

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES.

Principles

1. The Third Age Trust and the U3As recognise the immense resources of skills, experience and enthusiasm possessed by older people who are no longer in full time employment.
2. Individual members are both learners and teachers, giving their services freely. All contribute to any eventual costs of using educational or cultural facilities.
3. Membership is open to all irrespective of religion or ethnic origin. No educational qualifications are required or given.
4. Whilst subscribing to the guiding principles of the Trust, each U3A is independently managed by its own members.
5. As far as is practicable U3A members are willing to help other members of the elderly population to organise themselves to achieve similar benefits to those enjoyed in existing U3As.

Objectives.

1. to encourage those older people no longer in full-time employment to engage in educational and cultural activities.
2. To find and help such people use their skills to teach and learn.
3. To provide affordable education for all members.
4. To make the population, as well as educational establishments, aware of the existence and aims of U3As.
5. To encourage people of all cultures to participate and both give and receive the benefits of mutual experience.
6. To seek to include the housebound and the disabled in the educational and cultural activities of the U3As.
7. To ensure adequate recognition of the abilities of the elderly.
8. To obtain access to, and the use of, facilities for the activities of the U3As from National and Local Government and other organisations.
9. To actively demonstrate the continuing contributions made by 'Third Ager' to the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

Revised October 199

My sincere thanks to all those who have sent me copy for this Newsletter. I cannot produce it without your contribution. Some people do not like putting pen to paper, so if something interesting has happened, give me a 'bell' and tell me about it. I will do the rest.

For those who have email, it saves me re-typing if you send copy by 'attachment' as I can 'copy & paste' it straight into the appropriate file. The next Newsletter will be published at the end of next term. My deadline for receiving will be November 16. Don't wait until the last minute. Jot something down while it is fresh in your mind. Sonja Baxendale:- mikson@waitrose.com 023 9273 1816



PORTSMOUTH

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2007

Officers and Committee for 2006—2007

Chairman	Freda Forcey	9242 3976
Treasurer	Arthur Ayshford	9287 0806
Secretary	Jane Urquhart	9285 1064
Speakers Secretary	Jean Poar	9273 0708
Social Secretary	Irene Macmillan	9229 1523
Minutes Secretary	Ros Slade	9282 5193
Publicity Officer	Aileen Loughran	92827826
Membership Secretary	Anne Westcott-Porter	9282 5739
Vice Chairman	Val Pettitt	9273 1460
Development Officer	Eunice Butler	9229 7190 (co-opted)
Programme & Newsletter	Sonja Baxendale	9273 1816
Group Co-ordinator	Paddy Hathaway	9283 2100 (co-opted)

Please note that the AGM is on 25th September, and ponder the question of what you can offer to the running of our U3A, also that the annual subscription is due on 1st August.

You are also asked to read the Aims and Objects of U3A which you will find on the back page. It is important that we keep these to the forefront of our minds.

For the holiday programme, please see pages 2/3.

LETTER FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

I am coming to the end of my first year as your Chairman, with a sigh of relief. It's OK I have enjoyed it, so far it's been a real pleasure, I'm not so sure about the committee meetings!! The committee members and group leaders have done most of the work and I thank them very much.

Our membership has grown and we now have 226 members. But we must still encourage more people to join, because every member who joins will have a skill we can tap into. Also we mustn't forget to make them feel welcome to join and enjoy a range of U3A activities as they wish, providing there is space in the group.

I would especially like to mention the new idea from Anne Westcott-Porter our Membership Secretary, ably assisted by Sonja Baxendale, which is to have an annual programme coming out at the end of each summer term. This will, I know, involve a lot of organizing initially by the leaders i.e. Local History, Travel Talkabout, & the Film Group, and of course our Speakers Secretary Jean Poar who has filled our General Meetings programme for the whole year.

I would like to say, on your behalf, a huge thank you to Jean Poar for her sterling commitment, as she will not be standing for re election at our next AGM. Also another special thank you to Aileen Loughran our Publicity Secretary for organising a Web Site for all our use, it will be in operation for the start of our new term.

We were sad to have to accept, due to ill health, the resignation of Elizabeth Brittain from the position on the committee of Group Co-ordinator, and wish her better health soon. Paddy Hathaway has agreed to be co-opted to fill this place.

Our programme over the last year has on the whole been very successful, the numbers for the Needlework & Dressmaking, Creative writing and the Bridge are a little low so if there is anyone interested in these three groups please contact the leader. We had a very enjoyable stay with the UIA our friends in Caen in May and we look forward to them coming here next year, the proposed date will be from the 6th - 9th of May 2008.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the U3A movement nationally we have asked Dr Celia Clark (Chair of Portsmouth Society) to open our Summer Fair on the 10th of July at 2pm, hopefully the media can attend which will give us more publicity. Please talk to your friends and neighbours and tell them it is a very good way to enjoy their "Third Age" by joining Portsmouth U3A. Freda Forcey

Both Optimists and Pessimists contribute to our society.
The Optimist invents the aeroplane and the Pessimist the parachute.

Sometimes it is better for people to wonder why you are not speaking
than why you are!

If you don't want your children to hear what you saying--
pretend you are talking directly to them.

email addresses

At the June General Meeting, I was asked to include email addresses.

If you would like yours included in the next Newsletter please email it to me.
Sonja Baxendale:- mikson@waitrose .com

Freda Forcey :- fredaforcey@ntlworld.com (Chairman)
Jane Urquhart :-jane.urquhart@ntlworld.com (Secretary)
Anne Westcott-Porter:- promeret@btinternet.com (Membership Secretary)
Aileen Loughran:- aileen_loughran@yahoo.com (Computers & Committee)
Marguerite Nudd:- margueritenudd@waitrose.com (Caen Twinning Link)
Olive Lindsay:- lewis.lindsay@ntlworld.com (Local History)
Beryl Denny:- beryl.denny@ntlworld.com (Architecture)
Diane Mundel:- dianedcmund@btinternet.com

'PEOPLE'S CHOICE' EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM

The Museum staff selected 400 of their stored exhibits. Photographed and described them and made catalogues which were put into libraries. The public was then asked to make their choice of what should be put on display. This exhibition is the result. And very fascinating and varied it is too. The Local History group had a conducted tour but we all felt we need to go again to do it justice, there is too much to take in on one visit. I recommend it to you!
Sonja Baxendale 93

CLASS REGISTERS

A most interesting talk at the June General Meeting was cut horribly short by a "Fire Drill". It was, however, quite instructive because it became apparent that not everyone had signed in.

The dreaded Health & Safety regulations require that the names of those present at such meetings should be known – which is eminently sensible. This is the reason we ask each group to keep a register, either by the group leader or a volunteer registrar.

When discussing in committee the progress, or otherwise, of groups, we have realised that in some cases we have no idea as to the make up of the group. We know only about those groups attended by one of our members. For which reason we ask each group to return a class register to Jane Urquhart. She is always available at General Meetings or they can be put on the upstairs notice board for her to collect.

There will also be a supply of registers on that notice board. Registrars of large groups who use a note book for their registers could just send in the numbers attending each meeting.
Sonja Baxendale

Final thought "Best be without it than not with it!"

fascinating sight was provided by the 'football like' mounds all over the heath which turned out to be anthills which had been there for up to 70 years and were essential for the preservation of the insect world.

Although the weather was overcast, windy and we did encounter a shower, the walk was very enjoyable and should be repeated by U3A.

Many thanks to Olive to arranging the event.

Ken Snell

A WALK IN THE PARK (June)

Victoria Park (opened by the queen of that name) is one of the few green spaces in the centre of the city of Portsmouth, and as such is much used and valued by shoppers and walkers alike. Its value is the greater when one considers that Portsmouth is the most densely populated city in Europe. However, it is doubtful if those who relax in the peace and calm of the park realise what a rich variety of trees surrounds them. We found ourselves admiring species from every part of the world, as well as examples of native trees such as oak, lime and beech.

Stephen Rees, our guide told us how philanthropic families such as the Rown-trees, Clarkes and Cadburys were the first to provide social housing and parkland for the benefit of their employees. He told us of the problems faced by the city in the face of climate change. Water charges are a drain on city finances and thought is being given to finding different species of plants that are tolerant of a warmer climate.

The fine weather contributed to our enjoyment of the park. Our afternoon concluded with tea in the small café, formerly the park keeper's cottage, where not only are refreshments available but art work is on show.

Olive Lindsay

T Shirt Literature

Front – "Be Alert"

Back – "The World Needs More Lerts".

U3A WEB ADDRESS:

We are in the process of having a web page designed, hopefully by the time you read this it will be operational.

[The address is portsmouthu3a.org.uk](http://portsmouthu3a.org.uk)

Once we are up and running, Internet users will be able to follow links from the National U3A web page to ours, hopefully this will bring in some new members.

You will also be able to read our future newsletters on-line.

Aileen Loughran

SUMMER HOLIDAY PROGRAMME (Wednesdays)

July 18 Visit to Syon House (Garden Appreciation & Architecture Groups)

Phone Freda Forcey 9242 3976 for information on vacancies.

July 25 Summer Lunch at St Margaret's Church Hall, Highland Road.

Cost £12 per head. Home grown entertainment. Phone Irene Macmillan 9229 1523

Aug 1 Film shown by Alan Spicer at Community Centre Room 2 at 1.30pm.

Title "The Philadelphia Story"

Aug 8 Lunch at Freda's Allotment. Noon. Alfresco. Bacon Butties provided. Bring salad, pudding & drinks if desired. The allotments are off Locksway Rd Eastney

Aug 15 Magic of Music by Sally Kime at Community Centre.

Albert Stanley Room 2 00 pm.

Aug 22 Bring your own Picnic Tea, and have it in company in The Rose Garden (rear of the Natural History Museum) 2.00 pm.

Aug 29 Quiz with Ken Snell at 2.00 pm in the Albert Stanley Room at the Community Centre. Followed by tea in Aroma Café (£1 per head)

Sept 5 Film with Alan Spicer Community Centre Room 2 at 1.30

Title "Cinema Paradiso" (Italian)

RUMMIKUB

Rummikub is a table top game played with tiles numbered 1—13 and in four different colours. Each tile has these two attributes—colour and number. The idea is to make runs of, minimum, three tiles, with different attributes, i.e. if the colours are the same, the numbers must be different, but consecutive; if the colours are different, the numbers must be the same.

After the initial lay down the runs can be added to, subtracted from, split and generally re-organised, within certain rules. It is not mathematical! Michael and I play it almost every day and whereas he taught Maths, I am almost innumerate, and I can beat him! (sometimes). A lot depends on what you pick up and whether you are concentrating. Margaret Prendergast-Comber has offered to lead this group. It will be on Thursday afternoons in Room 1 from 2.00 to 4.00 pm Sonja Baxendale.

2007 TWINNING VISIT

The bi-annual visits of Portsmouth U3A and Caen UIA groups have become an established tradition of the twinning formed in 2004. This year it was our turn once again to visit our friends in Caen and join them in the programme of visits they had prepared for us.

On 8th May 25 U3A members gathered at the ferry port for the early morning crossing to Caen where UIA members greeted us and drove us to our base for the four-day visit, the Hotel Kyriad.

The official dinner that evening gave George Jenkins the opportunity to present UIA with a gift on behalf of U3A – a handsome framed water colour picture of Portsmouth harbour.

Next morning we visited the Abbaye-aux-Dames, founded by Queen Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror, and now the home of the Regional Council of Lower Normandy. The visit ended with an aperitif and canapés, courtesy of the Regional Council.

On to Caen University for lunch and then a mini concert given by the UIA choral group, a very entertaining sketch presented by their drama group and an exchange of information between UIA and U3A research groups into the historical links between our two cities. Dinner that night was 'en famille', in UIA members homes.

Up early the next morning for a coach journey to Avranches and the new 'Scriptorial' (a purpose built centre to house and display the Mont Saint-Michel's original manuscripts), lunch and then on to an auto-guided visit of the Mount itself. The visitor first begins the climb along the streets of the two villages of the Mount. Then comes a more serious series of steps and finally a steep stairway climbing heavenwards and leading to the entrance to the abbey, towering over the surrounding sea. Our group all made it to the top, which must say something for their determination and stamina!

Dinner back in Caen – and so to bed after a very enjoyable day. All too soon Friday dawned and it was time to head for home – but not before a farewell lunch at L'Ecume des Mers and a stroll along one of Caen's sandy beaches.

It's our turn next to entertain our friends from Caen and the twinning committee will meet in September to begin to plan the programme. Details will be announced in the autumn but make a note of the dates (May 6th - 9th).

We look forward to entertaining UIA members here and hope many U3A members will join us on this the next twinning visit.

Marguerite Nudd

FRENCH SNIPPET

Having chosen our menus weeks before, most of us had forgotten what we had ordered and at the lunch table were discussing our choices. I turned brightly to Jacques on my right and said, "Vous avez le poulet?" He replied in impeccable English, "No, I live in an apartment"(!). So, George, my French still leaves something to be desired! But we can laugh in the same language – and how we did!

Irene Macmillan

MONDAY NEEDLEWORK

The number of members attending the fortnightly sewing class is falling dangerously low. If we don't attract some fresh blood, the class will have to be discontinued. What a shame!

Those of us who attend enjoy the social contact as well as valuing the help and encouragement of fellow sewers. Why not come along and bring with you one of those

There were two alternatives on offer, a ride in an open sided buggy which carried seven people (45 minutes) or a shorter mini train ride, also open sided. We opted for the buggy, of which there were three.

Whatever the weather, Exbury Gardens are an inspiration and the long wait in the cafe was soon forgotten whilst we enjoyed the huge variety of rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, other shrub varieties, trees and lakes, all looking fabulously green and fresh after their soaking.

Eunice Butler

VISIT TO THE MAP ROOM AT SOUTHWICK HOUSE (March)

"I count on every man to do his utmost to ensure the success of this great enterprise, which is the climax of the European War".

These words by General Eisenhower are inscribed above the famous wall map at Southwick House. One cannot help being reminded of a similar message being transmitted by Nelson prior to the Battle of Trafalgar. Both "enterprises" were of paramount importance to this country, and thankfully resulted in success in both instances.

Southwick House is no longer known as H.M.S. Dryad. It is now a training facility for Service police, Army and R.A.F. as well as Navy. However the famous D Day map will remain in its original position here in perpetuity. It is kept as it appeared at dawn on June 6th 1944, showing the deployment of men and ships and their routes to the beaches of Normandy.

The huge map jig-saw was manufactured by Chad Valley and the men who installed it were kept at Southwick until the landings had taken place, in order to maintain the secret of the location of the landing beaches. As we sat comfortably viewing the map, and having it explained to us, it was hard to imagine the scene on that fateful day, probably one of frantic activity.

All who attended agreed that we had had a most interesting and worthwhile outing to a truly important historical site, which we are lucky to have nearby. It reminds us of the important role played by people of this area in the planning and execution of the invasion, resulting in victory in Europe.

Olive Lindsay

VISIT TO FARLINGTON MARSHES

We visited on May 8th (8 of us) and were met by Mr John Goodspeed who would guide us on our 2¾ mile walk. John, a retired Senior Civil Servant of 10 years, is revered as one of the top ornithologists in the south.

During the walk John introduced us to the birdlife which included Little Egrets, Shellducks, Gulls; the sounds of a Sedge Warbler and a Cetti Warbler; and the sights of a White Throated Oyster Catcher, Swans, a Reed Warbler, a Great Crested Grebe, Greenfinches, a Bearded Tit, Mullard, Canada Geese and the group just missed a Peregrine Falcon attack another bird in flight, as related by another bird watcher. Another

now gradually setting up Email accounts for those who want to email friends and family.

As we have gone along I have tried to give the members some understanding of how the computer stores and transmits data, as this enhances their confidence.

Our numbers are limited to 9 in each group as there are 9 computers, At present we have 2 people on the waiting list. If you are interested in joining please contact me to add your names to the waiting list. I expect a turnover as some members will be able to cope on their own home computer or the library computer once they feel competent enough.

Members are working at their own rate, but we've found that those who were touch typists in their earlier life are progressing faster. However there is no pressure on members, everyone proceeds at the rate that suits themselves.

Aileen Loughran

THE OUTING

We looked out of the window at the pools of rainwater, alive with heavy drops of rain which bounced and cascaded onto the sodden patio. The garden tables and chairs dripped with large globules, while saturated sun canopies sagged heavily with the weight of the steady stream which poured off as a waterfall unabated.

Inside the café, the visiting crowds huddled over their steaming cups, staring out at the downpour and wondering, "Will it ever stop?" In the last few days almost the whole of a normal month's rain had fallen onto land parched from an April of record breaking sun and high temperatures. We had been lulled into believing that summer had come early and we could discard our raincoats and umbrellas and look forward to a record period of outdoor fun and sunshine.

This should NOT have happened! In the past, Freda's pact with the weather man had ensured fine weather for all our garden outings. She had been let down badly this time. We had known that the early spring would probably have caused the rhododendrons and azaleas to bloom early and would be past their best. However Exbury is always a wonderful place to visit at any time of year, but, on this occasion, we risked getting nearly drowned if we ventured far from the shelter of the café.

Fear not! U3A members, being what they are, had no problems occupying themselves with the usual intellectual, personal, political, gossipy, funny conversations when all have so much to contribute and we all do more talking than listening.

From time to time the downpour appeared to be easing up and we would say, "Come on, let's go", but before we had gathered up all our belongings – bags, macs, rainhats, cameras etc. etc. the downpour had resumed as before.

Towards mid-afternoon there was a slight easing, but by this time the paths were so saturated, with puddles everywhere we decided that to venture out on foot would lead to soaking wet feet and wet clothes to wear on the coach home, which we agreed would not be "a good thing".

jobs you've been putting off? There's that skirt to hem, those trousers to shorten, a top to alter or a zip to replace.

Or if you aspire to greater things, the large tables make cutting out easy and help is at hand to use the excellent sewing machines. Some members bring knitting, cross stitch or embroidery. We're nothing if not versatile! Give us a try! Olive Lindsay

LOCAL HISTORY VISIT TO THE NEW THEATRE ROYAL

On Tuesday November 21, we met at the New Theatre Royal for a guided tour. We were greeted in the foyer by the assistant manager, Mike Philipson, then up the wide staircase into the Dress Circle passing the Conservatory Bar and Othello Café on our left.

As we took our seats the full character of this Edwardian theatre enchanted us- built by Matcham it was a true gem- alas misfortune and disaster overcame it – vandalised-burnt down-it is now partially restored to its former glory. It has no back stage and the dressing rooms are porta-cabins, with covered passages leading to the stage which has been extended into the auditorium.

When there is an orchestra the first two rows of the stalls are taken out to become the orchestra pit.

Acoustically perfect there is no need for microphones and visually without pillars there are no blind spots in the auditorium.

Having been pointed out the intricate carvings and decorative statues of cherubs and females divine, we were taken to the Upper Circle and thence to the Gods i.e. the Gallery. Finally descending via the Boxes to the Stage- we felt we should do a dance routine.

Back to the Circle for any questions – sadly we learned that there is no chance of the rear of the theatre being rebuilt due, of course, to lack of money. Someone asked if there was a ghost! 'Only Agnes', was the reply.

Mike then told us that when he was first at the theatre, his last duty each night was to check that everything was secure and then put out the house lights, the switch being situated at the back of the Gods. One particular night, the stage set comprising of a drawing room with an open door which was never shut during the entire performance – in fact permanently fixed open, as he switched the lights off that door shut with a bang and he felt a presence rush past him.

Could there have been a ghost? His feet barely touched the ground as he leapt down the stairs and out into the street firmly locking the doors behind him. Thereafter, armed with a powerful torch, he always said 'Goodnight Agnes', before pulling the switch. So we left the theatre after a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. Thank you Olive.

Joyce Walters

I live in my own little world, but it's okay—they know me there!

U3A VISIT TO THE FILM ARCHIVE IN WINCHESTER.

On 31st January a dozen U3A members assembled at Southsea Community Centre at 9 am and in a three car convoy journeyed to Winchester via the 'scenic route'. Amazingly the three cars arrived together at the car park next to the Records Office at 10.45.

Being 30 minutes early for our appointment, we amused ourselves trying to find change for the beverage machine, looking at available literature on Winchester and generally relaxing in the facilities provided.

At 11.25 we were met by the Film Archive Manager who took us into the workshop and introduced us to old and new technology, a film studio and a reference library with books and videos.

Then into the cinema where we watched Portsmouth films which included a Torpedo Trial in 1897, a Navy Field Gun Team, a 1930 Easter Fair on Portsdown Hill with hundreds of people in attendance, a PIMCO (Portsea Island Mutual Co-operative Society) sports day in the 50s, the Co-operative Building on fire in the late 40s and Hilsea Lido in the 50s.

The films were both nostalgic and amazing

Ken Snell

DISCUSSION GROUP

At a recent meeting of the Discussion Group, one of the oldest members of Portsmouth U3A suggested that the Government should set up a ministry for the elderly. The U3A is actually comprised of U3A, U4A and in a few years U5A. Imagine a department dealing with the "young" covering 0 years to age 40. The day-to-day living over the 40 years of ageing is as problematic, yet we are lumped together as the "elderly".

The Discussion Group addresses the subtle progress of Age. Post Office Closures, an economic expediency, taken with disregard to the ability of the Elderly to a) walk and b) queue. Pensions are to be paid into Bank Accounts, regardless of whether you have one or not. B.T. plan to fine customers if they pay by cash or cheque even if that is the way you have paid for 60 years. Hospitals and the N.H.S. provoke endless discussion.

We are, by no means, preoccupied with our own problems. Over the weeks we have considered the Architecture of the Future Portsmouth, Children's Behaviour (not so bad in our opinion). Diet, Healthy Eating, (the nanny state). Asylum Seekers, Immigration. We get a great deal of fun from the folly of celebrity and the Manic Media. The Spinnaker Tower.

The Discussion Group is ready to advise the Ministry for the Elderly and I think they will be surprised at the innovative ideas from opinionated Pensioners. IT IS FUN.

Jane Urquhart.

57 businesses were looted.

Thousands were made unemployed just before Christmas.

In a public house my future father-in-law's head

Was fatally struck by a soldier's gun.

Footnote

There was ample military force that night in Cork

To have prevented the destruction of Cork.

But Strickland's Auxiliary Division

Had been exasperated by earlier losses.

Subsequently intercepted letters

Showed K-company's part in events.

British press hoodwinked; Parliamentary report was suppressed

But British rule ended in 1922

Rose Lynch 3 Mar 2007 (born 1913)

FRENCH READING GROUP.

We have had a successful year, meeting every other week from September to Easter. The numbers have increased over the year and we have a thriving group.

We look, mainly, at extracts from French literature by writers such as Proust, Sartre, Malraux and more recently Marcel Pagnol, who was the author of

We have also read some poetry this year, including, among others, Baudelaire whose poetry is very beautiful and easily understood.

Interspersed with the literature, we look at topical or unusual articles from the Paris daily newspaper "Le Monde"!

Our leader, Margaret Spierer, works very hard to provide an interesting mix of subjects for study and our thanks go to her for all her work this year.

New members are welcome in September when we begin again. Lesley Knott

COMPUTING GROUP

This group has been running since January at the Community Centre. Portsmouth College agreed to allow us to use their laptops. Initially we had one group, but the Community centre asked to use the room every Friday to make full use of the facility, and a second group was started enabling us to take up all those on the waiting list.

The majority of the group were beginners, a few either had a PC at home, or had attended a previous class. We began with learning basic word processing to enable everyone to become familiar with the keyboard and use of the mouse. Control of the mouse is one of areas that beginners often have difficulty with, but members are becoming more competent. Since Easter we have progressed to using the Internet, and are

Imperial State Crown looked magnificent and seemed to come alive in the glow of the lights. I am informed it contains 3,600 diamonds as well as the huge sapphire at its head.

There were several large TV monitors in the Royal Gallery which allowed us to follow the proceedings in the House of Lords when the Queen made her speech from the throne, thus opening Parliament for the coming year. Listening to her were all the Lords in their red ceremonial robes and the Prime Minister, Speaker and MPs from the House of Commons were standing at the far end of the Chamber. The Queen's speech was short this year and her procession returned through the Royal Gallery to the Robing Room within 15 minutes.

On completion of all the ceremonial I was escorted with the other guests to a luncheon in the House of Lords before returning home.

The perfect end to a memorable day!

Carol Jones.

WAR IN ST PATRICK STREET (A memory of childhood)

The British Empire was Britain's enterprise.
Ireland its nearest source of wealth and taxes;
Thirty two thousand square miles
Of hills and dales for 800 years.

In 1920 the game was up.
Sinn Fein rose in secret struggle.
Protest rife as rebellion spread.
Republican Ireland declared itself free.

British Army's revenge was brutal.
Lord Mayor MacCurtain was shot at home at dawn.
Replacement, MacSweeney, a hunger striker died in Brixton Goal.
The mayhem of war; curfew followed.

December 1920 came Black and Tans, many were drunk,
With petrol and paraffin cans in their Crossley tenders.
Twenty four hours of destruction began.
St Patrick Street in Cork city was burned.

Fire hoses were deliberately cut;
It was a night of arson, and the shooting did not end until dawn.
14 acres of the city centre were on fire; Cith Hall razed;
Gone too the Carnegie library of priceless books.

SIX GO SHOPPING

On a cold but dry day a couple of weeks before Christmas we took the ferry to Gosport. Our destination was The Range, adjacent to Fort Brockhurst. Boarding the number 83 bus (it seems the 86 also goes that way) we arrived after about twenty minutes. The building externally, what is loosely termed "Shed Architecture", revealed inside a veritable emporium of confectionery, toys, homeware, furniture, glassware, plants, art materials, Christmas decorations, soft furnishings and more too numerous to mention or remember!

A short preliminary look around before we met in the café at an agreed time where we spent a pleasant hour over a light lunch. Then down to some serious shopping. A huge choice of things at competitive prices was very tempting but we are Third Agers and know when to keep to our lists.

Arriving back home in good time with the knowledge of the said list a bit shorter, it occurred to me that the day was more than buying presents etc. It was also about others' company and a chance to make friends with new members.

Hurrah for U3A

Jean Poar

PORTSMOUTH ARCHITECTURAL GROUP-----SPRING TERM 2007

I didn't get to our first meeting of the New Year, but I understand it was very successful with everyone selecting one of the places we have visited for revision and further discussion. Its sometimes good to slow down our enthusiasm to explore, just to pause and recall what we have already done.

After the next meeting we were invited to join the newly formed Waterlooville U3A for an interesting lecture entitled 'Images of England' sponsored by English Heritage. This involved photographing every listed building in the country.

At our next meeting we met at Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral in Portsmouth High Street, and as I am a Guide there I was able to explain the progression through the ages of this great building and the sequence of styles that can be discerned in almost all historic buildings.

We shall complete the meetings this term with visits to the splendid new University Library and the interesting church of St. Philips at Highbury. Beryl Denny

PORTSMOUTH U3A AT 10 DOWNING STREET.

One gloomy wet morning at the beginning of December an excited group of Portsmouth U3A ladies – oh, and one gentleman assembled at Fratton station en route for Westminster. Our stalwart leader, Freda Forcey had arranged for us to have an official conducted tour of No.10, the home of the Prime Minister. So after scattering for lunch we all met outside the impressive railings, peering in at the modest house.

Security was not a problem, we deposited our cameras and mobile phones in the

hall, and as we were doing this along came Cherie Blair, telling us that she was off to the dentist. Seeing her made us realise that the house is also home to a lively family.

Our guide told us the history of the house. 300 years ago King George II, who spoke only German, gave the house to his First Minister, Robert Walpole, who accepted it as the official residence of all future Prime Ministers – or First Lords as is engraved on the door. Incidentally, the door has a duplicate ready and waiting in the event of any incident involving breaking down the existing door, the Prime Minister doesn't have a key. He never needs one as there is always a policeman on duty.

The black and white marbled hall holds two very interesting pieces of furniture, one is an oak chest that is believed to have belonged to the Duke of Wellington and accompanied him to Waterloo, the other is a hooded chair that was once used by the night watchman outside the front door. There is a drawer beneath the seat where hot coals were kept to keep the attendant warm.

Then we went into the Cabinet Room where your eye automatically focuses on the furniture rather than the decoration. Harold Macmillan introduced the boat shaped table so that everyone can see and hear clearly. Every member of the Cabinet always sits in the same chair, and when the P.M. is absent his chair is always left at an angle so that he can return quickly.

One of the most impressive features of the house is the cantilevered staircase lined with portraits of Prime Ministers. Each Prime Minister bequeaths a portrait when he/she leaves office and this goes at the top of the stairs, so everyone is moved down a position.

Next we were shown into the White Drawing Room. This impressively large room is comfortably furnished to receive distinguished visitors, it can also be used as a family room, it was here that Edward Heath used to play his piano. It wasn't quite good enough for Mrs Thatcher who added ornate gilded ceiling mouldings. The next room has a different colour scheme, and so it is known as the Terracotta Drawing Room. It contains a very special desk where Pitt sent Napoleon an ultimatum, Asquith wrote to the Kaiser, and Chamberlain wrote to Hitler.

Finally we come to the magnificent Pillared Room. Here the first television was demonstrated to Ramsay MacDonald and his children..

Our tour finished in the Dining Rooms, first the small one, which until the private flat was built upstairs in 1937, was used by the Prime Minister and his family. Its claim to fame is the unusual feature of a fireplace under a window, so it has a split flue.

As we left we met the next party of visitors who were all members of South African Police Forces in the smartest uniforms imaginable. Our tour should have ended with a visit to the garden, but as we peered down at a very muddy patch of grass, where we were told the Blair boys practised football, we lacked enthusiasm, and were fascinated instead by the wonderful Christmas decorations rapidly transforming the stately home into a Christmas wonderland. Our last memory will be of a giant tree being hoisted into position outside the front door.

Beryl Denny

LOCAL HISTORY

The February meeting was a great success – one of the most enjoyable that I can remember! Members were asked to research the history behind the name of the street in which they lived. We had some fascinating results with enough material for another meeting. Information had been gleaned from visiting the City Record Office and the Central Library. Portsmouth having been a military and naval base, many street names reflect not only the history of Portsmouth but that of the whole nation i.e. Winston Churchill Avenue, Agincourt Road and Tangier Road to name but a few. This meeting really demonstrated the aims and values of U3A. Members did their own research and brought it to the meeting for the benefit of other members.

Since the last newsletter the group has toured the New Theatre Royal (see report). We have toured the ordinary streets of Portsmouth to appreciate (on camera) the varied styles of architecture to be encountered there. And we have learnt about the unique talents of W. L. Wyllie who spent his last and most prolific years in the city of Portsmouth.

Olive Lindsay

THE STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

On the 15 November 2006 I had the privilege of attending the State Opening of Parliament. I left home early and arrived in plenty of time to take my seat in the south west corner of the Royal Gallery. It was situated near the doors to the Queen's Robing Room and alongside the aisle where the Royal Regalia and main procession enter the Royal Gallery.

At 10.47 the Yeomen of the Guard entered the Royal Gallery and lined the route towards the Princes Chamber which forms the final part of the Royal Route into the House of Lords. The Heralds, Officers of State and the Lord Chancellor arrived and took their places in the Gallery. Prior to the Royal Party arriving the Imperial State Crown, Sword of State and the Cap of Maintenance were placed upon their stands almost in front of where I was sitting. The Crown would be taken into the Queen's Robing Room upon her arrival.

As we sat awaiting Her majesty's arrival I looked around the packed Royal Gallery and what a glorious sight it was! Pageantry and Ceremony as only we British can do; the rich gold and reds of the Ceremonial Uniforms; the Full Dress Uniforms of the officers complete with swords and plumed hats, and the bright red coats and white ruffs of the Yeomen of the Guard. Wonderful!

At 11.27 the Lord Great Chamberlain raised his white staff in signal and to a fanfare the great doors of the Queens Robing Room opened and the procession to the House of Lords began. This was led by the Officers of State followed by the Queen and Prince Philip. The following procession included Princess Anne who has the rank of Gold Stick in Waiting. The queen looked splendid in her ivory gown and the Royal Robes. Four young Pages of Honour in traditional costume carried the Robes. The