



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# DUNEDIN newsletter



No.20 February 2009

## Our intellectual challenges?

When this newsletter appears you may have had an agreeable and energetic summer but not many intellectual challenges — which we are now told are needed for preserving whatever we still possess. (Unless we want to accept that 'our supply of brain cells are now down to a manageable size'!)

The courses for 2009 should stimulate and challenge your interests. You will have a good range of choices, notwithstanding some possible problems in confirming our venues — with the planned redevelopment of the Hewitson Wing at Knox College and uncertainties (at the time of writing) about the Leith Bowling Club.

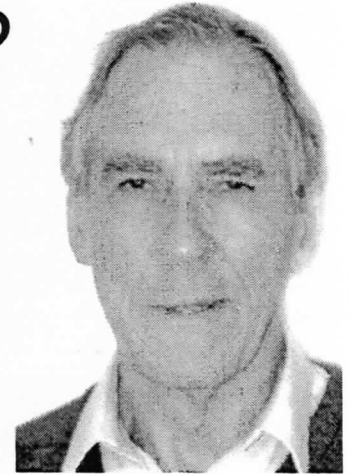
Late in 2008, U3A Dunedin was asked to contribute to a research document which will inform every U3A in Australasia about the organisation, its value to the wider community, and ideas for the future. The questionnaire showed that our group has many features which are still only hopeful goals for others, especially our access to University and Government funds and resources, agreeable venues and reasonable audio-visual aids.

We were asked about our most important problems, accomplishments and what we aim for in the next five years. Have we contemplated physical activities which keep the brain as well as the body stimulated? Do we

### ★ chairman's message

favour activities that are academic in nature or is our ideal any type of intellectually challenging pursuit within a social setting? Do we actively encourage our members as participating speakers? Do we actively foster social networking with like-minded people? Do we use the Internet for learning/teaching resources? And do we have evidence of members displaying a general improvement in zest for living since joining U3A?

For some of these questions we provided reasonably informed responses, but for others there has been little discussion and we needed more member input. If you have ideas or advice for the Board please let us know. A letter to the Newsletter Editor would be a good means of generating discussion, especially about what would enhance our programmes.



Graham Mortimer

## U3A Dunedin slides into the Digital Age

By Bill George, Treasurer

Once upon a time in a town very near a group of people, whose thirst for knowledge was not satisfied in retirement, came together to form Dunedin U3A. They realised that others would like to join them in discussion, lectures, and learning from themselves and those who are still working and studying locally.

To assist the wise old eyes and ears of our audience, technical boosters were desirable, and the equipment selected by this new group was carefully chosen and still is capable of performing well today.

The first slide projector was a surplus, well-used machine donated (more or less) and due to its quality, with TLC and adjustments, still performs well.

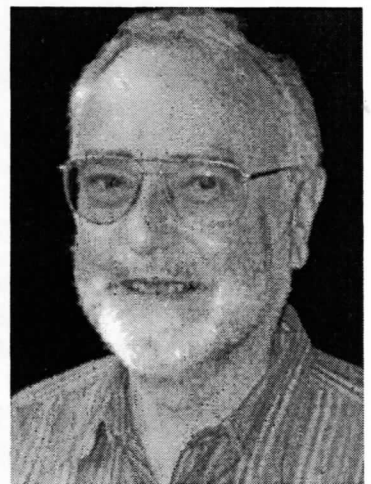
Further equipment progressively obtained was all good, up-to-date, and provided a base on which most presentations could be built.

Our equipment has been housed and cared for by the staff at Knox and Salmond Colleges, always willing to help. However U3A members have carried out maintenance as necessary.

### ★ equipment

Over the years the progression of technology — equipment becoming smaller, more powerful, and versatile — has necessitated additions, but when 'History' is retold it still requires the use of slides, OHP transparencies, and the pictorial word, so that our older equipment is still valuable.

The major revolution, the Digital Age transformation, enabled information from many sources and genres to be 'funnelled' into a common medium, a digital file. Thus with the advent of the common use of PowerPoint or similar computer programs, most lecturers can have all their



Bill George

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## ★ administration

by Judith Gray

*Secretary*



Yet another year of U3A Dunedin activity beckons. Course brochures and application forms for Series 1 2009 accompany this newsletter and the Board is sure that there will be something to appeal to everyone.

When completing the course application form please mark choices clearly. It helps to make the ballot process easier and faster for Rodgers Law staff (and for me) if options are clearly marked. Please ensure that the name and address panel on the back of the form is completed.

The deadline for course applications for Series 1 is noon on Wednesday, 11 February, and responses should be sent to you from Rodgers Law on or about 20 February. Any questions about course applications and acceptances after 20 February should be referred to me (471 9913, or [graysinn@clear.net.nz](mailto:graysinn@clear.net.nz)) Members should feel free to apply for one, two or three options in a series of courses, but if you actually only want to attend one course, then only send \$30. Specifying several options gives members more chance of being successful in being accepted for at least one course when numbers are heavy.

Keep the brochures for any courses for which you have applied so that you have the correct information about venue and starting day and time available when courses start. The brochures also provide a useful reminder about the content of each session and the name of the Course Organiser. Thank you to those of you who completed course evaluation forms last year. The comments on completed courses and the suggestions for future offerings provide assistance to the Board when it is considering future programmes. The Board cannot take up every suggestion, but many of them are of great help.

Our membership is still close to the 500 cap. Once all membership renewals for 2009 have been processed it is hoped that some of the 40-plus people on our waiting list will be able to join but it is most unlikely that all those waiting will be successful in time for Series 1.

A reminder about parking: the Board is aware that parking at the Knox and Salmond College venues is limited but please do not park in areas which make access difficult for College staff and large delivery vehicles.

Also a reminder to turn off cell phones before the beginning of any session.

Enjoy U3A Dunedin 2009!

## ★ looking ahead

by Sue Cathro

*Programme  
Co-ordinator*



In the November Newsletter I noted that four courses were confirmed for the first series in 2009: *The New Genetics*, *The Metaphysical Poets*, *Climate Change: a New Zealand Perspective* and *The Real Thing — 170 years of Photography*.

The two other courses are now finalised: *Christianity Without Theism*, and *Realism and Antirealism about Science*. This series offers plenty of variety for U3A members.

Looking further ahead to Series 2, some confirmed courses are *The Book Group*, *The Reformation*, and one organised by the Southern Sinfonia, as well as the repeat of *Women in Society*. Some proposals mentioned in the November Newsletter may now be in Series 3, and even beyond — into 2010. Several topics for later series are being pursued now.

The Board is always looking for suggestions and ideas — and offers to run a course in a series. Please contact a Board member with your ideas so that he/she can bring it to a Board meeting.

### University's representative

While Dr Claire Matthewson is on leave from March to September this year, the University will be represented at U3A Board meetings by Emeritus Professor Colin Gibson.

### Conference in India

The Indian Association of U3As wish to advise that an International Conference will be held on February 11-13, 2010 in association with the University of Chitrakoot, Madhya Pradesh. Special transport and post-conference tours are planned to be a feature of this worldwide gathering.

**Quick Quote:** *It is better to ask some questions than to know all of the answers.* ~ James Thurber

### UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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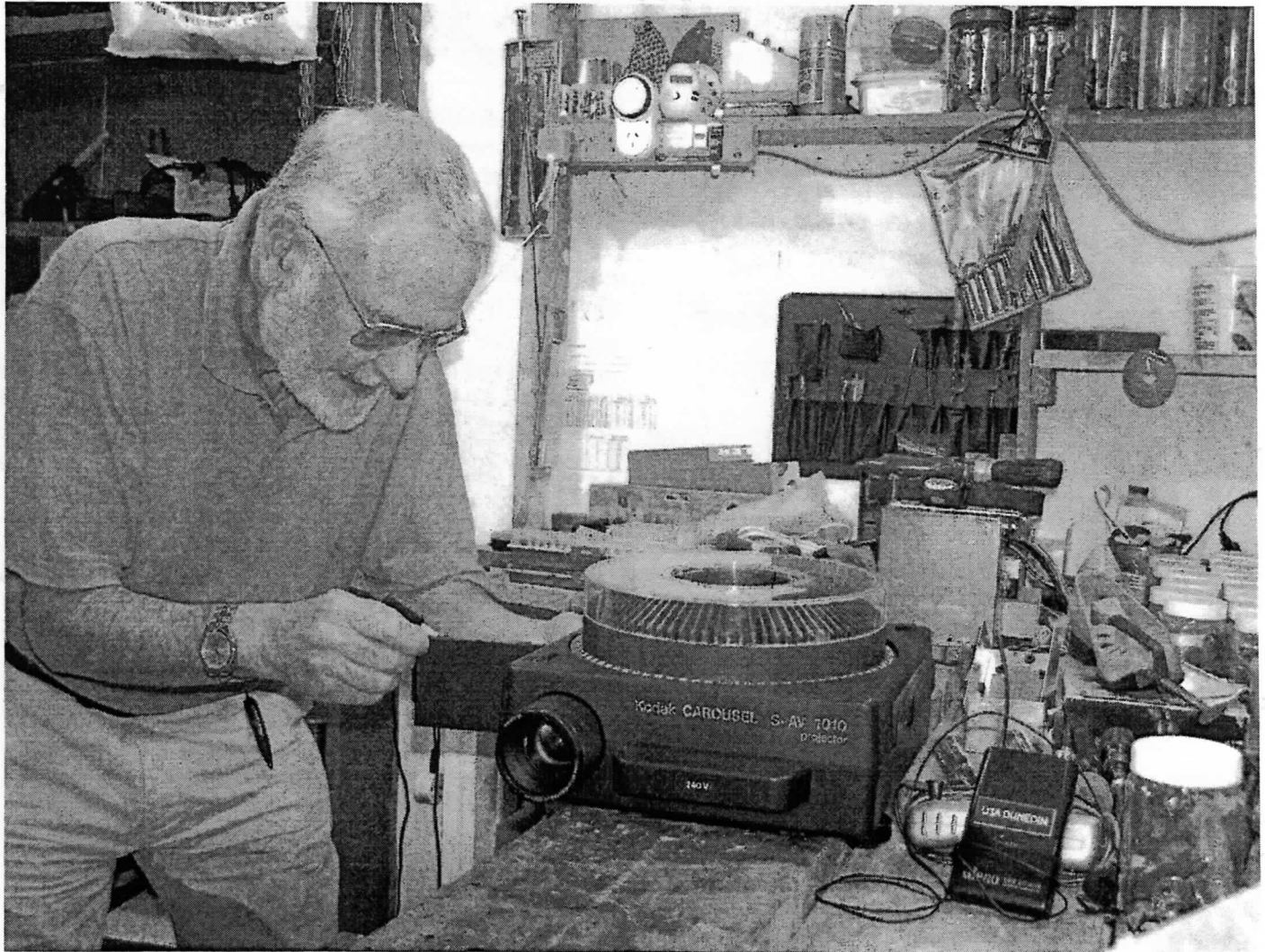
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# > U3A slides into the Digital Age

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visual and aural information prepared for digital presentation.

Initially we made some use of television, tape and disc recordings, but now almost exclusively presentations are made via computer and digital data projector.

U3A needs pictures and sound — clear pictures for the discerning audience, and very clear sound, enhanced if possible for we mostly have problems with quiet speakers.

The linking of differing pieces of equipment (some provided by presenters) can create problems — as we all know. The mismatch of levels, interference (all sorts), and the more simple problems, like not having the correct plug for a socket, or no plug at all, creates an ongoing challenge.

As equipment 'improves', has more features, and does more, we want to use more of these attributes. Our knowledge improves also, so variations are tried, tested, and if successful incorporated into our armoury of equipment.

Currently we own two public address systems with radio microphones, and have the ability to play compact discs, tapes, and with machines we have donated to Knox and Salmond, DVDs and VCR videos.

**U3A Dunedin Treasurer Bill George, regarded as our O.C. Equipment (and troubleshooter extraordinaire) sorts out a problem with one of the slide-projectors.**

Our data projector is located at Knox College, and travels to the Leith Bowling Club as required. The data projector and sound gear at Salmond College is their installation, assisted by funds from U3A and the Student Body. The U3A radio microphone works with this gear and also travels to Leith B C, as required.

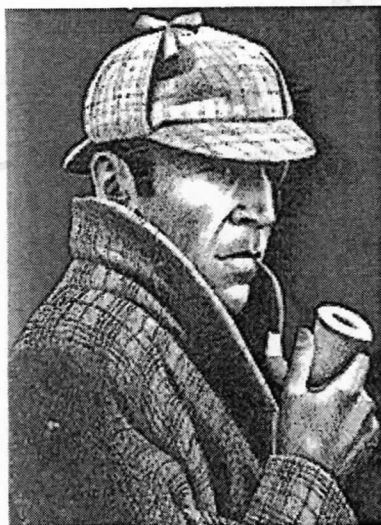
Our two slide projectors are maintained to the best standard, and regularly checked, adjusted as required, and cleaned. However, Eastman Kodak made their last projector in October 2004, and lamps are becoming harder to source. Nonetheless we still use these, as slides are expensive and labour-intensive to digitise. They also have a certain charm.

Equipment maintenance is carried out during breaks between terms, mostly over the Christmas holidays, aiming to have everything bug-free and functional at the beginning of the year.

Hardware and software can largely be managed, but as always it is the 'wetware' which causes most problems.

While we have come quite a long way from the first projectors the future will no doubt bring more challenges and more pleasure in the knowledge we can share.

# Elementary my dear Watson!



'*Sherlock Holmes, the greatest man who never was.*'

[attributed to Orson Welles]

by Ted Nye

The enduring fascination with Conan Doyle's fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, dates from the end of the 19th century, when the first of the 61 stories, *The Sign of Four*, appeared in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*.

At the time Doyle was trying to make his way in general medical practice in the south of England and was trying his hand at writing, little thinking that he was launching a literary force that lasts to this day. Within a fairly short time Doyle was writing his self-contained stories for the *Strand Magazine* and was collecting a wide readership, which was selling the magazine for the publishers in a big way.

From a modest start Doyle was eventually asking for, and getting £1,000 a story, so he abandoned medical practice. He died a millionaire in 1930.

When at one point Doyle tried to kill off Holmes there was a public outcry, with people in London wearing black armbands. Doyle, under pressure from the magazine, was forced to resurrect Holmes with a bit of literary artifice and finished the series with 61 stories later in the canon.

Since then the Sherlock Holmes stories have been translated into all main languages of the world and have spawned some 424 societies devoted to the study and appreciation of Doyle's art, and his chief character and, of course, Holmes' friend, and "chronicler" Dr Watson.

One of the best known of the long stories, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* has proved popular with film makers and there are some 21 film versions! Hardly a decade passes before there is another edition of the collected stories.

The Antipodean Holmesian Society here in Dunedin is the only New Zealand society and it issues a newsletter eleven times a year, which has subscribers in the USA, Australia, Britain, France and Sweden. The 100th Newsletter was published recently.

## Literary Contest

U3A Central Coast (NSW) is holding its 15th annual Australia and New Zealand Literary Competition this year, in two sections: Short story (fiction) and Article (non-fiction). Both must be 500 to 2,000 words in length and carry three prizes (\$200, \$100 and \$50).

Entries close on 4 August 2009 and the entry fee is A\$5 per entry. If interested entry form and detailed conditions are available from the U3A Dunedin secretary, Judith Gray.

## ★ internet links

<http://worldu3a.org> — Congratulations to U3A Online Australia for a major award by the Federal Government of Australia as part of a consortium to deliver services for Seniors.

<http://aiuta.org> — IAUTA/AIUTA, or the International Association of Universities of the Third Age has a newly designed website.

[www.undp.org/mdg/](http://www.undp.org/mdg/) — We are now at the halfway point of the UN's Millenium Development Goals shown here, and U3A Online Australia is creating an online course to explain these. (For further information email Kathleen Rossini [kathleen@rossini.id.au](mailto:kathleen@rossini.id.au))

<http://dev.europeana.eu> — Europeana, the Digital Cultural Library, aims to be a massive collection of art and literature resources from many world-class libraries.

[www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com) — Free online translation dictionaries; also contains excellent forums where you can ask questions about finer definitions, colloquial usage, etc., and native speakers from around the world give you their advice. (Similarly, logophiles will be gobsmacked by <http://www.worldwidewords.org>)

[www.oprah.com/ads/skype/skype\\_main.htm](http://www.oprah.com/ads/skype/skype_main.htm) — Like to try free phone and video calls around the world but don't know how? A brief commercial video explains how in two minutes.

[www.WellnessLetter.com](http://www.WellnessLetter.com) — contains *Wellness Made Easy: 365 Tips for Better Health*, a booklet from the University of California, Berkeley.

[www.themovieinsider.com](http://www.themovieinsider.com) — has latest news, reviews and more from the movie world.

[www.howitshouldhaveended.com](http://www.howitshouldhaveended.com) — exists because "sometimes movies don't end the way we'd like."

<http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk> — Oxford University is making hundreds of lectures by top-flight experts available as podcasts. You will need to install iTunes to see/hear them.

## Letter to Editor

As an antidote to national and international economic woes, are any U3A members interested in forming a small group for occasional eating out, combined with wine and good conversation? If so I would love to hear from you.

[email:[jcowley@clear.net.nz](mailto:jcowley@clear.net.nz)]

— Judith Cowley

*Edited by Geoff Adams*

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Elizabeth Timms — U3A Board Liaison

U3A Dunedin is most grateful for assistance from Dr Claire Matthewson (Director, Summer School and Adviser, Distance Learning and Continuing Education, University of Otago) in producing this publication.