

Exchange Visit to Mauritius U3A 17-24th February 2017

Thanks to the entry in Third Age Matters last September I became interested in the exchange with Mauritius U3A.

Mark Twain was right when he said:

“Mauritius was made first and then Heaven”

This tiny Island in the Indian Ocean is heavenly. The beauty of the scenery from the seven coloured sands to the waterfalls and beaches was matched by the courtesy and kindness of its people. This was personified in the founder/president of U3A Mauritius Armoogum Parsuramen. Known to his many friends as Parsu he is loved by all who know him. His charismatic personality, boundless energy and enthusiasm is reflected in the rapid growth of the movement. It was his Idea to initiate the exchange in order to foster overseas collaboration and share ideas with U3As in the United Kingdom.



The party which was led by AIUTA members Ian Funnell and Jenny Carley came from various parts of the U.K. We were provided with a full programme which included the inauguration of a new U3AM and visits to interested groups including ICT, art, yoga, dancing and singing. Participation was encouraged with opportunities to share knowledge and experience in ICT, music and dance being welcomed.



Ian & Jenny made presentations, acted as guest speakers and where a ready source of information at meetings. Inclusion, self-development and a sense of achievement are high on the list for U3AM members with success being marked with a graduation style ceremony.



Our visit coincided with the Mauritius Maha Shivaratri Festival which is the largest Hindu pilgrimage outside of India. Thousands of devotees walk from all corners of the island to Ganga Tulao, the sacred lake at Grand Basin, to celebrate the Grand Night of Lord Shiva. This cultural attraction was one of the highlights of the visit.



I found the whole visit uplifting and enlightening. The courtesy, good will and kindness shown to me by my host family was appreciated. I look forward to returning the wonderful hospitality by welcoming U3A Mauritius members to my own U3A Foyle and sharing more time with my new found friends.



Rose Marie Bradley