

## MERTON U3A AND ITS GROUPS

Group Leaders are regularly invited to provide the Groups' Co-ordinator with lists of their members in order to ensure that they are indeed members of Merton U3A. In carrying out these checks in the autumn/winter of 2013, and against the background of recent discussion of the imbalance between male and female members and the importance of group activity within Merton U3A as a whole, it seemed appropriate to analyse current group composition, size and representation by gender.

Having topped 100 for the first time in September 2013 Merton U3A currently has 94 active groups, with two more coming on stream in 2014, but having lost three language groups, and no longer being in a position to consider two other groups as its own after the somewhat intransigent position adopted by a neighbouring U3A. The analysis below covers all the 94 groups active at the end of 2013.

Altogether, and including the Group Leaders, these groups have **a total of 1096 members of whom 212 are men**. However, when account is taken of the fact that numerous Merton U3A members are involved with more than one group (the record being 8!) the actual number of our individual members who are members of one or more groups amounts **to 608 or 74% of our current membership of whom 124 or just above 20% are men**.

By section, now that all groups have reported, we currently have **161 members of Language Groups, of whom 33 or 20.5% are men**. There are **96 members of the Arts and Crafts Groups of whom 15.7% are men**, **277 are members of The Arts groups of whom 16% are men**, and there are **48 members of our Science Groups of whom 25% are men**. **Current Affairs and History has 119 members of whom 28% are men** – the highest male representation of all. As for the sections for which complete figures are now available, the percentage of **male representation** is: **Music: 21%; Active Pursuits & Games: 18%**. **Men** therefore, in principle **appear to be more interested in Current Affairs and History, and Science** than other areas of group activity.

The number of members per group varies enormously. The averages per section are set out below but the largest groups have in excess of 40 members. Some of the smaller groups only have two or three.

The average number of members per group by section of activity is as follows:

Music	8.9	C
Current Affairs & History	9.2	
Languages	9.5	
Arts and Crafts	9.6	
Science	12.0	

The Arts 13.2

Active Pursuits and Games 16.3

As to **Group Leaders** themselves, overall **69% are women and 31% are men**. In relation to their limited overall representation within Merton U3A this means that **men are particularly well represented as Group Leaders in Science (50%), The Arts (48%) and Music (46%),** but in other areas these figures tail off with **38% leading the Current Affairs and History Groups, 22% Active Pursuits and Games, 11% Languages and 10% Crafts and Arts.** 13 Group Leaders – male and female - run two or more Groups.

The above is not intended to be anything more than a snapshot of the position at the end of 2013. But it might help the new committee to focus upon certain areas of activity if it wishes to pursue the objective of achieving greater gender equilibrium with Merton U3A.

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