**Some Interesting Facts about U3A**

***How old is U3A? -*** 50 years old this year. It started in Toulouse France in1973.



**Professor Pierre Vellas –**recognised the pool of experience, knowledge and intelligence of retired people.

***How many countries have U3As–*** over 300 countries worldwide.

***Can you visit a U3A when overseas? –*** Yes. Visit this website myu3a.0rg and they will put you in touch with a U3A, although many now have their own web pages with this information.

***Why was U3A started?*** – originally it was ‘a cure for stagnation’ for retired university professors. Study groups were held in universities with academically highly qualified course leaders and the format was the somewhat antiquated passive listening model. This has changed radically over the decades with the acceptance and recognition of individual talents and skills and the use of a shared knowledge approach.

***Why do we still retain the word ‘university’ in the title? –*** Not everybody has a degreenor do they need one to join U3A, but we all have an interest in shared learning and activities as we age, so why keep the word ‘university’ in the title? In NZ the Education Act 1990 protects the use of the word ‘university’. Despite several challenges it remains an offence so NZ groups now uses the abbreviation U3A as way round this legal requirement.

***How did this change from the traditional U3A format to a newer more relaxed one come about? –*** The first seeds came from a British study into education for the elderly. Many seriously conservative university colleagues were ‘constipated by history’ but it soon became clear that ‘third agers’ were quite capable of organisng their own activities and providing the skills and expertise required. Each country and U3A group now has their own interpretation for presenting U3A content, but all agree that there are no scholastic requirements nor exams or certificates although some courses may. lead to these.

***Benefits of U3A*** – new colleagues and friends, a ‘feel good factor’, health factors mental and physical benefits plus best of all ‘the cogs don’t get so rusty’!

Nb Please click here to read a more detailed version, kindly put together by Dave Smith.