



Examining the U3A 'university'

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By the time you read this message, I will have completed my term of office as Chairman. I have greatly enjoyed the experience and have found it very stimulating. However, I think it is wise that U3A Dunedin has an unwritten policy that the term of office for the post is one year. I'm sure I won't have difficulty finding things to do!

Rosalie Clarke, Doug Holborow (elected members) and Marjan Lousberg (co-opted member) have now completed their first year on the Board and their input has been greatly appreciated.

Judith Gray, our secretary for a decade, has decided to call it a day. Judith has given her 'all' to U3A Dunedin and I am sure we are all extremely grateful for the commitment and expertise she has given to us. Her organisational skills will be greatly missed by the Board. Fortunately she has agreed to remain 'in office' until we find a new way of managing our secretarial needs.

We are fortunate that all members of the Board signified their willingness to stand again. Judith Cowley indicated

We're not about passive learning — the person who knows coming along and telling the people who don't know. In the U3A, the learner is also the teacher. Every member has the potential to share learning with others. We get people leading groups who say: I never thought I'd be a teacher, but I'm doing it, and I'm loving it.

- Peter Laslett: *A Fresh Map of Life: The Emergence of the Third Age.* (1991)

that she was going to retire but has been persuaded to change her mind. Judith has been a member of the Board since 2007 and been particularly inventive with courses that are a little bit different and which encourage participants to get involved more than many courses do. 'The Victorian Age', particularly, gave members the opportunity to prepare and deliver a short presentation. I know that she has something else in mind! I believe we should have more of this type of course as opposed to the didactic ones that many members

seem to prefer. Education, after all, is about involvement and is a two-way process.

There was debate at a recent Board meeting about the role of the University in our activities. We are extremely lucky to have such a close association with the University of Otago. It is interesting to note, however, that Prof. Peter Laslett, of Cambridge University, who was responsible for getting U3A off the ground in England, wrote in 1981 that 'The word 'university' in the name of the institution (i.e. U3A) shall be used in its original sense, meaning a corporation of persons devoted to a particular activity, not necessarily intellectual.' A message for us to ponder.

I wish the next Chairman, to be elected by the Board at its meeting in late July, all the best for a successful year.

John Burton

BIG BOUQUET: Judith Gray, U3A's retiring secretary, and six of the ten chairpersons she has worked with (from left: Elizabeth Timms, Wilson Daniel, Judith, Graham Mortimer, Sue Cathro, Jenny Laws, John Burton.)



Administration



Judith Gray
Secretary to Board

The Annual General Meeting of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust was held at Salmond College on Thursday, 5 July 2012. No new nominations for election to the Board had been received by the closing date for nominations and the current Board members were all re-elected for a further year: —

John Burton, Sue Cathro, Rosalie Clarke, Judith Cowley, Bill George, Judith Gray, Sue Harvey, Jane Higham, Doug Holborow, Rosemary Hudson, Marjan Lousberg, Norma Restieaux, Brian Robinson, Bill Wilson.

At its next meeting, on 31 July, the Board will elect Office-bearers for the 2012-2013 year.

The annual lunch, which preceded the meeting, was attended by 66 members and guests. We were pleased to welcome Dr Elaine Webster, who has replaced Dr Claire Matthewson as Director of the University of Otago Summer School and Continuing Education. Dr Webster attends our Board meetings and continues the pattern of valuable links between the University and

the U3A Board. Staff from Rodgers Law were also present at the lunch and their assistance to U3A was acknowledged

As members will by now be aware, I have decided that it is time that U3A Dunedin looked for a new secretary, and although I will miss the challenges and the friendships, I am sure that there will be someone out there with fresh ideas and greater skills. I have agreed to continue until a new secretary is in place.

I should like to record my thanks to the ten chairmen I have worked with, and my gratitude to all Board members who have worked together so well over the years and have made the secretary's life easier. Bill George as Treasurer has been a continuing source of support, advice and friendship all through.

The closing date for applications for Series 3 courses is noon on Wednesday, 15 August. Brochures for the six options and the application form accompany this newsletter.

Our membership currently stands at 502, with 156 on the waiting list.

Looking ahead



Sue Cathro
Programme Co-ordinator

The Programme Committee have worked hard on providing a some interesting courses for the spring series. In Series 3, 2012, you can look forward to *Medical Research*, *Two Aspects of Literature* (three sessions on C.S. Lewis and three sessions on the Nature Authors), *Six Journeys of Academic Life*, *Philosophy and History of Science*, *Hamlet* and *Tides of Research within the Pacific*.

The Committee is now working on courses for 2013, If you have a particular topic you would like to learn more about, please contact a member of the Board so that it can be approved at a meeting. If you can, please suggest the name or names of those who could be approached to present such a course. You do not have to be on the Board to organise a course and you could be the one to run it. There are guidelines available to help you, and a Board member would support you, so do let us know if you could do this.

In the last newsletter I answered some questions about the choice of rooms and the numbers of members that they can hold for a course, and explained why it is not possible to change venues at the last minute.

Since then, there have been queries about why we cannot use the University lecture theatres. The quick answer is 'because they are already in use'. The University simply could not accommodate a course of six weeks during term time.

Holiday times, when rooms are available, are too short at two or three weeks. We will continue to do the best we can with what is available; we recognise that we are very fortunate to have the three venues that we use.

SAGE (wisdom of age)

*The early bird might get the worm
but the second mouse gets the
cheese.*

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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Literature prescribed as therapy

There's an interesting blog titled 'Literature as therapy.' The tagline is 'How great literature can change your life' and the owner/lecturer Robin Bates, a US English teacher, says this:

'Literature is as vital to our lives as food and shelter. Stories and poems help us work through the challenges we face, from everyday irritations to loneliness, heartache, and death. Literature is meant to mix it up with life. This website explores how it does so'. Find this site at www.betterlivingthroughbeowulf.com

Punch and Judy still pleasing as puppets after 150 years

Mr Punch, that irascible partner of Judy, et al, is 150 years old this year. The first recorded appearance was in Covent Garden in 1662. According to Samuel Pepys the show, originally performed by marionettes (before glove puppets became the vogue towards the end of the 18th century) was 'very pretty.'

Punch and Judy is the longest-lived and most vigorous form of folk puppetry in Europe, derived from 16th-century Italian commedia dell'arte. Punch derives from the Neapolitan stock character of Pulcinella, anglicised to Punchinello. He is a manifestation of the 'Lord of Misrule' and 'Trickster' figures of deep-rooted mythologies.

In England moves are afoot to give Punch and Judy travelling shows a birthday present of licensing deregulation, to forego some expense and red tape imposed by a 2003 Licensing Act (that also affects musicians in bars and restaurants, and concerts in church halls.) There is also news of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £240,000 for a punchy new Punch and Judy Show to tour the UK this summer.

[*Punch, or the London Charivari* was the British weekly magazine of humour and satire established in 1841 by Henry Mayhew and engraver Ebenezer Landells. It was most influential in the 1840s and '50s, when it helped to coin the term 'cartoon' in its modern sense as a humorous illustration. It became a British institution, but after the 1940s, when its circulation peaked, went into a long decline, closing in 1992. It was revived in 1996, but closed again in 2002.]



Voluntary efforts valuable

Expert retired people who are engaged in 'meaningful voluntary activities'"in their U3As provide valuable contributions to the well-being of members and to the national economy,

This is the conclusion of a research paper about U3As in Australia and New Zealand capitalising on the 'cognitive resources' of older volunteers, published in the *Australasian Journal on Ageing* in 2010.

In total 164 of 265 independent U3As in both countries provided detailed counts of all activities carried out by their volunteers. In 2008 Australian U3As were supported by 871,000 volunteer hours and New Zealand ones by 69,000 volunteer hours. A notional value of \$20 per hour was rationalised, to value U3A volunteer work at \$21 million and \$1.9 million for New Zealand.

It was felt that the study will 'help inform policy-makers of how effectively the self-help U3A model harnesses the cognitive resources of expert retirees to provide a wide range of activities that benefit volunteers and members and contribute to the greater good.'

SAGE

You're never too old to learn something stupid.

Gifts to University

U3A Dunedin has made a gift of up to \$3,000 towards the reproduction and installation of the large Ralph Hotere art work *Rain*, that is to be hung where the painted banner was before in the Richardson Building of the University. The original is now in a fragile state.

The Board at its May meeting also decided to gift the University Library for the purchase of a copy of a reproduction limited edition of an attractive, large-format 19th century book *The Temple of Flora*, for the Special Collections. This contains poems and vivid botanical illustrations. (The price is expected to be \$2,500.)

U3A Dunedin has also presented Knox College with a Blu-ray player which can play discs in Blu-ray, DVD or CD formats. This equipment may also be useful for musical presentations in some of our courses held at the college.

Did you know?

The University of Otago 47th Foreign Policy School last month focused on the Middle East and also illustrated one of the benefits of your membership of U3A. Members of the general public had to pay \$350 as the fees for attending the School, but there was a big concession for 'students and U3A,' reducing the amount to only \$130.

Test your wits!

The exam teasers below have 'correct' answers in italics. Can you match your wits with them?

In which battle did Napoleon die?
His last battle.

Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?
At the bottom of the page.

What is the main reason for divorce?
Marriage.

What is the main reason for failure?
Exams.

What can you never eat for breakfast?
Lunch and dinner.

What looks like half an apple?
The other half.

If you throw a red stone into the Blue Lake what will it will become?
It will simply become wet.

How can a man go eight days without sleeping?
No problem, he sleeps at night.

How can you lift an elephant with one hand?
You will never find an elephant that has only one hand.

If you had three apples and four oranges in one hand and four apples and three oranges in other hand, what would you have?
Very large hands.

If it took eight men ten hours to build a wall, how long would it take four men to build it?
No time at all, the wall is already built.

How can you drop a raw egg onto a concrete floor without cracking it?
Concrete floors are very hard to crack.

Plenty of gems on the Internet!

More websites for Internet addicts (note that your computer should add *http://* to the front of each address):

www.airpano.com Explore stunning world panoramic tours from your computer.

tinyurl.com/89x9tgt This amazing educational tool takes you through the size of things from the smallest known object to the largest (the universe)

www.bridgebase.com is a site enabling bridge players of all levels to play live with people from all over the world whenever they like. Worth looking at or learning from.

www.iwastesomuchtime.com owns up to its traps — an easy way to procrastinate on line.

tinyurl.com/757ng66 Google Maps has become a ubiquitous resource for many viewers, but we tend to use it in a very limited way.

www.themovieinsider.com has latest news, reviews and more from the movie world.

www.freefaxbutton.com provides a free service allowing up to two free faxes to over 30 countries per day. Compose the fax online similar to an email or upload a file.

www.howitshouldhaveended.com exists because 'sometimes movies don't end the way we'd like.'

www.mapsofwar.com uses clever animations to illustrate history, and

What the Dickens?

Charles John Huffam Dickens (7 February 1812 - 9 June 1870) was the most popular English novelist of the Victorian era, and he remains very popular, responsible for some of English literature's most iconic characters. If anybody asks 'What the Dickens is going on?' you should say that this year is the centenary of his birth — a good time to read *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, or his many other books. (But 'Dickens' in the exclamation quoted in the headline is said to be euphemistically referring to the 'Devil, and not the novelist! Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes preferred 'What the deuce?')

SAGE

We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.

apparently revealing how time and geography affect war.

www.consumer.org for NZ test reports, ratings etc.

www.librarything.com is an easy catalogue for your book collection. It can also connect you with readers of similar taste. A sort of world-wide fan club for books and their authors and readers.

www.rathergood.com provides quirky songs near cult status.

www.hepguru.com/monalisa exposes the famous painting from many viewpoints. Great after reading 'The Da Vinci Code.'

www.howstuffworks.com is a compendium of articles about how stuff works. Supported by advertising, it is written in a popular 'gee whiz' style, but has plenty of well-written articles on a wide range of subjects.

www.thefreesite.com lists and reviews of all the many free resources on the Web. Tons of sidetracks to explore.

www.royalsoc.co.uk has excellent talks by many eminent scientists on the Royal Society website. The section on Climate Change is especially recommended.

www.bbc.co.uk/voices — 'The Way We Speak' is a BBC website with a wealth of sound recordings of local words and accents. It also offers a Language Lab you can download and a Word Map of local language.

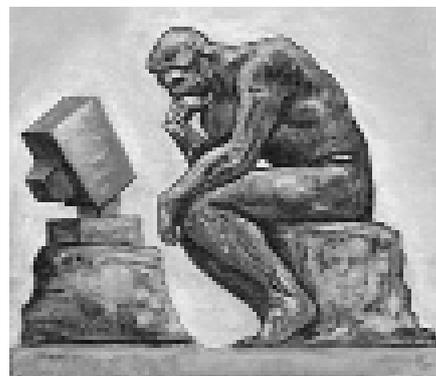
www.zefrank.com/scribbler can be a diversion that does your doodling for you once you provide some initial inspiration.

www.badastronomy.com: Phil Plait, a professional astronomer, debunks myths in astronomy and related topics.

www.noslang.com/index.php: where to go if you want to find out what your children or grandchildren are talking about — an Internet slang translator.

www.collectbritain.co.uk has 90,000 images and sounds from the British Library arranged in fascinating collections (with a search index.)

www.classicpage.com for news, information, games etc about the life, literature, art and archaeology of ancient Greece and Rome.



'The Thinker' — latest update

www.shiftinglight.com offers a way to spend a year in Provence while staying at home. Daily paintings offer a postcard throughout the year to make a virtual journey.

www.whistlingrecords.com would you believe, is a serious guide to a specialist musical subject.

www.geographia.com is useful for cultural and historical backgrounds to countries if you planning travel.

www.shiftinglight.com offers a way to spend a year in Provence while staying at home. Daily paintings offer a postcard throughout the year to make a virtual journey.

www.wwwow.info — new website from Third Age Press with some excellent links to organisations of particular interest to older women.

www.informationclearinghouse.info for an alternative view of current news. You may even add your own comments on the contents.



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