

# **'My' Activity Groups**

*by John Armstrong*

I started a few of the early groups myself which, oddly enough, seem to have attracted mainly men. Also oddly enough, they seem to have a lot to do with flying, including my latest group, Indoor Flying, started in 2008.

In Flight Simulation we each had our own PC running Microsoft Flight Simulator, bringing our own joysticks and learning to take off, fly and land Cessnas and other aircraft including jumbo jets. The College provided great support, setting up their PCs and connecting our joysticks, and of course renting the lot to us for a nominal fee. We flew weekly for about two years, until we came up against software restrictions which grounded us.

The Sci/Tech group came from a desire to tap in to some of the very able brains in our village to explore scientific or technical/engineering themes. The group began with a few, including John Armstrong, Ruth Westley, Clive Wells, Angela Skerit, Neil Barker, George Harris, and has grown to about a dozen. Clive Wells and later Bob Kidd led the group for the years following my return to work, and now Mike Thompson organises us. Sci/Tech discussions and talks are brought to us by members, some short. some longer, with great variety. We have occasional visits, the first of which was to the Royal Institution for a national U3A Sci/Tech day with a lecture in the famous Christmas lecture theatre; I was able to join visits to the Shuttleworth Collection of aircraft (from which I still have Neil Barker's photo collage), to the Vulcan at Bruntingthorpe, and again to Rolls Royce jet engines at Derby. Our monthly meetings really are a delight.