



Three new secretaries in restructured administration

In the last newsletter I indicated that the Board would make a recommendation for the administrative structure of U3A Dunedin. I am pleased to be able to inform members that the work will now be divided into three sections. There will be a Secretary to the Board, who will support all Board activity, a Membership Secretary, who will maintain the membership list and the waiting list, and a Programme Secretary, who will support the Programme Committee.

These three positions have now been filled. Marion Potter is the new Secretary to the Board, and she is an ex-officio member of the Board. Jane Higham, a current member of the Board, is the new Membership Secretary. Marjan Lousberg, also a current member of the Board, is the new Programme Secretary. We welcome and look forward to working with them in their new positions. Retiring secretary Judith Gray will continue to collect statistical data.

Communication is vital for our members. Please note that all correspondence should be directed to the Secretary to the Board. The



Dame Norma Restieaux
Chair, Dunedin U3A

addresses are included in this newsletter.

The Board has recently established two new subcommittees. The first, chaired by Jane Higham, will review the long waiting list for membership of U3A Dunedin to provide recommendations as to how we might address this.

The second subcommittee, chaired by Rosemary Hudson, will review the activities of U3A Dunedin since it was established in 1994 and provide a written report that will be made available to members in time for the 20-year anniversary celebration. Please contact Rosemary if you have

FROM LEFT: Marjan Lousberg, Programme Secretary; Marion Potter, Secretary to the Board; Jane Higham, Membership Secretary. [See Profiles, page 2]

any items you would like to share with her.

It has now been confirmed with the Hocken Library that U3A documents not required for current use will be catalogued and archived. These documents will still be available for review at the library.

Series 1 for 2013 is now well under way and once again the Programme Committee has provided a varied and stimulating series.

Included in this newsletter is the notice for the AGM for 2013 as well as the invitation to attend the luncheon. I do hope you can be there. If you have any items of business you would like on the agenda please forward them to the Secretary to the Board.

Norma Restieaux

Membership figures

Membership of U3A Dunedin stood at 523, three above the increased cap, it was reported at the March meeting of the Board. Eleven members had not renewed their membership. The waiting list was then 173.

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'We are here on earth to do good unto others. What the others are for, I have no idea.' ~ W.H.Auden

Marion Potter**Secretary to the Board**

I was born in Gore, grew up and worked on our family farm in Pukerau and attended Gore High School. I trained as a teacher in Dunedin and taught my first five years in Southland and Dunedin. I then moved to Christchurch for two years and then on to Auckland, where I received promotion as a teacher up to Deputy Principal over the next 20 years, working in three different schools. I became the Principal of Pakuranga Health Camp School for eight years before I returned to Dunedin in 2004 where I worked as a long-term reliever for seven years.

Jane Higham**Membership Secretary**

Born in Oxford, England, I came to New Zealand in 1973 with my husband Richard, who was intending to take an academic job for two years. We have stayed ever since! My professional career has been in the not-for-profit sector, starting as a volunteer with both Family Planning (when its name was said in a hushed voice) and Budget Advisory Service. As the services grew I was able to be paid as an administrator. We moved to Auckland in 1987 when our three daughters had finished their

Marjan Lousberg Programme Secretary

I was born in the Netherlands, where I worked as an executive secretary for an advertising agency and gained a BA in Political Science before moving to New Zealand with my husband in 1972. After some wonderful years of adventure and travel, working on farms and in orchards, we finally decided on Dunedin as our place of residence in 1979. We opened a second-hand bookstore in Knox Row (where the Doc's Cafe is now). At Otago University I completed a degree

in Computer Science to an MA and also a Postgraduate Degree in Education.

I worked for the University from the 1980s as consultant in computer-assisted learning and managed the educational technology services of the Computing Services Centre. I took early retirement and worked part-time while completing a PhD in 19th century New Zealand history (1997). This suggests an eternal student, making U3A the perfect place for me.

Profiles

I have been involved in a variety of voluntary activities all my life, ranging from Church, Citizens Advice Bureau, local community committees, Auckland BPW (Business and Professional Women), Auckland Commonwealth Games, and SPCA. I was awarded the N.Z. 1990 Commemoration Medal. Sport has always been a major interest of mine – from playing, coaching and watching. Now, in retirement, gardening is my main active interest with a particular interest in growing fuchsias.

Dang! there's also dwale and dwang

'Life quiz'
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Astute readers who read the 'Quiz for bright people' in the last edition of the newsletter queried our solution to question 7: 'Only three words in standard English begin with the letters "dw" and they are all common words. Name two of them.' Our answer was: 'dwarf, dwell and dwindle.'

John Burton reported his first choice wasn't on the list: 'dwang, which any carpenter would be familiar with.'

Margaret Feist was also sure that dwang existed; indeed she found it listed in the *NZ Pocket Oxford* third edition (2007), although it was not a word in her *Concise Oxford* (1982).

Your Editor's even older *Concise Oxford*, a battered fifth edition (1964), did not contain 'dwang' either. However, like Margaret, he also found 'dwale' listed, learnt it meant 'deadly nightshade,' and was possibly of Scandinavian origin. Quizzically, we

must award 10 points to any reader who knew that this word existed — or that you have to double the z in 'quizzically.'

Google knows all, of course, sending us to the online (and always slightly suspect) Wikipedia. It proclaims that dwale 'may refer to a name for *Atropa belladonna*, commonly known as Deadly Nightshade, a perennial herbaceous plant in the family *Solanaceae*, native to Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia.'

'The foliage and berries are extremely toxic, containing tropane alkaloids. These toxins include scopolamine and hyoscyamine which cause a bizarre delirium and hallucinations, and are also used as pharmaceutical anticholinergics. The drug atropine is derived from the plant.'

Ancient Romans used Deadly Nightshade as a poison (the

wife of Emperor Augustus and the wife of Claudius both were rumoured to have used it to murder contemporaries.).Predating this, it was used to make poison-tipped arrows.

The genus name *Atropa* comes from Atropos, one of the three Fates in Greek mythology. The name 'belladonna' is derived from Italian meaning 'beautiful woman' — because the herb was used in eye-drops by women to dilate the pupils of the eyes to make them appear seductive. Perhaps used by prima donnas?

As for 'dwang,' John hit the nail on the head! Yes it is the horizontal bracing piece used between wall studs or floor joists to give rigidity. Wikipedia however claims the word to be Scottish in use and prefers 'nog' (New Zealand) or 'noggling' (in England and Australia.) At this point in research the Editor adjourned for his noggling. . .

Women still evolving, researchers claim

Man is still evolving, or at least women are, according to research carried out at Yale University. Medical advances mean that in the developed world most people who previously would have died before reproducing now live three-score years and ten, or even longer — so it had been thought that 'survival of the fittest' no longer applied to humans, and we therefore had stopped evolving.

By analysing data covering three generations of women in Framingham, Massachusetts the research team identified traits that are still being shaped by natural selection. If the trends they have identified continue, in the space of 10 generations (about 300 years) the average woman will be around an inch shorter and two pounds heavier than her present-day counterpart.

Meanwhile, at the University of Southern Denmark, researchers concluded that the average British child born today has a 50% chance of living to 103.

Interesting courses for winter series

The Programme committee is pleased that we have been able to organise six interesting courses for the winter series. Of the courses that I foreshadowed in the last newsletter there has been one change that of the course on *Faust*. This has had to be withdrawn as the presenter is ill. However, we have six courses that we are sure will be popular. These are *Water, Hot Topics in Economics, Six Journeys by Women, Portraiture, Our Harbour* and *Poetry Appreciation*.

Looking ahead to spring, we have five courses confirmed already: *The Nervous System, Art and Change, The Education Question, Vision* and *James Joyce*, with another on the way. We are now looking towards courses for 2014, and encourage your input.

In the last Newsletter I mentioned that we were putting together a course on member's talents and hobbies. We have had several proposals, but do need some more to complete a full course. Do you have a hobby or interest that you would be willing to

Looking ahead



Sue Cathro

Programme Co-ordinator

share with others? If so, we would be pleased to hear from you. This could be a more informal course, with two or three people per session, so it would not be too onerous for anyone.

The Board is always open to suggestions. The course evaluation forms are a good source of ideas, but if you have an idea at any time and a possible presenter, please contact a Board member so that he/she can bring it to our meetings.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General meeting of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust will be held at Salmond College, Knox St, Dunedin on Thursday, July 4 2013, immediately following a luncheon which will commence at 12.15pm.

Nominations for membership of the U3A Board for 2013-2014 will be welcome and nomination forms are available from Marion Potter, Secretary to the Board, u3adunedin@gmail.com (email) or P.O. Box 6491, North Dunedin, 9059. Nominations close on Friday, June 14, 2013.

Copies of the agenda and other papers for the Annual General Meeting will be sent to all members who accept the luncheon invitation, or will be available on request from the Secretary to the Board.

Marion Potter, Secretary to the Board

Critics out of tune?

Pianist Michael Houstoun had two trenchant quotations on his personal website www.michaelhoustoun.co.nz under the heading of 'Reviews' and above excerpts from and transcripts of some critics' articles. They are:

- 'Why, Sir, a fly may sting a stately horse and make him wince. But the one is still a horse, while the other remains a fly.' — Dr. Samuel Johnson.
- Franz Liszt (to student whilst travelling on a train): 'Come and make up a fourth for a game of whist.'
Student: 'But, revered master, I don't know how to play cards.'
Liszt: 'Then you can be the critic.'

Melbourne U3A Conference

'Ageless Learning Begins with U3A' is the title of the U3A Victoria and Asia Pacific Alliance International Conference being held in the Melbourne Town Hall, Australia, on October 14-15 this year.

Costs: A\$100 covers the conference, morning tea and lunch on both days. Registration forms are available now. View <http://u3a-melbourneinternationalconference2013.org> for more details. For any queries email the following: conference2013@u3avictoria.com.au or for wider issues go to elsiem@bigpond.net.au (chair of Conference Committee)

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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Quiz: how might you live longer and better?

How would you answer these multiple choice questions from this quiz? Each of the answers is backed up by scientific research on the topic. (Answers in italics.)

1. Which of these is most likely to improve your memory after age 50?

- a. Solving word puzzles?
- b. Going on regular walks?
- c. Taking ginkgo biloba supplements?

Answer: b. Walking is even better than puzzles. Supplements aren't effective.

2. What's the best treatment for creaky, arthritic knees?

- a. Sitting down?
- b. Taking glucosamine supplements?
- c. Doing tai chi?
- d. Taking shark cartilage pills?

Answer: c. Tai chi, an exercise programme that is famous for flowing stretches and poses; its

exercises control pain and improve function.

3. Which of these two habits could shave the most time off your life?

- a. Watching TV?
- b. Smoking?

Answer: Surprise! Every hour watching TV can cut 22 minutes from one's life span; Smoking a cigarette reduces life span by about 11 minutes. (Don't smoke while watching TV. That's a double whammy.)

4. If you are 45 and have lived an "unhealthy life" so far, you might as well forget changing now. (True or false?)

Answer: False. It's never too late to begin, even if it is just walking a few times a week.

5. If you are physically active and sociable, you can expect to add how many years to your life span?

- a. 0.8 years?
- b. 1.5 years?

- c. 3.6 years?
- d. 5 years?

Answer: d. Research on people 75 and older who were physically active and sociable showed they lived five years longer than people who were isolated and sedentary.

From 'Live Longer & Better' by Gretchen Reynolds, *Parade* magazine, January 27, 2013, [Courtesy of Taos Institute — www.positiveaging.net]

Life expectancy

According to a new publication from the Max Planck Institute 'Life expectancy is rising because mortality is falling'. The Max Planck institute in Rostock, together with demographers from the university in Berkeley, currently maintain the largest database of such figures, including actual death rates, in the world. The Human Mortality Database contains details from all countries for which reliable data is available — often harking back to the 19th century, and freely available online for researchers and the general public.

Value of science

In general, we don't value science as much as we should. It lives beneath the surface of everything we touch and taste. So let's look again at science: what is it doing for us already? How is it going to drive us to a better future? Click-on <http://sciencesowhat.direct.gov.uk/SSWFindOutMoreFavourites.aspx> and see how science is touching you.

Kind of interesting

Web: www.randomactsofkindness.org where the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation offers a wide range of resources, including videos and a newsletter, all celebrating the positive effects of kindness in everyday life.

'I don't believe in astrology. I am a Sagittarius and we're very sceptical.'
~ Arthur C. Clarke

Parking perks

Outside England 's Bristol Zoo there is a parking lot for 150 cars and 8 buses. For 25 years, its parking fees were managed by a very pleasant attendant. The fees were £1 for cars (\$1.40), £5 for buses (about \$7).

One day, after 25 solid years of never missing a day off work, he just didn't show up; so the zoo management called the City Council and asked it to send another parking agent.

The council did some research then replied that the parking lot was the zoo's own responsibility. The zoo advised the council that the attendant was a city employee. The City Council responded that the lot attendant had in fact never been on its payroll.

Meanwhile, sitting in his villa somewhere on the coast of Spain (or some such scenario), is a man who apparently had a ticket machine installed completely on his own initiative; then had simply shown up every day, collecting and keeping the parking fees, estimated at about \$560 per day — for 25 years. Assuming seven days a week, this amounted to just over \$7 million!

When a man opens a car door for his wife it's either a new car or a new wife. ~ Prince Philip



And your partner, is he locally-sourced? [Oldie magazine archives]

Oldest in any photo?

A correspondence on the Letters page of the London *Daily Telegraph* asked who is the oldest person to be recorded in a photograph — i.e. of all the people who have ever been photographed, and whose photograph survives, who was born first?

One of the leading contenders submitted by readers was George III's eleventh child, Princess Mary. She was born in 1776, the year that the American colonists declared independence, and photographed with her niece Queen Victoria in 1856.

The best cure for sea sickness is to sit under a tree. ~ Spike Milligan

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