

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 1999

Chester U3A continues to grow and our achievements have been considerable. During the past year, 371 members were registered and we now have some 35 groups covering a variety of subjects.

Looking back, one of the biggest decisions made was the re-location of the venue for monthly meetings. This was necessary as our numbers had outgrown the capacity of the Wesley Church Hall. Following a fruitless search for suitable premises in Chester, the venue was moved to Upton Village Hall. The Committee were aware that this change would cause inconvenience for some members, and the decision was not taken lightly. A free 'bus service' has been provided to overcome transport difficulties and it is hoped it will prove successful.

In February, John Turley organised a 'Debate of the Age' day at the Queen's School. 55 members took part; included were members from Wirral and Liverpool. It was an interesting exercise.

During the summer, we had an exchange visit from Colchester U3A members, who were kept busy with the planned itinerary. Everyone concerned agreed it was very enjoyable: Mary Vives, assisted by Barbara Wright, had organised this exchange; they also kept our diaries full with various outings and visits to Paris and Scotland. We are grateful for their dedication and hard work in this and other areas of the U3A.

At this time we remember members who are no longer with us, and we reflect on their contribution to our U3A. In particular, I would like to mention Roy Wilson, who was a founder member of Chester U3A and who gave unstinting support to the movement. His passing has left a void in our lives.

The National Conference was held in London in September. This was attended by June Hargreaves and John Turley as our Voting Representatives.

A comprehensive Resources Centre has been established by Head Office. This facility will be a great asset to U3A groups; it is hoped that they will make good use of the resources.

This Annual Report is my Swan Song as I will be relinquishing the role of Chairman. In closing, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for the support given to me and Chester U3A during the past two years. I know it is dangerous to name specific people for thanks, because one is bound to forget someone deserving of appreciation. However, on behalf of Chester U3A I would like to express appreciation - to Evadne for her sterling work with the Groups; helping to set up and visiting groups, which as already mentioned now number about 35; to Isabel, who for the past three years has jotted down the Committee's every word and miraculously produced Minutes; to Harold who undertook the Membership List and other tasks. We wish them well as they retire from Committee; - to the remainder of the Committee, who work so hard for the success of Chester U3A - this includes Cecil, who provides our meetings with speakers of high quality - his connections are endless; - last but not least are the Group Co-ordinators; - the team who put the chairs out for the monthly meetings (those chairs are heavy!) - Ray and team who plug in the microphones and sort out all the wiring; - Alison and the tea rota members. And we all thought it happened by magic!

We are all cogs in the wheel of Chester U3A, with enthusiasm and commitment to meetings and groups. This organisation is special to us, and will continue to thrive and be vibrant in the future. I know you will be in capable hands with your new Chairman, June Hargreaves.

Thank you.

Dorothy Clift, Chairman