



u3a, what's that?

Forty years ago three friends had the notion that old age was a positive rather than a negative time in life. The underlying thought about the third age was intended to do away with the idea that once retired all you were fit for was watching daytime television. The idea of continuing education for everyone was to form the basis of the u3a. The concept was introduced from France where L'Université du Troisième Age was already well established, but the UK model would not be attached to the universities but would instead be a mutual self-help movement where third-agers would organise their own activities.

In 1982 life expectancy was 73 this has risen to 82 by 2021 and with people living longer and remaining healthier for far longer the u3a provides an outlet for people who wish to join with others to discuss matters of common interest. Education should be more about participation rather mere instruction linked to qualifications. By contributing to an active retirement, both mentally and physically, the u3a promotes the message that getting older is OK and should be embraced. As one of the founders put it the third age, "is the last golden paragraph of life and not a hastily scribble postscript on the letter of life. It's not fading away, it's a chance to do things - learn Arabic, study military history, whatever.""

Bognor Regis formed its own u3a in the spring 2011 and we now have over 500 members with 40+ different interest groups ranging from sports to science, arts and crafts to languages, supper clubs and short break holidays in the UK and near continent. All these activities to support the new tag line of "Learn, Laugh and Live"

Our regular monthly meeting with a speaker is held at St Mary's centre in Felpham on the last Thursday of the month from 10.30 to 12.00. Much more information can be found on our website or by contacting us at lesgrionettes@yahoo.co.uk.