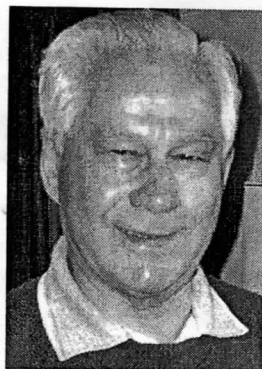




**FROM THE
 CHAIRMAN**

**New year, new editor, and the
 members' survey**

By the time you receive this message the Christmas season will have come and gone and those of you who have been on holiday will be returning home, ready for a new year of U3A activities.



Wilson Daniel

The good news at the beginning of 2006 for U3A is that one of our members, Geoff Adams, has assumed the role of Editor of the Newsletter, as successor to Brian O'Rourke. The former editor of the *Otago Daily Times* for nine years, having served previously as deputy editor for 11 years, Geoff brings with him a wealth of journalistic experience and expertise. Welcome aboard, Geoff!

At this time of transition, the Board wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the very important contribution of Mervyn Cranefield. Mervyn has played a major part, since the inception of the Newsletter, in assembling news items and overseeing the design and layout of headings, scanning photographs, etc., ably assisted by Judith Cranefield (currently a Board member) as proof-reader.

Responses to the recent survey on the future direction of U3A Dunedin have been encouraging. Following initial consideration by the Policy Sub-committee, the Board will discuss the matter further at its February meeting and submit recommendations in due course to the full membership.

The course offerings outlined in the enclosed brochures promise to be interesting and challenging. Enjoy them!

— Wilson Daniel, Chairman

IN THIS ISSUE:

How the ballot works	2
Planning for all three terms	2
Those survey results	3
Members' comments	3
U3A Online	4
Links with local branches	4

EDITORIAL

Good answers from survey?

Britain's entertaining *Oldie* magazine (edited by Richard Ingrams, founder of the satirical *Private Eye*) is a cheeky but recommended read. Its diarist once commented: 'U3A, the University for the Third Age, is for Old People Who Have Retired And So Naturally Have Nothing To Do And Must Therefore Be Stimulated.' A scathing report was then detailed from a reader, who'd been taken to a poorly presented lecture at a U3A in the north of England. Sadly, it had smacked of *Fawlty Towers* scenarios. But the columnist observed: 'I feel sure that U3A is a brilliant idea. Although perhaps it needs a little attention?'

We have been graced in Dunedin with well-practised lecturers and excellent presentations. U3A is alive and very well here. It is a brilliant idea, and our many members enjoy their participation. The way the U3A concept is best continued here with expanding branch numbers does, however, require a little thought and attention.

An excellent number of members gave this problem their personal input. The results of the survey (page 3) must help the Board plan a sensible future, and we look forward to an invigorated local organisation. The majority of members it seems would like more of the present type of courses, they are evenly split about more small study groups, the idea of occasional daytime single lectures gained overwhelming approval, and there was support for limiting the growth of the present Dunedin branch.

— Geoff Adams

ADMINISTRATION

Fill in your choice of courses for series 1

Welcome to the first set of course brochures for 2006 (with this newsletter). The Board is happy to offer five full courses and one small study group for Series 1, and we hope that there is something to appeal to all tastes.

Please clearly indicate your preference on each application that you submit and make sure that you have kept a note of the order of your preferences. Your cheque should accompany the enrolment forms.

If you have not received a letter from Rodgers & Associates by 24 February advising that your application has been unsuccessful you may assume that you have been accepted for your first choice course.

If you have any questions about your acceptance or otherwise after that date do telephone Judith Gray, Secretary to the Board at 467 2619, rather than Rodgers, as all the enrolment information will have been passed on to her.

How the ballot is done

Rodgers & Associates have provided this explanation of their process for conducting the ballot for places in our courses:

'All applications are placed in a box upon receipt until such time as the closing date has passed. We then randomly select one application at a time and enter the applicant details on his/her/their first choice course. Any applications for additional courses are then held until each application has been dealt with for the first choice. If a course has been fully allocated that person is allocated a place on their second choice course.

'Once all applications have been opened and places allocated as above we then allocate second/third choices on a similar basis until each course is filled and this is where some people get onto two courses. While they still must pay the course fee, members aged over 90 are automatically accepted [to one course in each series], and course organisers must of course be included.

'Usually by the time we reach this stage most people have been successful with the exception of the odd course where the applications far outweigh the course places.'

LOOKING AHEAD

Planning for three terms

In Series 1 of this year, members will have a wide selection of topics to choose from. The courses include: 'Faking It,' which will deal with various 'fakes, forgeries, frauds, hoaxes, counterfeits and disguises' in science, the arts and the commercial world; 'Cosmology,' looking at how the universe is constituted; 'Richard Wagner: The Early Operas,' leading to a study of *The Flying Dutchman*; 'Ethnic and Civil Conflict in the Post-Cold War World,' which will range from studies on Afghanistan, Iraq, Yugoslavia and Chechnya to the foreign policy of Russia and the United States; a repeat of 'What Does it Mean to be Human?' and a small study group, 'Pilgrimage Through the Ages,' that will look at the attendant art, history and religious beliefs.


Obviously, all these have been prepared well in advance of the recent questionnaire sent out to U3A members, and since then more thought and discussion has been given to the kinds of future courses we all want. One trend to note from the questionnaire was the considerable interest shown in small study/discussion groups, especially if the topics were broadened to include more practical subjects. But to implement the formation of more such groups the Board desperately needs help from other members. So, if you would like to become involved in setting up a group, please let us know.

Otherwise, the planning of lecture courses for Series 2 and 3 continues along familiar lines. So far, we have in place two courses on the Soviet Union since 1953 (Series 2 and 3) and one on the New Zealand novel (Series 3) which will include a visit to the Janet Frame cottage in Oamaru; and the Book Discussion Group will continue. Other plans, too tentative to outline at the moment, are also in the pipeline, but we will try to give as broad a choice as possible.

— Jenny Laws, Programme Co-ordinator

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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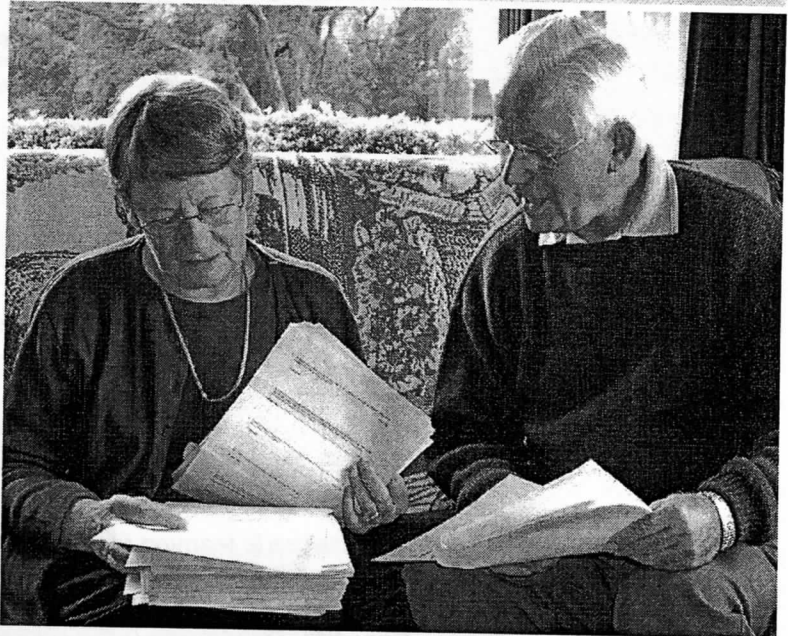
Chairman: Wilson Daniel. ph: 488 6322

Secretary: Judith Gray ph: 467 2619

Sorting the survey

Last year 218 completed survey forms were received by the 30 November deadline.. Thank you to all the members who replied. Your comments have provided the Board with much food for thought, and it will take some time to study all the responses in detail and to take action to implement any changes.

In the meantime the Board thought that members would be interested to see the basic figures that relate to the first four survey questions [set out below].



Dunedin U3A Secretary Judith Gray and Chairman Dr Wilson Daniel with the 218 survey papers returned by members.

Questions	Yes	No	Unsure
1 Would you like to have more lecture courses of the type already offered?	131 (60%)	76 (35%)	11 (5%)
2 Would you like to have more small discussion/study groups?	82 (38%)	112 (51%)	24 (11%)
3 In addition to lecture courses and small study groups would you support the idea of occasional daytime single lectures?	196 (90%)	16 (7%)	6 (3%)
4 Would you support the idea of limiting the numbers in the present U3A group? This could lead to a second U3A group in Dunedin?	133 (61%)	52 (24%)	33 (15%)

(Remaining questions relate to comments and priorities and will require much more consideration.)

So many different comments came from members that it is difficult to find any representative view. Some of the many opinions received include these: —

Question 1

How about having more courses in the Winter season?

Yes, including more of the Arts and Nature.

More would be wonderful but current choice is very good.

Enough choice now.

Question 2

Not for me personally but I'm sure others would.

A follow-up extension discussion group of a topic would be good.

These groups . . . must be encouraged.

Question 3

The idea is fine but I wouldn't opt for it — I prefer a course of study.

This would be a good idea — larger lecture theatres with more sophisticated teaching aids.

One of these a year could be a feature. . . Speakers would have to be top-notch.

Question 4

Perhaps a limit to the number of courses attended in each year.

Possibly may become necessary. But repeat courses could be an alternative.

There has to be a maximum number if courses are to remain available to the majority of members.

I agree membership be capped at 500.

U3A interests

A newsletter we receive (now issue No.60 for November 2005) is from U3A Ohariu in Wellington, which has a number of special interest groups. Members are able to read most of it on the Internet at the branch's website www.u3aohariu.org.nz

Don't forget the UK's national U3A website www.u3a.org.uk and also <http://worldu3a.org> where you can join register to receive monthly lists of fascinating websites.

U3A Online

Did you know that U3A members in Australia and New Zealand are able to study at a good concession rate (about A\$20 per course) through *U3A Online* — the world's first virtual U3A, which allows older people to study at home or elsewhere via the Internet? It's ideal if a member is unable to go to a course in person.

No qualifications are needed, there are no exams and no degrees awarded in *U3A Online*, based at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia and run by volunteer enthusiasts in Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

The purpose is learning for pleasure, or learning for leisure — at bargain rates. Visit the website at www.u3aonline.org to view courses or get more information, or email info@u3aonline.org.au The website also provides a useful list of U3A addresses, news and other useful facts.



Developing links with other local branches

There are more than 170 U3As in Australia and more than 60 in New Zealand. In Otago there is a branch in Alexandra and an active group in Mosgiel, as well as ours here in Dunedin. A useful local exchange of ideas and courses has been developing recently.

The 'Food Glorious Food' course offered in Dunedin twice (2001 and 2002) was repeated in part for Mosgiel U3A when it was starting in 2002. It was taken to Southland for U3A Invercargill last October-November. Some original speakers were available; gaps were filled by Southland people able to cover details of local food crops.

Those taking part from Dunedin thoroughly enjoyed meeting the Invercargill folk, reported Elizabeth Timms. The course was held on Friday mornings, in a room under the stand at Rugby Park provided by the Southland Institute of Technology (which sponsors both the Invercargill and Southland U3As.) This was the final course for 2005; the following week Invercargill U3A had a bus trip as an end-of-year social activity.

An earlier course on 'Conflict,' that Invercargill U3A had arranged through the University of Otago Department of Political Studies, is being repeated for Dunedin members in the first term series for 2006. Such repeats save time on course preparation, but we cannot assume that University departments are always able to deliver a repeat, as this itself entails a commitment of time by busy academic staff.

Applause for courses

'**The World in 1900**': diversity of topics and speakers was one of the best features of this 2005 course, attended by 51. University of Otago lecturers put a lot of effort into preparing the series, organised by the History Department through Dr Mark Seymour. Quotes from some of the evaluation forms: 'The rich material brilliantly presented;' 'The enthusiasm of the tutors;' 'A very good course by very gifted speakers.' Included were two lectures by art historians as well as lectures on ideologies, New Zealand, 'new women', Japan and Christian missions.

'**Words and Images**': Emeritus Prof Colin Gibson's six lectures were illustrated with slides, images on the overhead projector, and examples from his own collection of prints, illustrated books and postcards shared with the class. Members praised the presentation as 'inspiring' 'lively,' 'humorous' and 'enthusiastic.' Half the class commented that this course could not be improved; most of the rest said: 'Only by continuing it.' Many members of last term's class of 40 wanted more of the same, suggesting that Prof Gibson could talk about any topic he chose.

Newsletter edited by Geoff Adams

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Elizabeth Timms — U3A Board liaison

U3A Dunedin is grateful for assistance from Dr Claire Matthewson (Director, Summer School and Advisor, Distance Learning and Continuing Education, University of Otago) in producing its newsletter.

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