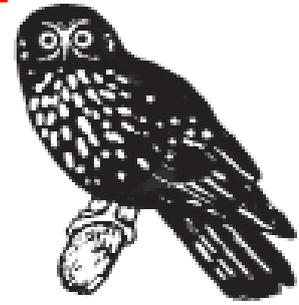


U3A DUNEDIN FORUM



Newsletter No. 51 April 2016

LAST
POST?



New system for Forum

This edition, printed in black-and-white, will be the last one in this format for many readers. But it is certainly not dying!

Most of our 800 U3A members have a computer and email address, so in future will receive a copy of *Forum* (the full colour version) emailed to their computer immediately it is published. It will be in PDF format (see 'PDF files reader' this page) so the file name can be clicked on and easily read — and even magnified on screen for those who like bigger type. Those who have a home printer and would like to keep a hard copy could easily print out the four A4 pages on their own machines.

In a time of modern electronic mail and a diminished postal service, it is sensible to use a cheaper, efficient and prompt means of getting a colour version of the newsletter to the majority of our members. We will still be posting black-and-white print copies to those without email or some who have indicated a need for that version.

P.S: Apologies to many readers for late delivery of the January edition, (No.50) caused by some confusion during the many hi-tech changes to improve all U3A Dunedin's administration and methods.

Success of summer-autumn courses, Golf Club venue

Greetings to all our members. When my last message was written for *Forum*, it was summertime and a great summer it has been. Now it is autumn and the colours are starting to glow and shine - just like our current courses which are in full swing with excellent topics and speakers.

We are pleased that most of the courses have their full complement of people attending and that the

giving contacts for anyone to apply to join a group.

Thank you to all for making the change-over to electronic membership application and enrolments so successful. Yes, there have been hiccups and yes, it has been a lot of work for some people. We are grateful to them for their hours of work given to make this easy for us all.

However, we anticipate that the systems are now robust and ready for enrolments for next term when we have some interesting courses available. Which reminds me, *if you do change your email (or street) address, please do let us know* so we can continue to keep in touch.

May I also remind you that our website is full of information relating to courses. Where we can, we do include information from lecturers, but copyright issues may prevent us from publishing some things.

Jane Higham



Jane Higham
Chair, U3A Dunedin Board

new venue of the Otago Golf Club has been so successful.

Also successful are our Small Group courses, set up in response to members who wanted to be involved in stretching their minds in a more unstructured way (than a six-week course) - hence the requirement that each individual group sets its own size and methods of working. So group members are able to say when and where they meet and how large the group can be. We report on the group activities in this *Forum* newsletter,

PDF files reader for download

If your computer does not already have a PDF reader program, we suggest a visit to <https://acrobat.adobe.com/nz/en/products/pdf-reader.htm> where free downloads of a leading viewer, Adobe Acrobat Reader, are available. This program is claimed to work on any computer device.

Website enrolment, but wait **Small Groups** there's more! **under way**

By and large, website based enrolment went well, and you were appreciative of the system which allows easy enrolment and immediate feedback on your enrolment. There were teething problems, but most of these related to inaccuracies in our membership database rather than issues with the website itself.

I hear all courses are being well received, which is very gratifying for the programme committee and the Board. So, we look forward to smooth sailing for the winter series.

There will be a change. As everyone now has their membership number and username, once enrolments open, you will be able to go to the website homepage at any time and click on the enrol button for the winter series. That will bring up an enrolment form that you fill in and make your own. You will be able to revisit at any time up to enrolment closure and the ballot, in order to make alterations. As for the previous series, winter course brochures will also be on the website. They will not be posted to those with email, and therefore Internet access.

Enrolments will close on 10 May, and you will be advised the following day by email, or by post in due course (if you don't use email), of the outcome of the ballots for places.

WINTER SERIES

The course schedule for the Winter Series is on the website, and offers another delectable selection of topics. There is a novel take on the "Off the Beaten Track" theme, in which speakers describe unusual places they have lived and worked. Ross Grimmert offers another of his fascinating and entertaining explorations of art works, this time of 15th and 16th century



Doug Holborow
Programme Convenor

Netherlandish artists. We examine the resurgence of interest in, and restoration of Dunedin's heritage buildings, we explore the five senses, and we explore the heavens with the Dunedin Astronomical Society and the Otago Museum. There is also the opportunity to consider whether the media in the digital age. The best of luck choosing, it will be another difficult job.

Remember – It's all on our website.

Use of the Otago Golf Club has proved a valuable addition to our venues. The new venue works well, especially for parking, and it allows us to enrol a much greater number of members for courses.

ENCORE has begun quietly, but that may be a result of all the changes that arrived at once. We will draw your attention to these unique sessions both elsewhere and here, where I remind you that you enrol for individual monthly sessions. You can enrol for one or more of these at any time. You pay no course fee when enrolling. The \$10 fee is paid in cash at the door. The website will advise if a particular *Encore* session is fully subscribed.

Doug Holborow

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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Address: **Secretary to the Board,**
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Phone: 453-4721

Chairman: Jane Higham, 476-1848

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Run independently of the main courses offered each semester and run continuously, not tied to fixed semesters, are several small groups.

Museum Group meets monthly at the Otago Museum. Members focus on a different aspect of the collections each month and try to go beyond what is immediately exhibited. Sessions are about 90 minutes in length. There are vacancies in this group at present.

[Inquiries to Doug Holborow tel: 177-4573 email: bdholborow@ihug.co.nz]

Current issues Group: This group meets at Gretchen's home once a month for two hours. It discusses a number of topics brought by members, either local, national or international. After a slow start last year it is now a group of ten who value the opportunity for discussion. Ten people is sufficient for a group meeting in a home, but the number of topics is unlimited! If you are interested in joining and particularly if you would like to have one meet in your home, then Gretchen would be very happy to help a second group get under way.

[Contact Gretchen Kivell Tel: 473-0031; gretchen.kivell@xtra.co.nz]

Arts Group is going ahead well. It meets on the second Wednesday morning of each month, the meeting arranged by members in turn. There is room for more people. Members visit galleries and private art collections, usually in Dunedin but also elsewhere. Last month they went to the Money Collection in Gore and later plan to visit Oamaru.

[Contact Jane Higham Tel 476-1848 email: rhigham@ihug.co.nz]

Poetry Appreciation Group: this enthusiastically continues to meet monthly at members' homes in turn. There are no vacancies at present.

[Contact Judith Cowley Tel 471-0026 email: jcowley@clear.net.nz]

Peace Education Programme: A new PEP course will be arranged for the winter term 2016. See www.tprf.org.

[Contact: Nola Walker Tel 455-3176 email: noelacw@xtra.co.nz]

Einstein proved right! Black holes and gravitational waves

February 11 2016 was a truly remarkable day for science! Physicists at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) announced their detection of ‘gravitational waves’— ripples in the fabric of space-time set off by the explosive collision of two massive black holes.

Albert Einstein had predicted the existence of such gravitational waves 100 years ago, but proving him right by directly detecting them has required mind-boggling technological prowess and a long history of hunting.

The discovery is the climax of a century of speculation, 50 years of trial and error, and 25 years perfecting a set of instruments so sensitive they could identify a distortion in space-time a thousandth the diameter of one atomic nucleus across a 4km strip of laserbeam and mirror.

WHAT THEY FOUND

Deep in space, two massive black holes— enormously strong gravitational fields left behind by gigantic stars that collapsed to infinitesimal points — slowly drew together. Scientists say the stellar ghosts spiralled ever closer, until, about 1.3 billion years ago, they whirled about each other at half the speed of light and finally merged. This collision sent a shudder through the universe. Six months ago, this washed past planet Earth. And, for the first time, physicists detected the minute waves, fulfilling a four-decade quest. On February 11 the success was announced.

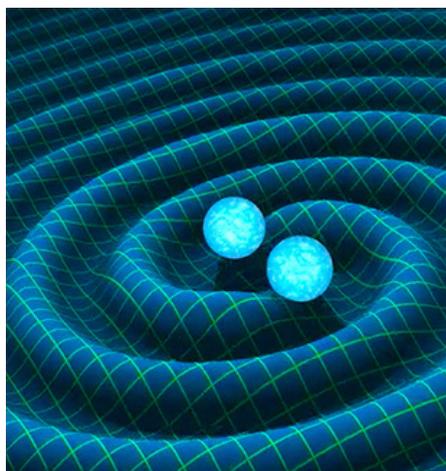
This discovery marked a triumph for 1000 physicists working in LIGO, which has a pair of gigantic instruments in Hanford, Washington, and Livingston, Louisiana, USA.

LIGO researchers sensed a wave that stretched space by one part in 10²¹, making the entire Earth expand and contract by 1/100,000th of a nanometer — about the width of an atomic nucleus. The observation signals the opening of a new window on to the universe.

‘This is transformational,’ said Prof Alberto Vecchio, of the University of Birmingham, and one of the researchers at Ligo. ‘We’ve observed

the universe through light so far. But we can only see part of what happens in the Universe. Gravitational waves carry completely different information about phenomena in the Universe. So we have opened a new way of listening to a broadcasting channel which will allow us to discover phenomena we have never seen before,’ he said.

‘This observation is truly incredible

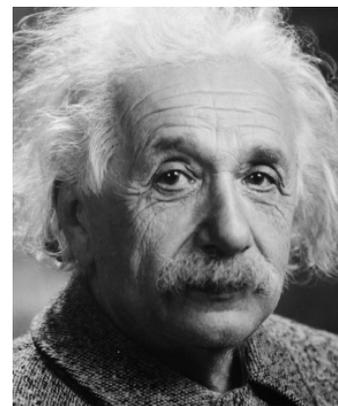


A bump wave travelled through the Universe after two ‘black holes’ raced together and exploded. It reached Earth about 1.5 billion years later.

science and marks three milestones for physics: the direct detection of gravitational waves, the first detection of a binary black hole, and the most convincing evidence to date that nature’s black holes are the objects predicted by Einstein’s theory.’

LIGO is the world’s largest gravitational wave observatory and a cutting-edge physics experiment. Comprised of two enormous laser interferometers located thousands of kilometres apart, LIGO exploits the physical properties of light and of space itself to detect and understand the origins of gravitational waves.

Although LIGO will search for gravitational waves from space, and it is called an ‘Observatory’,



Albert Einstein.

LIGO is not, strictly speaking, an astronomical facility. It is unlike any other observatory on our planet. LIGO bears no resemblance to a typical telescope dome on a mountain top.

LIGO is a physics experiment on the huge scale and complexity of some of the world’s giant particle accelerators and nuclear physics laboratories. Though its mission is to detect gravitational waves from some of the most violent and energetic processes in the Universe, the data it will collect will have far-reaching effects on many areas of physics including gravitation, relativity, astrophysics, cosmology, particle physics, and nuclear physics.

ENCORE!

‘ENCORE’ again offers a chance to hear lectures that you missed, or would like to hear again in a new monthly format to complement our current three-series model, which will not change. All members are eligible to attend; attendance at any of the series lectures does not disqualify.

ENCORE is our ‘one-session’ presentation monthly, on the second Tuesday of the month from 10.00am -12.00 noon. **Venue:** Otago Golf Club, 125 Balmacewen Road.

Content: Two recommended speakers from past series (and morning tea).

Eligibility: All full members.

Enrolment: Book for each individual monthly session on the Dunedin U3A website <http://u3adunedin.org.nz>. Use the ONLINE ENROLMENT button via the Home page.

Cost: \$10 per monthly session, payable in *cash only*, at the door.

Dates: April 12, May 10, May 24.

Speakers: Full details in the brochure on the Website.

YOUR WEBSITE
u3adunedin.org.nz

Look for updates!

Most of you will use *u3adunedin.org.nz/* website to look for news and cancellations even if you don't use it to book courses, etc.

The Autumn courses are listed there and if any of the presenters give additional materials after a session, you will find them on the website as well – next to the course to which the additions refer.

We are adding new features and new capabilities to the site quite often – we do have a plan to make it even more useful using those user names and membership numbers which we introduced over summer. We have a very clever webmaster, John Shanks (from the Mathematics Dept at University) who is able to turn many of our wishes into reality.

Not everyone uses the web – we know that and won't make it the only way we communicate with you – but it is fast becoming the preferred method and we can give our members far more via the web than we can any other way.

We are an educational group and so it is worth asking family and friends to share a few tips on how to get the most out of it.

Alan Jackson, Web Editor

Electronic farms

Row after row of electronic 'servers' that store emails at data centres around the world perform the functions that constitute the 'Cloud.' They back up computer data and consume vast amounts of electricity.

Google currently has 12 'server farms' containing 900,000 servers. Facebook has built its farm on the Arctic Circle to reduce cooling costs.

U3A email directory

Sending email correspondence to U3A Dunedin? Using the addresses below will take your messages to the appropriate people and have quicker attention. (Should you contact the wrong person they will of course forward your mail to the correct address.)

General information: info@U3Adunedin.org.nz

Re Administration: admin@U3Adunedin.org.nz

Re courses: courses@U3Adunedin.org.nz

Re Membership: members@U3Adunedin.org.nz

Re 'Forum': newsletter@U3Adunedin.org.nz

Opportunity?

Are you looking for an opportunity to explore a new or special interest further? Or perhaps you have time to contribute to something completely different and worthwhile: developing a course for your U3A colleagues?

Russell Thew worked last year to develop 'Speaker's Corner', and as course host is now reaping the rewards of hearing both the splendid presentations and delighted comments of those attending the course.

"It's been a stimulating exercise. I've enjoyed making contact with potential speakers, all of whom said "yes" unless there was a *force majeure*. They have all been committed to doing well. The U3A bar is high, and a challenge,' said Russell. 'The experience has been enriching for me personally. It has continued my good liberal education of expanding boundaries. The presenters light fires.'

The U3A Programme Committee would welcome your interest. Work for some 18 2017 courses will begin within the next few months. New organisers are given a buddy for support, which helps get over the hurdles. Extraneous administration – sound and overheads, premises and catering – are all taken care of.

Do get in touch with Doug Holborow, chair of the Programme Committee, at bdholborow@ihug.co.nz if you are interested.

Museum education

The \$1,000 grant made to the Otago Museum last year by the U3A Dunedin Board was received with gratitude. Dr Ian Griffin, the director, stated that it will be used to provide educational resources at the museum. 'The education team provides a range of educational programmes and are looking to develop new ideas

7 barred jokes

1. A jumper cable walks into a bar. The bartender says, 'I'll serve you, but don't start anything.'
2. Two peanuts walk into a bar, and one was a salted.
3. A dyslexic man walked into a bra.
4. A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm, and says: 'A beer please, and one for the road.'
- 5 A man walks into a bar and says 'Ouch.'
6. Why did the blonde take a ladder into the bar? - She heard the drinks were on the house.
7. What did the barman say when a book walked into the bar? - 'Please. no stories.'

'Doc, I can't stop singing *The Green, Green Grass of Home*.'

'That sounds like the Tom Jones Syndrome.' — 'Is it common?'

'Well, *It's Not Unusual*.'

Fore!.. how to score at the Otago Golf Club

How to travel to the Otago Golf Club venue for some U3A courses and 'ENCORE' sessions? There is a bus stop opposite the Golf Club gates in Balmacewen Rd. (Helensburgh Service Route 50 – Octagon stop is outside Reading Cinemas)

There is generous car parking beside the Club House; walk along the covered veranda and up the stairs. Members with limited mobility can be dropped off at the door into the meeting room by continuing up the top road, through the car park behind the club house. More than 20 more car parks are adjacent.

U3A phone directory

To discuss problems with U3A Dunedin please phone the right person:

Chairman: Jane Higham

476-1848

Board matters: Marion Potter

453-4721

Membership: Lynda Jackson

473-6947

Programme or Courses:

Doug Holborow 477-4573

Edited by Geoff Adams

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