

The University of the Third Age – Plettenberg Bay

(known as U3A PB)

Chairman's report: February 2011

I joined the committee of U3A PB four years ago, in 2007, and have served as chairman for the past two years. In accordance with our constitution I am now standing down from that position but shall continue to serve as a committee member.

My experience with U3A PB has been a wonderful learning curve and I have made many friends among the members, to whom I am most grateful for positive input and suggestions. In 2010 we were loaned two super series, *Rhodes* (Shirley Leveton) and *History of Modern Britain* (Carole Walker). An enormous "thank you" to you both. We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Lin Gubb, whose poetry mornings have opened our minds to a magic world of lyric verse. It is great to know that Lin has offered to return this year for more poetry readings.

I would also like to record what a great pleasure it has been to share committee duties with: Christo Vlok, our extremely able deputy-chairman and advertising manager, Michael Lond, our super-efficient secretary, Ian Hogan, our meticulous, reliable treasurer and membership co-ordinator, Brian and Brenda Hardy, who make our Film Club evenings such pleasurable events, Elsa Baartman, who runs our Book Club so extremely well, Alain Leger, who introduced us to the edifying and erudite American Teaching Company series (and presents them with such flair), Jetty Oppenheimer, who is an art historian of note and whose meticulously prepared lectures impart so much wisdom, and Marina Niven, whose input, suggestions for lecturers and outings are invaluable.

The working of the committee of U3A PB is a team effort, with valuable contributions from all the members. We are fortunate indeed to have such a set-up.

I must add, with regret, that Barbara Fletcher and her husband, Pat, have left Plettenberg Bay to settle in Natal. Barbara's presence on the committee is missed. However, Moesch van der Spuy, who has been nominated to take Barbara's place, will be heartily welcomed.

A very special person and a regular lecturer at Plett U3A since its inception was Louis Matthee. This remarkable, knowledgeable man came over to us from his home in Knysna, to enrich our lives with his memorable programmes about the history of music, illustrated with selections from his own extensive collection of CDs. Dear Louis died suddenly on 22nd October and we replaced his scheduled programme with a special memorial concert, put together by Amelia White and Michael Lond and. We shall miss Louis enormously.

Our membership stands at 396, compared to 402 from the previous year (and 393 in 2009). However, in a most welcome balancing act, I can record that, overall, attendance at lectures and presentations has increased, with record figures being recorded when we had between 80 and 100 people coming on those Mondays when we flighted the excellent series about Cecil John Rhodes. (And almost the same number for the Andrew Marr *History of Britain*). It is most rewarding to notice how attendance numbers at all events have grown – so I guess we must definitely be doing something right!

We had so many good speakers during 2010 that I feel it would be invidious to single out any particular names. In drawing up the U3A course lists, I have tried, generally, to keep Monday mornings for showing series and Wednesday mornings for lecturers, courses like poetry and one-off programmes. Having said which I must add that we have two shorter series that are so good I've decided to show them on Wednesdays. The first is the latest Sir David Attenborough documentary, *First Life*, and the second is Michael Wood's *In Search of Shakespeare*. I took this decision because we are spoilt for choice with some outstanding longer series to show during the coming year.

In this report thanks must also be made to those non-committee members who run various on-going courses. They include Gill Brown and Pam Rodwell, who hold the extremely popular bridge afternoons at the Angling Club, and Merle Decot, who hosts the French conversation group. Ian Sayer has, since the start of Plett U3A, been the leader of the Plett Panters Hiking Group. Ian does a great deal for U3A because he is also our (voluntary) Examiner of Accounts. Thank you, Ian, for everything! However, he has decided to hand over the running of the hiking group to Robyn Eidelman, although he will continue to participate.

Finally, I must acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to the management and staff of Formosa Garden Village. Without being able to hold our presentations in this venue, where parking and security are taken care of, and for all the help they proffer to make our meetings run smoothly, Plett U3A would not be the same. I am especially grateful to FGV's IT expert, "Bugs" Liebrecht van Zyl, who is always on hand to iron out glitches in our technical equipment. We shall hand over R7500 to FGV as a contribution towards staff expenses and the refreshments that are always available.

The report of our treasurer, Ian Hogan, will deal with our costs and accumulated funds. There is a list of our assets available for anyone who wishes to view it.

We exist for those who haven't forgotten that learning is fun – and that mental stimulation is indeed pleasurable during one's third age. I think we do indeed fulfil a small need in the community.

Angela Embleton

Chairman

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