

## Friends and Family Open Day: A Day of Activities

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2013 at Arnot Hill Civic Centre, Arnold

This day was conceived when two members of Arnold U3A were discussing the Womens' Day that had been held at the same venue and they had the idea to hold a day for Arnold U3A. We were grateful to be offered the venue by Gedling Borough Council at no cost. The concept of the day was widened when the idea was brought to the Notts Network who enthusiastically supported it and it was decided that it become a joint U3A day involving the Gedling U3As and Nottingham U3A.

We began our planning in July holding roughly monthly meetings up until November. With so many people to accommodate it took us some time to identify a modus vivendi but we were greatly supported by Michaela Moody's planning proforma which kept us to a plan.

Our objectives were twofold:

- To promote awareness of U3As in the area
- To develop interaction between local U3As

Eventually, we hit upon the idea of each U3A having a lead role in providing a showcase stand for their own U3A and one relating to one of their Interest Groups. This gave us a structure and we then added some particular feature events such as the Carlton & Gedling Rose Singers, Bob Massey's talk on the history of Arnold and a debate.

The debate was, from the first, to be a key feature of the day and the initial vision was for it to be an intergenerational debate with U3A third agers and sixth formers involved. Unfortunately, we were let down by the school and so reverted to a debate between third agers alone. However despite this, it was a triumph with such well thought through speeches and such a variety of styles and ideas. My concern that we would not have enough visitors there to provide an audience was also ill founded and all in all I feel sure this inter U3A debate is something we ought to set up for the future.

The planning process was often a difficult one with so many people involved and the issue of having to rely on members to carry out tasks which they did not always follow through with. Having said that, there was a massive amount of good will and the total numbers involved in helping in one way or another must have been over 60.

We were greatly helped by having the support of our Regional Trustee, Michaela Moody, and Liz Wilson, Education & Development officer. Michaela, in particular, gave so much time and good advice. Through her we were also able to access £200 in grants from the Trust and a variety of publicity materials.

The day itself was a great success with a very early start for those setting up and the whole venue looking really welcoming with so many activities on each floor. We had stalls from various charities as well as the Garden stand put on by Burton Joyce U3A, the Crafts stand put on by Arnold and Nottingham U3As and the Languages and Board Games room put on by Arnold U3A.

We estimate that over 300 people attended the day. The majority were from the areas close to the Civic Centre but there was support from further afield including many of you.

In retrospect, we very much enjoyed the day and were proud of what we had achieved and the wide involvement of so many U3A members. We feel it is definitely worth repeating but probably every two years. We are in the throes of setting up a debating group at Arnold and hope others may do the same so that we can have inter U3A debates.

Rosie Allen  
Arnold U3A on behalf of the Organising Team  
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