

From the Chairman

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream
(C.S.Lewis, 1898 - 1963)

At the time of writing, most of the leaves are yet to fall and it is still a “golden” Autumn - an apt metaphor for renewed Group activities after what for some will have been a summer break. Elsewhere in this issue are reports and pictures of holidays and outings, together with reminders of pleasures to come. It’s all too easy to forget how much thought and hard work goes into organising events and I am ever appreciative of so many people who keep SU3A “on the road”.

The good news is that membership continues to increase and it is already the time when our Membership Records Officer gears up to face the avalanche of renewals alongside new applications. You will have seen in the latest U3A News (page 6) that the votes of your delegates to the National Conference did not prevent a motion being carried for a capitation fee increase of £1 per member, albeit moved to April 2010 rather than the originally proposed April 2009. As already reported at the October Coordinators’ Meeting, this means that the SU3A Membership fee remains unchanged for a further year and the originally proposed increase to at least £8 per annum will not be in place until 2010.

On a more general note, you may have been aware of the recent consultation document **Informal Adult Learning – Shaping the Way Ahead** from DIUS - the still unfamiliar Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (see U3A News pages 31-33). Prompted into action by David Pierce, and with Executive Committee blessing, seven¹ of us got together in June and responded. We said -

“In our various careers we have accumulated wide knowledge and experience of business, education and local and national government. We have come together as an informal group within U3A specifically to discuss and respond to your consultation document, Informal Adult Learning.....”

Cover Picture: from a photo by Peter Barclay of a replica crested and masked helmet at Sutton Hoo (see page 21)

The ***Consultation Response Analysis Report*** has now been published by the Central Office of Information (COI) and over 5,500 responses were received. A breakdown of replies (Report *Appendix B*) shows that, along with very many other organisations and individuals, responses were received from The Third Age Trust (TAT) and some 100 U3As.

Sheffield's is the only U3A response from which a direct quote (as below) has been taken. This may have been because we didn't follow the party line and use the 'prompts' from TAT and restricted our comments to two pages. All thanks to David Pierce for summarising our discussion so succinctly (the Analysis, page 30) -

"....In U3A we value our independence and the success we have had in building a successful network of adult learners..... The biggest problem we face is finding affordable premises in which to meet. A way forward might be to stimulate more partnerships with libraries, schools, universities etc. We believe that Government at national and local level should do more to stimulate such partnerships...." (Sheffield U3A)

[<http://www.adultlearningconsultation.org.uk/download/>]

Still on the subject of lifelong learning, some time ago (October 2007 issue of *Links*), I suggested that those of you with internet access might like to look at what the Open University (OU) is offering on line *without charge*. The oncoming winter months seem an opportune time to remind both Group Coordinators and individual members of the still expanding free study material provided in unit form on the OU's *OPEN LEARN* web site at

<http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn/home.php>

There are 13 topic areas, with all the material taken from OU programmes at various levels.

With seasonal greetings and very best wishes for the New Year.

Joan Keogh

¹ John Halstead, Peter Hughes, Joan Keogh, David Pierce, David Rance, Myra Smith and Shelagh Woolliscroft

Sheffield U3A News Update

Executive Committee Report

The Committee welcomed Peter Hughes as a newly coopted member.

As promised in the last *Links*, SU3A representatives at the U3A Conference in September tried to persuade National Office to change their minds about reprinting the manual ***Computer Basics for Seniors***. Their view is that a reprint would be too costly. However, they have agreed that the CD-ROM at the back of the manual can be copied. If you would like to purchase a copy, please contact our Web Coordinator, Clare Chiba (contact details inside the front cover of *Links*).

A smart, new SU3A banner has been designed and purchased. The SU3A publicity leaflet has also been re-designed and the new colour version should be available for distribution in the near future. All feature the revised SU3A logo (see front cover).

Outreach work in Stocksbridge is going very well and, so far, three new Groups have been formed - Book Reading, Dining Out and Walking (5 - 7 miles).

If you are looking at public venues for Group meetings, suggested guidelines as to suitability are available from our Joint General Coordinators (contact details inside the front cover of *Links*).

The date of the Annual Members' Meeting / Annual General Meeting has now been confirmed for Wednesday 22 April 2009. More details will be available in the next issue of *Links*.

Vera Dyer

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Your subscription is now due for renewal - please use the form on page 25 and send off your cheque ASAP.

Safety: at home and on the hills

In considering the application of Gift Aid funds across the whole membership of SU3A, the Working Group has been made aware that domestic safety is a matter for all of us; whereas the more focused issue of safety on the hills is a concern for only an estimated 20% of our membership - around 500 individuals. With this in mind we have taken it upon ourselves to explore opportunities for acquiring skills that enable members to equip themselves to preserve their own lives and to help others at risk, as well as adding to the list of skills that members are learning for their own sakes.

The value and application of first aid skills cover a multitude of settings and eventualities. They include domestic contexts in which we, or those we are caring for (from partners to grandchildren) live, public arenas, and more intimate ones involving fellow members of a SU3A Group meeting or activity. In addition, we have considered the prospect of offering training in the skills which render expeditions to the countryside safer by supporting practical, participative learning in the use of map and compass as well as the much vaunted - by some anyway - GPS.

We need to know members' views about such an initiative at two levels:

- Is this a valued use of Gift Aid funds?
- What support would such offerings gain from members?

The format would vary from half day sessions on domestic safety, through certificated courses, to two day classroom and outdoor training programmes. Costs will vary - from no formal charge, but with a significant donation to the provider organisation from Gift Aid funds; to a per capita charge, which would be subsidised from Gift Aid funds.

Feedback through Coordinators, Committee members or directly to Roy Darlison in his role as Chair of the Gift Aid Working Group [randbdarlison@waitrose.com] would be welcome.

Roy Darlison Chairman

New Monthly ‘Drop-In’ Sessions

Starting in January 2009, for a trial period of six months, there will be a monthly ‘Drop-In’ session at the United Reformed Church (opposite the Crucible Theatre). They will be held on the first Tuesday morning of every month -

6 January
7 April

3 February
5 May

3 March
2 June

Everyone is welcome to drop in at any time between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon. Refreshments will be available at a very reasonable cost (NB offers of help will be gladly accepted!). There is no formal programme - this is an opportunity to meet up with friends, make new friends from different Groups, exchange ideas, ask questions and promote forthcoming events. There will be several Committee members present each month - with Joan Keogh, Clare Chiba, Ken Stringfellow and myself opening the batting on 6 January.

Do put the dates in your (U3A?) diary NOW and come and join us!

Shelagh Woolliscroft Vice-Chairman

Sheffield U3A’s Silver Jubilee

In early 2011 Sheffield U3A will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its foundation in 1986. Preliminary discussion has already taken place in the Editorial and Publicity Sub-Committee and a number of early ideas have been brainstormed. The Gift Aid Working Group have also briefly discussed this and have indicated that funding should be made available for suitable projects when details have been worked up. This sentiment was welcomed by the Executive Committee at its last meeting. It is probable that there will be a number of events throughout the year.

The key question now is what should we do to celebrate this important milestone. It is hoped that all Groups, either individually or working together in amalgamations of Groups, will want to celebrate this event in some way. Please give this some thought and make contact with other Groups if you think there might be a

possible joint venture. The views of individual members are also important, so let us know what you think or would like to happen.

When you have the outline of an idea (or ideas) and potential cost, please pass the details to either Peter Barclay or Shelagh Woolliscroft (contact details inside front cover).

Shelagh Woolliscroft Vice-Chairman

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

When I *put up my hand* in response to an item in *Links* in 2000 and agreed to act as editor of the first attempt to record SU3A's history, I did so for a variety of reasons - the important ones of which no longer pertain in my view. I was newish to the organisation and had less baggage than some longer standing members. I also reckoned it was important to get on with the job, uncluttered by other commitments, and whilst those who had been in at the beginning were still able to contribute their recollections.

It was suggested to me recently that I might agree to renew my acquaintance with the task. I declined, but suggested that the organisation might benefit from the identification and appointment of a "historian" who might not only keep a hand on the archives - now deposited for safety with the Sheffield City Archivist - but also prepare the ground for a revision to coincide with our 25th anniversary in 2011; now appearing over the horizon all too quickly.

I would be happy to make available what experience I gained in the process of working on the 2002 enterprise, as part of a support group similar to the one that assisted me.

Roy Darlison

What do you think?

Are you interested in becoming SU3A's historian / archivist? Are you, or your Group, interested in coordinating or joining a small working party to update SU3A's history? If so, please contact either Roy Darlison or the Editor with your views or ideas.

Group News

Visiting History

Not a new Group, but a new name for the Archaeology Group, first formed 22 years ago. Over the years the time span of our interests has expanded, providing a wider range for venues and subjects for slides / talks.

The half year's programme for 2009 should be available at the first talk on 20 January 2009, at 2.00 pm, at Carmel Court, Wilson Road (near Hunters Bar). New members will be most welcome.

Kathleen Head Coordinator

Opera DVDs Available for Loan

Members of SU3A Enjoying Opera Group have built up a collection of opera DVDs, some of which have been purchased with Gift Aid funding. Any member of SU3A may borrow a DVD for a period of three weeks for their own private use. More details, including a list of operas currently available, may be seen on the SU3A website [www.sheffieldu3a.org.uk]. If you prefer a paper version, please send a stamped addressed envelope with your request to -

Mrs Hilary Hutson,

Literature Network Meeting

The Autumn meeting of the Literature Network was held at Shirley House, Psalter Lane on 17 October. The speaker was Berlie Doherty, a writer of books for children and adults which are much loved.

She spoke of her development as a writer and the compulsive sense she had to *tell the story*, to guide the narrative through to a satisfactory end. She gave a strong impression that she could do

no other! The number and variety of books she brought along to the meeting were witness to her prolific output of published work. Some of her books have been translated into other European languages.

She herself has a warm personality and there was an immediate rapport with our SU3A audience, many of whom knew her work. We look forward to hearing her speak again and of her satisfaction of being a writer whose work is enjoyed by many readers.



An enjoyable event.

Rita Brent Coordinator [photograph by Peter Barclay]

Music Appreciation Group

Whilst for most of my life I have been transformed by the sound of classical music, I consider I have very little knowledge of composers and their works. So it was with some trepidation that I responded to David Andrew's article in *Links* regarding the Music Appreciation Group held in Hillsborough Library.

My fears were unfounded, as it is true to say the Group comes alive to the sound of music, guided by David's expertise on both composers and their works. We take a journey into their world before listening to their music. On one occasion, as I was listening to a particularly moving symphony, I half expected the ghost of Sibelius to give me a nudge with the words *not bad eh!*

A great way to spend an afternoon, all free, and, most importantly, a warm welcome is guaranteed.

Audrey Heeley

Classical Concertgoers' Group

We open our 2009 programme with a light-hearted afternoon *Viennese New Year Celebration*, on Saturday 3 January 2009, at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham. The concert will be given by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Carlos Kalmar, with Sarah Tynan (soprano). The programme includes many familiar pieces - Mozart's overture to *La Clemenza di Tito*, the *Exsultate Jubilate* and the ballet music from *Idomeneo*, Suppé's overture *Poet and Peasant* and a collection of perennial favourites by the Strauss family - *The Dragonfly*, the *Furioso* and *Anvil Polkas*, the *Acceleration* and *Blue Danube Waltzes*, a selection of operetta arias and more - hopefully with encores!

The coach will leave the bus parking bay on Ecclesall Road South, near the top of Millhouses Lane, promptly at 12.00 noon. The inclusive cost of the visit is £30.50 and bookings may be made by using the reply slip at the end of this issue. Please send to Derek Shipley, 40 Wollaton Avenue, Sheffield S17 4LA, including a stamped addressed envelope, to arrive as soon as possible. Please include the names and contact numbers for all members for whom you are applying.

Our visits are open to all current SU3A members and no special Group membership is required.

Derek Shipley Coordinator

Walking Group E

Our Group invites new members to join us. The Group walks weekly on alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays for varying distances between five and seven miles. We walk mostly in the Peak and during the summer try to go to the more westerly area in order to find new places to enjoy. We take a packed lunch and start from our meeting place at 10.30 am. We are open to anyone, but would particularly like to recruit some younger members. If you are interested please telephone or email me [*j-kould@talktalk.net*]

John Ould Coordinator

GIFT AID LECTURE SERIES

The next lecture in the series will be held on
Wednesday 17 December 2008 at 4.00 pm
at Sheffield Hallam University

Speaker: Professor Mike Smith
Medical Imaging: Past, Present and Future

Professor Smith is Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research and Knowledge Transfer. He came to his post at Sheffield Hallam having previously worked at the Universities of Edinburgh, London, Leeds and Teeside. Over 30 years his work has included the undertaking and direction of research in fields associated with a wide range of medical and other health related topics.

The lecture will be held in the **Pennine Lecture Theatre**,
at Level 2 in the Owen Building (access is from the Arundel Gate entrance).

The event is open to all SU3A members and friends.

There is no charge for admission and tea or coffee will be available free of charge in the University's Heartspace Café from 3.00 pm.

If you plan to attend please contact Roy Darlison; Enid Hirst (or Shelagh Woolliscroft This will give us names and approximate numbers for catering and seating purposes. The venue is entirely user friendly. However, if you have any questions about access etc. please telephone one of the above.

Aspects of Art III

Aspects of Art III has been formed in response to the high demand and long waiting lists for Aspects of Art I and II.

We will meet at Greenhill Library, Hemper Lane, Sheffield S8 7FE (No. 76 bus route) on the third Thursday of each month, beginning on Thursday 15 January 2009, at 2.00 pm.

We will be a self-help Group, focusing on the participation of our members and drawing upon each other's strengths and experiences. It is envisaged that all members will be involved, irrespective of their knowledge levels; so enabling us to learn together, with each other, through each other and by personal participation. Our programme will also include visits to art galleries, museums and country houses; as well as talks by speakers, invited because of their extensive knowledge in their respective fields.

For further information please contact either myself or Beryl Brown on (0114) 230 4001.

Barry Gall Coordinator

Stocksbridge members seek kindred spirits!

After two well-attended meetings held in Stocksbridge Library in late September, members who live in S36 are busily forming new Groups as well as joining existing Groups. However, there are some who would like to meet up with others keen to pursue any of the following interest areas -

Arabic conversation	whist	belly-dancing
lace-making	metal detecting	cycling
photography	model railway construction	

If anyone is interested in helping to form a new Group, please get in touch with me in the first instance.

Shelagh Woolliscroft Vice-Chairman

IMPORTANT REMINDER

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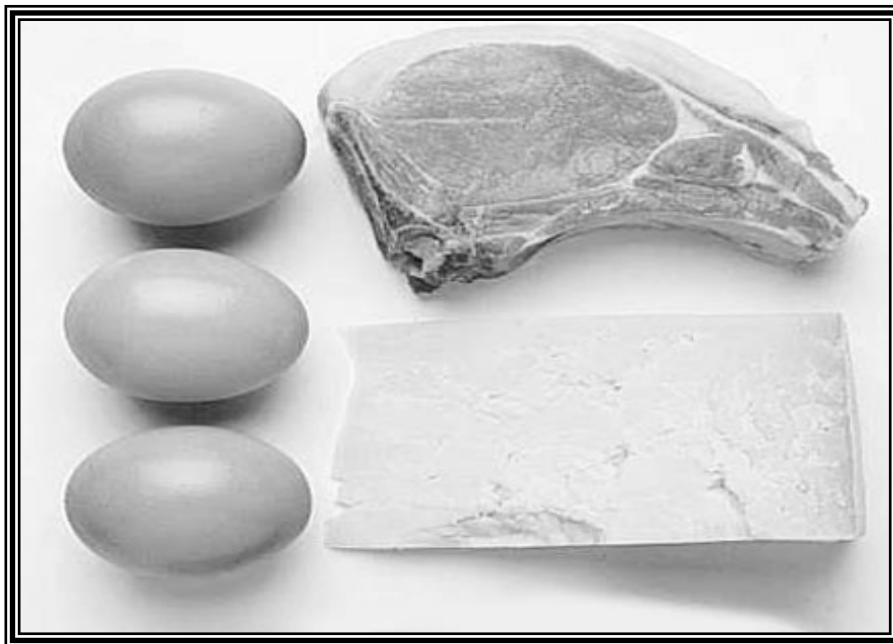
VITAMIN B12 IN OLDER PEOPLE

We are looking for
**men and women aged between
65 and 85 who live in Sheffield**
to take part in research study to investigate
vitamin B12 in your diet.

If you are interested in finding out more about the study,
please contact us at -

**Human Nutrition Unit, School of Medicine
The University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2RX**

**Tel: (0114) 271 1508 or email:
*vitaminB12@shef.ac.uk***



You will be compensated for your time and inconvenience

Travel News

Travel Organising Committee

Shirley Marney, Coordinator
Barry De Roek, Treasurer
Derek Shipley, Minutes Secretary
Margaret Bullivant
Barbara Robertshaw
Val Wiley

Only members of Sheffield U3A can join the tours/day trips.

Holiday Insurance - All members travelling have full responsibility for arranging their own Travel Insurance. In no circumstances will Sheffield U3A be responsible for covering claims for loss of life, personal injury, medical expenses, accidents, loss or damage of luggage or personal property, cancellations or loss of deposits. Each member **MUST** insure themselves against such risks.

Disabilities - When sending an application slip for a holiday or day trip, please inform the organiser of any disabilities. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate a disabled person on all social trips, if there is a conflict of opinion the Tour Operator / Travel Agent or day trip venue will make the final decision.

Cancellations - In the case of a cancellation please contact the organiser or another member of the Travel Group Committee as soon as possible. **Refunds** cannot be given for cancellations unless a replacement can be found.

Pick-up Point - Please contact the Organiser if you are unable to be at your pick-up point, or want to change it.

Envelopes - Please ensure that you attach the correct postage when sending applications. Envelopes larger than 240 x 165 x 5 mm (approx 9.4 x 6.5 x 0.2 in) require a large letter stamp. When sending a **stamped addressed envelope** it should be no less than DL size - 220 x 110 mm (8.6 x 4.3 in), with the correct postage for its size.

Please do not park in front of the doctor's surgery on Millhouses Lane.

Travel Excursions and Holidays

The *Edinburgh Tattoo* short break, planned for August 2009, has been cancelled due to lack of interest and the deposits received will be returned. However, there are still places on the *Austrian holiday* in June 2009, advertised in the last issue of *Links*.

Kraków, Poland

1 - 5 September 2009 (5 days - 4 nights)

The city of Copernicus and Pope John Paul II, and royal capital of Poland for 500 years, Kraków ranks with Prague and Vienna as one of the architectural gems of central Europe. Centred on its magnificent mediaeval square, the statistics are staggering - more than 6,000 historic buildings and monuments, 18 museums, 2.5 million works of art, at least 140 churches and one of Europe's oldest universities - no wonder it has been designated a European City of Culture.

Our 4* hotel is just a short walk from the old town square with its famous 12th century Cloth Hall. We will have bed and breakfast for four nights, with dinner on the first evening. The next two evenings we can choose one of many restaurants in the old town, and on the final night we will dine in a traditional hostelry - with live music.

Our half day guided tours will take us to the Wawel Castle area, the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz and Wieliczka Salt Mine. We will have time to make our own visits to museums, art galleries and churches - all easily accessible - and, of course, the market.

A visit to Auschwitz Concentration Camp can easily be arranged for anyone wishing to do so. This can be discussed and decided upon during the stay. There is no obligation to make such a visit - I am sure our guide will give us information to help us decide. The cost of such a visit has not been included in the holiday price - I am told it may be about £25.

The cost of the holiday is £620, with a single supplement of £106.

This includes coach journeys, return flights, English speaking guide, four nights hotel bed and breakfast, two evening meals and gratuities for guides and coach drivers, but not hotel staff. Members must arrange their own comprehensive travel insurance and send the policy details to the organiser with the booking form.

To reserve a place, please complete the booking form at the end of this issue and send, with a deposit of £150 per person and a C5 size stamped addressed envelope to Margaret Bullivant, to arrive no later than 17 January 2009.

SHEFFIELD U3A TRAVEL

PLEASE NOTE THAT
ONLY POSTAL APPLICATIONS
WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR HOLIDAYS AND DAY TRIPS
***PLEASE ENSURE YOU USE THE CORRECT POSTAGE
and include the SAE envelope size requested***

Holiday Reviews

Sampling Suffolk

We have just returned from a five-day short break sampling the delights of Suffolk. Our home base was Ipswich, but we visited a variety of places during our stay and, like a menu, there was something to suit every taste.

On our way down to East Anglia we stopped off at Tattershall Castle. At 100 feet tall and constructed on four levels, it held a commanding position with panoramic views across the Fens. The castle was saved from demolition in 1910 by George Curzon, who restored its gothic fireplaces, tapestries and brick vaulting. Across its moat is the Holy Trinity Church, which houses thousands of bats in its belfry, living under a full protection order. "How wonderful"

I cooed, looking up. “You don’t have to clear the droppings!” replied the disgruntled churchwarden.

Over the ensuing days we were bused to various locations, including the Guildhall in Lavenham - which had in its long history been used as a prison, town hall, almshouse and museum. A leisurely cruise down the River Orwell followed, where we waited with a lively cormorant for the lock to fill up and release us past container ships, loading their hulls with grain, to Woolsthorpe Manor, birthplace and family home of Sir Isaac Newton. From his bedroom window we could see the orchard and a tree, groaning with apples. It was by such an apple falling that the revolutionary ideas of gravity, mathematics, optics and laws of motion began to ferment in his extraordinary mind; growing into the theories and scientific methods that still underpin the world of science today.

A revelation to all was the National Stud at Newmarket. An enthusiastic guide conducted us around the immaculate grounds; the graves of famous winners, like Mill Reef; and the intricacies of the sex lives of the stallions stabled there. Currently eight stallions cover two hundred broodmares - work, she assured us, certainly, but work they seem to enjoy!

The market town of Sudbury is where we found Thomas Gainsborough’s house. In the heart of the town, it is an attractive building, with a Georgian façade, which retains some of his paintings, and a delightful walled garden with its ancient mulberry tree. The paintings encompass the whole of his career from early portraits of local gentry, to his later London period. Some of these last works include the enigmatic figure of a woodcutter, which experts say was symbolic of his ensuing death. However, Suffolk was home to two artistic giants. Bring on John Constable.

Ironically, after numerous days of grey leaden skies, the sun came out for our trip to Flatford Mill. It shimmered on the water and over the wooden slatted bridge that ran by the Miller’s Cottage. The ducks congregated noisily by the dry dock where he painted *Boat Building* and we could imagine *The Haywain* in the stream by Willy Lott’s house. The landscape and locations of Dedham Vale were the spark for Constable’s glorious art, rich with detail of lives lived

at this time and this place. Although none of his great paintings are here, it did not detract from the visit - it was as if they hung everywhere you looked.

Later in the week the coast beckoned and we journeyed to Aldeburgh. It's a seaside resort with a long linear high street, pebbled beach and a hidden jewel called the Red House. Nestled at the bottom of a long lane, it is the home of composer Benjamin Britten and his life-long partner, tenor Peter Pears. The Red House is well proportioned and has a wonderful garden surrounding it. The interior of the house is decked with Pears' extensive and eclectic art collection and the visitors' book shows royal connections, as well as a glimpse at the glitterati of the 1960's artistic scene. There was a quiet, dreamlike quality to the place, a sort of time warp. It was as if Britten and Pears had gone for a drive in their convertible and would return soon.

The highlight of the trip for many was a visit to Sutton Hoo, the Anglo Saxon burial ground of kings. We walked across a field overlooking the River Deben where, in 1939, local archaeologist Basil Brown found a 90-foot long Anglo Saxon burial ship. Excavating carefully, he discovered an amazing treasure that had lain untouched for 1300 years. Our informed, enthusiastic guide told us that in the 7th century AD a king died in battle and received a magnificent burial. A ship was hauled up from the river, a chamber was erected in the middle of it and a stupendous collection of magnificent objects, including the iconic iron helmet, gold and silver brooches, the sword of state, drinking horns and a lyre had been placed there to help him from "this world into the next – his Valhalla".

This was the first holiday we had been on with SU3A. It was an interesting one made easier by the thorough organisational skills of Margaret Bullivant, who led the group, and Derek and Maureen Shipley, who aided her. So, to all of you out there who have never ventured on a trip before, look in *Links* and get booking. There is so much to be sampled in our green and pleasant land.

Denise West

Make a note in your diary and come and support us.

**SHEFFIELD U3A TRAVEL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AND ART COMPETITION
THURSDAY 12 March 2009**

1.30 pm to 4.00 pm

at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Millhouses

Come and discuss previous visits, future plans and ideas for future programmes.

We do appreciate your opinions and ideas on Sheffield U3A travel.

Come and have a sociable afternoon with us!

ART COMPETITION

The 2008 Art Competition was another great success and hopefully this one will be as successful. So take out your paint and paint brushes and show what wonderful talent we have in SU3A. We will have three judges, who will judge the pictures before the meeting; and all the paintings will be on display from 1.30 pm for all to admire.

Categories: (Not necessarily connected with travel)

- 1 Animals
- 2 Seascapes / Landscapes
- 3 Townscapes
- 4 Still Life

Minimum size 13 x 18cm and maximum size 55 x 60 cm, mounted on suitable card or framed. Only one painting per person in each category. All paintings will be returned.

Details of where to send or deliver the paintings will be in the February issue of *Links*.

Istanbul, Cappadocia and Classical Turkey

We arrived in Istanbul late on a pleasant afternoon, having left behind a wet Sheffield October morning. All were eagerly looking forward to our planned 14 day tour of places in Western Anatolia that were steeped in history and had seen many great events and developments, stretching back to the dawn of civilisation.

Two full days in Istanbul under the tutelage of our excellent guide, Ibrahim, and with the support of our coach driver, Ercan, both of whom accompanied us throughout our stay in Turkey, gave us a good overview of life in the city - past and present. Our visits to the Topkapi Palace, home of the Sultans until the 19th century; the Aya Sofya, built by the Romans in the 6th century as the greatest church in Christendom; and its Muslim rival, the 17th century Blue Mosque (see photo), served to

illustrate the extent to which the city, under its various rulers, was a beacon of excellence as a civilising force in the world at large. The superb location of Istanbul at the crossroads between Europe and Asia was brought home to us during a leisurely cruise along the Bosphorus and its



vitality as a great trading centre was evidenced during our visits to the Grand Bazaar and the smaller Spice Bazaar.

We left the city for Ankara and an extremely instructive visit to the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, where our initial impressions of what many different creeds and cultures had brought to Anatolia, and the world in general, were considerably amplified. On our journey south onto the central Anatolian plateau we saw further evidence of the remains of the once powerful Hittite Empire at Hattusa, before spending time exploring the lunar-like landscape of

Cappadocia, where houses and churches are burrowed into stone cliffs and cities established underground as a measure of protection against unwelcome visitors. Time out from the archaeology of the region was taken to enjoy vibrant displays by local dancers - belly dancers and whirling dervishes were particular favourites.

Further south crossing the Long Road, one of the oldest trade routes in the world and dotted with the remains of caravanserais where the traders would stop for accommodation and business, the mighty Taurus mountains took us to Antalya on Turkey's balmy western Mediterranean coast. There we began our visits to a series of classical Hellenistic / Roman sites at nearby Perge and the magnificent amphitheatre at Aspendos. From Antalya our expedition bore north and west, first to Aphrodisias and Hierapolis and on to Ephesus, one of the most fascinatingly complete cities of antiquity in the entire world. We completed this phase of our journey up the Aegean coast with visits to the remains at Pergamum and the legendary city of Troy. The reconstruction of the infamous Trojan Wooden Horse, which stands at the entrance to the latter site, provided an amusing photo opportunity for the party at large.

The final phase of our journey (dare I say odyssey) involved a crossing of the Dardanelles to visit the battlefields, trenches and memorials that commemorate the soldiers who tragically lost their lives on the Gallipoli peninsula between 1915 and 1916. The sad events here had an important bearing on the development of modern Turkey today. As we flew back to Manchester from Istanbul, we reflected on where we had been and what we had seen during an eventful two weeks. The tour left us all with a better understanding of Turkey and its people; and the vital contribution they have made, and will continue to make, to our general well-being in the years ahead.

On behalf of our group we would like to record our appreciation of all the hard work which had clearly gone into the planning of this holiday, particularly by Shirley Marney. She, along with our guide and driver, remained focused throughout on the many details that needed to be resolved to ensure the success of the holiday.

Bob and Sylvia McColm

[article and photograph]

U3A Trip to Rhodes – October 2008

My wife and I joined Mike Bakall's group of almost 30 third-agers on the autumn trip to Rhodes. Fortunately we were able to fly from Manchester – much easier than joining the main group from Gatwick. The Hotel Ibiscus was very comfortable, with excellent buffet breakfasts and dinners - not good news for dieters! It was also well located in Rhodes new town, opposite a beach – it was still warm enough to enjoy several dips in the sea (most days were sunny and up to 24°C) – and just a 15 minute stroll along the front into the old town.

The old town is still encircled by its massive walls which, defended by the Knights of St John, held off a 90 day Turkish siege in 1480; before eventual defeat, after a six month siege, by Suleyman the Magnificent in 1522. Mike Bakall led us on a walk around the dry "moat" which is now a pleasant linear garden offering splendid attacker's eye views of the defences.



Away from the group we enjoyed exploring the old town with its narrow streets through the Turkish and Jewish quarters, as well as

up the street housing the Inns of the Knights – lodgings for each of the eight “tongues” or nationalities from which they came. The clock tower near the top of the street gives a good view over the town and harbour.

The Museum of Decorative Arts has a small but most interesting exhibition of costumes, ceramics, furniture and other artefacts from Rhodes and other nearby islands.

The Archaeological Museum, housed in the 14th century Knights’ Hospital (where up to 100 patients could be tended), gives a good survey of the historical palimpsest created by thousand of years of occupation from 1500 BC Minoans to 1930’s Italians.

Beyond the town we had very enjoyable outings to the Greek / Roman archaeological site of Kamiros; to the Greek temples and mediaeval fortress above the delightful small town of Lindos, set in its lovely bay; and to Monte Smith – previously the Hill of Agios Stefanos – to see the remains of the temple of Apollo and the ancient Greek stadium. There was also a relaxing boat trip to the nearby island of Symi, with its pretty pastel coloured houses rising up the hillsides around the harbour.

Altogether a very enjoyable trip, combining history and archaeology, an escape from Britain’s cool grey autumn skies and the chance to sample Greek cuisine. It’s just a pity that the U3A national travel organisation is being closed down; but let’s hope that Sheffield U3A can organise more trips to compensate.



Michael Miller

[article and photographs]

Sheffield U3A Calendar

2008

December 4 Stratford on Avon

December 17 Lecture - Medical Imaging: Past, Present & Future

2009

January 3 Classical Concertgoers', Birmingham

January 6 Drop-In Session

February 3 Drop-In Session

March 3 Drop-In Session

March 4 Coordinators' Meeting

March 12 Travel Group Art Competition & AGM

March 25 National Media Museum, Bradford

April 22 Annual Members' Meeting / AGM

April Beverley and Goole

May 10-14 Northumberland (5 days)

May Richmond and Bowes Museum

June 20-29 Austria - Vienna and Salzburg (10 days)

June Stamford and Burghley House

July Houses of Parliament

August Southport Flower Show

September 1-5 Kraków, Poland (Short Break)

September Lincolnshire

October Saltaire and Canal Cruise

November Thursford (3 days)

November New Zealand (3 weeks)

December Belvoir Castle and Melton Mowbray