

# U3A DUNEDIN FORUM



Newsletter No. 55 April 2017

## Computerised membership success

I write this on the last day of the Autumn term when we have had a treasure-trove of speakers and subjects... I look forward to next term and its wide appeal – which makes choosing what to attend not an easy task!

This term we had the one-off process of allowing a single-session attendance at one course, so that the overseas speaker could be heard by as many people as possible. This is one of the innovations which is being discussed for future courses, together with the number of lectures per course and various ways of offering lectures to our members.

Your Board has met twice this year, with one planned for late May. The meetings have included discussions about reimbursement payments for people who are not Board members but who are asked to do specific work for the Board. (Secretary to the Board, Membership Secretary and Programme Secretary). It was



Jane Higham  
Chair, U3A Dunedin Board

agreed that these people should be paid annually.

The thorny question of the increase in cost for communication with members who, for one reason or another, are not able to receive information by email (i.e. must receive by post) was resolved with the decision that there will be no differential membership subscription! The finances of the organisation are in a good state, thanks to the hard work undertaken by our treasurer Evan Taylor.

### 840 MEMBERS, NO WAITING

The use of our computerised membership and enrolment processes is working well. We

have a membership of 840 and no waiting list! As was suspected, when the Waiting List people were offered membership, not everyone took it up because they knew they could join at any time — and this also applied to some people who had been members previously.

It is not a small organisation and we must be aware of the varied requirements of both the members and the presenters when choosing courses! To make sure we are on the right track we have initiated a small team to look at the way we communicate with everyone, including the design and use of our website.

The Board has noted the increased number of Small Groups now available and acknowledged the work of co-ordinator Ngaire Bates in offering such a wide variety of subjects.

The AGM is to be held on 26 June with details available early in the month when we will also be calling for any motions, nominations, etc. Best wishes, **Jane Higham**

## Refining ballot for member pairs

U3A Dunedin's ballot system for courses has been adjusted to allow for pairs of members wanting to attend the same course together.

A new line on the enrolment form asks them to provide the Membership Number of the member they wish to pair with. Both members must put this information on their respective course enrolment forms.

After the ballot for an over-

subscribed course is over, either both members will gain places in the course or neither member will. There is neither advantage nor disadvantage for members using this new facility. The likelihood of each winning a place is the same as for any individual member. (A deeper, more technical, explanation of the procedure can be given.)

In the case of two members who do not mind (in ballet terms)

dancing solo rather than a "pas de deux" there might still be some advantage in not applying for the duet but hoping for individual success in the ballot.

There is always the risk of disappointment in popular courses but the U3A Board has no doubt that its ballots are fair, governed by computer-generated, completely random selections. The new option for pairs is an attempt to fill a need for some members.

# Series 2 follows courses that delighted

Series One 2017 has just finished and I'm delighted to read the very complimentary course reports that are coming in from the course convenors. It seems you approve of the courses that are being offered, which is very reassuring for the programme committee, the Board and the course developers who work hard to design the courses and recruit speakers.

Course reports are a summary of the evaluations you do at the end of each course. These are invaluable to us; I encourage you to spend the five minutes it takes to fill one out and ensure you let us know what you think of the courses you attend.

## Not another innovation!

I was intrigued to read my last report again, before writing this one. I saw in December of last year that there would be no further changes to course administration. Ah well, if you're on a roll, why stop.

We took up a suggestion by a member, and gave you the opportunity to enrol in one session of a course in Series One 2017, without having to enrol in the entire course. It was an innovation that was successful in terms of both your response, and the ease with which it was administered.

The Board will now develop a policy on such enrolments. Clearly it won't work where a course is oversubscribed, and balloting for places is necessary. There will be other occasions when it the system cannot be employed, but it does appear to provide another option for members.

You will also note that one of the Series Two courses will be three sessions



**Doug Holborow**  
Programme Convenor

rather than the usual six. The Board had just decided that this departure from our normal pattern should be allowed as a matter of course. The course on the history of New Zealand women is an ideal opportunity to test this design, as the speaker, Professor Barbara Brookes is able to give only three talks. Such "short" courses may well suit many of our members, too. We shall see.

## Attending as a pair

Elsewhere you will find an announcement relating to members who wish to attend a course with another particular member, usually a partner or spouse. That ability is now built in to our balloting system, for courses where a ballot is necessary.

It is essential that both members provide the necessary information on a new line that will be found on the course enrolment form.

## Series Two 2017

A delightful mixed bag awaits you for our winter series, and will make choosing courses as difficult as ever.

It is a real pleasure to have a course developed by a member with an

interest and expertise in a subject. Doug Hart has worked professionally in the UK in technology and teaching. He has put these talents and an interest in art together to produce "*Technology in Art*", a course that is bound to fascinate many.

Our members feature again in another "*Yes I worked there*" course. Charmian Smith endeavours to answer the question "*Who are we?*" in a course presented by a splendid team who will explore the influences of our southern land on who we are.

Professor Barbara Brookes will be known to many for her recently published much acclaimed history of New Zealand women. We are very fortunate that she has agreed to provide three sessions on this subject.

Often placed in the too-hard basket, some of the knotty issues in bioethics will be explored in what promises to be a very stimulating and challenging course.

Associate Professor Graeme Downes will lead an exploration of music for all tastes, a wonderful contribution from the University's Music Department.

I did say choosing wouldn't be easy.

## Feedback

As always, we welcome your opinion on what is being suggested. Please let us know what you think of our offerings, and let us have suggestions about speakers, and expertise or interest you may have in the any subject area. You can contact us with your thoughts at [courses@u3a.org.nz](mailto:courses@u3a.org.nz), or by phone to the programme convenor. (See the U3A phone directory elsewhere in this Forum)

## Encore!

For anyone wondering what has happened to *Encore*, we continue to work on a feasible means to run this programme. It hasn't been put into the too-hard basket yet.

- Doug Holborow

## Charms of music

*Music is indeed the most beautiful of all heaven's gifts to humanity...Alone it calms, enlightens, and stills our souls. It is not the straw to which the drowning man clings; but a true friend, refuge and comforter, for whose sake life is worth living, ~ Tchaikovsky*

## UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

Website: [u3adunedin.org.nz](http://u3adunedin.org.nz)

Address: **Secretary to the Board,**  
U3A Dunedin, PO Box 6491,  
North Dunedin, 9059.

Email: [info@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:info@u3adunedin.org.nz)  
Phone: 453-4721

**Chairman:** Jane Higham, 476-1848

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## Progress with small groups

U3A Dunedin continues to make progress with the establishment of its small groups, with Ngaire Bates continuing the supervision work started by Judith Cowley. Members with computers will find full information and updates on our website that lists some 10 or more groups. Here is some news.

### Expanding Musical Horizons Group

This is now operating and has become full. If there are any other members who would like to join such a group please let Ngaire know (phone 454-2170 or email [mikni@ihug.co.nz](mailto:mikni@ihug.co.nz)) and she will start a waiting list with a view to starting another group.

### TED Talk Group

We now have a facilitator for this. TED is a non-profit organisation devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED is a global community, welcoming people from every discipline and culture who seek a deeper understanding of the world. They believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and, ultimately, the world.

The proposed group would meet once a month on the first Friday of every month. The meetings will be held at Ngaire Bates' home at 2pm and will run for about two hours. It is

### Perilous punctuation

Man: 'I'm not the easiest person in the world to get along with. So when our anniversary rolled around, I wanted my wife to know how much I appreciated her tolerating me for the past 20 years. I ordered flowers and told the florist to enclose a card that read, "Thanks for putting up with me so long."

'When my wife got the delivery, she called me at work.' "Just where do you think you going?" she asked. 'What do you mean?' I said. 'She read the card aloud as the florist had written it: "Thanks for putting up with me. So long."

**YOUR WEBSITE**  
[u3adunedin.org.nz](http://u3adunedin.org.nz)

expected that members would render help to and receive help from fellow members of the group. It is hoped that TED talks and open lectures at the university might be activities pursued as a group, alongside whatever other study methods members may resort to as individuals. Please contact Ravi Vohora (phone:464-0182 or email; [vohora@xtra.co.nz](mailto:vohora@xtra.co.nz)) to join this group.

### Philosophy Group

Ngaire is keen to begin a Philosophy Group. If you have an interest in this topic and would like to pass on a little of your knowledge to other members please contact her so that she can help you organise this group. Ngaire is also taking names if you would like to join this group.

### Book Group

This group inherited from U3A Otepoti has ceased to function at the moment for lack of members. Anyone out keen to join it and meet like-minded people who enjoy reading please contact Ngaire.

### Local History Group

This is in recession as we go to press through lack of members. If someone would like to join this group please contact Ngaire. If you are person who has lived in Dunedin for a long time and have an interest in passing on your knowledge of the area to members please consider offering to run this group. Ngaire will give you all the help you need to get started.

### Other groups?

If you would like to see a specific group commenced on whatever topic please contact Ngaire phone 454-2170 or email [mikni@ihug.co.nz](mailto:mikni@ihug.co.nz).

## Lost and Found

A "Lost and Found" tab has been added to the U3A Dunedin website home page. If any items are lost, would the owner please let the course convenor, course assistant or me know so the detail can be posted on the page. If any items are found the course convenor, or assistant can let me know with advice on how the item can be retrieved. To ensure this web space does not look like a Steptoe auction, items will be deleted two weeks after the last course ends. (Then the Board will have to decide what to do with any unclaimed property.) – Alan Jackson

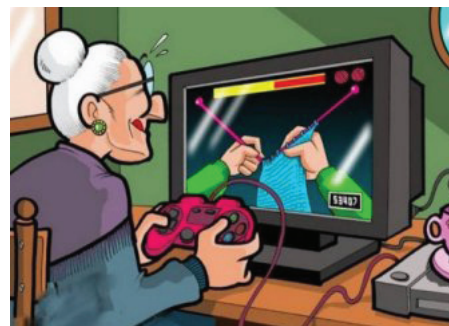
## Email decisions

The email programmes we use make decisions for us based on rules designed by the programme makers and sometimes from our patterns of use. Most emails will come into a 'box' labelled 'Inbox' and we handle these as we choose. Some emails find their way into boxes marked 'Spam' (rubbish) or 'Trash' (blocked junk mail). Mostly we can trust the email software that what goes into 'Spam' and 'Trash' is of no interest to us – but sometimes the system is too cautious and emails we do need are placed there.

It is important to look inside the 'Spam' and 'Trash' folders before we empty them (delete the contents). Some U3A messages have found their way into 'Spam' folders for some members – making us and them think that the mail has not been delivered.

You can help prevent our emails being treated as spam by adding [u3adunedin.org.nz](http://u3adunedin.org.nz) to your email software's white list (trusted senders) or add it to your address book. Sending any message to [noreply@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:noreply@u3adunedin.org.nz) can also help.

– Alan Jackson, U3A Web Editor



## Pins and needles?

Readers interested in embroidery, knitting and fabrics will be interested in the Antique Pattern Library on the Internet at <http://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/html/warm/catalog.htm>

<http://www.royal-needlework.org.uk/> will take you to the Royal School of Needlework, the international centre of excellence for the art of hand embroidery. The RSN is steeped in the history of hand embroidery and offers a range of courses for beginners through to advanced practitioners.

**Query?** How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?





## Universities Offer Lifelong Learning to China's Elderly

China already has the world's largest aging population, with around five workers for each retiree. By the end of 2015, more than 222 million Chinese were age 60 or older, 16% of the country's total population. By 2020, that number is expected to reach 243 million. In

**More senior citizens in China are heading towards 'third age' universities — to keep busy, pursue childhood dreams, or secure degrees.**

Shanghai — more than 30% of the population are currently 60 or above.

With the legal retirement age set at 50 for women (55 for female civil servants) and 60 for men, and an overall life expectancy of 76.3 years, how to address the needs of this growing demographic has become an increasingly difficult problem to solve. And now that the first generation of parents affected by the one-child policy, enacted in 1980, is poised to retire, many are also faced with the so-called empty nest problem, with children living far away from their parents and grandparents.

Hou Xiaoying, a 70-year-old former computer engineer, has decided to enroll in intermediate-level English

and Photoshop, as well as a travel course in which students learn about the history, culture, geography, customs, and language of a particular place, giving them a great deal of knowledge before they travel there in real life. Plus a total of 160 courses are available, from nutrition, wellness, singing, painting, and calligraphy to more challenging offerings like saxophone lessons and computer classes. [World U3A]

### Dirty work

A man was asked by phone what he was doing. He said he couldn't talk because he was working on 'aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminium, and steel while under a dangerously constrained environment.' That was impressive — until the following day, when we learned that meant he was 'washing dishes with hot water under his upset wife's supervision.'

### 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

## Web wanders

**Brainpump.net** is a site full of random, short, educational videos. Choose from their list of categories that include topics such as psychology, technology, food, history, physics, space, business, maths, etc. It has hundreds of free videos.

Google Arts & Culture is well worth regular visits to see many changing exhibitions, reports from around the world. Go to <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/>

<http://tinyurl.com/oldie343>: takes you to the Natural History Museum in London, working with Google Arts and Culture shows some of its 300,000 items in exhibitions — with talks by eminent scientists and videos.

**Tate.org.uk:** lots of pictures and information in this London art gallery's overhauled website.

### 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](mailto:info@u3adunedin.org.nz)  
**Re Administration:** [admin@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:admin@u3adunedin.org.nz)  
**Re courses:** [courses@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:courses@u3adunedin.org.nz)  
**Re Membership:** [members@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:members@u3adunedin.org.nz)  
**Re 'Forum':** [newsletter@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@u3adunedin.org.nz)

## Queen in a jam

When Mary, Queen of Scots, was feeling ill, all she could stomach was the preserve originally made from quinces (rather than oranges.) So the jam got the French name 'Marie Malade' (Sick Mary). Centuries later we all love our marmalade.



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