



U3A

By Daphne Chamberlain

U3A? Is it a band? Is it a tax form? No, it's the University of the Third Age. What? It's a university without conventional tutors, without exams, without compulsory course-work, and with just one pre-entry qualification. It's for people who are "no longer in gainful employment".

Does this mean a lower age-limit? Actually, no. There are no age-restrictions, although the majority of members are older people. One of them is my aunt, and it has enriched her life enormously. Now it's reaching East Finchley, with two groups meeting in Strawberry Vale from October.

It's never too late

The purpose of U3A is to encourage its members to share their interests and expertise with each other. So it's never too late to take up virtually anything that's always interested you, from philosophy to computing, theatre visits to table tennis, money matters to river walks. The membership fee of £20 covers membership, three annual newsletters, and attendance at Central Events.

U3A started in 1975 in France, where it really is tied in with the universities. The English version is different. Here, it's a case of informal

groups, learning from each other, led by people with knowledge in that particular area. They meet in the daytime, either in each other's homes, or in local venues.

There are now over 400 autonomous U3As throughout the country, with over 100,000 members. They are all affiliated to the Third Age Trust, a registered charity and limited company.

The North London U3A already has many groups in Highgate, Muswell Hill, Wood Green and North Finchley. The classes at Strawberry Vale are Tai Chi, 1.45-3.15 pm on Mondays, and Yoga, 2-3 pm on Wednesdays at the Green Man Community Centre. As the tutors are professional, there is a fee for each class. As with all groups, you do not need to join the U3A until you have tried out the class. Please ring 020 8346 3751 for further details.

The Quiz on the Hill

Winner of the "How well do you know Muswell Hill?" Festival Quiz, organised by the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association as the central attraction on their stand at the annual summer event, was Judy Loren of Excel English, whose office is on Muswell Hill itself. She wins a £20 voucher to be spent at W. Martyn, the Broadway grocers.

Second was Ms O. Lahr of Wilton Road and third Mrs I. M. Glynn of Muswell Place. They win vouchers for £15 and £10.

The quiz, compiled by committee member, East Finchley's Bill Tyler, had ten questions ranging from "What did Sainsbury's replace?" to "How many metres above sea level is The Broadway?" Nobody got the answers to all ten questions.

The three winners also receive a year's free membership to the association, which gained 31 new members as a result of its summer promotion.

The winter series of members' meetings gets underway on October 17 at the Friends' Meeting House in Church Crescent. The speaker for that evening is yet to be arranged, but Hugh Garnsworthy, vice chairman of the Hornsey Historical Society, will speak on November 21. There will be a talk about the history of Highgate Wood on February 21 and a speaker from the Muswell Hill and District Horticultural Society will speak on March 21.

Moment of Truth

The last programme in Spice Girl Mel B's talent finding programme "This is my Moment" resulted in an East Finchley man being pipped at the post.

Thirty-seven-year-old Andy Abraham sang the Whitney Houston hit "The Greatest Love of All." Over one hundred and thirty two thousand people phoned in to vote for Andy, but Irish air hostess Ellie Bar's version of "The Streets of London" proved to be more popular.

Had he won, Andy would have received 50p for each of his votes, and planned to wed his partner Denise and buy himself a car.

Astrology Apology

In "Charting the Future", our recent article about Anne Brennan, DMS Astrol, we stated that Liz Greene was taught by the late Howard Saspertas. Anne wants to make clear that, although Liz Greene was associated with Howard, she was not his student. We apologise for the misunderstanding.

Swing Along With Henry

By Daphne Chamberlain

Henry Van Emden, clarinet player and saxophonist, once had one of the best bands in Europe. In 1946, he even found himself with an advantage over the great Benny Goodman.

Henry, a Londoner entertaining English and American fellow servicemen, was in the Guards Armoured Division, though not a Guardsman - ("I would have had to stand on a chair").

His five-piece band, including drummer Joe Toff, who had played with Fats Waller, entertained at Divisional parties around Bonn. This, though, was the era of the big band, and Henry wanted one to rival the Americans.

With help from existing top brass, he found some more from across the regiments. They played for King Leopold in Brussels and broadcast on British Forces Network from Hamburg. When some of the first band were demobbed, and he was transferred to Berlin, he built up another one.



Then he approached the American Forces Network for a weekly radio slot. "You'll follow Benny Goodman", he was told. "What, me?" was his response. Then he realised the advantage. Goodman's show was recorded, but his was live, and incorporated a request spot.

Rhapsody in Blue

Henry could have worked with his producer in the States,

but fate intervened in Stoke Newington, where he met his late wife. She didn't want her husband to be a full-time musician, but he and his civilian bands still managed to play at all the big London hotels, often in partnership with toastmaster Ivor Spencer. Henry has accompanied an assortment of stars, but recently he did a solo piano gig for the Concert Artists' Association.

He still has a clarinet from wartime days. Someone picked it out of the mud, saying, "Here, mate, you're a musician. What's this?" He bought it for £3, and found it "a damn sight better than the very expensive one I had already".

Continuing the American connection, but this time on holiday, Henry has played his clarinet in a Dixieland band in New Orleans, and Jerome Kern's old piano in the Waldorf Astoria. The other day, he played "Rhapsody in Blue" for me, on his own piano. What a great way to end an interview!

These days he plays mostly for local groups - senior citizens and disabled. For them it's at his own expense, though he needs transport for his new band, which is his amazing Yamaha keyboard. Henry can be contacted on 020 8883 2715.



Top: Henry van Emden and his band "some years ago" and above: Henry today - photo by Sippy Azizollah

A Guiding Hand

By Sarah Hagger

The Guide Association is running a national recruitment campaign to raise awareness of Guiding and its many benefits, for both girls and leaders. These benefits include self-development, team working, leadership qualities, fun and adventure.


Some of the events taking place this term are a 'Big Gig' for guides - a fantastic pop concert with a host of bands at Wembley Arena, and a 'Bug Challenge' - we are being challenged to get a million yellow and blue Guiding bugs into circulation nationwide.

Units in Finchley will be getting involved in these or their own recruitment challenges during the next couple of months. We're doing this to seek more women to become leaders and helpers so that more girls in Finchley can get involved. To find out more, ring free on 0800 1 69 59 01.

Every day of every week, The

Guide Association in Finchley regularly allows girls and young women the chance to experience many fun activities.

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