

URAC

1982-2003



**Beginnings and Subsequent
Growth of the University of
the Third Age in Cambridge**

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By Dr Ross Mitchell

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**By Dr Ross Mitchell
Director of Studies**

This page: Founders of the U3AC, Dr Peter Laslett and Dr Nicholas Coni
Front cover image: School of Pythagoras, St John's College, taken in 1982
Back cover image: Wednesday Afternoon Lecture, Mill Lane Lecture Theatre

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Foreword

The University of the Third Age in Cambridge entered its 21st year on the 22nd of March 2003, and so, in this time of the U3AC's maturity, it seems appropriate to go back and consider how the whole enterprise began back in 1982.

This is all the more important because, as the organisation has grown and developed over the years, the original vision of the founders has to a degree been lost, together with all the excitement, enthusiasm and commitment to a new venture.

Such changes will inevitably overtake any social enterprise as it becomes organised, and ways of successful working become systematised. Then, there can be a danger of people and the manner of doing things being taken for granted, so that new ideas and new methods can be seen and experienced as threatening – things are all right at present; why change them? Thus new growth can be stifled.

Here then is the paradox – in order to be free in the present to grow into a new future, it is necessary for us to return to our roots, to remind ourselves of how it all began, and why, and with what ends in view.

Dr Ross Mitchell.
Director of Studies (Courses).
2003.

Explanation

I have written this account of the beginnings and subsequent growth of the University of the Third Age in Cambridge (U3AC) in two parts:

Part One: the Narrative

This is written in a continuous form, setting out the story of how the U3AC began and how it developed thereafter in a historical perspective, letting the principal events and decisions unfold over time.

Part Two: Additional Notes

This is a series of expanded notes on a variety of topics that emerge in the Narrative, but are not considered in detail there in order to maintain the historical flow of the story, but which are discussed later so as to make sense of the details encountered along the way.

Narrative

Introduction

"To advance the education of those no longer in full time employment through courses of study in such academic and artistic disciplines as shall be required by them, and to pursue and publish research both on general matters and into various aspects of ageing."

Objects of the U3A in Cambridge.
Declaration of Trust, 1983.

The University of the Third Age in Cambridge (U3AC) comes of age in the year 2003, and so this would appear to be an entirely appropriate time in which to consider and record how the U3AC began in Cambridge, and how it has developed over the intervening years. I have therefore set myself the pleasant task of discovering what I can of the ways in which the U3AC came about in Cambridge, through the testimony of those foundation members who are still with us, and from the various documents lodged in the archives of our organisation in the present offices at 33 Bridge Street.

The U3AC did not come about in a vacuum, but at a time when there had been considerable demographic changes in populations throughout Europe with more and more people surviving into a healthy and active period of retirement. Gone were the days when the retired were seen as passive and dependent on support of the community at large, with little to contribute to the common good. The shape of the population pyramid was changing with more people surviving into later life who now wished and were capable of continuing to learn new things, and to be active and contributing members of their communities.

Early Beginnings

Our own story begins in the early summer of 1981 when Dr Nicholas Coni, a consultant in Geriatric Medicine at Addenbrookes Hospital here in Cambridge, with a Travelling Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians, went on a study tour of France, looking at the facilities for older people in that country. While he was in Toulouse, the Professor of Geriatric Medicine there suggested he might like to look into a relatively new facility which had been started back in 1973 by a Dr Vallas which was called L'Université du Troisième Âge (University of the Third Age). This then poses two questions – in what way was it a university, and what is the Third Age? These questions will be discussed later, but we should pursue our story.

When he came back home, Dr Coni contacted Dr Peter Laslett of Trinity College who had an interest in the sociology of populations and the ageing process. As Dr Laslett has played such a pivotal role in the setting up of the U3A movement here in Cambridge and nationally, a short biography is included in the Additional Notes to this Narrative. Dr Coni and Dr Laslett believed we could set up a similar University of the Third Age here in Cambridge, but unlike the French model which is somewhat rigid and hierarchical in the French tradition, with classes for retired people provided by professional educators, the model in Cambridge would be run by retired people for retired people; in other words, the U3AC would be run by Third Agers for Third Agers.

They decided to put an advert in the Cambridge Evening News, and to arrange a public meeting in the Guildhall to determine what interest and local support there might be to begin a U3A here in Cambridge.

The Guildhall Meeting

The proposed meeting in the Guildhall here in Cambridge was advertised for 7.30pm on the 20th of July 1981 and some ninety people attended. The panel party consisted of Dr Peter Laslett (Chairman), Dr Nicholas Coni, Dr Eric Midwinter (Director of the Centre for Policy on Ageing), and Professor Michel Phillibert (University of Grenoble). After a general introduction by Peter Laslett, Professor Phillibert described experience of the U3A movement in France; then Eric Midwinter outlined a plan for a possible U3A here in Cambridge. There was a lively discussion from the floor, and ultimately there were two proposals:

1. that a University of the Third Age should be set up in Cambridge.
2. that a steering committee should be appointed to plan the opening of such a university as soon as possible.

There was enthusiastic support for both proposals. Peter Laslett would chair the Steering Committee which would include Nona Gratier and Michael Young (Baron Young of Dartington) among others. They would meet as soon as was practical to begin the work of planning.

The Steering Committee

The first meeting was on the 2nd of October 1981 in Peter Laslett's rooms in Trinity College. At that first meeting it was decided to set up two planning committees which would work in parallel, one in Cambridge and one in London:

Cambridge: Peter Laslett (Chairman), Mary Pomeroy (Honorary Secretary), M.Allen, Nicholas Coni, Nona Gratier, Brian Hicks, Tom Kidman, Harold Shelton, Stephen Webster.

John Harrison would be asked to be Legal Adviser.

London: Michael Young (Chairman), Dianne Norton (Secretary), Eric Midwinter, Peter Laslett.

The Cambridge Committee would plan the setting up of the U3A locally, while the London Committee would supervise the setting up of U3As elsewhere in England.

It was decided to set up an *Easter School* here in Cambridge from the 22nd to the 26th of March 1982 in St John's College, where the so-called School of Pythagoras could accommodate 120 people in its lecture theatre with six smaller discussion rooms nearby. A two day National Conference for the London Committee would be held in the same venue from the 26th to the 27th of March, with thirty residential places at Hughes Hall.

Eric Midwinter was asked to explore with the Nuffield Foundation the possibility of obtaining a financial grant for both committees.

4th November 1981

Just as Dianne Norton would be paid on a sessional basis to be Administrative Secretary for the London Committee, so Jean Lambert would be the Administrative Secretary for the Cambridge Committee.

Eric Midwinter reported that there would be a Nuffield Foundation grant of £9,000 to be shared equally between London and Cambridge.

Publicity for the new U3A in Cambridge would be sought through the Cambridge Evening News and local radio. The needs of the housebound could be a useful project, and questions of ageing could be a research subject undertaken by Dr Felicity Huppert of the Professorial Department of Psychiatry of Cambridge University.

Peter Laslett was working on a paper "*All Our Futures*" which would form the basis for a prospectus of the U3A.

There were now U3As proposed for London, Sussex and Oxford.

7th December 1981

Sir John Butterfield, Regius Professor of Physic at the University of Cambridge (and subsequently Vice-Chancellor) had kindly agreed to be Patron of the U3A in Cambridge (U3AC) and would help with establishing charitable status for the U3AC.

13th January 1982

New groups being set up could call themselves "U3As" but only if they ran on a mutual aid basis, that is by Third Agers for Third Agers according to the emerging UK model which was different from that of the French.

Nicholas Coni and John Harrison would work on the Declaration of Trust which would be the basis for charitable status of the U3AC.

It was agreed that the U3A in Cambridge would be deemed to have been founded on the first day of the Easter School, that is on the 22nd of March 1982.

17th February 1982

The bid to become a Charitable Trust was referred to the Charity Commissioners, and in that connection there was considerable discussion about the use of the term "*university*" in our title. This was an important matter because critics in later years would say that the word "university" with all its connotations of intellectual rigour and examinations could well frighten some people off, and appear to deny the concept of learning for its own sake, learning for fun.

Peter Laslett, in his book "A Fresh Map of Life" indicates that "universitas" initially did not have any intellectual connotation, but meant an association of people from different backgrounds coming together for a specific purpose; in our case coming together to learn from each other, and to enjoy the freedoms of our Third Age.

Eric Midwinter reported that a further £1,000 had been granted by the Nuffield Foundation. It was agreed that the forthcoming Easter School should be self-financing, except for guests who would be paid for out of the current finances. After the conclusion of the Easter School, there should be a "Freshmen's Fair" held in a week in the following August.

Further U3As were being planned in Lancaster, Bromley, Dartington Hall, Manchester, Harpenden, Oxford and at Urchfont Manor. In addition, the U3A movement was being developed in Poland, Mexico and the USA. This would lead in due course to the formation of AIUTA (Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Âge).

17th March 1982

The terms of our charitable status had been referred back to the Committee, and were required by the Charity Commissioners to be changed to reflect the aims of the U3AC to be largely academic and artistic, rather than recreational, so it would truly conform to the concept of "university" and not of a "club".

Financial budgets were allocated as follows: £2,600 to Dianne Norton for the National Committee up to March 1983, and £3,860 to Jean Lambert for the U3AC up to October 1982. These might need to be reviewed in light of the expenses of the National Committee.

The Easter School

The Working Party, charged with planning the organisation of the Easter School, and drawn from the Steering Committee, met under the chairmanship of Nona Gratier on the 25th of November 1981. Brian Hicks and Tom Kidman had withdrawn and Dr David Clark was invited to join the Working Party for the meeting on the 4th of January 1982. Jean Lambert would act as Administrative Secretary.

The Easter School was intended to be the opening of the U3A in Cambridge, and would comprise a week of seminars, group tutorial sessions, lectures, research projects and other activities. This would serve as a model for future U3A activities and test out how the participants reacted to and assessed what was provided.

The School would run from Monday the 22nd of March until Friday the 26th of March 1982, and the venue would be at St John's College, in the building known as the School of Pythagoras. Pevsner in the Cambridgeshire volume of his Buildings of England says that "it was probably a private house, and as it can hardly be later than c.1200, it is a great rarity and beyond doubt the earliest house in the county". Interestingly, it was for a time the property of Merton College Oxford!

The upper floor converted into a modern lecture theatre holds about 120 people, and the undercroft below can be used as a refectory for light refreshments. Nearby there are six smaller rooms suitable for group work. Main meals would be taken in Hall, and arrangements made for participants to be resident if necessary.

The Working Party was concerned about establishing the costs so that the School would be entirely self-supporting, except for invited guests. They arranged a booking of twenty residential places at Hughes Hall (£12 per day), and up to seventy places at the School of Pythagoras. The cost for non-residents would be in the order of £25-£30 for the week, including use of rooms, coffee, tea and a buffet lunch. They were concerned with the perennial Cambridge problem of parking!

They also drew up a questionnaire, 1000 to be distributed widely together with a notice about the Easter School, to determine who might be interested in attending and the likely numbers.

In the event, seventy-five people attended the Easter School, most from Cambridge and the immediate surroundings, but others from East Anglia, Bedfordshire, and Nottingham.

The Programme

Monday 22nd March:

9.45	Assemble for inaugural speech (Peter Laslett)
10.00-11.00	Seminar: A Keats sonnet (Dr Hugh Sykes-Davies)
11.00-11.30	Coffee
11.30-1.00	Group Seminars
1.00-2.00	Lunch
2.00-4.00	Film: "Going well over 60" Introduction (Mr Tedder, Manager Alton Sports Centre) Discussion
4.00	Tea
6.00-7.30	Reception

Tuesday 23rd March:

10.00-11.00	Seminar: The changing pattern of disease (Sir George Godber)
11.00-11.30	Coffee
11.30-1.00	Group Seminars
1.00-2.00	Lunch
2.00-5.30	Visit Ely Cathedral or Hinchingsbrooke School

Wednesday 24th March:

10.00-11.00	Seminar: History on your doorstep (Mr Jack Ravensdale)
11.00-11.30	Coffee
11.30-1.00	Group Seminars
1.00-2.00	Lunch
2.00-4.00	Various group activities: Travel Agency (Mr Abbott) Botanic Gardens (Dr Max Walters) Churchill College Archives

County Folk Museum
 Kettle's Yard and Gallery
 Cambridge Collection, Central Library
 Housebound visits
 (Dr Sylvia Dawkins, Mrs Evelyn Tacon)
 Research Group (Survey of Third Agers)
 Physical activities e.g. indoor bowls

4.00 Tea

Thursday 25th March:

10.00-11.00 Seminar: Architecture and Arts (Christopher Cornford)
 11.00-11.30 Coffee
 11.30-1.00 Group Seminars
 1.00-2.00 Lunch
 2.00-4.00 Personal growth and change (Dr David Clark)
 Yoga: talk and demonstration (Mr Ian Rawlinson)
 Alternative physical activities
 4.00 Tea

Friday 26th March:

10.00-11.00 Visits: Wimpole Hall, Wicken Fen, Old Vicarage
 Grantchester, County Record Office (Mr Farrar, County
 Archivist), Cambridgeshire Collection
 1.00-2.00 Lunch
 2.00-3.00 Plenary Session: with participants for the National Conference
 3.00-4.00 Group Discussions led by Conference delegates
 4.00 Tea

End of the Easter School

7.45 Dinner in the Wordsworth Room.

The National Conference

This had been organised by the National Committee and planned to follow straight after the Easter School in Cambridge on Friday the 26th and Saturday the 27th of March in St John's College, with thirty residential places in Hughes Hall.

There were thirty-six delegates from a widespread area – London and the southern counties, Oxford and Wales, the Midlands and Yorkshire, and one member from the U3A of Toulouse! In addition, there were twelve members of the Cambridge Committee and Working Party, and the three officials of the National Liaison Committee – Lord Michael Young (Chairman), Eric Midwinter (General Secretary) and Dianne Norton (Executive Secretary).

The Programme

Friday 26th March:

12.00 Introduction
 1.00 Lunch
 2.00 Plenary Session: with Easter School representatives
 Discussions in small seminar groups
 4.00 Tea
 6.00 What should be the aims and objectives of the U3A?
 (Peter Laslett)
 7.45 Dinner

Saturday 27th March:

9.30 How should a U3A be organised? (Eric Midwinter)
 11.00 Coffee
 11.30 Should the U3A movement attempt to consolidate itself
 nationally? (Michael Young)
 1.00 End of Conference.

Follow-on from the Easter School

A *brief report* on the opening of the Easter School appeared in the Cambridge Evening News on the 23rd of March, in which it stated that "eighty old people" took part on the opening day and recorded the details of the first day's programme. In fact, publicity and relationships with the local press and radio would remain an important issue for the U3AC.

Perhaps, in order to have a more informed report on the Easter School, a full *Press Release* was prepared subsequently by the Steering Committee in which the purposes of the week long conference were described and what had been essentially an experiment resulted in a stimulating, successful and thoroughly enjoyable experience. Some seventy participants had enrolled as life members of the U3A by paying their £5 subscriptions! (this came out of an over-enthusiastic misunderstanding, and subsequently all members of the U3AC would pay a £5 registration fee once, and then an annual subscription).

After the excitement of the Easter School the burgeoning U3AC would be seeking new members who would be expected to take an active part in the U3AC by participating in teaching, counselling, fund-raising, organising, visiting the housebound or addressing envelopes! Appeals for financial help would be made to local firms, individuals and institutions, but financial aid would not be sought from governmental or public funds, in order to fulfil the original objective of being self-supporting and paying its way.

Some of the *Seminar Groups* said that they would like to continue to meet but there is no evidence that they did so before the U3AC began on a regular basis in the autumn of 1982.

A local research group reported the findings of a *preliminary survey* done in the streets of Cambridge into the attitudes of local people to ageing. The sample consisted of eighty-five persons interviewed: thirty-nine thought we became elderly at 70, although sixty considered 60 to be old. When asked what they would prefer to be called when elderly themselves, eighteen favoured "senior citizen", thirteen "elderly" and twelve "pensioner" or "old age pensioner". Nearly all thought that older people could learn new things, and sixty-nine were in favour of the idea of the U3A and only nine were against.

Participants in the Easter School were asked to *give their impressions of the week and to be critical*. I have been able to find only one such reply but I take it to be typical of most. This respondent said that it had been a most interesting and stimulating week. She did not know what to expect at the beginning, but it became clear in due course. The standard to be expected from everyone was very high and set by the lecturers and group facilitators. It was an opportunity to meet a great variety of people from different backgrounds, and the Group Seminars were especially lively, with group members encouraged to interrupt, even in the set presentations. She had some reservations: allocation to the various sets seemed to have been done arbitrarily, and she would have liked to choose for herself, and indeed go to all of them! She would have liked more time to talk with the delegates from the National Conference who joined on the last day, and at the last dinner someone should have closed the School by saying "thank you" and a formal goodbye. Finally, she was aware from her own experience of the difficulty potential members of a U3A who lived in rural areas might face, with limited local resources e.g. libraries with limited opening hours, and difficulty in getting to a central point for large meetings.

The Steering Committee was charged with planning and organising the beginning of the regular sessions of the U3AC in the autumn of 1982. In the document "All Our Futures", a prospectus for the new U3A in Cambridge prepared by the Steering Committee, as well as spelling out the Objects and Guiding Principles, it describes a *programme of activities* prior to the inauguration of the U3AC, namely a market research project into the needs and wishes of potential members, and a residential summer school to be held at Trinity College in the first week of August 1982. There is no evidence that either of these happened.

However, an *Enrolment Fair* was held in St Michael's Hall, Trinity Street on Friday the 10th and Saturday the 11th of September, with further publicity and enrolment forms, mounted in the Central Library and manned by early members of the young U3AC. An *Inaugural General Meeting* would be called for on Wednesday the 29th of September in the Lecture Theatre of Old Addenbrookes Hospital.

The U3AC Begins a Regular Programme

The Steering Committee prepared a *Prospectus and Programme* for the period October 1982 - September 1983 to be sent out to all prospective members of the growing U3AC. This document declared that "the University of the Third Age in Cambridge aims to provide opportunities for retired people to learn and teach both academic and non-academic subjects in a spirit of self-help or mutual aid on a non-profit making and non-competitive basis. Wherever possible groups will be encouraged to develop their own interests for study and research".

Prospectus indicated there would be a general/ foundation course, seminar study groups, research, physical activities, travel club, drama group, social club, book club, counselling service, and a volunteers service.

Membership would be "open to all no longer in full-time employment" with life membership (otherwise a registration fee) of £5.

Course fees would be £10 for six months, with small additions to meet costs in certain courses.

An *Inaugural General Meeting* was called for on the 29th of September 1982 at 5.00pm in the Lecture Theatre, Old Addenbrookes Hospital.

Programme would consist of:

(a) *General Seminar Groups* on Wednesdays 2.15pm-4.00pm in the Lecture Theatre, Old Addenbrookes Hospital.

6th Oct.	Who are the Jews? Nicholas de Lange
13th Oct.	How to appreciate twentieth century painting Barbara Sharp
20th Oct.	The resources of the Cambridgeshire Collection Michael Petty
27th Oct.	Preventive gerontology Sir John Butterfield

3rd Nov.	History of the English pleasure garden Ruth Chippendale
10th Nov.	Rebound exercise, movement and dance for the Third Age Rosalind Potter and Rhoda Simmonds
17th Nov.	Antiques Evelyn Eckstein
24th Nov.	Yoga and meditation in the Third Age Ian Rawlinson and Theo Chalmers
1st Dec.	Development of the steam engine Laurence Ambrose
8th Dec.	The elderly in the past and the elderly in the present Peter Laslett.

(b) *Group Seminar Series* i.e. courses on Modern Languages, English Literature, Arts, Music, History, Sciences, writing and perception.

The Autumn Term would begin on Monday the 4th of October 1982.

The first *Newsletter*, edited by Douglas Pickersgill, had been published dated the 1st of October 1982 and set out details of the Seminar Study Groups to begin in January 1983 as follows:

Health education and human biology (June Wistreich)
Perception and communication (Jane Abercrombie)
Shakespeare and the idea of politics in the tragedies (Christopher Gillie)
Genealogy (Dr L. J. Slater)
Engineering (Laurence Ambrose/ George Wistreich)

The use of the term "Seminar Study Groups", later to be called simply "courses" or "classes", is important because right from the beginning the emphasis was on shared learning together, rather than the Second Age model of a class listening somewhat passively to an "expert". Also, it is interesting to see that again from the beginning, it was possible for more than one person to act as "tutor" or class leader, allowing a greater flexibility in arranging classes which even today is not fully appreciated by members.

In the Newsletter Douglas Pickersgill gave notice of other study groups which were being planned namely:

Computer programming

Laurence Ambrose

The comic in relationship to Molière

Professor de Mourgues

Sociology and psychology

Pat Baldwin

History of political thought/ modern political theory

Reading the New Testament

Bernice Hamilton

Holistic view of life

Damaris Parker-Rhodes

History of garden design/ British examples of landscape garden styles

Dr D.N.Truscott

The University of the Third Age in Cambridge was now well under way.

The Inaugural General Meeting

With the academic side of the U3AC now well established, it is appropriate to go back and review the organisational and administrative structure of the enterprise. An *Inaugural General Meeting* had been called by the Steering Committee for Wednesday the 29th of September 1982 at 5.00pm in the Lecture Theatre of Old Addenbrookes Hospital in Trumpington Street. There is no record of how many people attended, but there is an account of the proceedings.

Peter Laslett as Chairman of the Steering Committee welcomed Dianne Norton, Executive Secretary of the London Liaison Committee, and introduced Nicholas Coni his Co-Chairman, Vernon Futerman (General Administrator), Jean Lambert (our Executive Secretary) and all other members of the Committee.

Peter Laslett suggested that subsequent General Meetings should be held six monthly, and that the next General Meeting would therefore be in March 1983. He further suggested that a new Management Committee should be elected at that meeting, and should remain in office for one year.

He affirmed that the aim of the U3AC was "to provide the retired and elderly with resources to develop their talents, and a satisfactory use of freedom from work". He reminded the meeting that there would be no use of public funds so that the U3AC could be self-supporting and supply tutors from its own membership.

Nicholas Coni reported that a sub-committee was working on a constitution which would be presented at the meeting in March 1983.

Joy Brook requested volunteers to help with projects being considered by the Social Activities Committee and Jay Atkinson gave information on a forthcoming Barbican concert and the proposed visit to the Ice Show at Wembley in January 1983.

It is interesting to note that there has already been established the concept of sub-committees elected for specific purposes, and the Social Activities Committee acting on behalf of the main committee with its own programme of events.

With the establishment of the U3AC on a regular basis, *accommodation* was going to be an ever increasing problem. In the beginning, through I imagine the good offices of Nicholas Coni and Stephen Webster both on the consultant staff of the hospital, the Wednesday Lectures were held in the Lecture Theatre on the top floor of the private wing of Old Addenbrookes in Trumpington Street. This was not without its difficulties in showing slides, and Tom Kidman struggled valiantly with the blackout system. The first office accommodation was in a very small room (the "broom cupboard") on the ground floor of the hospital. Study groups with small numbers could be held in members' own homes. In 1983 there were plans to close Old Addenbrookes, with the new hospital now growing in size out at Hills Road. This prompted a need for a *building fund* to be set up to provide finance for

the purchase or rental of accommodation elsewhere. Office accommodation was found in two rooms in Parker Street, while large group meetings could be held in the Chemistry Lecture Theatre in Lensfield Road, and in the Union Society by the Round Church until one of the Cambridge University Lecture Theatres in Mill Lane was made available on a regular basis.

The First Annual General Meeting

The *First Annual General Meeting* was held on the 21st of March 1983 at 2.30pm in the Chemistry Lecture Theatre. Peter Laslett was Chairman and 121 members of the U3AC attended. Peter Laslett spoke of the growth and expansion of the U3AC in the last six months since it began in earnest. He reminded the meeting of the general aims of the U3A movement as set out in the document "All Our Futures". Vernon Futerman, the Vice-Chairman and responsible for the academic programme, reported that there were nineteen different language classes held each week. Painting, drawing and drama courses were to be introduced soon, and there were plans for structured courses on literature later. There were 319 life members i.e. who had paid the £5 registration fee, as well as a further 100 people attending classes. The annual subscription was set at £20.

Jean Lambert (Executive Secretary) reported that the following *sub-committees* had been set up: Research, Sports Club, Community Services, Social Activities, Travel Club and Finance. Nicholas Coni (Treasurer) reported that the Easter School had run at a financial loss so that the Financial Sub-committee would have to review the current situation and make plans for the future. A provisional enabling document would be prepared for the eventual acquisition of charitable status.

The existing Steering Committee would now stand down, and a new *Committee of Management* was elected as follows:

Officers: Peter Laslett (Chairman), Vernon Futerman (Vice-Chairman), Nicholas Coni (Treasurer), Jean Lambert (Executive Secretary).

Members: Jay Atkinson, Joan Blows, Joy Brook, David Clark, Eve Eckstein, George Godber, Nona Gratier, Tom Kidman, Harold Shelton, Stephen Webster, Leonard Wensley, and Vera White.

The next AGM would be in March 1984.

With the establishment of the new Committee of Management, the academic programme growing apace, and the office up and running under Jean Lambert, this was the *end of the beginning*, and the general format of the U3AC was set for the next twenty years.

Subsequent Growth of the U3AC 1983-2003

Over these years there has been a steady growth in the size and scope of the U3AC, and although a very detailed description could be made of everything that happened, this would not make for easy reading nor necessarily be particularly informative. What I intend to do therefore is to keep to the major events in the Narrative, and leave detailed description of specific events and developments to the second half of this account.

1983

Declaration of Trust

"THIS DECLARATION OF TRUST is made the Sixteenth day of March 1983 by SIR JOHN BUTTERFIELD Regius Professor of Physic in the University of Cambridge and Patron of the University of the Third Age in the City of Cambridge...". This document was to enable the U3AC to apply for charitable status, and it set out the Constitution of the U3AC for this purpose by declaring the duties of the various officers and auditors, the definition of membership and of the Council, the powers of the Council, the meetings of the U3AC and the dissolution of the U3AC.

It was signed sealed and delivered by Sir John Butterfield in the presence of Dr Nicholas Coni. As the U3AC changed and developed, this Constitution had to be amended from time to time, but the basics were established here.

An *Art Exhibition* was held in June, and this became a regular annual event by means of which the work done in the various Art Classes could go on display, and formed one of the many social events which have been important in the life of the U3AC.

1984

In March the Research Committee published *Research Report No 1: The Image of the Elderly on TV*. This was to test the hypothesis that older people might be portrayed adversely in television programmes, but they found that in general older people, defined as over 60, were in fact shown in a sympathetic way.

This research was continued later in September 2000 by examining how older people were shown in TV advertising and again they were portrayed in an understanding and sensitive way. The experience taught us that on the whole members of the U3AC were not best placed to carry out research projects on their own but that they could contribute best by assisting others better qualified such as the professional members of CIRCA (Cambridge Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Ageing).

In April, Peter Laslett published his paper (2nd issue) "*The U3A in Britain: Objects and Principles*." After an introduction, Peter sets out eight Objects, twenty Principles and his thoughts on how the institutional form of the U3A movement might develop. These he included as an appendix in his book "A Fresh Map of Life" which he published in 1989 and again in 1996.

1985

The office which had begun in Old Addenbrookes and then in Parker Street, now moved into 8a Castle Street where there were three other small classrooms taking up to twenty members. The U3AC would remain in these premises, which were part of the complex at Kettle's Yard, for the next eight years.

This was the year in which *Peter Laslett*, who had played such a major

role in the creation of the U3A movement in the UK and had been our first Chairman since the Guildhall Meeting in July 1981, retired as Chairman of the Committee of Management at the AGM held on Wednesday the 27th of March in the Chemistry Lecture Theatre, Lensfield Road. Dr Nicholas Coni was elected Chairman in Dr Laslett's place, and paid tribute to all the excellent work which he had done for us since the very beginning.

With the departure of Vernon Futerman last year, there were now three *managing officers* elected:

Leonard Wensley as Director of Studies
Terry Coslett as Administrator
Kenneth Way as Treasurer.

They would be ex-officio members of the Committee of Management, and formed what came to be known as "the first triumvirate"! who would make a large contribution to the running of the U3AC over many years.

In November, David Clark, Freddie Howe and George Wistreich presented a paper "*Present State and Immediate Future*" of the U3AC. This was a report of a Working Party to the Management Committee, and was based on investigations of the actual situation, and results of a questionnaire which had gone out in 1984, and discussions in an Open Forum. Their report contained valuable statistics 1982-1985 and ideas for the future.

1986

With a growing membership now around 600, the work in the office was assisted by the purchase of a *BBC micro-computer* and so the U3AC was entering into the electronic world of information gathering and speedier communications.

Leonard Wensley, the Director of Studies, had set up a *Support Group* to assist with the organisation of the academic programme as follows:

Geoffrey Bailey	Art
David Bratherton	Music
Pat Cahn	Literature
Doreen Waddington	Languages
Vera White	History.

1987

This was the year of two AGMs! The first was held on the 29th of April, at which time it was decided to move the time of the AGM forward to November or December to obviate the disparity between the financial and academic years. Terry Coslett (Administrator) reported the setting up in 1986 of a *Communications Group* (Ann Eberhardie, John Williams and Douglas Pickersgill) as a clearing house for information and ideas. This group would later develop into the *Way Ahead Group*, a forum in which new ideas and possibilities could be explored.

In the general discussion concern was raised that publicity in the press and local radio should be improved, especially in the light of an enquiry from the local press regarding a rumoured decline in the U3AC!

The second AGM that year was held on the 2nd of December. The membership had now reached over 900 with some 110 classes, but the age-old problem of *waiting lists* was confronting the U3AC. Unless the steady rise in membership was paralleled by an increase in people willing to run classes, there would inevitably be disappointments as people were unable to get onto the classes they wished. This problem would be echoed by the Director of Studies over the years.

Tribute was paid to the *Computer Group*, previously led by Peter Thacker but now by Ray de Vere, and also to the *Office Enquiry Team*. Reference was made to the *Area Contacts Scheme* organised by Ann Eberhardie. This was a means of improving contact between the ever growing number of members, by identifying local members who would act as a focus for members in their locality. Peter Laslett always stressed the importance of face-to-face contact throughout each U3A if the movement was to prosper

and maintain its unique vitality. He even suggested that when a U3A grew to more than 500, thought should be given to splitting up and forming a new U3A group in that locality. This challenge has never been met by the U3AC because of the administrative and organisational difficulties of running more than one U3AC at a time!

It was noted that the research and political activity which formed a substantial element of the original concept of a U3A, had not developed as predicted, although some limited research was being carried out by our own members such as the *autobiographical study* undertaken by Liz Shoenberg.

The *Third Age Trust* is the legal designation of what began as the London Liaison Committee, and then became known as the National Committee of the U3A movement in the UK. The Third Age Trust had been holding national conferences, the last being at Bath this year. It was at this conference that a proposal was first made to replace what had been a three tiered affiliation charge with a per capita system. This marked the beginning of unrest in our own U3AC about what was being proposed nationally to be carried out by all affiliated local U3As of which we were one. This unrest grew into frank dissatisfaction with what was seen as excessive control from the centre over the local U3As. Gradually the feeling arose that we should take the serious step and disaffiliate from the Third Age Trust. As this is a complicated but important stage in the development of the U3AC, in order to maintain the narrative I will deal with it in detail later in this account.

1988

The original *office computer* of 1986 had been replaced by a more advanced model, and James Dow was working on a programme designed to meet the administrative needs of the U3AC.

The Council, under David Clark's chairmanship had worked throughout this year on a *review* of the first five years of the U3AC (1982-1987), considered the present, and clarified aims for the next five years (1988-1993). They showed how the membership had grown from some 360 members with 40 classes in 1982/83 to 980 members with 120 classes currently. There was a question of

access to classes and meetings when parking was so difficult in central Cambridge, and public transport was unreliable. It was noted that the U3AC was not fulfilling all the Objects set out in the prospectus "All Our Futures". They recommended that the U3AC should continue as a self-help teaching and learning cooperative with maximum voluntary involvement of members.

The First International Symposium

This was the main event in the 1988 programme. Entitled "*Into the 21st Century*" it was held from the 11th to the 18th of September in Trinity College. The invitation to attend indicated that "the Symposium will feature leading figures from the worlds of Architecture, Medicine, Science, History, Futurology and other fields of human endeavour. In lectures each day they will present their views of where their subjects are going. The questions raised in these lectures will be studied and discussed in seminars led by experts".

Steering Committee, which began preparing at the beginning of 1987: Nicholas Coni (Chairman), Vernon Futerman (Programme Organiser), Sally Ginns (Secretary), Joan Andrew (Treasurer), Jay Atkinson (Social Activities), Terry Coslett (Press Officer), David Low (Legal Adviser), David Clark and Nona Gratier.

Principal Speakers: Sir John Butterfield, Professor George Steiner, Professor Malcolm Johnson, Dr Max Perutz, Professor Richard Porter, Professor John Nelson Tarn, Mrs Edwina Currie, Dr Nicholas Bullock, Dr Alex Comfort, Dr George Haskell and Dr Peter Laslett.

Optional Activities: music recital in the Wren Library, guided tour of Ely, visit to Wimpole Hall, theatre visit to Stratford-upon-Avon and dinner in the Lord Leicester Hospital in Warwick, guided tour of Burghley House.

The numbers were limited to 350 and cost £275 for three days, £350 for seven days. This covered full board, conference attendance and the final dinner. There was accommodation available in student rooms in college.

I have not been able to find a list of those who attended but undoubtedly they would have come from a wide area as implied in the title "international symposium" and importantly it was a financial success.

1989

This was the year the membership went above the 1000 mark, with a female to male ratio of 3:1 and 189 new members joining in this year.

The new computer was making the increasing work in the office easier.

1990

The Working Party planning the *Second International Symposium* proposed for 1992 was set up, and Muriel Walker was asked to begin preparing for our *10th Anniversary Celebrations* in 1992.

The *Future Accommodation Working Party* led by Nick Goodyear was considering the lease of 8a Castle Street, and the effect of changes at Kettle's Yard. The option of purchase as opposed to renting accommodation was considered, but in the end the Working Party recommended we should continue to rent the Castle Street property provided the costs remained reasonable and acceptable to Council.

The annual subscription increased to £25 in 1989 had resulted in a *healthier financial situation* which allowed some £10,000 to be transferred to the Development Fund. The Accounts of the First International Symposium had shown a surplus of £9,000 of which £4,000 had been spent on publishing the Report, copies of which were still available for sale.

Two recent office *break-ins* had resulted in loss of cash, and security arrangements had been improved.

1991

Membership now exceeded 1300. The absence of a U3AC staffed stand at the Central Library Community Education Exhibition appeared to have had little impact on recruitment.

John Fleming had produced a Tenth Anniversary Calendar which showed great craftsmanship and skill.

The Trinity College light buffet lunch, and the College Tea Party on the 7th and the 24th of July were now firm anniversary events.

With the organisational development of the U3AC, *trustees* in whom property and assets could be vested were now required and the following had been proposed and accepted: Sir John Butterfield, Dr Peter Laslett, Dr Nicholas Coni and Mrs Jane Reid.

1992

David Clark presented his paper "*Living in the Third Age*" at the Wednesday Lecture on the 2nd of February. This described the discussion groups which he had held from 1982 to 1992. These discussion groups, held in his own home, examined through free-flowing discussion the processes of entering the Third Age and responding to the challenges which this presented.

The lease on *8a Castle Street* was extended for a further five years.

The U3AC was now entering into the 10th year since it all began back in 1982. The *10th Anniversary Celebrations* organised by Muriel Walker included the Founder Members' Lunch held in March at Dr Coni's home in Barrow Road (through the kind hospitality of Dr and Mrs Coni many U3AC social events were held here over the years until the Conis moved into a smaller house); and a Garden Party for tutors and class leaders was held in June.

The Second International Symposium

This was the big event in our anniversary year. It was entitled "*Challenge of the Future*" and was held in King's College from the 13th to the 20th of September.

Symposium Committee: David Clark (Chairman), Jay Atkinson (Coordinator), Leonard Wensley (Academic Director), Sally Ginns (Secretary), Joan Andrew (Treasurer), Barbara Grounds (Accommodation Officer), Nick Coni, Peter Laslett, Betty Adams, Queenie Band, Nona Gratier, Joe Shentob, and Vernon Futerman, who came up from London. Work began early in 1991.

Attendees: Australia (29), USA (23), China (5), Czechoslovakia (2), Sweden (2), Malta (1), Belgium (1), New Zealand (1) and from the UK (11). These were all resident; others from local U3As attended on a daily basis.

Principal Speakers: Sir John Butterfield, Professor Akio Hayoshi, Dr Antony Lentin, Professor Brian Reddaway, Leonard Wensley, I.G. Bateman, George Medley, Dr George Haskell, Professor Wozniakowski, Gabriel Gafita, Dr Z. Palan, Anglika Markova, Bohunka Bradbrook, Mary Archer, Beryl Bainbridge, David Boal, Eric Aubry, Hubert Kolb, Dr Felicia Huppert, Professor Richard Gregory, Mark Goyder, Professor Elaine Murphy, Professor Kay-Tee Khaw and Dr Peter Wadham.

Optional Activities: guided tour of Cambridge colleges, music recital in Sidney Sussex College, organ recital in King's College, guided tour of Ely Cathedral, garden party in St John's, theatre performance at Stratford-upon-Avon and river cruise and dinner on the "Lady of Camelot", visit to Hatfield House and lunch in the Old Palace.

Final Report of the Symposium Committee to the Council (February 1993)

It was judged to have been a full success with all who attended finding the occasion stimulating and informative. The Symposium had produced a financial surplus of £6,402 and with the surplus of £7,704 from the 1988 Symposium, this meant there was a total financial surplus of £14,000.

They recommended that this surplus should be placed in "The U3A International Symposium Fund" for financing future International Symposia.

They recognised that organising such symposia was very hard work, but worth the effort because of their unique content and the credit which they brought to Cambridge.

1993

Research was being carried out in Australia into the *U3A movement* worldwide and there were now some 260 U3As in the UK. Britain and Australia were now given full membership of AIUTA (Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Âge).

Although the lease on 8a Castle Street ran until 1997, it was decided to seek more accommodation elsewhere for the ever growing number of classes. This was found in the *Old Warehouse*, at 33 Bridge Street by Magdalene Bridge.

Tony Gibson had proposed that a *questionnaire* should be sent to the general membership designed to find out what members thought about the present state of the U3AC, to guide the Council in its future decisions.

1994

Membership passed the 1500 mark with 140 tutors and class leaders.

The Council decided to remain at 33 *Bridge Street* and signed a five year contract with St John's, while the lease on 8a Castle Street was surrendered. Various alterations and improvements had been made at Bridge Street providing three teaching rooms with larger capacity, and sufficient office space.

Council also decided that the roles of *Administrator and Secretary* could best be amalgamated, and that Tony Evans would hold both offices.

There were three *publications* by U3AC members this year:

Report on U3AC Membership by Tony Gibson
1937-1947: Decade of Disruption edited by Dorothy Millgate
on behalf of the Oral History Group
A volume of poetry.

1995

This was the year in which *Dr David Clark* retired from the Council, having been Chairman for eight years. In reviewing the past years since the inception of the U3AC, he was impressed by how much had been achieved in the last twelve years.

Looking to the future, he felt himself that it might be time to consider rejoining the Third Age Trust. He also felt it important to remind the membership that ours was an educational organisation in which it was vital to continue a spirit of giving rather than one of getting.

1996

This was the year in which Muriel Walker, who had previously been Chairman of the Cultural and Social Activities Committee and Vice-Chairman of Council, was now elected as the *first woman Chairperson of Council*.

The long awaited *computer classes* had been arranged in connection with Impington Village College, and later with Hills Road Sixth Form College and Cambridge Regional College.

The Director of Studies, Leonard Wensley reported the emergence of *common interest groups*, for example there were now five play reading groups and other such groupings were anticipated.

For some time, with the *increasing demands on the Director of Studies*, Dr Peter Brook had been assisting Leonard Wensley with the Wednesday Lectures and I agreed to help him with the academic courses.

1997

There had been a serious burglary at the Bridge Street office involving the replacement of much essential equipment, and repair of considerable damage done by the thieves.

A series of *lectures on modern advances in medicine* had been organised by Graham Neale to be given by his consultant colleagues in the large William Harvey Lecture Theatre on the New Addenbrookes site. These lectures given on Monday evenings at 6.00pm would be for U3AC members, but would also be open to sixth form colleges and especially interested members of the public. This was a new departure for us in that the lectures were held in the early evening, and would be a shared venture with other people.

1998

Although the *Millennium* arguably started on January 1st 2001, we decided we would celebrate the Millennium in the year 2000, and so a *working party* was set up in the January of 1998 to begin preparations for this event. The Working Party met regularly right through until December 1999.

As Leonard Wensley was failing in health, Peter Brook and I decided we would suggest to Council that we should together take over the *duties of the Directorate* with myself being responsible for the programme of academic courses and Peter for the Wednesday Lectures. This was agreed, and I thought it was time to develop *U3AC relationships with other academic bodies* in Cambridge. Together with Tony Evans, I began discussions with John McCann, Director of Adult Education at Hills Road Sixth Form College.

Also, at this time I was approached by *Polynous*, a discussion group in Cambridge run by Richard Moss in which some of our members took part. There was a suggestion that the U3AC together with Polynous would help a body known as the *Voice of the Listener and Viewer (VLV)*, which monitored Public Service Broadcasting, to mount a conference in Churchill College. Council agreed that the U3AC would agree to underpin any loss from such

event to the sum of £100. The conference focussing on developments in Public Service Broadcasting took place at Churchill College in April the following year, and not at a loss! Audio tapes of the proceedings are available in the office.

Deliberations about relationships with the Third Age Trust (TAT) were continuing, and an *Extraordinary Council Meeting* was held on the 19th of August, when our Council met Len Street (Chairman of TAT) and Kate Wedd (Vice-Chairman) when arguments for and against the U3AC rejoining TAT were explored. At a subsequent Council meeting in September it emerged that Council was evenly divided about rejoining or not. I will examine in detail the story of U3AC relationships to the TAT and the eventual outcome at the end of this account.

Like Leonard Wensley before me, I was concerned to have as many *tutors and class leaders* as possible, and to that end I organised a special meeting on the 16th of December at which existing tutors would describe how they ran their classes, and what help was available from the office, in order to encourage more members to volunteer. It was an interesting meeting but only some forty members attended, and it was largely made up of tutors talking to other tutors, but it served to flag up what would be a continuing need in the U3AC if we were not to disappoint members who could not get on the classes they applied for.

1999

Discussions continued between myself and John McCann (Hills Road Sixth Form College), Mary Abbott (Anglia Polytechnic University) and James Hampton (Cambridge Regional College). All were keen to open their facilities to our members and would offer any help to the U3AC they could.

Tony Evans and myself attended a Study Day in June organised by the *Open University*, and also in June some forty U3AC members spent a very interesting *day at the CRC* as guests of James Hampton and his colleagues. Again, this let us discuss how we might help each other's organisations, in particular how Penny King might help us develop our computer and Internet links.

Friendly relations continue between the U3AC and these other bodies but we have yet to develop working together in more comprehensive ways.

David Jakes, one of our members had contacted me earlier in the year suggesting we might set up a *Cinema Group* in connection with the newly opened Cambridge Arts Cinema in Regent Street which had replaced the old Arts Cinema. David and I met with Terry Jones (Manager) and decided it would be a viable commercial venture if we could get fifty to seventy-five members of the U3AC to sign up for a term's worth of films, paying in advance at reduced cinema rates. These film showings would be open to the public as well, but would be run primarily for the U3AC. In the end some 150 members signed up for the first series which began at 1.30pm on the first Tuesday in October with the Italian film "Il Posto". This Cinema Group continues, Autumn and Spring Terms, to the present time, ably organised and supervised by David Jakes whose work is much appreciated by those of our members who continue to join each year.

At the December AGM the motion "*That the University of the Third Age in Cambridge should rejoin the Third Age Trust*" was put to the meeting, proposed by Tony Evans and seconded by myself. Voting was: For - 35, Against - 198, with 3 abstentions, and so the motion was lost.

2000

There were two important events this year – the Millennium Programme and the Working Party set up to consider the future of the U3AC.

Millennium Programme

12 January: *Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving* in Emmanuel United Reformed Church in Trumpington Street at 11.00am. This was led by the Revd Keith Riglin, Minister of St Columbas Church, and the Revd Paul Quilter, Minister of Emmanuel. The Address was by the Rt Revd Simon Barrington-Ward, retired Bishop of Coventry.

Followed by the *Millennium Luncheon* at the Guildhall at 12.45pm, and

then the Lecture at 2.30pm "The 20th and 21st Centuries: a Historical Perspective" given by Professor Christopher Andrew.

30th January: *Come and Sing Concert* held at the West Road Concert Hall and organised by Peter Woodcock. Members of the U3AC with the help of other musical groups and professional musicians practised during the day for the Concert to be given in the evening at 5.00pm including Handel's Zadok the Priest, and Vivaldi's Gloria.

12th-17th June: *the Discovery Exhibition of members' work and interests* and incorporating the Annual Art Exhibition was held at Emmanuel Church. Active as well as static presentations were made. Sir Alec Broers, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University kindly opened the proceedings.

6th July: *Millennium Garden Party* in the Fellows' Garden of Christ's College.

There were other events held during the year:
 Guided Walks around Cambridge by Tony Evans
 Poetry Workshop on the 13th of May
 Study Days: U3AC members and research projects
 Sources of information for Third Agers
 Learning and teaching in the U3AC
 Caring for the environment
 William Morris in Cambridge.

During this year a small party from the U3AC went to Oberammergau to see the Passion Play 2000, and during June there was a visit to us of members of the U3A in Perugia, Italy.

The final event *The Year 1901 Presentation* would be made in January 2001.

In January this year Barbara Megson presented her paper "*U3AC Eighteen Years on: Whither the Next Decade?*" in which she raised the question of how a body which had grown from some seventy-five members in 1982 to nearly 2000 now, should plan for growth in the future and meet the needs of such a large membership.

In response to this the Council set up a Working Party "*Meeting the Future Needs of the U3AC*". The given terms of reference were "Keeping in mind the Objects and Guiding Principles of the U3AC, the Working Party is charged with considering how far the existing administrative and organisational structure will be able to meet future needs of the U3AC. The Working Party should also explore possible ways of meeting perceived needs and it should bring back to the Council any recommendations it may have, including outline suggestions for their implementation".

The *members* were: Muriel Bradley (Chairman), Nicholas Coni, Lizanne Van Essen, Christopher Holt, David Jakes, Barbara Megson, Ross Mitchell, Derek Turnidge and Peter Woodcock.

When the Working Party reported back its preliminary findings to the Council, questions were raised concerning how the Working Party was proceeding and how its findings were put before the Council. At the AGM held on the 6th of December, when the Working Party presented its recommendations for changing our Constitution, three resolutions counter to what was proposed were interjected, but were not supported in a vote taken on them, and because of the concern raised, the whole matter was referred to an Extraordinary AGM to be held later in 2001.

2001

This was the year in which our *membership* topped the 2000 mark.

At the first Wednesday Lecture of the Spring Term, Barbara Megson and members of her archive group presented a programme of the historic events of the *Year 1901*, using original records of the time. This presentation was made up of pictures, speeches and sounds, with a hanging designed by Jane Page, advised by Muriel Bradley's art group, and assembled by members of Jane's embroidery group.

On the 1st of March, we met *Sir David Williams* who had been the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, and who kindly agreed to be our Patron after the death of Lord Butterfield, our founding Patron who had done so much in supporting the U3AC in its early years.

The *Extraordinary AGM* was held on the 28th of March at which time the Report of the Working Party proposing amendments to our Deed of Trust was welcomed and passed by the members attending.

A *Memorial Service* for the life of Lord Butterfield at which we were represented, was held on the 28th of October in Great St Mary's.

2002

Dr Peter Laslett who, along with Dr Nicholas Coni, was our founding inspiration died, and a *Memorial Service* was held in the Chapel of Trinity College on the 9th of March. A short biography of Dr Laslett is in the second half of this account.

To celebrate twenty years of the U3AC, some sixty of our surviving founder members attended a *special lunch* in the Benson Room, Magdalene College. This was a pleasant occasion and Nick Coni used the opportunity to recall many of the important episodes from our past.

I had been feeling for some time that it was important to record the early memories of our founding members while they were still with us, and by chance *Dr Jill Robinson*, Lecturer in the Centre for Applied Research in Education at the University of East Anglia, approached me at the end of 2001 saying she was looking for a subject to *research in lifelong learning*. This was an opportunity for us both. Together with Muriel Bradley and Barbara Megson, Jill and I set up a programme in which she would interview a number of our founding members to record how they first heard about the U3AC, and their experiences of becoming members in those early years. We would then make a similar survey of more recently joined members to see how the perception of the nature and aims of the U3AC may have changed over the last twenty-one years. Between April and September, Jill interviewed ten of our founding members and gave me her recorded interviews which I have analysed.

Unfortunately, Jill's own career has had to change, and so we have not been able to date to complete the second half of the research, but we intend to do so in the near future.

During the summer we were approached by *Dr Barry Pearce* of the Cambridge Preservation Society, to say that they had opened a new Study Centre up at the Society's premises at *Wandlebury*, on the Gog Magog Hills south of Cambridge. We visited the Centre in August, and we are exploring how our members might use the Centre, and possibly help with a project to restore the Gardens which were part of the original estate on the site.

Jane Moorman, who had come as *Senior Administrative Assistant* in the office in 1987, and who over the years had ensured the smooth running of the U3AC as it grew ever larger and its affairs more complicated, decided to retire having won a BA degree at APU and having obtained an administrative post at one of the Cambridge colleges. A leaving party was arranged for Jane on the 18th of October. *Carol Spong*, who had come as *Second Administrative Assistant* in 1998, was appointed in Jane's place, and *Liz Crow* was appointed to the vacant post as from November.

John Hunter, who had replaced Ken Way as our Treasurer after so many years' service to the U3AC, had been warning Council that our *financial affairs* were under considerable strain. Although extra funds had accrued from the two International Symposia, these had been invested in shares and this was not a good time to realise them. The way the annual subscriptions were collected meant that there was a period each financial year when we went into deficit. John felt that we would have to raise the annual subscription to cover this shortfall, but this could be minimised if everyone who could, would sign a *Gift Aid* form. Some 750 members seemed to be eligible, and their Gift Aid forms would raise a considerable sum. Nevertheless, with the real possibility of St John's raising the cost of our rent for the Bridge Street premises, we should still have to raise the annual subscription to £40 which would cover us for the two years to come. John presented his findings and recommendations at the AGM in December, and these were passed by the meeting.

Personal Reflections

During 2002 some of our foundation members who were still active in the U3AC were given an opportunity to reflect on their early experience of joining

the U3AC and in particular to think about what they were looking for when they joined, and what over the subsequent years had been important for them.

When asked **what they were looking for on joining the U3AC**, they spoke about wanting the opportunity to go on learning in their retirement, but also to be able to learn new things together with people with similar interests:

"I thought it was a very good idea, an idea I approved of, for ageing people to have something that would involve further learning."

"For me, it offered an encouragement and opportunity to learn and do things together with like-minded people."

"I wanted to have fun while we continued mental, social and physical activity which is good for our mental and physical health in old age."

"I wanted to study things I had an interest in before I retired, but I never had the time then to follow them up in any detail."

"I had just retired and the U3AC came along at the right time for me; otherwise I don't know what I would have done."

When asked **what they valued most in being members of the U3AC**, it emerged that the social network was as important as the intellectual stimulus, together with the opportunity to face a challenge to discover new skills and aptitudes in this later phase of life:

"I've made some wonderful friends in the U3AC – that's a very important part of the U3AC. There's such a variety of people, such a variety of interests; it's not very difficult to find other people who have the same kind of interests as you."

"I have enjoyed the 'university' atmosphere – it has made up for gaps in my earlier education, and I have discovered new skills I did not know I had."

"When you have done something, and people come up to you and say 'we enjoyed that', that's the reward you get – it's making a contribution whatever it is, that's what it's all about."

"The only thing that is important is what you are doing, and what you want to do and what you can bring to the U3A. We were inspired to say 'not only can you do it the way you want to do it, but you can do it yourself'."

"I believe the U3A can transform people's lives at a time when they desperately need not to stop working, not to stop thinking, not to stop using their brains and not to stop contributing to life."

These last contributions spell out the *essence of the original vision* of what the U3A movement was all about – the excitement, the opportunity for new things, the discovery of self-determination, but above all, the challenge and commitment of belonging to an organisation which is in the hands of the members themselves, to shape and modify as they wish.

As we have grown in numbers over the years something of this original vision has been lost as the organisation has become systematised and regulated internally, as it must, to meet the needs of a large and diverse membership. With a pattern that has been developed over time and which is working, then it is less easy to see new and exciting ways of doing things differently; it is easier for the general membership to be content with what is available, and to leave it to those who are managing things at the moment. Thus, there is a danger of stagnation unless there is an ongoing process of renewal from the inside. This is the challenge to the present and future membership of the U3AC described so clearly for us, by these personal reflections of our foundation members.

2003

We are now into our 21st year, and as such we have come of age!

The year begins with all attempts to safeguard our financial position, while the academic programme continues to prosper, although with the continual need to recruit new tutors and class leaders. The Wednesday Lectures, a well established part of the programme have been and continue to be of high standard and well attended in the Mill Lane Lecture Theatre which has been refurbished and is more comfortable, with good audio-visual facilities.

For some time, there has been dissatisfaction with the facilities in the Students' Union building which are used in the Summer Term for Wednesday Afternoon Lectures and the excellent facilities at the Wesley Church are now being used instead.

The U3AC and the Third Age Trust

This would appear to be an appropriate point at which to finish this account of the development of the U3AC from 1983 to 2003, but to conclude the Narrative with the story of the relationships between the U3AC and the Third Age Trust over these years.

This is a very complex and convoluted story, and at best all I can do is describe the main events as they have evolved to our present situation.

At the historic meeting in the Guildhall in Cambridge in July 1981, the Steering Committee was set up to begin the process of bringing the concept of a University of the Third Age to the UK. At its first meeting in October 1981, the Steering Committee decided it should set up *two committees* to run in parallel – one in Cambridge to set up a U3A here, and one in London which had various titles: the National Committee, the London Liaison Committee, and ultimately the *Third Age Trust* with a National Executive Committee, whose purpose was to oversee the developments of U3As within the UK.

Right at the outset, there was a dispute over how the money raised by Eric Midwinter from the Nuffield Foundation should be divided between the two committees. We concentrated on setting up the Easter School in Cambridge, and London organised a National Conference which was held here in Cambridge immediately after the Easter School concluded. In due course, like all other emerging U3As, we affiliated to the Third Age Trust (TAT) as a sign of solidarity and unity of purpose as defined by Peter Laslett in "All Our Futures".

The TAT held AGMs or annual conferences, and at the *conference held at Bath* in September 1987, it was proposed that a three tiered affiliation fee for

each U3A should be replaced by a *per capita* system. This, among other things began to cause unrest here in Cambridge which came to a head in 1989 when there was clear opposition to the policy being followed by the TAT based on:

- (a) the perceived increasing centralising control exercised by the TAT
- (b) the proposed new Constitution involving:
 - change to a capitation fee (from £50 to £1,000 for Cambridge)
 - the TAT now saw itself as *THE U3A*, with "branches" elsewhere
- (c) the loss of local U3A autonomy and freedom to grow as members required, as laid down in "Objects and Principles".

Having expressed our reservations to the proposed changes, a meeting was held in Cambridge on the 24th of March of our Council officers and the Chairman of the TAT and members of the National Executive Committee (NEC). A further meeting took place on the 24th of April following, but the representatives of the TAT remained inflexible in their position regarding the changes.

Thus, our Council on the 25th of May 1989 decided to accept the recommendation of its officers *that the U3AC should disaffiliate from the TAT*, and the two organisations would therefore operate separately. We also sent a letter to all other known U3As explaining why we, the original U3A, were taking this action.

The TAT called a *National EGM* at which it was announced that four of the largest U3As with members over 1000 (when most local U3As had under 300 members) had decided to disaffiliate namely Cambridge, Dewsbury, Halifax and Huddersfield. The NEC was instructed to enter into discussions with these U3As to see if they would change their minds, but I cannot find any evidence that they came back to us, and our decision stood. This put Peter Laslett in a difficult position because, as well as being one of our founding fathers, he was playing an important role in the TAT and NEC.

At the AGM of December 1995, *Dr David Clark*, standing down as Chairman of Council after eight years, suggested that in his opinion the time

had now come to reconsider our relationship with the TAT and discuss the possibility of affiliating once more.

Discussions took place over a period of time until 1998 when on the 19th of August a meeting between ourselves and *Len Street* (Chairman of TAT) and *Kate Wedd* (Vice-Chairman) was arranged at which we explored the current position of the TAT, and the arguments both for and against our re-affiliating.

At the next Council meeting on the 7th of September, a general discussion of these arguments showed that *the Council was equally divided*. It was decided that a paper showing the detailed arguments for and against rejoining the TAT would be prepared and taken to the December AGM for full debate. At the AGM I presented the arguments for rejoining, and Muriel Bradley those against:

For:

1. we should rejoin to support all the other U3As in the TAT
2. there had been some shift in attitude in the NEC
3. we would have contact with other U3As though informal local networks
4. we would have access to free legal advice, the Resources Centre and copies of the Third Age News
5. we would gain the respect and trust of other U3As in the TAT.

Against:

1. doubts were expressed that paying £4,000-£5,000 (capitation fee) would produce little benefit for our members
2. some of our members would have to be prepared to serve on the NEC and attend the AGM to safeguard our interests

3. we would face the risk of increasing centralised bureaucracy in the future
4. the danger of SAGA, which was supporting certain aspects of the TAT, having undue influence over the organisation
5. the Resources Centre could be expensive, and result in an increase in subscriptions when the National Lottery support money ran out
6. the disproportionate voting powers of smaller U3As within the NEC and TAT could be disadvantageous to larger U3As like ourselves.

After a full discussion by members at the AGM the motion was put:

"That the U3AC should rejoin the TAT"

There were 35 votes *For* the motion and 198 votes *Against* with 3 abstentions. The motion therefore was not carried, and the U3AC would not rejoin the TAT.

Members of the U3AC could still join the TAT as individuals if they wished, as had happened in the past, and the U3AC would hope to maintain good and friendly relations with the TAT in the future.

This now brings us to the conclusion of the *Narrative*, the first section of this account of the early beginnings and subsequent development of the U3AC. The second section, *Additional Notes*, follows after the Illustrations.

Illustrations

Headquarter Buildings



2a Parker Street



8a Castle Street



The Old Warehouse

The Easter School

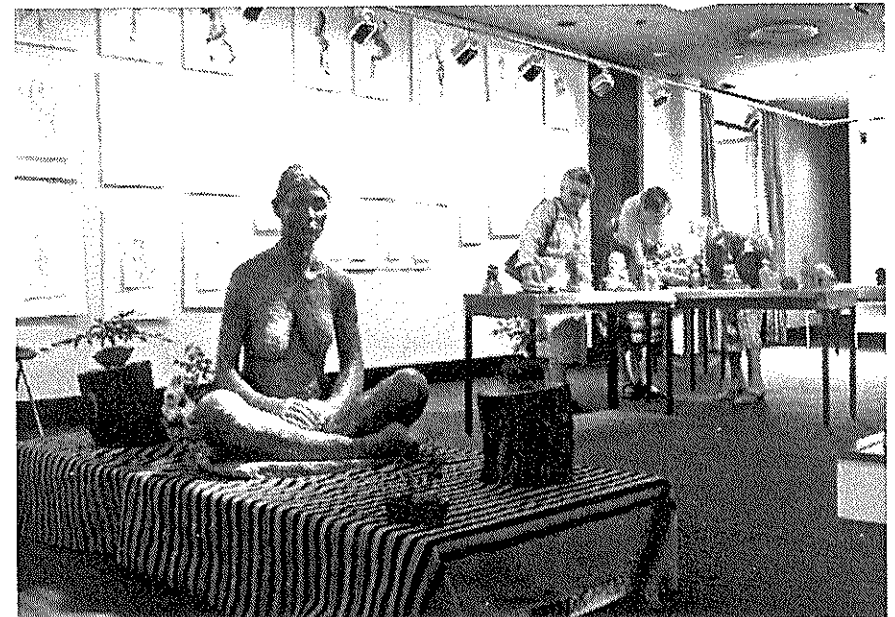


School of Pythagoras (exterior)



School of Pythagoras (interior)

Events



Art Exhibition 1983



10th Anniversary Lunch 1992



Garden Party, Christ's College 1999



Founder Members' Lunch 2002



Christmas Party 2002

Activities



Painting Class



Monopoly Group



Yoga Class



Ramblers' Outing



Archive Group



"Come and Sing"

Additional Notes

Peter Laslett

Dr Laslett was Reader in Politics and the History of Social Structure at the University of Cambridge. He was Director of the Ageing Unit at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, and a Fellow of Trinity College. Together with Michael Young he founded the Open University, and played a major role in the organisation of the BBC Third Programme in its early years. As a historical demographer he published in 1965 "The World We Have Lost" and in 1996 "A Fresh Map of Life" in which he describes a general theory of the Third Age, and sets out the Objects and Principles of the U3A in Cambridge.

He was also the co-founder of the Cambridge Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Ageing (CIRCA), with whom the U3AC have been associated over the years.

Peter Laslett died during 2002, surely gratified to see how the concept of the U3A had grown throughout the UK and in many countries across the world, but sad that what he saw as the gulf between the U3A here in Cambridge and the national body in London was unresolved.

Michael Young

Michael Young (Baron Young of Dartington) was a British educationalist, Director of the Institute of Community Studies in 1953, and Chairman (later President) of the Consumers' Association in 1965. He pioneered "distance learning" via the National Extension College, a forerunner of the Open University, which he helped to found along with Peter Laslett. He was created a life peer in 1978.

Concept of the Third Age

In *Life Cycle Theory* each of us, as individuals, moves through a cycle of developmental stages, from birth through infancy and childhood into adolescence, then by young adulthood into middle age, ultimately through older adulthood into dependent old age. This is a continuous process, with each stage flowing imperceptibly into the next.

An alternative way of thinking is to identify certain discrete periods of life identified by the main characteristics and behaviours of that stage. Thus, Shakespeare has Jacques, a shrewd observer of the human condition, describe in "As You Like It" the *Seven Ages of Man* – the first the mewling and puking infant, the second the whining schoolboy, the third the sighing lover, the fourth the bearded soldier, the fifth the justice in fair round belly, the sixth the lean and slippered pantaloone, and finally the seventh second childishness sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything!

Erik Erikson, a psychoanalyst and authority on human development, in his book *Childhood and Society* published in 1950, describes *Eight Ages of Man* – the first three in infancy and childhood namely the oral, anal and locomotor-genital ages, leading into latency (pre-pubertal), puberty and adolescence, then young adulthood, adulthood and finally maturity. As a psychoanalyst, Erikson puts most emphasis on the very earliest stages of human development, and is less concerned with later life, particularly older age.

When Vallas, in Toulouse in 1973, created L'Université du Troisième Âge he had to presume a first, a second and possibly a fourth age, and in so doing he was simplifying Shakespeare and Erikson, and for our purpose restoring the balance in favour of later life. The **First Age** is that of dependency on others, hence infancy and childhood; adolescence is a bridge into the **Second Age** of adult independence in which we earn our living, marry and have our children; the **Third Age** is when we are no longer in regular employment, may have retired but are still mentally and physically active; the **Fourth Age** is that of senility with a return to increasing dependence once more on other people for our welfare. Thus, our Third Age corresponds to Shakespeare's fifth and early sixth age, and Erikson's eighth age.

For those of us living in the latter half of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, as Peter Laslett has pointed out unlike our parents, and certainly grandparents, with more people living into a healthy older age, we may spend as long in our Third Age as in our second. Further, unlike the very pessimistic description of older age in Chapter 12 of the book of Ecclesiastes – "when the evil days come, and the years draw nigh and we have no pleasure in them", in our Third Age many people are physically fit, are relatively affluent and want to enjoy life to the full. Again, as Peter Laslett has pointed out, the Third Age is not a time of "retirement" in a passive sense, but an opportunity and challenge to explore new horizons and do new things – hence our motto of "learning for pleasure and fun" and Peter Laslett's challenge "to live in the presence of all our tomorrows".

The French Model for U3As

Because of the nature of French culture in which great respect is paid to intellectual authority, and because of the hierarchical structure of French society, it was natural that when L'Université du Troisième Âge was set up in Toulouse in 1973, that it too would be hierarchical and somewhat rigid in its attitudes and concepts of "education". Thus the tutors came from the ranks of existing professional educators, with strict qualifications to be a tutor, and set standards for the courses provided. This means that the Third Agers were being taught by Second Agers, as applies in the UK in such bodies as the Open University, Boards of Extramural Studies in the Universities, Workers' Education Associations etc.

Peter Laslett believed it was vital to stress that Third Agers themselves have a vast reserve of information and knowledge to share with each other, and that U3As in the UK should be run on a mutually supportive basis by Third Agers for Third Agers. Thus members would be both tutors and class members of each other, and that each U3A should be democratic and run by the local members for their members, with no preconceived idea of how each U3A would develop and grow.

Recruitment of Tutors and Class Leaders

Because of the difference in the French and UK models for U3As, the criteria for recruitment of tutors and class leaders in the UK are radically other than those in France. Here, with the emphasis on mutual support and working within the existing resources of a U3A, we are not looking for academics or "experts" primarily, but for people with an enthusiasm which they want to share with like-minded people, and who focus on helping the class members find out what they already know, and what new things they would like to find out.

The Steering Committee

This was set up after the Guildhall Meeting in order to plan the setting up of a U3A here in Cambridge:

Peter Laslett (Chairman), Mary Pomeroy (Honorary Secretary), Jean Lambert (Administrative Secretary), M.Allen, Nicholas Coni, Nona Gratier, Brian Hicks, Tom Kidman, Harold Shelton, Stephen Webster. John Harrison (Legal Adviser).

with members of the National Committee:

Michael Young (Chairman), Dianne Norton (Honorary Secretary), Eric Midwinter.

The Easter School Working Party

This was drawn from the Steering Committee in order to plan for the proposed Easter School to be held in March 1982:

Nona Gratier (Chairman), Jean Lambert (Administrative Secretary), Nicholas Coni, Brian Hicks, Tom Kidman, Mary Pomeroy, Stephen Webster.

Brian Hicks and Tom Kidman withdrew from the Working Party early on and Dr David Clark was invited to join the Working Party in January 1982.

Easter School Seminar Groups

Subject	Facilitator
Literature	Violet Simmonds
French Literature, Language and Culture	Nancy Cooke
Art and Society	Harold Shelton
History	Bill Hancock
Local Studies: History, Biography, Genealogy, Environment	David Clark
Social Studies: Politics, Economics, Resources	Leonard Wensley
Gardens and Gardening: History, Landscaping	Joy Brook
Natural History	Eric Whitehead
Ageing in Society	Mary Jackson

These seminars, with up to twelve people in each, were held Monday to Thursday in small rooms in New Court, St John's College.

Cambridge Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Ageing (CIRCA)

Peter Laslett was co-founder of CIRCA, a confederation of a number of academic disciplines interested in researching the causes and effects of the ageing process. This included demographers, sociologists, social anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and geriatricians.

Our main contact, apart from Peter himself, has been Dr Felicia Huppert, a clinical psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry, and lately Dr Philip Taylor a colleague, working full-time for CIRCA. We have served for a time on the organising committee, and have taken part in a number of seminars led by CIRCA and latterly at the first Peter Laslett Memorial Lecture following his death in 2002.

U3AC Statistics

Growth of Membership

Year	Month	Number	Year	Month	Number
1982	March	72 (at Easter School)			
1983	March	419	1994	December	1548
1985	March	600	1995	December	1614
1987	December	940+	1996	June	1650
1988	December	1000+	1997	June	1717
1989	December	1070	1998	June	1803
1990	December	1175	1999	June	1880
1991	December	1300+	2000	June	1971
1992	December	1400+	2001	June	2007
1993	December	1477	2002	June	1943

This shows a steady recruitment of members from a modest beginning in 1982, passing the 1000 mark in 1988 and the 2000 mark in 2001. There is a dip in 2002 which has coincided with the anxiety of falling revenue from new subscriptions and has raised the question of whether we now need to be more proactive in publicising the advantages of U3AC membership.

The *Working Party Report of 1986* presented by David Clark, Freddie Howe and George Wistreich sets out a number of tables relative to U3AC membership at that time, and can be consulted to complement this account.

List of Officers, Council Members, Auditors and Office Staff

Chairman		Vice-Chairman	
Peter Laslett	1982-83	Vernon Futerman	1983-84
Nicholas Coni	1984-86		
David Clark	1987-95	Muriel Walker	1990-95
Muriel Walker	1996-99	Muriel Bradley	1996-99
Muriel Bradley	2000-	Derek Wood	2000-
Administrator		Secretary	
Vernon Futerman	1983-84	Jean Lambert	1983
Terry Coslett	1985-87	Nona Gratier	1984-85
Tony Evans	1988-94	Freddie Howe	1986-92
Barbara Megson	2000-	Muriel Rooney	1993-94
Administrator/ Secretary		Secretary	
Tony Evans	1995-99	Chris Holt	2000-
Treasurer		Assistant Treasurer	
Nicholas Coni	1983-84	Eric Mitchley	1983
Ken Way	1985-2001	Ken Way	1984
John Hunter	2002-	Colin McLeish	1987-2001
		Josephine Stubbs	2002-
Director of Studies		Minute Secretary	
Vernon Futerman	1982-84	Jean Gimbert	1995-2000
Leonard Wensley	1985-97	Wendy Cooper	2001-
Ross Mitchell (Courses)	1998-		
Peter Brook (Lectures)	1998-2001		
Pam Gatrell (Lectures)	2002-		
Members of Council			
Betty Adams	Pam Gatrell	Lorna Morse	
Jay Atkinson	Tony Gibson	Douglas Nix	
Eric Allsup	Sally Ginns	Douglas Pickersgill	
Yolanda Allsup	George Godber	Muriel Rooney	

Bruce Allen	Nick Goodyear	Pat Saunders
Dorothy Baer	Sheila Goodyear	Edith Schlossman
Queenie Band	Nona Gratier	David Scarisbrick
Sylvia Barratt-Eatough	Kate Grillet	Harold Shelton
Ethel Bentley	Barbara Grounds	Joe Shentob
Joan Blows	Mary Hancock	Liz Shoenberg
Muriel Bradley	Chris Holt	Dominick Spencer
Piers Brereton	Freddie Howe	Monica Sommereux
Joy Brook	John Hunter	Russell Thompson
Peter Brook	June Johnson	Brian Thrush
David Clark	Millie Johnson-Jones	Derek Turnidge
Rita Cole	Tom Kidman	John Waddington
Robin Coleclough	Lorna Knox	Muriel Walker
Shirley Coleclough	Jean Lambert	Ken Way
Nicholas Coni	David Lane	Stephen Webster
Terry Coslett	Peter Laslett	Leonard Wensley
Peter Davis	Ann Lucas	Vera White
Rachel Dew	Margaret Mason	John Williams
Brenda Disbrey	Colin McLeish	George Wistreich
James Dow	Barbara Megson	Derek Wood
Ann Eberhardie	Graham Milburn	Gregory Wren
Eve Eckstein	Pat Milne	
Tony Evans	Vita Milne	
Selwyn Few	Ross Mitchell	
Desmond Fitzgerald	Hugh Mooney	
Wendy Francis-Wood	Bob Moore	

Office Staff (Administrative Assistants)

<i>Senior</i>	<i>Junior</i>
Jean Lambert	Jo Knight
Caroline Quick	Gay Housden
Jane Moorman (1989)	Joan Clewes
Carol Spong (1998)	Liz Crow

Auditors

M.C.Adams, J.A.Warwick, Eric Pooley, Ron Cook, David Butler, Peters, Elworthy and Moore from 1996.

U3AC Annual General Meetings

Year	Month	Location	Chair	Numbers attending	% of members
1983	March	Chemistry Lecture Theatre	Peter Laslett	121	29
1984	March	Mill Lane	Peter Laslett	180	32
1985	March	Chemistry Lecture Theatre	Peter Laslett	170	29
1986	April	Mill Lane	Nicholas Coni	95	13
1987	April	Union Society	Nicholas Coni	166	18
1987	Dec.	Mill Lane	David Clark	146	16
1988	Dec.	Mill Lane	David Clark	169	17
1990	Dec.	Mill Lane	David Clark	158	13
1995	Dec.	Mill Lane	David Clark	84	5
2000	Dec.	Mill Lane	Muriel Bradley	121	6

The number of members attending these AGMs fluctuates between 180 and 84, so that with the steadily rising membership eligible to attend, the actual percentage of the membership at each AGM falls away. This creates a problem for the democracy which is at the heart of the U3A movement; a small number of our membership makes decisions affecting the rest of the non-attending members. This is one of the disadvantages of a large membership. In the early days of small numbers, everyone can be enthusiastic but even then under a third attended the AGM.

Life Membership

This was paid once at £5.00 in 1982, but with subsequent financial arrangements this has not been continued, and is replaced by the *Joining Fee*.

Annual Subscription

This is paid by each member on application for classes each year, and is used to cover the administrative costs of running the U3AC in general. As each U3A class is supposed to be self-financing, there will be other costs for each member, for example paying for materials used in art classes, the cost of outings and foreign travel, the cost of photocopying when over the allowed amount per member.

After some initial confusion between life membership and an annual subscription, this began at £20 per member in 1982. It rose to £25 in 1989, and to £30 in 2001. Finally, at the AGM in 2002, Council had to raise this to £40 in order to meet the pending financial deficit forecast by John Hunter our Treasurer.

Over the years, our treasurers have asked the members who are eligible, to *covenant* their annual subscription (now called "*Gift Aid*") as this will raise extra funds recovered from the Inland Revenue, and help to keep down the size of our annual subscription.

The Administrative Office

The heart of any large organisation is its centre for administration. For the U3AC this has been the office.

At the beginning of the first term in 1982, the office was in a small room (the "broom cupboard") on the ground floor of *Old Addenbrookes* in Trumpington Street. Changes scheduled for the Old Addenbrookes building prompted a move to two rooms at *2a Parker Street* during 1984. Then, the following year with the need for more space, the office was accommodated at Kettle's Yard in premises at *8a Castle Street* where there were three small

rooms for classes as well. Again, possible developments at Kettle's Yard in 1990 forced a decision to stay at Castle Street or move elsewhere. In the end, a further five year lease on Castle Street was taken out in 1992, while alternate accommodation was sought in other locations. This was found at *the Old Warehouse at Bridge Street* in 1993. This provided space for the office, other administrative space and three further rooms for classes. These premises on the ground floor were leased from St John's College with student accommodation upstairs. Happily, we were allowed to discontinue our lease at 8a Castle Street which had still to run.

Our *current office* has two rooms, one for the two paid part-time Administrative Assistants (Carol Spong and Liz Crow) with our computers and filing facilities. The other room houses the photocopier, our library and the main telephone, manned by our band of volunteers.

Accommodation Needs of the U3AC

With a current membership of around 2000, and some 200 classes, we have a great need for accommodation other than at the Old Warehouse. We need one *large meeting place* seating up to 200 people for our Wednesday Lectures and our AGMs (Mill Lane Lecture Theatre, Wesley Church). We need *rooms for classes* varying from 120 (Cockcroft Hall), 50 (Friends' Meeting House) and up to 30 in various locations. A number of small classes are still held in *members' own homes*, as was the pattern in the early days.

At the present time our classes are accommodated as follows:

Cambridge Centre: the biggest group of classes, many at the office building (Bridge Street), Friends' Meeting House (Jesus Lane and Hartington Grove).

Church Premises: Castle End Mission, St Columbas, St John's, St Luke's, St Mark's, St Paul's and recently the Wesley Methodist Church.

Cambridge Colleges: Emmanuel, Magdalene, Trinity, Gilmour Building Botanic Gardens.

Outer Cambridge: Barton 2, Chesterton 3, Comberton 1, Coton 1, Cottenham 1, Girton 1, Grantchester 2, Great Shelford 1, Ely 4, Newnham 4.

As the accommodation in the Union Society was not very practical, we are now using the premises at the Wesley Church in the Summer Term.

Cultural and Social Activities Committee

The Council has, from time to time as need arises, set up various Working Parties for specific tasks. In the early AGMs, there is reference to groups and "committees", but there has only been one standing committee, namely the Cultural and Social Activities Committee which has been present from the beginning and emphasises the importance of the social network of events, running alongside the academic programme.

It was established as the "Social Activities Committee" in May 1982, under the vigorous chairmanship of Jay Atkinson. At the first AGM in 1983, she reported the early programme including a Royal Barbican Concert and a Christmas Dinner at King's College.

By 1985, the programme included theatre visits, concerts, opera, art exhibitions, garden party and visits to places of interest. In 1986, Jay Atkinson reported that 1200 members had taken part in twenty events, and that the annual financial turnover was £10,000.

In 1988 the title was changed to the "Cultural and Social Activities Committee" to reflect the scope of work undertaken for our membership.

Chairman		Treasurer
Jay Atkinson	1982-1992	Eric Mitchley
Muriel Walker	1993-1994	Joe Shentob
Monica Sommereux	1995-2002 (June)	
Derek Wood	2002-	

Annual Events

As the U3AC has grown in size and complexity, gradually a pattern of events has built up over each year, and these are now fixtures in our calendar.

January: New Year's Drinks Party
Beginning of the Spring Term

March: Tutors' meeting with Director of Studies
Class secretaries' meeting with the Administrator
Beginning of Summer Term after Easter
Thank You Party for tutors, class leaders and volunteers

June/ July: Garden Party
Applications for membership and for classes

October: Welcome Tea Party for new members
Beginning of Autumn Term

December: Annual General Meeting (moved to March 2004)
Christmas Lunch

The Wednesday Lecture is held every Wednesday afternoon in term.

Council meets in January, March, May, October and November.

The Annual Art Exhibition

The first Annual Art Exhibition was held from the 2nd to the 9th of July 1983.

Thereafter, it was a regular feature each year for nine years, organised by Muriel Bradley on behalf of all the Art Classes. Because no one was willing to take on this task from Muriel at that time, it ceased to be a regular annual event.

The Art Classes were represented in the Discovery Exhibition of members' work, organised by Rosemary Huggins from the 12th to the 17th of June, as part of our Millennium celebrations in 2000.

Patrons of the U3AC

Sir John Butterfield (Lord Butterfield of Stetchworth)

John Butterfield was appointed Regius Professor of Physic to Cambridge University. As a clinician, his special interest was in Diabetes Mellitus. He played an important part in the development of the Clinical Medical School here at New Addenbrookes. He did important work for the Medical Research Council, and in due course became Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University. Finally, he was elevated to the House of Lords.

Despite this very busy life, Sir John was pleased to become *our first Patron*, and helped us establish our Deed of Trust in 1983 which got us our charitable status. He gave us much support in the early days through his many contacts in the university, and he was always happy to come to our social events such as the Garden Parties, until he died in 2000.

Sir David Williams

Sir David Williams, likewise a former Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, kindly agreed to become *our current Patron* on the death of Sir John, and we welcomed him to the U3AC at a tea party on the 1st of March 2001. He too is pleased to come to our social events, such as the Thank You Party for tutors and helpers.

The Deed of Trust

This is the legal document which defines the U3AC, and as such is the basis of our Constitution. It was originally signed by Sir John Butterfield on the 16th of March 1983, as our Patron and on behalf of the U3AC. It sets out the Objects of the U3AC, the rules of management, and then the duties of the Honorary Secretary, the Honorary Treasurer, the Director of Studies, the Administrator, and the auditors. It defines the membership, the Council, the powers of the Council, the meetings of the U3AC and finally, how the U3AC will be dissolved, if that day ever comes. As our situation has changed over the years updating changes to this document have been made as necessary.

Chronology

1981	20th July	Guildhall Meeting
1982	22nd-26th March	Easter School in St John's College
	26th-27th March	National Conference
	29th September	Inaugural General Meeting
	4th October	First Term begins
1983	16th March	Declaration of Trust
	21st March	First Annual General Meeting
1985		Membership passes 500 mark
1988	11th-18th September	First International Symposium held at Trinity College
		Membership passes 1000 mark
1989	25th May	Decision not to affiliate with TAT
1992		Our 10th Year
	13th-20th September	Second International Symposium held at King's College
1994		Membership passes 1500 mark
1995		Time to reconsider joining TAT?
1998	19th August	Extraordinary Council Meeting with representatives of TAT
	2nd December	AGM vote not to rejoin TAT

1999	15th April	Public Service Broadcasting Conference held at Churchill College with VLV (Voice of the Listener and Viewer)
2000		Millennium Programme
		Working Party into Future Needs of the U3AC
	6th December	AGM debate on Working Party Report
2001	1st March	Sir David Williams becomes our Patron after death of Lord Butterfield
	28th March	EGM accepts Working Party Report amending Deed of Trust
	28th October	Memorial Service for Lord Butterfield
		Membership passes 2000 mark
2002	9th March	Memorial Service for Dr Peter Laslett held in Trinity College Chapel
	15th April	Founder Members' Lunch held in Magdalene College
	18th October	Leaving Party for Jane Moorman
2003		Our 21st Year.

Retrospect

In looking back, we have to ask ourselves why the U3A movement has been such a success both locally and nationally? Systems Theory teaches us that for a concept to succeed it must not only be right in itself, but also that the times must be right as well. We can identify those timely factors present both nationally and locally when Nicholas Coni and Peter Laslett first thought of introducing the U3A movement in Cambridge back in 1981.

Nationally:

During the 20th century life patterns began to change so that although the length of the human lifespan did not alter much, the number of people surviving into older age significantly increased and is still increasing. Not only was the number of people surviving going up, but those people were relatively fit and healthy, and so could expect to enjoy an active and productive Third Age.

At the same time there has been an emphasis on continued learning in later life with mature students at universities, the National Extension College and the Open University. The use of computers and the Internet has allowed people greater access to information, and has facilitated distance learning which in turn has encouraged people to experiment with learning new things in later life when previously they might not have done so.

Locally:

Peter Laslett was a historical demographer and a sociologist researching population changes, and was particularly interested in ageing and the potential of older people to continue to contribute to society. He had worked with Michael Young in setting up the Open University. He had been in discussions with Dr Nicholas Coni, a local consultant geriatrician at Addenbrookes, about the role of older people in society, and ways of postponing the entry into the dependence of the fourth age. It was natural therefore that when Dr Coni came back from Toulouse with news of their Université du Troisième Âge, they together should see the value of such an organisation in the UK.

It so happened that in 1981 and 1982 a number of key people were retiring in Cambridge at this time, and looking for something constructive to do in their retirement. They were attracted to the Guildhall Meeting and the initial enthusiasm for a U3A in Cambridge. They themselves went on to play a crucial role in getting the scheme off the ground and developed over the following years.

The academic setting in Cambridge no doubt helped to foster the founding and subsequent growth of another educational body, and particular thanks have to be given to Lord Butterfield and other university figures for the support and help they have given the U3AC, both at the beginning and afterwards.

In addition, in the 1930s Henry Morris started the Village College movement to encourage local people to take up educational pursuits in the local college buildings which contained the local school premises. City schools had evening classes, and there was the Board of Extramural Studies out at Madingley. The local atmosphere was favourable to learning. Thus, the concept of a University of the Third Age was indeed opportune and the time was right, both at national and local levels. Once the concept was born, the enthusiasm of our founding members ensured it would not only survive but prosper.

Starting in Cambridge, the setting up of the London Committee allowed what we pioneered here to be taken elsewhere and spread throughout the UK, and by the two International Symposia, to extend the concept worldwide.

Now, in our 21st year we can be proud of what has been achieved locally, and be inspired by the vision of Peter Laslett and Nicholas Coni, and the enthusiasm of our founding members, to carry the concept through into the next 21 years.

Dr Ross Mitchell.
Director of Studies (Courses).
2003.

Acknowledgements

In writing this account of the early days and subsequent development of the U3AC, I have been able to rely on information from a variety of sources:

Documentary Evidence:

the U3AC archives, and in particular the two albums of annotated photographs which relate to the early days, prepared for the Council by Tom Kidman.

the U3AC archives have been organised by Barbara Megson, our Administrator, and the minutes of the more recent AGMs by Chris Holt, our Secretary.

Dr David Clark has kindly made available to me his comprehensive personal records, from the early days and through to 1999.

the replies of ten of our founding members to the enquiry by Dr Jill Robinson contained much information of events in the beginning of the U3AC, but also their personal recollections and reactions to the early programmes.

the back copies of the Programme of Studies, held by Carol Spong in the office, gave me good information on the various officers, and members of Council.

Personal Recollections:

Muriel Bradley (Art Exhibitions)

David Clark (memories as Chairman over 8 years)

Nicholas Coni (the very beginning)

Chris Holt (recent AGM minutes)

David Jakes (Cinema Group)

Barbara Megson (U3AC archives)

Monica Sommereux (Cultural and Social Activities Committee)

Carol Spong (general help from the office)

Ken Way (financial matters)

Muriel Bradley, David Clark and Barbara Megson have carefully read the draft copy of the text and have corrected both my typing errors and where I have got the facts wrong.

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Documents Referred to in this Account

All Our Futures (Peter Laslett)	1981
Declaration of Trust (Sir John Butterfield)	1983
Extraordinary Council Meeting	1998
Future Programme (Ross Mitchell)	1998
Living in the Third Age (David Clark)	1992
Memories of the Early Days in Cambridge U3A (David Clark)	2001
Millennium Programme: Study Days (Ross Mitchell)	2000
Objects and Principles (Peter Laslett)	1984
Present State and Immediate Future (David Clark, Freddie Howe, George Wistreich)	1986
Press Release (Steering Committee)	1982
Relations with TAT (Council)	1998
Review and Report (David Clark)	1988
U3AC Eighteen Years on: Whither the Next Decade? (Barbara Megson)	2000
U3AC List of Members in March 1982	1982
Working Party Report: Meeting the Future Needs of the U3AC	2001

Copies of all these documents are in the U3AC archive housed in the U3AC office, and will be available to members on request.