

Chair's Report 2014 -2015

The past year has yet again seen a growth in the U3A movement both nationally and locally. Over the last few months there has been a wonderful amount of publicity in the national press. There were articles in the Times, the Guardian and the Daily Mail, which should result, hopefully, in greater awareness of this great organisation and a reflected growth in interest in your own U3As.

There have been a number of new U3As set up in the past year and these were Edwalton Gamston & District, Stapleford, Daventry and Bolsover. There are several more in the pipeline for the coming year so my thanks and that of the RRC must go to all the Regional Volunteers and other volunteers who have helped set up these U3As. I hope they will continue to flourish and grow. There are now over 100 U3As in the East Midlands region.

Successful workshops have been held on Constitutions and Committees and on Sleep and Memory, plus a number of locally run Network workshops, including Speaker Finders. There is another regional workshop scheduled for October for Treasurers and Groups Co-ordinators.

The RRC meets regularly to discuss regional and county matters and to plan workshops and the future development of the region. The regional development plan coordinated by the Regional Trustee, Michaela Moody is monitored and updated as necessary. We also discuss national initiatives which are started by the Third Age Trust. One recent item of concern to the RRC has been the plan to employ a number of paid workers to form a new training and development team. The RRC felt that not enough consultation or communication with grassroots U3As had taken place and were concerned that this was being rushed in. It was also felt that although we accept that no big organisation can exist without paid staff, up until now Regional Volunteers in our region had been very successful. A letter had been sent from the RRC to the Third Age Trust expressing our unease and concerns.

One exciting piece of news for 2016 is that as a region we will be running our own Summer School. There are some exciting and interesting subjects and many have a 'local' theme. More details will follow in due course.

Finally, I must record my thanks to all members of the RRC and the alternates, some of whom travel long distances to attend the meetings. Amongst these, I must especially thank Michaela Moody our Trustee for all her hard work and dedication and hope that next year she can reduce her workload and her mileage with the help of her two assistants Mary Mitchell and John Redshaw. I would also like to thank Jane Pavier for taking over as secretary during the year and Mary Cearns our treasurer for their hard work.

Hilary Wells