

U3A DUNEDIN Forum



No. 74 - August 2021

Our great organisation

Kia ora koutou. Greetings to you all U3A is a great organisation to be part of. The engine room of U3A, the Programme Committee, has new members, new ideas and the commitment to approach their colleagues, friends, and experts on a range of subjects to ensure we have wide and varied courses offering for you all. We are always grateful to those who agree to present so we can enjoy subject areas we may not have had access or opportunity to in the past.

The Discussion Groups are also making a difference to new learning and meeting our social needs with 16 groups all enjoying new experiences.

Thank you to all who participate, lead, and contribute to our success and growing membership.

THIRD SERIES

Our third series for the year will commence in the next couple of weeks, another great selection and good numbers enrolled. We hope those who were not

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OUR WEBSITE
u3adunedin.org.nz

successful in registering for their first choice may have an alternative choice and please know our policy states you will be guaranteed a place in the next series. We know some of you will be disappointed. We will revisit venues as numbers rise so we can accommodate the larger numbers we are lucky to have as members.

2022 promises to be equally exciting and interesting.

LIBRARY LEARNING

The Dunedin City Library has contacted U3A and asked us to assist to promote the FREE learning opportunities they facilitate. The current offerings are about using digital technologies, offering weekday and evening classes. You can book a class by ringing the library (474 3675) or alternatively go online to www.dunedinlibraries.govt.nz/steppingup These courses are posted on our website and we will post further courses as we are notified of them.

A reminder that the Albatross Colony welcomes our members and has its two for the price of one offer, continuing through to March 2022. Do make the most of this generous discount. See how the chicks have grown.

COVID COVER

COVID is still a threat for us all, so I hope you are all obtaining your vaccinations. There is some literature circulating at the moment on the timing between vaccinations. The first vaccination delivers around 65% cover for an



Linda Kinniburgh,
Chairperson
U3A Dunedin

immune response, the second to 93-96%. To minimise risk the aim is to be fully vaccinated. In the likely event we have additional variants of the virus come to New Zealand please make sure you have the second vaccination in a timely way.

Do stay safe and well out there, and I welcome any feedback, and comments on what U3A can achieve for our members. The *whakatauki* (proverb) below says it all.

He aha te mea nui o te Ao, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

What is the most important thing in the world, it is people, it is people, it is people.

Kia pai to ra

Have a good day

Linda Kinniburgh

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'Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

= Mark Twain

Winter series was very popular

With the Winter Series courses safely, successfully concluded, interest has now turned to the forthcoming Spring Series with a good spread of interests being catered to—medical science, current affairs, art, music, literature, and visual culture and technology represented by contemporary architecture. This balance seems to have worked for most members, as shown by the record number of enrolments and places requested, 597 and 749 respectively. These numbers are well above those recorded for this year's Autumn and Winter series.

While we would like to think that good programming is responsible, there is no doubt that they have also been boosted by a new high in membership, last recorded at 932 and seemingly on the way to the 1000 mark.

These numbers, however, can have their own difficulties, as requested placements are not generally evenly spread across courses. In principle, this is not a problem as it is recognised that not all interests are equally shared.

Literature and science, unless medical, attract smaller numbers, whilst anything to do with health is always popular. In practice, however, extremely popular courses can exceed allowable venue capacity (148 at Leith and 150 at the Golf Club); and a bit like climate change this is becoming more common,

requiring ballots. In the Autumn series *Women Leading the Way* attracted 204 enrolments; in the Winter Series, *Exploring Hocken Collections* and *Humour and Laughter*, both 177; and the upcoming Spring *Medicine* one, a massive 241.

BALLOTS NEEDED

At present, balloting is the fairest way of allocating available places, but it can lead to understandable disappointment. Those interested in how the ballot works can find a full description on our website under Public Documents. However, this does rather leave a growing problem unaddressed and other solutions may be needed: larger venues, but for which courses? Repeats, very difficult to arrange. Enrolment cut-offs, unfair to those, (about 50) without internet access. Something of a conundrum, but a good one to have!

A further issue that can come up is changes to courses after first being advertised. These happen for many, mostly unavoidable, reasons and can be at the last minute. Typically, courses are arranged months ahead of advertising to the membership, but presenters may later find that they have other, more pressing, commitments.

If possible, these are coped with by switching speakers, rescheduling or finding acceptable substitutes. Very occasionally, illness or delayed travel may



Stuart Strachan

with only a few hours' notice, or even less, compel an emergency solution, including even cancellation. For these reasons, it is important to keep abreast of any changes by checking the latest version of the course on the website, rather than relying on first viewing. These are always posted urgently.

LOOKING AHEAD

Finally, looking ahead to 2022, we can say that the Autumn courses are now mostly decided on; *Pandemics*, *1980s Popular Music*, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, *Leadership*, *Sustainable Dunedin*, and *Writing Your Memoirs*. Next year's Winter ones are now being actively developed, including for those feeling science deprived one on *Aspects of the Electro-Magnetic Spectrum*, but hopefully by then enticingly titled. A further eleven possibilities are being considered, from which to select. It is always interesting to see what eventually makes the cut, always with an eye to another good spread.

Linda Kinniburgh & Stuart Strachan

Programme Committee Co-Chairs

An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.

~ M.K. Gandhi

U3A DUNEDIN CHARITABLE TRUST

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World History

World History Encyclopedia {www.worldhistory.org} was founded in 2009 by Jan van der Crabben. He realized that the internet was missing a reliable and comprehensive resource for ancient history, which is why the website was called Ancient History Encyclopedia until it changed its name to World History Encyclopedia in 2021.

What was available online was either scattered across various websites, illegible due to poor presentations or tainted with a distinct nationalist agenda.

Jan also had the idea that history was not linear (as it is taught in most school books), but rather a very parallel type of story, where everything is interlinked.

After much programming done during daily train rides from London to Horsham in the UK, the site was launched to the

public in August 2009. Since then, it has grown from a small history website to the largest and most popular history encyclopedia on the internet.

It has organisational and media partners in Europe, North America, and South America. World History Encyclopedia has also received grants from cultural and research organisations in the UK and USA. It is a non-profit organisation dedicated to transparency.

In 2020 it had over 29 million unique visitors. Its aim is to make history engaging and compelling, inspiring users to learn more. It follows academic standards, but is written in an easy-to-read manner with students and the general public in mind. As a result, it is recommended by many educational institutions including Oxford University.

Resist cyber ‘bullying’

When we read the letters to the Editor in the ODT we note that they have to be accompanied by a name and address. Many of the items on social media platforms are anonymous and cause “cyber bullying” and, we read, consequent mental health problems for those targeted.

In U3A Dunedin, we try to strike a balance by making names optional when making comments in course feedback – of course, any electronic communication

Have you heard?

HE ASKED for it: A boy knocked on the door and asked for a small donation towards the local swimming pool, so the man of the house gave him a glass of water.

OGDEN NASH’S description of the cow was this::

*“The cow is of the bovine ilk
One end is moo, the other milk.”*

can be traced but we have never done that and all feedback has remained anonymous.

However, sometimes spiteful and hurtful comments are included in feedback and where that happens in future we may well make a connection between author and target.

When I was working for the Ministry of Education and writing about projects or people, I was given the advice never to write anything that I wouldn’t be happy with seeing on the front page of the newspaper.

It is important to remember that people who deliver the lectures and people who run U3A Dunedin are doing so voluntarily and deserve the respect of all members. Criticism can certainly be made but it should be directed to the topic and not the individuals involved.

Alan Jackson (Web Editor)

Anonymous

I talk to myself because sometimes I need expert advice. My people skills are just fine. It’s my tolerance of idiots that needs work.

When the kids text me “plz” (which is shorter than please), I text back “no” which is shorter than “yes”.

At my age “Getting lucky” means walking into a room and remembering what I came in there for.

Did you hear about the guy who invented the knock-knock joke? — He won the no-bell prize.

I refused to believe that my dad was stealing from his job as a road worker. But when I went round to his house all the signs were there.

If a child refuses to sleep during nap time, are they guilty of resisting a rest.

What’s the difference between a poorly dressed man on a tricycle and a well-dressed man on a bicycle? - Attire.

Eloquent?

“He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.” – **William Faulkner** (about Ernest Hemingway).

“Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go.” – **Oscar Wilde**

“Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?” – **Mark Twain**

“He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends.” – **Oscar Wilde**

We ask readers : What is the plural of Bluetooth: Bluetooths, Bluteeths, or other? Let *Forum* know your view or other? And say why your answer is best?

WORD Wonders

by John Hale

Out of Africa

In the world of books, titles don't matter that much. But a perfect title must help. It can surprise you to find how ultra-fluent writers, like Dickens or C.S. Lewis, had such troubles with their titling.

As a perfect title, I choose *Out of Africa*. This magical book by Karen Blixen, about her years as a coffee planter in Kenya, comes "out of" Africa in several apt ways. She writes out of unique experiences there. She writes it after coming out from Africa, and composes it out of memories.

The title phrase comes from the ancient world, where the great Pliny the Elder said "Out of Africa always [comes] something new," *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*. Like the human race itself!

In David Attenborough's equally magical series *Africa*, the accompanying interviews are named "Outs from Africa," take-outs. I like to think of Atters in his pale blue shirt, recollecting the words of his scientific ancestor (who was quoting the even greater Aristotle): Pliny died in 79 AD, seeking a closer look at the erupting Vesuvius. All of them great enquiring spirits

Accles & Pollock

In the days before cellphones, you

Doctor's doubtful diets ?

A Doctor was addressing a large audience. 'The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here, years ago. Red meat is awful. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. Chinese food is loaded with MSG. High fat diets can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the long-term harm caused by the germs in our drinking water.

However, there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and we all have eaten, or will eat it. Can anyone here

had little to occupy your eyes on the London Underground but newspapers and advertisements. My favourite among the ads was for Accles and Pollock's steel products, because they purposely mangled their name at the first attempt; "Shackles and Dollop," "Hackles and Wallop," and the like. Quite a good way to catch attention and also to make your true name known to a captive audience, grinding through the tunnels—even if the method might not work so well for TV at sports stadiums.

Businesses rise and fall, or merge or tinker with their naming rights, Accles and Pollock of Oldbury, Manchester, continue to this day making high-end steel products. They won a Queen's Award for exports last year. They win mine for self-deprecatory wit.

Gabbitas & Thring

In my youth I went looking for a job school-teaching, and applied to the scholastic agency, Gabbitas and Thring. Just the names take you halfway into fiction, like "Jaggers" or "Tulkinghorn." I was not surprised to find that Evelyn Waugh put his own engagements with Messrs G and T into fiction (*Decline and Fall*).

tell me what food it is that causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?

After several seconds of quiet, a 75-year-old man in the front row raised his hand, and softly said, 'Wedding Cake.'



A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk I have a work station...

Other notables to pass through the agency's portals include Vaughan Williams and W. H. Auden.

THE CARD INDEX

On the Net I read that one's interview at G & T's led to assessment and card-entries, in coded form lest their subject ever got a peep at them. "TG" meant Thorough Gent, the top ranking. "Good M & A" meant "Good Manner and Appearance", but as decoded in the office meant "Impossible to Place" this applicant.

Of 'G and T' I sing

To celebrate this inherent euphony of some business-names, imagine the partners greeting each other one morning.

Gabbitas: Good morning, Thring.

Thring: Hallo, my dear old thing!

What say we sing?

G: And make the rafters ring!

T: Hey ding-a-ding-ding. . .

Hey ding-a-ding-ding.

G. What - you man who -

T. No I mean whom will the day bring?

Together: From TG to GMA, we're just the Thing.

(*ad lib*). ting-a-ling,
ting-a-ling.

- John Hale

QUICK GIGGLES

A man asked: 'Waiter, what is this fly doing in my soup?'

Reply: "I think it's the breast-stroke, Sir.": (*Old joke book*.)

Another guy was telling his neighbour, 'I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. - It's perfect.' Really,' answered the neighbour. 'What kind is it?' — 'Eleven thirty.'

Why did the golfer bring an extra pair of pants? — In case he got a hole in one.

Hell of a chemistry question?

The following is an actual question given on a University of Arizona chemistry mid-term exam, and an actual answer turned in by one of the students.

The answer by the student was so 'profound' that the professor shared it with colleagues, via the Internet, which is, of course, why we now have the pleasure of enjoying it as well:

Bonus Question: "Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)?"

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law (gas cools when it expands and heats when it is compressed) or some variant. One student, however, wrote the following:

First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is changing in time. So we need to know the rate at which souls are moving into Hell and the rate at which they are

leaving, which is unlikely. I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave. Therefore, no souls are leaving. As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different religions that exist in the world today.

Most of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there is more than one of these religions and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all souls go to Hell. With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially.

Now, we look at the rate of change of the volume in Hell because Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand proportionately as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

1. If Hell is expanding at a slower

rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.

2. If Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls in Hell, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over.

So which is it? If we accept the postulate given to me by Cheryl during my Freshman year that, 'It will be a cold day in Hell before I sleep with you,' and take into account the fact that I slept with her last night, then number two must be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic and has already frozen over. The corollary of this theory is that since Hell has frozen over, it follows that it is not accepting any more souls and is therefore, extinct, leaving only Heaven, thereby proving the existence of a divine being which explains why, last night, Cheryl kept shouting 'Oh my God.'

Footnote: This student received an A+

Heard these?

Morris, an 82-year-old man, went to the doctor for a check. A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm. A few days later, the doctor spoke to Morris saying 'You're really doing great, aren't you?' Morris replied, 'Just doing what you said, Doc: 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.' The doctor said, 'I didn't say that.. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur; be careful.'

Asked how many husbands she had had, actress Zsa Zsa Gabor replied: "You mean apart from my own?" Brigitte Bardot was asked: "Excuse me Miss Bardot, but readers would like to know what you wear in bed?" The reply was "Chanel No.5."

Searching family history?

A few years ago, a man started digging into his family history. With the help of some software, he was able to trace his father's family line back to a direct relative in Scotland, who was born in 1744. He was then able to find an ancestor of his grandmother who was born in 1620, and went to New Amsterdam, a Dutch settlement at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, around 1640. Fascinating stuff!

If you want to research your own family tree *Forum* recommends these two online resources for doing genealogical research to chart your family tree.

1. *Cyndi's List* is an excellent comprehensive index to over 300,000 genealogical resources on the Internet. Cyndi Ingle has maintained this website for over

25 years, as a labour of love. You'll find a list of links that point you to genealogical research sites, all categorised and cross-referenced. It's like a "card catalogue" to the genealogical collection in the immense library that is the Internet. <https://www.CyndisList.com>

2. *Ancestry.com* is a great resource too (probably the best) but it charges fees. Good news: contact is available free on the computers on the fourth floor of the Dunedin Public Library (the genealogy section.)



Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.

- Groucho Marx

Philosophy of real Ambiguity?

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes

I went to a book store and asked the saleslady, "Where's the self-help section?" She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.

If a deaf child signs swear words, does his mother wash his hands with soap?

If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?

Is there another word for "synonym"?

What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

Would a fly without wings be called a walk?

Why do they lock petrol station bathrooms? Are they afraid someone will break in and clean them?

If a turtle doesn't have a shell, is it homeless or naked?

Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

If the police arrest a mute, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent? Do they actually hold him for questioning?

How do they get deer to cross the road only at those yellow road signs?

. How is it possible to have a civil war?

If one synchronised swimmer drowns, do the rest drown, too?

If you ate both pasta and antipasto, would you still be hungry?

If you try to fail and succeed, which have you done??

Can an atheist get insurance against acts of God

Why is abbreviation such a long word?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

One nice thing about egotists: they don't talk about other people'.

U3A Email Directory

Sending email correspondence to U3A Dunedin? Using addresses below will take your messages to the appropriate person and have quicker attention.

If you contact a wrong person they will forward your message on to the correct address.

General information:

contact@u3adunedin.org.nz

Courses:

courses@u3adunedin.org.nz

Membership:

membership@u3adunedin.org

Forum: *newsletter@u3adunedin.-*

U3A Phone Directory

To discuss any problem with U3A Dunedin please phone the right person:

Chairperson: Linda Kinniburgh
473- 8443

Board matters Richard Highgam
476-1848

Membership : Lynda Jackson
473-6947

Programme:Committee
Stuart Strachan 482-2339

Discussion Groups: Ngaire Bates
454-2170

Courses: Phyll Esplin 467-2594

Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.

- Groucho Marx

Discussion Groups news

It has been a busy time for the Discussion Groups over the last few months.

We have organised and run a successful learning group on how to use an Android phone.

This is nearly at an end now and has been run largely by the Stepping Up programme out of South Dunedin. This group also operates out of the Dunedin Public Library, if there are any more members out there that would like to learn anything about phones, internet, banking etc.

The other groups that were advertised were the card group and the scrabble groups. We are still waiting for enough members to make these two groups viable. So please contact me (phone 454-2170) if you are interested.

The Board has also been busy trying to find a replacement for the Discussion Group committee. Particularly as the Convenor. If anyone out there is at all interested please put your hand up so that this can get sorted.

A few of our long-term groups like (for example) the Local History, Ger-

man Speaking, and Film Group have finished operating. However, if you are still interested in anything else that you would like to participate in or learn more about please contact me,.

The Poetry group is also looking for a few more members. So, if this sounds like you, again please contact me and I will point you in the right direction.

Hope those of you who have enrolled in the winter series enjoy what is on offer..

Please keep warm, get vaccinated and look forward to spring. It is nearly here.

- Ngaire Bates, Convenor,

Discussion Groups



The website Tinyurl.com/webster400 provides a searchable list of books published or distributed since 1950.

(Jonathan Swift's "A Treatise on Good Manners and Good Breeding" — a good book for users of Twitter and Facebook to read!)

My Favourite Language by John Hale

Of course the whole thing is largely accidental. You miss out on most languages, by accidents of birth or educational system. And these days, you can survive with English alone. But do members of the U3A remember a time when French or Latin came next, with secondary school; and perhaps how life or choice or work or travel brought other languages too?

My own fate was to be plunged into French and Latin simultaneously, at age 11.

I liked them but did not love them. They were taught in dry, routine fashion, systematically. I found the systematizing more enlightening for Latin, which is nothing if not systematic—all those endings, of cases or of verb- inflections, marching down and across the pages of Kennedy. I liked system.

Then I chose Greek over German; another dead language over another living language poorly taught. Why? My parents insisted, but indeed Greek gave and gives access to just about everything intellectual. And yet speaking it made no sense, cut no ice.

Contrast Italian, my own conscious choice at last, begun at age 15. Whereas it took years, and a visit to France, before I spoke French for real use, Italian was oral from day one. The Greek teacher, Dennis Riddiford, had learnt it in the army drafted to Venice, where he met and married the lovely Maria. So back in London circa 1953, thanks to them both Italian was spoken and taught freely around me. And I went to Italy with my parents a few months later. Triumphant, when we were lost in Lugano and trying to catch the right bus, I asked the lady at our bus stop. “Di quale direzione viene l’autobus a Domodossola



“Dante and the Three Kingdoms”- (1465) oil by Domenico di Michelino. It portrays Dante, Florence and the Three Kingdoms of the Afterlife.

per favore, Signora?” It worked! As a bonus, Latin had helped me invent *direzzione* from the Latin components.

This was really living. So, a year or two later, I was starting to read Dante in Italian with Maria. Dennis in his Italian “language” classes enthused at the drop of a hat about Italian food, motor racing, cities, art, opera, anything really. We giggled and nudged each other at getting him (“old Bubbles”) digressing yet again. We were not digressing, but receiving a living specimen of Italian in action. And I can vouch for it, that if Italians hear you attempting but mangling their language, like with irregular verbs, they will join in the mangling, to encourage you and share the fun. Contrast French!

Italian is made for singing. Music, practice or theory, is saturated with Italian terms. It sings well (as does Latin, for ever). Opera, food, and so on. English has needed to borrow from it incessantly, at the highest and mundane levels alike. Mundanely in *motto, grotto, ditto, risotto*. High up, in Dante’s hell, we learn that some who sin have thereby lost the “ben de l’intelletto” — the right or

good use of intelligence, such as we have. The misuse of mind, how rife among us too; like how to avoid tax or subvert the Net.

Dante came early and formative in the history of Italian, like Homer in Greek, or Shakespeare or Goethe or Pushkin in their languages. Why so early? Dunno, but true it is. Equally true that “*Nel mezzo di cammin di nostra vita/ My ritrovai per una selva oscura/ Che la diritta via era smarrita...*” Who hasn’t felt that? “In the middle of the path of our life I found myself in a dark wood that had lost the straight way for me...” *Our* life, the path, found *myself*: this allegory includes each and all, still. And he, for me the supreme poet, the best of the best, did find himself. Persist with him on his journey of the vision of the three kingdoms of death, until just before he passes out he glimpses *l’amor che muove il sole e l’altre stelle*.

“A room without books is like a body without a soul.”

~ **Marcus Cicero**



St Paul's Cathedral in the Octagon: shows its wintry facade (above) and lit up at night (left).

Photos by Ann Wood
(Photography Discussion Group, U3A Dunedin)

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