable is 'Whatever Became of X-Rays?' which explains computer advances in body imaging such as computer tomography, magnetic resonance imaging and ultrasound. You can also see how virtual reality programmes are used to teach surgical techniques. A fascinating video especially if you, friends or family have experienced any of these new diagnostic methods yourselves.

ADULT LEARNING

There has been some discussion in past issues of SOURCES on the skills needed to lead subject groups. The Lifelong Learning Group recently produced a video showing adult tutors in action. Some U3A members took part in the making of this film, and although some of it relates to teaching learning impaired students and is not relevant to U3A groups, other sections illustrate good teaching techniques. If you are planning some training for your own co-ordinators or trying to encourage new group leaders to come forward you might find this video useful. I would also remind you that there are two U3A produced videos (available for purchase from the National Office) which cover this area as well.

RESOURCE CENTRE LISTS

In my SOURCES articles I often refer to the subject lists of stock that we have available for potential users. It is a considerable time since all the lists were included here and several new ones have been added. It therefore seems a good time to remind you of what is available, and also to point out that we can produce a list for any specific subject covered by our stock. We can provide a personal list for you if you cannot find what you require in the subjects below, or they are too general for your needs

Lists include all media types such as slides, audio-cassettes and videos in each subject area.

Archaeology History - general

Architecture History - ancient

Art & paintings Languages

Art-practical Literature

Astronomy Music

Biography Natural history

Foreign films Ornithology

(with subtitles) Philosophy

Gardening Recreation (incl. Walking)

Geography and travel Religion

Geology Science - general

Health and human

biology

All of these lists are free and can be obtained from:

Elizabeth Gibson

Resource Centre Manager

Third Age Trust

26 Harrison St

London WC1H 8JW

Tel: 020 7837 8838 (Tues. and Thurs. only)



SPINE-TINGLING STUFF

Elsewhere in this issue, Martin Funnell, Architecture Network Co-ordinator, makes a fascinating point when he comments that visiting an example of modern architecture can be, for him, a more spine-tingling experience than music.

This set me wondering. What is it about a work of art – it could be a painting, a piece of music, a poem, a building – that produces that spine-tingling effect? Perhaps readers might like to submit – as briefly as possible – their nomination for the spine-tingling effect in a work of art. If appropriate, we could publish a "Top Ten" in a forthcoming issue. This could make an interesting subject for debate in arts groups of all kinds.

The Editor

Network Vacancies

At the time of going to print, the Networks were looking for Co-ordinators in the following two subjects:

Classics

Design

Please phone the NEC Networks Co-ordinator, Chris Dickson, on 01722 335223 or email her at chris.dickson@ukgateway.net

WEBSITES

Recommendations from readers on useful websites. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information. Apologies for any errors that may have crept in.

Please send in your contributions to this corner.

HISTORY

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/pilot/>

(May no longer be accessible by the time this edition of Sources appears but worth looking just in case.)

BBC Journey into History is a pilot project running from January to March 2002 in association with a selection of museums, libraries, colleges and UK Online Centres in England. The pilot will provide a series of public, supervised online history sessions at pilot sites to stimulate and promote learning and interest in history to include the BBC History Trails.

PHILOSOPHY

www.rep.routledge.com

This site advertises the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online but also available there is an excellent mini-library of definitions of philosophical terms and movements. The Encyclopedia itself, from which the definitions are extracts, can only accept institutional subscriptions. Click on the word 'browse'.

CLASSICS

www.perseus.tufts.edu/ (Greek and Latin texts, translations and more)

www.classicspage.com (general serious and less serious classics)

www.yle.fi/fbc/latini/ (Finnish radio station's weekly world news review in Latin)

www.jact.org (helpful resource list and general information at the Joint Association of Classical Teachers)

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