



## Second U3A is now being planned

U3A Dunedin may be about to have a partner organisation in the city. Three of the Board members met a recent arrival in Dunedin, who has been a long-time active member of the Bay of Islands U3A.

This person is on our waiting list, but is keen to establish a new group, which will be based on the small-group structure that we have begun to launch for our members. I understand that she has placed a notice in the local paper asking interested people to contact her.

We are delighted to hear of this development, and to support it in whatever way we can. Although there are a number of ways in which we could relate to this new group, at present it will establish independently and in a small way, depending on demand. For anyone who is interested the contact number is 454-2170.

Our year will begin with a full six-subject series covering a wide range of topics.

We have completed the transfer of sufficient members from the waiting list to have an active membership of 700. This means that there will be a greater demand than previously for places on the courses, so I urge you to waste no time in deciding what you would like to attend, and to ensure you choose an alternative course in the



Doug Holborow

### Chairman's message

event you miss your first choice. The ballot system will operate as it always has.

Courses for winter and spring are also well into planning stage, so it promises to be an interesting year, with the added attraction of an opportunity to join a small group. We will also watch with interest the progress of the new U3A. It is an excellent development for the city, and for those who wish to continue learning and be active in the third age.

The Board will be busy keeping the administrative and policy wheels turning, and in that regard would love to fill the vacant position of Programme Secretary. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to contact me, or any Board member.

I wrote this prior to Christmas, as printing deadlines required, and I wonder what sort of summer we will be enjoying by the time you read this newsletter. It certainly wasn't a promising start. I do hope you were able to enjoy the festive season you planned, and that summer is allowing you to do the things that a little sun and warmth encourage. Enjoy your U3A year.

## Welcome to our new members ... the waiters

'All things come to those who wait' is a saying that can be hard cheese to those still remaining on the U3A waiting list, but we now welcome the latest 100 or more recruits to our membership, with its limit expanded from 600 to 700.

Seeking the origin of the quote above, that advocates patience, we searched the Internet and found its origin to be obscure. It was used (but probably not originated) by Violet Fane (1843-1905) in a grim sort of poem:

*Ah, all things come to those who wait  
(I say these words to make me glad),  
But something answers soft and sad,  
'They come, but often come too late.'*

Lord Byron (1788-1824) wrote a sonnet in which appears another famous line: 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'



## 276 were awaiting

Jane Higham, Membership Secretary, reported at the Board meeting in November last year that our roll then stood at 585 people, with a waiting-list that had grown to 276.

Offers to join up in our expanded membership were then sent to more than 120 of these people.

Message to all seniors: Take heart! You are not elderly — you are just 'chronologically gifted.' [See p.3]

## Six interesting courses next term

In October we sadly said goodbye to Marjan Lousberg who has been the Programme Committee Secretary for some years. Marjan has gone to live in Clyde where she is building a house and has family. Consequently we need a new Secretary, someone who, among other things, is familiar with Excel for producing course rolls, who can organise the information about a course into the brochures for members and attend the balloting process.

Meanwhile the tasks are being shared. There is a job description with more information, which can be sent to anyone who is interested. It is a busy week or two, three times a year.

Judith McKinlay, a new Board member, has joined the Programme Committee the members of which are now: Sue Harvey, Doug Holborow, Rosemary Hudson, Gretchen Kivell, Judith and myself..

For Series 1 2015 beginning in

## Small groups are being trialled

You will receive the brochure outlining the first of the Small Group series which start in February. These include *Looking Beyond the Exhibits at the Museum, Art and Art Galleries, Poetry Appreciation* and *Current Issues*. We hope that you will support this trial and make it a success so that others will be encouraged to take part.

With membership up to 700, we need to be able to offer differing types of courses to appeal to members' various interests. It is imperative that a second and third choice is marked for the six-week sessions because not everyone will now get into their first choice! (No other choice marked means no course will be offered if the first choice is full). A small group course is a viable alternative, either on its own or it

March, we have six courses finalised. The titles are: Dunedin's Contribution to Broadcasting, New Zealand - Some Attitudes to War, Music in the time of War, The U3A meets the MBA, Providing Services for Dunedin and Burne Jones and Pre-Raphaelite Art.

Remember to post your applications early, in plenty of time for the ballot date of noon Wednesday 11 February. There will be another 100 members in 2015 and only so many places can be organised in our present venues, so it is very important to give a second choice.

In planning ahead, as part of the Series 2 2015 programme, we appealed for members who would talk about their travel experiences for a course based on the theme of *Off the Beaten Track*. We are delighted that many members have volunteered to do this. Bill McKinlay, the organiser, has offered to hold a workshop to discuss the course, and, for those

can be taken up alongside the usual six-week course as an 'extra'.

Each group will decide its own way of working, its procedures and way forward. It is a collaborative venture (within the group itself), promising to be an exciting new way (for the Dunedin U3A) of taking part in U3A courses. The first groups will be the trail-blazers for successive ones, ironing out any wrinkles and hiccups.

If anyone who would like to start another group, please contact us and we can publicise it with our Series 2 brochures later in the year. **Jane Higham**

*'Wood burns faster when you have to cut and chop it for yourself.'*

~ Harrison Ford

## LOOKING AHEAD



**Sue Cathro**

Programme Co-ordinator

who need help, lessons in PowerPoint can be set up.

Although planning for the rest of 2015 is in its early stages, we have firm proposals for both Series 2 and Series 3 for several interesting courses. More about them closer to the time.

We are always open to suggestions. We do take notice of what you suggest in the course evaluation forms and follow up those that we think will appeal to you, the members. Suggestions can be made at any time, so please contact a Board member so that he/she can bring it to our meetings. If you would like to organise or help organise a course yourself, there are guidelines that you can use and a Board member will support you.

## Tracks being beaten

Some members have enthusiastically supported the proposed *Off the Beaten Track* series for June/July this year. Twelve speakers have been confirmed for the course, and another six members are happy to be speakers for a possible second series. If you have travel experiences you would like to share with U3A, please join this list by ringing Bill McKinlay on 4774 161 or via email at [billruth@clear.net.nz](mailto:billruth@clear.net.nz)

## 'VERY 'IMPORTANT' - from John Cleese

According to *Facebook*, 'John Cleese is a tall person who likes lemurs, coffee and wine. He's also been known to write and act a bit.' Famed for his wit and silly walks, Cleese also responded to a 14-year-old fan who wrote to him when *Monty Python* entered its second run of live shows in London last year. This was John's answering letter, published by British newspapers:

*'Dear Matthew, I am afraid I'm much too important to write notes to people like you. Please remember that I am very very very very very very important. However, there is no John Cleese fan club (despite my importance) because they were all murdered in 1983 by Michael Palins' fan club. I enclose a photograph to remind you of my importance.*

*Yours sincerely, John Cleese'*

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# YOUR MEMORY: is it really failing — or greater knowledge?

It is common as people grow older to fail to recall a name or a place. Humorously we call these 'senior moments,' as if to apologise. But are such failures actually an indication of a weakening brain? Not according to Dr. Michael Ramscar from Tubingen University in Germany, a researcher long involved in studies on this topic.

'The human brain works slower in old age but only because we have stored more information over time. The brains of older people do not get weak. On the contrary, they simply know more,' says Dr Ramscar.

'Imagine someone who knows two people's birthdays and can recall them almost perfectly. Would you really want to say that person has a better memory than a person who knows the birthdays of 2000 people, but can "only" match the right person to the right birthday nine times out of ten?'

As research journals often report, many tests of cognitive skills favour the young. But do they really? This depends on why one succeeds or fails. For example, in one particular test,



called 'paired associated learning', people are asked to remember pairs of random objects – like shoes and ham, trees and fish.

Prof. Harald Baayen, who heads a group conducting the research proposes: 'The fact that older adults find nonsense pairs harder to learn than young adults simply demonstrates older adults' much better understanding of language. They have to make more of an effort to learn unrelated word pairs because, unlike the youngsters, they know a lot about which words don't belong together.' [Taos Institute]

# YOUR AGE - how old is old?

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) did a survey in which 1,800 Americans were asked what getting older has been like for them so far. Here are some of its major findings:

Question 'How old is old?': 85% of the respondents, ages from 40-90, said they were 'not old'. In general, regardless of age, 'old' was always older than they were. When asked how others would describe them, based on their age, 45% said 'younger' and another 25% said 'Active', 'healthy' and 'in the prime of life.'

Interestingly, in general, the older people got, the more they agreed with these statements: 'Problems with my physical health do not hold me back from doing what I want,' and 'Growing older has been easier than I thought', and 'I have more energy now than I expected for my age.' For example, about 70% of people in their 60's and 70's said that physical health did not



hold them back. In answer to the comment 'I know I'll enjoy sex no matter how old I am' men were more likely than women to say yes (71% vs. 50%). [AARP The Magazine.]

*If the aunt of the Vicar has never touched liquor, look out when she finds the champagne!* ~ Rudyard Kipling

# Gems you could find on Internet

An amazing website recommended by World U3A is [www.openculture.com](http://www.openculture.com). that lists 1,000 free online courses, 1000+ 'Massive Open Online Courses' (or MOOCs), 675 free movies, 550 free audio books, 600 free eBooks, 170 free textbooks, and 300 free language lessons. It also lists 30,000 hours of free online courses available from top universities.

Ever heard of the Indo-Greeks? Someone found them in [http://worldhistorymaps.info/images/Indo-Greeks\\_100bc.jpg](http://worldhistorymaps.info/images/Indo-Greeks_100bc.jpg), while trying to track down the mysterious blue-eyed Tocharians (aka Yuezhi) described in the Chinese chronicle 'Hou Hanshu'. (The World History Maps site has been put together and maintained by Thomas Lessman, an 'amateur historian with over 20 years of experience researching world history'. The level of detail in these maps is astonishing.)

[www.rhymezone.com](http://www.rhymezone.com) — an online dictionary helps people find rhymes for couplets or longer poems.

[www.whichbook.net](http://www.whichbook.net) provides a means of finding out books based on story characteristics or plot lines — but you'd need to go to a library to see if they have the suggestions.

[www.twbooks.co.uk](http://www.twbooks.co.uk) has its own useful database of crime and mystery fiction with recommendations and interesting links.

## Biased science?

Dr Ben Goldacre is well known for his 'Bad Science' website and writings. Some of the work he has published affects many and particularly those of retirement age. His TED lecture on 'Publication Bias' concerning the effectiveness of widely dispensed drugs sounds a warning on research misconduct (bias in drug testing) that we might all be interested in, You can view it at [www.youtube.com/embed/RKmxL8VYy0M](http://www.youtube.com/embed/RKmxL8VYy0M)

TED is a non-profit organisation devoted to spreading ideas, usually in short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers many topics from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages.

## Laughing at (or with) those Aussies

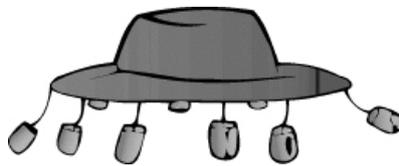
Australian humour has a long history that can be traced back to the country's origins as convict colonies. 'It is therefore no surprise that a national sense of humour quickly developed that responded to those conditions,' states the official information website [australia.gov.au](http://australia.gov.au) 'This unique sense of humour is recognised (although maybe not always understood) the world over as being distinctly Australian. Our humour is dry, full of extremes, anti-authoritarian, self-mocking and ironic.'

Mark Little (an actor in TV show *Neighbours*) says: 'The country itself is the ultimate joke; the wave you body-surf into shore after a day at the beach could contain a shark or a rip-tide and, when you get back, your house could have been burnt to the ground in a bush fire. That's where the whole 'no worries' thing comes from.'

Humour is seen in the Australian use of slang, and across media from cartoons in print, as sketches on radio, as comedy series on television, in films and with witty observations of life in Australian literature. One could mention comic heroes from 'Dad and Dave' to Barry Humphries and 'Kath and Kim' causing delight. Not forgetting the witty Clive James, and our own Fred Dagg (John Clarke) who crossed the Tasman.

Australians can have a very black sense of humour. While in many cultures it is considered poor taste to find comedy in difficult circumstances, Australians tend to look for a lighter side. It may be a reference to their brutal past, where humour was a means of coping with a bad situation. A (perhaps unintentional) example of this is the naming of the Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Pool in Melbourne after a Prime Minister who disappeared while swimming in the ocean in 1967.

Mocking the 'wowsers' is another common element found in Australian humour. The term refers to a person who is highly moral or politically correct. In 2002, a lawyer called O'Sullivan



Some corks from your mates . . .  
across the Ditch,

expertly demonstrated this aspect of Australian humour in court. Defending his client charged with baring his buttocks, or 'mooning', at a policeman, O'Sullivan argued that 'mooning was accepted Australian behaviour and should be seen as a national icon'. The prosecutor responded by asking 'whether bare buttocks should replace the emu and kangaroo on Australia's coat of arms.'

### GENTLE INSULTS

A significant number of Australian colloquialisms are affectionate insults or backhanded compliments. A clumsy friend or colleague may be called a 'dag', galah 'drongo' or 'boofhead'. There are also many ways of saying that someone is not very useful, for example (from [www.freewebs.com](http://www.freewebs.com)):

'Can't find a grand piano in a one-roomed house'

'Can't blow the froth off a glass of beer'



Two cobbers debating philosophy.

'A chop short of a barbie'

'Useless as an ashtray on a motor-bike'

'Handy as a pocket in a singlet'

A slice short of a loaf'

### COMPUTER 'CULCHA'

And now, to give our readers a little bit more of Aussie culcha..., here is a compendium of rural Australian computer terminology:

LOG ON : Adding wood to make the barbie hotter

MONITOR: Keeping an eye on the barbie.

DOWNLOAD: Getting the firewood off the Ute.

HARD DRIVE: Making the trip back home without any cold tinnies.

UPGRADE: A steep hill.

KEYBOARD: Where you hang the Ute keys.

WINDOW: What you shut when the weather's cold.

SCREEN: What you shut in the mozzie season.

BYTE: What mozzies do.

CHIP: A pub snack.

MICROCHIP: What's left in the bag after you've eaten the chips.

MODEM: What you did to the lawns.

LAPTOP: Where the cat sleeps.

SOFTWARE: Plastic knives & forks you get at Red Rooster.

MOUSE: The small rodent that eats the grain in the shed.

MAINFRAME: What holds the shed up.

SEARCH ENGINE: What you do when the Ute won't go.

CURSOR: What you say when the Ute won't go.

WEBSITE: Usually in the shed or under the verandah.

MAIL SERVER: The bloke at the pub who brings out the counterlunch.

## U3A Online

But we must praise Australia for being enthusiastically in favour of the U3A movement. In particular the Griffith University in Queensland freely hosts 'U3A Online,' that is run entirely by volunteers. The organisation (visit at [www.u3aonline.org.au/content/our-courses](http://www.u3aonline.org.au/content/our-courses)) runs more than 40 high quality non-award courses for people who like to learn new things.

## Brisbane conference

The 2015 U3A Asia Pacific Alliance International Conference will be held this year in Australia at Brisbane City Hall on Thursday and Friday, May 28-29. On May 30 the AGM of the Queensland Network U3A will follow, hosted by U3A Brisbane at its premises. The conference is open to all U3A members; for information visit website [www.u3aqlconference.org](http://www.u3aqlconference.org)

## U3A phone directory

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