

u3a – AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

During my recent 3 month stint in South Africa I visited West Rand u3a, in the Gauteng province near Johannesburg. This club started in April 2016 with 170 members. The first meetings were held in Ruimsig Retirement Village Hall. Due to increasing numbers recently moved to Wilgespuit N.G. Kirk. Monthly meetings are every 2nd Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. for coffee followed by a talk at 10:00. Outings take place every 2nd month with group lunches alternate months.

I was warmly welcomed at two of their Core Meetings – *History of Photography* and *Pain free lifestyle through correct deportment*.

I was also invited to join them on an outside visit to Nuclear Energy Corporation South Africa (Nesca). This develops and uses nuclear technology as part of the National System of Innovation. Nesca also aims to raise awareness of nuclear science and its application. The centre is a fun and funky place to learn. A (bring your own) refreshment break in the tour was taken in the grounds.

Lunch had been arranged in the garden of a local restaurant. This had to be aborted due to a torrential downpour but rearranged indoors at the nearby Lion Park.

I wasn't the only English visitor. Two members of u3a Canterbury were also in the party.

My circle of friends in SA has once again expanded.

POPULARITY OF u3a IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first branch started in 2000 in Cape Town. When I began my annual visits some 16 years ago there were only five clubs in the whole of South Africa. Now there is a u3a in most provinces with more than 25 branches and a membership of approx. 11,000 throughout the country.

Marjorie Stubbs.