

U3A DUNEDIN FORUM



Newsletter 58, January 2018

Thinking about our future growth

Your U3A Board has a lot to think about over the coming months. U3A Dunedin in December had nearly 900 members, of whom 45 were new last year.

At this rate, as baby boomers retire in ever-greater numbers, we are set to continue to grow to become a significantly larger organisation. Already thinking about the future, we have come to some early conclusions:

1. We aren't able to put on any more than six courses in a Series – our organisation is very stretched to achieve even this number, and we wish to maintain the current excellence of our courses.

2. We can't increase course numbers above the current 150 for two reasons. Principally, this is the largest number we can accommodate at either of our current venues. Also, we only just manage to get the tea/coffee served comfortably to that number in our 20 minute break.

3. Our Discussion Groups (currently nine of them) have significant opportunity for expansion. For many U3As these are the major or only offering, and some U3As have upwards of 30 of these groups.

We would welcome input from members about these and other activities they would like to see.

SEARCH FOR IDEAL VENUE

We have taken the decision to run Series 1, 2 and 3 2018 half at Leith Bowling Club and half at the Otago Golf Club while we continue to look at costs and other features of each site.

Members have made a lot of comment about our various venues over the years, so here I thought I'd list our 'ideal venue'.

- Reasonably in the central city, with



By Gretchen Kivell
Chair, U3A Dunedin Board

easy road access and good parking.

- *Flat level access from parking area.*

- *Bus access – preferably between the Gardens and Cargill's Corner so the members don't need more than two buses to get to their venue.*

- *Available at times to suit our needs (note, this is for only part of each year).*

- *Rooms to take 50, 100, and 150 people available (a course can be much larger, or smaller, than expected and this is determined only shortly before the course begins).*

- *Blackout curtains, and audio-visual facilities to enable all course attendees to both see and hear the presentation comfortably.*

- *Good heating, and adequate ventilation.*

- *Tea and coffee making facilities and space in which to take our break.*

- *Provision of suitable food for our morning and afternoon teas.*

- *Reasonable cost of hire.*

Our former and current venues all meet these requirements to an acceptable extent, but each has drawbacks which can particularly affect some groups within our membership. We continue to be on the lookout for even

better venues. Please get in touch if you know of anywhere that ticks at least most of the above boxes.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

The Dunedin U3A Board initiated small groups in 2015, their name recently changed to Discussion Groups. They are run autonomously and independently of the main lectures and usually meet on a monthly basis in a member's home. Depending on the interest and the size of the house these can be for any number of people but mostly around eight to ten. Meeting times and days are usually decided by the members of the group themselves. They can be in the morning or afternoon. No meetings are held at night, and we work to ensure our Discussion Group meeting times don't coincide. The group can work around the U3A main series of lectures so this need not be a problem. Most current groups involve no cost; one group has a gold coin toward morning tea.

Ngaire Bates is our Discussion Group co-ordinator. She says "from my own experience with Kerikeri U3A, many of the members of the Discussion Groups get to know each other very well and can form long term friendships".

Any member of U3A Dunedin is able to join any Discussion Group. If one group is full on any topic we can start another group up. If you have a topic that you are particularly interested in {e.g. philosophy or photography} please contact Ngaire and she will help you set up a group. Ngaire is helpful but not directive. Groups are autonomous U3A activities.

— Continued on page 2 —

OUR Website
u3adunedin.org.nz

Another series awaiting keen members

Our Spring lecture Series 3 courses finished with a flourish around mid-October with many favourable comments like: 'the best course I have been to since joining U3A Dunedin some years ago', 'I was really impressed with the quality and knowledge of the presenters', 'the variety of information has been surprising and delightful', and 'the whole course captivated me'.

Such comments are always appreciated by the organiser, developer, assistants and presenters of a course as well as the members of the Programme Committee, many of whom will have been involved in the often drawn-out process of initiating and mounting a course on a new topic.

DIVERSE TOPICS

Looking ahead to our 2018 Autumn Series 1 courses we have what I hope will be an interesting collection of diverse topics. We all seem to struggle with the rapidly changing aspects of digital technology (particularly at our age !) and so this course will hopefully unlock some of the mysteries associated with this topic including developments at Otago University and robotics, artificial intelligence, cyber security and cyber psychology. However the course will begin with an overview of the historical progression from room-filling computers to wrist-sized microcomputers in the Dunedin context and include a visit to Toitu Early Settlers Museum to see some of this historic computer equipment in operation.

The Southern Ocean and Antarctica are increasingly recognised as playing a major part in the likely global effects of climate change and this course will



Barrie Peake
Programme Committee Chair

examine the science behind these effects as well as New Zealand's historical and legislative involvement. Many of us are still intrigued by English stately homes and this course will cover aspects of their history, design and operation in the context of the English class structure.

The many musical settings down through the ages of the most famous and ancient Christmas song (the *Magnificat*) will be covered in another course. The progressive transition of the English poet W. B Yeats from Romanticism to Modernism will be considered in a course in the context of politics, the occult and imagination.

Finally, there is a course covering a progressive history of the design of Dunedin buildings from their beginnings in the early settlement of Dunedin through to the modern times and finishing with Damien van Brandenburg presenting his views in person on the future of Dunedin's buildings.

The locations of these Autumn Series 1 courses are divided equally between

the Leith Bowling Club and the Otago Golf Club as we assess the suitabilities of these two venues to cater for our maximum numbers of attendees.

Further details including enrolment for these courses that will start in the week that begins on March 5, 2018 are available on the U3A Dunedin website under 'Course and Resources' and will have been recently sent out by email or post to all members.

PLANS FOR WINTER SERIES

Planning is already under way for the 2018 Winter Series 2 lecture courses and some firm topics at this early stage include ; 'The Formative Years', 'Nobel Prize winners 2016-17', 'High Renaissance Art', 'Brain Health' and 'Literary Passions'. Watch this space and the website for further details! Thank you all for your support during the 2017 year. - **Barrie Peake**

Future growth

[Continued from page 1]

Finally, with 900 members we hope to have a steady stream of volunteers looking to become more involved in our activities, for example presenting or organizing a course, participating on one of our committees, or perhaps taking on a particular job.

We currently have a need for someone to fill and post envelopes to get information out to our approximately 90 postal members. There are three large mailouts, when all course information and enrolment material is sent, and five smaller ones. These are well spread out through the year. If one or two people would like to volunteer for this role, or for any other of U3A's activities, that would be wonderful. Please contact our Secretary Marion Potter at info@u3adunedin.org.nz

- **Gretchen Kivell**

They said it...

If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music. I get most of my joy in life out of music.

~ **Albert Einstein**

The chief enemy of creativity is good sense.

~ **Pablo Picasso**

When the uncreative tell the creative what to do, it stops being art.

~ **Tony Bennett**

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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Housing world's growing and ageing populations

As the world's population growth continues to soar most countries have to face up to the problems caused by finding adequate housing for climbing numbers. Populations are also ageing as people live longer, adding to the crisis.

Singapore has a silver tsunami of seniors living alone. The number of seniors who live by themselves has been increased from 14,500 to 42,000 from year 2000 to 2014.

Based on the current growing rate, by the year of 2030, there are likely to be more than 80,000 elderly people living alone in Singapore. In a concerted push to help the growing population of seniors there lead more active and fulfilling lives in their golden years, the Ministerial Committee on Ageing announced last August a comprehensive raft of initiatives spanning areas such as lifelong learning, employment, housing volunteerism.

CO-HOUSING TREND

Singapore needs to explore more flexible types of public housing in order to adapt to future requirements. Co-housing may provide an alternative option for different necessities of various user groups. It is defined as a clustering of smaller-than average residences to maximise shared open



spaces for social interaction, with common facilities for shared daily use as well as non-hierarchical consensus-based resident management.

By looking into various successful case studies in Western Countries such as Denmark, Germany and Holland, in the longer term, these types of affordable and sustainable housing typologies have become more popular choices for smaller user groups to mark the beginning of their home ownership.

From a social point of view, this kind of resident management planning process under a non-hierarchical shared environment helps especially the elderly or disabled to live and work-in-place comfortably. The sense of place and belonging of 'village' community was created through shared social interaction.

UK AGEING REPORT

An extra 71,000 care home places will be needed in England by 2025 to cope with rising numbers of older people unable to live independently, research has revealed. The findings have considerable implications for relatives as older people will have complex needs, requiring sustained input from family carers or social care teams to support independent living.

A study led by experts at Newcastle University, published in *The Lancet*, shows that as life expectancy increases so too have the number of years older adults spend with substantial care needs. While care is increasingly provided in the community placing a significant burden on families, the study warns tens of thousands of care home places will be needed by 2025 at the cost of millions of pounds.

OWCH (Older Women's Co-Housing) is a group of women over 50 who have created their own community in a new, purpose-built block of flats in North London. As an alternative to living alone, they have friendly, helpful neighbours.

OWCH's 'New Ground co-housing for women over 50 at High Barnet, N. London has 16 residential flats and eight for rent.

OWCH members began moving into their new homes in December 2016 and their community is now fully resident. Their dream is being realised and they are busy coming to terms with the realities of living as a group. They have organised household responsibilities among the group and set up a programme of common meals and some shared activities.

What's 2 plus 2?

A mathematician, an accountant and economist vie for a job. The manager calls in the mathematician first and asks: "What do two plus two equal?" The mathematician replies: "Four." The interviewer asks: "Four, exactly?" The mathematician looks at the interviewer with a puzzled expression and says "Yes, four exactly."

Then the manager calls in the accountant and asks the same question: "What do two plus two equal?" The accountant says: "On average four — give or take 10 percent, but on average, four."

Finally the manager calls in the economist and posts the same question: "What do two plus two equal?" The economist gets up from his seat, sits down next to his interviewer and says: "What do you want it to equal?"

Wonders

Why does someone believe you when you say there are trillions of stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?

Why do banks charge a fee on 'insufficient funds' when they know there is not enough money?

Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the end on your first try?

Notes on Discussion Groups

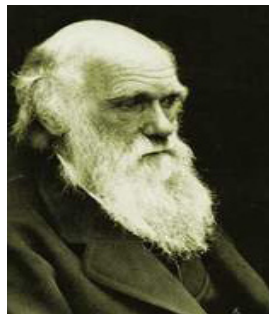
The convenor, Ngaire Bates, is keen to set up a Philosophy group and to get a TED* talk group firmly off the ground. If you are interested in either of these topics or have a particular idea of something you are interested in please also let Ngaire Bates know. Phone; 454 2170 or email ngairemichael@gmail.com

The Discussion Group page on our website is accessed from the list on the left hand side of our home page, or directly from <http://u3adunedin.org.nz/?Discussion%20Groups> Ngaire provides a monthly update of each group's activities, and this can be accessed from the above page.

*TED initially stood for Technology Entertainment and Design, but now has its own meaning, principally 18-minute talks by excellent presenters on any topic — search their website and you will be hooked! These talks are now very popular,

Beards inspire art .. or close shaves?

British artists 'Gilbert & George' are clean-shaven in real life, but a series of surreal self-portraits sees them with beards. But they are made of wire mesh, foliage, flowers and even rabbits. The set of 172 pictures are shared among six 'Beard Pictures' exhibitions, in Paris, New York, London, Brussels, Naples and Athens that opened in October and are on until next March. In the works barbed wire is crossing behind or in front of the two men's faces, to evoke pictures of war and refugees rather than any new fashion for facial hair.



Charles Darwin, 'great badger of a beard'

"Every time you switch on the television you started to see barbed wire all over the world," says Gilbert. "And you started to see holes in the barbed wire, and you started to see human beings with beards sticking out of it."

The septuagenarians (Gilbert is 74 and George 75) are usually seen dressed impeccably in tweed suit and tie. Their art often consists of large-scale photos, sometimes of



'City Lights' (2013) is one self-portrait by Gilbert & George

themselves, in strong, super-saturated colours and tackling sensitive subjects such as sex, religion and ethnicity. They won the prestigious Turner prize for art in 1986. Beards are prominent in Islam, Judaism and Christianity, the pair say. And agree the most famous beard in the world is that of Jesus Christ.

By coincidence, the UK *Oldie* magazine last October discussed the new book *Charles Darwin: Victorian Mythmaker* by A.N. Wilson. It noted that Darwin had 'a great badger of a beard' then. Gilbert & George (of the self-portraits) explained why: 'Whiskers which had been sprouting from English male cheeks since the 1840's crept round during the Crimean War (1854-6) to cover the chin. The difficulty of obtaining shaving soap and razors—and the greater difficulty of shaving in the wintry blizzards above Sevastopol lead to the relaxation of military discipline.'

Oldie agreed: 'Before the war only eccentrics, madmen and labourers wore beards. After, a beard meant you were a war hero. Cue the mighty beards of Trollope, Tennyson, Ruskin and Lord Salisbury. Funnily enough the recent hipster popularity of the beard has been attributed to glamorous army officers returning from Afghanistan, where they were encouraged to grow beards to fraternise with the locals.'

Wonder why?

Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?

If people evolved from apes, why are there still apes?

Whose idea was it to put an 's' in the word 'lisp'?

U3A phone directory

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

Chairman: Gretchen Kivell
473-0031

Board matters: Marion Potter
453-4721

Membership: Lynda Jackson
473-6947

Programme or Courses:
Barrie Peake 453-3151

'Hunger' of us oldies

'Old Un', a columnist in Britain's *Oldie* magazine has commented on U3A, writing: 'Just like their entrepreneurial oldies, the egg-headed oldies are expanding too. There has been a 10 percent increase in membership over the past year [2017]. It has now reached 400,000.'

One U3A, in Hampstead Garden Suburb, North London, has 400 members and was only set up in March last year.

The range of U3A activities is reported as expanding from languages to music, art to maths and zoology. Recent activities include ballroom dancing and medical calligraphy in Hampshire.

'The brain is a plastic organ, that can change at any age,' Old Un observed. 'The press often highlights brain conditions, such as Alzheimer's, which reflect a decline in brainpower. It's time to highlight what Philip Larkin called "a hunger ... to be more serious". It is a hunger which grows.'

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



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