

U3A DUNEDIN FORUM



Newsletter 57, November 2017

Our 'very successful' organisation

This is my first contribution as Chair of U3A. Elected at the first Board meeting after the AGM, one of my first jobs was to thank Jane Higham for her superb two years as Chair. Her final *Forum* page 'U3A's two years of great change' was indeed accurate; our excellent website became our principal communication with members, electronic membership and emails for all members who are on line was introduced, and – we got rid of the waiting list! All of this meant a huge amount of work for Jane and her Board colleagues. They have positioned our organisation well, ready for the next challenges.

The AGM reported a very successful organisation, a strong financial report, and great support and enthusiasm by members for our 6-week courses. With membership continuing to increase throughout this year we plan to continue from strength to strength.

The formerly-named 'Small Groups' have been more invitingly named 'Discussion Groups'. Ngaire Bates, who has recently joined the Board, looks after these groups. Currently there are eight active (two are full) with one more on the way. These are groups of (usually) 8 – 12 members, meeting (usually) in someone's home. Many U3As in New Zealand have these groups as their main, or only, offering. They offer members a great opportunity to join – or start – a group of interesting folk exploring a much-loved (or entirely new) topic.

On 22 August I wrote to all members – most via email, but some by letter – explaining the sudden decision to move three courses in the Spring series from Leith Bowling Club to the Otago Golf Club. I said I would let you know about venues and



Gretchen Kivell
Chair, U3A Dunedin Board

travel for 2018 as soon as matters have been canvassed and decided. Investigations are still ongoing, but there will be three courses at the Leith Bowling Club and three at the Otago Golf Club for the Autumn series (March - April) 2018. The Bowling Club rooms can (by rearranging the seating) take

2018: three courses at Leith Bowling Club and three at Otago Golf Club for Series 1 (March-April)

more people than we had appreciated (148, rather than 110). We will be watching how the venue works with a larger course and this will form part of our subsequent decision-making.

Finally I'd like to acknowledge Doug Holborow's work in the past two years as Programme Convenor. It's a very big job, and Doug has enthused members of his committee to achieve the giddy heights loved and expected by our members – your feedback on

recent courses has shown this. We thank him very much, and it's with great pleasure we note he's handed over the mantle to another enthusiast, Barrie Peake. The U3A courses are in safe hands. - Gretchen Kivell

BUS ROUTE AND WALKS TO OTAGO GOLF CLUB

We are very disappointed the Helensburgh bus has been rerouted away from Balmacewen Road. The walk to the Golf Club from anywhere on this route is now significant.

Some members do walk from nearby. Please take care when walking along the Golf Club's road. Where it turns a sharp corner, walkers have to leave the road quickly if there are cars coming in both directions and meet (unexpectedly to both) at the corner. It is much safer to be walking on the inside of the bend (contrary to usual advice) because the grass verge there slopes much less steeply. Take a look when you pass by next time!

- Gretchen Kivell
(Meet Gretchen on page 3 - Ed.)

Ride Share

We will continue this travel sharing facility in Series 1 2018. The plan is that no request lies on the site for more than two weeks and all requests disappear at the end of a Series.

Parking at Leith Valley Bowling Club is said to be tighter with the advent of the cycleway – so sharing vehicles is a useful way to reduce congestion.

- Alan Jackson (Web Editor)



Every now and then go away, even briefly, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgement will be surer; since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power ~ Leonardo Da Vinci

Another series awaits keen members

I would like to introduce myself as the new Programme Committee Chair taking over from Doug Holborow from September 4. It is appropriate to take this opportunity to thank Doug for his sterling work as Programme Convenor for the last two years during which time the numbers enrolling for courses increased significantly as we opened up the membership that has now reached a figure of about 900.

Although an increasing membership is usually seen as a healthy situation for any organisation, in the case of U3A Dunedin it has also made for some difficulties. The most significant of these is having course venues that are large enough to minimise the need to ballot out some enrolments when their preliminary numbers exceed the capacity of the assigned venue. At present we have access to rooms at the Leith Bowling Club (148) and the Otago Golf Club (160) but neither facility is necessarily available at short notice or on a day that suits our timetable.

On the other hand, course presenters are often only available on certain dates and times and they often want to plan their lecture schedules up to a year ahead. So the Programme Committee tries to guess what is the maximum number of likely enrolments for a planned course and book a venue that will be available and large enough at the times and dates that will suit the presenters for that particular course.

FORE! SHIFT TO GOLF CLUB

Until now we have generally been successful in assigning courses to either the Leith Bowling Club or the Otago Golf Club without the need to ballot. However for this past Spring Series 3 it became apparent early



Barrie Peake
Programme Committee Chair

on during the enrolment period that at least several courses were likely to significantly exceed the maximum capacity at the time of the Leith Bowling Club, to which they had been assigned. To minimise the likely disappointment of many of these enrolments being balloted out of these courses, the Programme Committee made the decision early on during the period of enrolment to shift all courses to the Otago Golf Club which was fortunately available at the required times and dates. This late change of venue for these courses was communicated to all members either by email or telephone and in sufficient time for members to reconsider the courses they had already applied for – but none did.

MOVING THE CHAIRS

So all courses for the current Series 3 Spring lectures were held at the Otago Golf Club using the largest facility that we currently had available to us at that enrolment time. However

the Leith Bowling Club has recently advised us that they could rearrange their seating to increase the capacity to approx.148 which of course, now makes it only slightly smaller than that of the Otago Golf Club. Accordingly the Programme Committee has booked 3 of the courses planned for the upcoming 2018 Autumn Series 1 in the Leith Bowling Club and 3 in the Otago Golf Club – we will be very interested in receiving feedback on how successful is the increased capacity at the Leith Bowling Club.

Although maximising the size of the lecture facility and hence minimising the need to ballot out some enrolments is considered to be a major concern, we also need to take into account the costs involved in running the courses at the two venues. There are fixed costs irrespective of class size such as venue hire and setting up the AV equipment, and there are variable costs such as catering that are charged per attendee. Both the Board and the Programme Committee are investigating all these financial aspects in order to ensure that we at least 'break even' for any course given our present enrolment fee of \$45 per course.

GOOD FEEDBACK

To other matters – the present 2017 Series 3 Spring courses are about to conclude and we are already receiving favourable feedback from many of you about them. The invitation extended to all members to attend individual lectures in the course on American literature was well received. Your Board will consider making a similar offer of attendance at an individual lecture in a future course depending on the number of enrolments and in consultation with the course presenter(s).

Please remember to complete the course questionnaire at the end of your course where you can register your comments anonymously. The Board and the Programme Committee particularly value your suggestions for future courses. Lloyd Smith and I have just entered over 350 suggestions from past course feedback into a database for easier reading and analysis, but would always welcome even more suggestions and particularly the names of possible course developers and presenters. - **Barrie Peake**

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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Meet Gretchen Kivell

Gretchen Kivell, the new chairperson of U3A Dunedin, was born and brought up in Dunedin (Arthur St, Queen's and Bayfield High Schools). She spent one year at Otago University in 1967, the year of decimal currency, mixed flatting and much else, before going on to study chemical engineering at Canterbury.

She and her engineer husband worked in New Zealand and then the UK (the latter not for 'OE' but to gain work experience in some of the biggest industries.) They returned to work in Auckland. The 1987 stockmarket crash shook her out of her employment in an engineering consultancy — but fortunately just as she was completing a part-time MBA. Employed for some years at Unitec, she then returned to Dunedin (with a painful cervical spine and without spouse).

For the last 16 years of her working life Gretchen had 'the best jobs ever', using her basic engineering skills and all of her wisdom and life experience. She was head of Toroa International



'A wonderful harmony arises from joining together the seemingly unconnected. ~ Heraclitus

The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing. ~ Socrates

Thinking is more interesting than knowing, but less interesting than looking. ~ Goethe

House first and then Abbey College, halls of residence for international students and later postgraduate students at Abbey College.

Gretchen maintained her association with her professional body, becoming President of IPENZ (Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand) in 1998. She has held several directorships, but is most proud of being a Distinguished Fellow of Engineering NZ (the new name for IPENZ from October 2017).

U3A Online

U3A Online (<https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>) is an individual, independent and autonomous U3A. It is the world-first virtual University of the Third Age delivering online learning via the Internet.

All that's needed to study online is access to a computer, tablet or other device with an Internet connection - and some basic computing skills. Courses are open to all older people and disabled younger people anywhere in the world.

Three recent new courses are:

The History of Mystery - this course traces the history of the mystery novel.

Food for Thought, Western Philosophy.

Storytelling with Pictures .

Gretchen Kivell (right) and Jane Higham (to Gretchen's left) welcome some of a group of new members of U4A Dunedin at a coffee morning in the Iconic Cafe.

OUR WEBSITE
u3adunedin.org.nz

Slides from Courses

Some lecturers allow their slides to be placed on our website and they appear under **Courses and Resources**. link When a series ends and the next series is advertised, those details go into the section (on the right of that page) called **Details of Past Courses**. All the notes and slides are preserved to allow members to look back on things they may wish to revise.

There is a note on the Course and Resources page that reminds members that the notes are only for members' use — they are not to be circulated or published.

-Alan Jackson (Web Editor)

Just thoughts . . .

I hate it when people use big words just to make themselves sound perspicacious.

Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.

Ever stop to think and forget to start again?

Money is the root of all wealth.

Climate change activists

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. It is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

Elder-activists, based in the USA at <http://www.elder-activists.org/> is a vision -- 'of individuals who use their life experiences, reflections and wisdom to inspire, educate and support each other in creating the future that will be our legacy.' Some of its principles are:

'Create Community – begin conversations, share your ideas, inspire and support each other, have fun together!

Take Action - Participate in rallies, letter-writing campaigns and boycotts. Write to your elected officials. Let your voice be heard.

Build Sustainable Institutions - that will seed a positive future with food co-operatives, time banks, and good neighborhood schools.' [World U3A]



Positive Aging supported

U3A World is now part of the "Pass It On" network. The Positive Aging movement stresses the importance of encouraging older adults to be proactive in support of all of the factors contributing to healthy aging.

The Pass It On Network emphasises the capacity of older adults to self-organise and help themselves and others find or create what's needed to thrive.

Its mission is to spread information worldwide about Positive Aging programmes led by older adults who share their strengths to help themselves, each other, and their communities. It is developing an on-line directory of innovative resources to encourage programme replication around the globe that is adaptive to local language, culture and needs. The latest newsletter can be seen at <http://passitonnetwork.org/newsroom/> [World U3A]



'Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination nor both together go to the making of genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius.' ~ Wolfgang A. Mozart

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

Busy discussion groups

Discussion Groups are starting to become more popular with our members. At the moment eight groups are fully operational. There are two in recession — the Museum Group and the Creative Writing Group. They are both just waiting for a facilitator to run them again. If anyone would feel able to take on the facilitator's role, please let me know.

I am pleased to announce that the Book Group is now up and running again. The Local History group has someone willing to take over the facilitating of it. Discussions are taking place at the moment and the outcome of these talks will be in the next monthly newsletter. I am still looking for someone to run a Philosophy group.

If you have a particular interest in a topic for a Discussion Group, please let me know (phone 454-2170) so that I can arrange for someone to facilitate it.

As part of the Discussion Group programme there is a monthly newsletter for online perusal. This includes a report about each group's monthly meeting as well as a programme for the following month. If you have a spare moment one day, please read about the groups on offer and maybe consider joining one. They are a wonderful way to get to know new people.

- Ngaire Bates

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



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