

Association of East Midlands U3As

Annual Report to AGM 2013

Regional Chair's Report: Alan Morris

1. This year the key word has been **development**:
 - Each of the 5 Networks now have a Development Team providing some essential continuity to what the Network does.
 - We agreed a 3 year Regional Development Plan which dovetails with the 5 Network Development Plans. Hitherto, we have worked on an informed but ad-hoc basis for planning events and that has led to periods of the year with little activity and other times when U3As have been bombarded with information about workshops and the like. With a 3 year view we now have a perspective within which the Regional Representative Council (RRC) and Networks can work flexibly. That Regional Development Plan is summarised on the third page of this report and all the Network plans are on the Regional website (and Network websites). Many thanks go to Liz Wilson for driving the construction of these plans.
2. Since its reorganisation in 2008 the Region has always tried to provide events which have one of two essential criteria: to focus on matters which are fundamental to individual U3As (e.g. the work of interest groups and the work of committee members) or experiences which enrich the core activities of U3As: monthly meetings, interest groups and visits. We have done fewer of the latter (e.g. study days) but we plan to do more and to do so consistently in future. This year we have held a successful workshop for committee members and, as you will see, more events are in the pipeline.
3. If you believe that the U3A is a wonderful creation then growing the movement is vital. As Michaela indicates, this is a national priority for 2013 and we will keep it as one of ours. We now have 90 U3As in the Region with nearly 30,000 members. In 2008 we had 70 U3As. Networks lead the way in launching new U3As and they have done splendidly. In a Region our size we do need Networks as part of our regional structure, and not as another layer of bureaucracy. So all the work done by Networks is part of the work of the Region. When you are doing something at the network you are doing something as part of the Region.
4. Brief mention must be made of the provision of memory courses in U3As (7 to date and more are planned) following the regional workshop in 2012 and the work of Lynne Cox as the Regional Coordinator. This is a smashing initiative.
5. Overall, I would summarise: we have had another good year. Crucial to that judgement is that members who have been participants in past events are returning for successive events – showing a good measure of satisfaction. Just as pleasing is the way in which members new to our Network/Regional events have engaged and found the activities to be worthwhile and enjoyable. Perhaps the most satisfying of these is the establishment of the Annual Conference as an event which attracts large numbers of members year on year, 114 this year.
6. We had members in 3 new roles this year: Gill Childs (Secretary), Michaela Moody (Trustee) and Liz Wilson (Education and Development). All have done an excellent job and, as they say, the future is bright for an active Region.