

# U3A

# DUNEDIN newsletter



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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## Splendid record of U3A 'enticing topics'

At 86, Fred Fastier is one of the keenest members of U3A Dunedin. He has attended more than 30 courses — three a year since they began.

Fred is a foundation member and contributed to one class on religion in a "Then and Now" series back in 1994, when the first courses were held.

Emeritus professor in pharmacology, University of Otago, Fred has contributed also to other courses, including two sessions on philosophy of science.

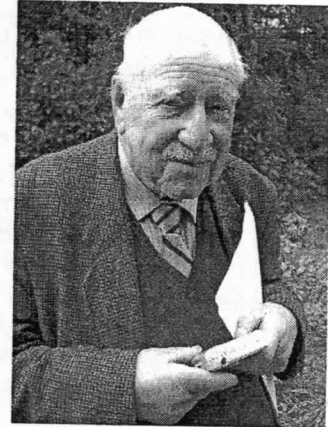
'Although all the indoor sessions were based either at Knox College or Salmond Hall, several series involved outside visits,' said Fred. Thus I have very pleasant memories of one arranged by Bill Brockie on geology of Otago, that required a long bus trip with an overnight stay at Alexandra.'

"I remember another geological one that took us around the Otago Peninsula, partly because it had not struck me till then that this region is notably lacking

in visible streams for the ominous reason that the water goes underground and every now and again causes slips like the one at Abbotsford.'

As he has a variety of interests, Fred states he always found 'at least one enticing topic.'

'Now that U3A has become more popular, I have not always succeeded in being able to attend my first choice. However, I seem to have been luckier than most in the draws for places, so I have been well pleased with what I have attended to date.'



*Prof Fred Fastier, taking part in the U3A 2006 class on digital photography.*

## Our thirteenth birthday — but how did it start?

By Honor Anderson

Have you ever wondered when or where the first U3A course was held in Dunedin, what it was all about, and who were the ideas people behind it?

Over the past few days I have been talking to some of those who were closely involved.

Sometimes memories differed over minor details, but as far as I can tell you, this is how U3A Dunedin began.



### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Late in 1993 Lorraine Isaacs, then Director of Continuing Education at the University of Otago, arranged a meeting in Christchurch with Brian O'Rourke, currently with a similar role at Canterbury University, to discuss the setting up of a U3A branch in Dunedin. Brian was the ideal person to approach, having played a major role in founding the first Christchurch U3A group the previous year.

Their meeting lasted for a whole day. Soon after returning to Dunedin Lorraine approached the Otago University Retired Staff Club, where a number of members expressed interest in establishing U3A locally. A public meeting was arranged in Salmond Hall chapel, which about 20 attended.

Ideas were exchanged and the first committee elected. I am told the members were Albert Moore, David McKenzie, Elizabeth Kerse, Alan Horsman, Bill Trotter, Jessie Laughtrey, and Tom Cowan. Significant others remembered for their generous support in those early days were Charles Croot (University Extension), Stan Andrews (technical support), Bill Cunningham and John Newton, to be joined within the next 2 or 3 years by Katherine Dolby, Lyn Phelan, and Brian O'Rourke (following his return to Dunedin in 1996.) There are probably many others who should be included here.

The first Dunedin course, happily named 'Treasures of Otago', was held in February 1994. Albert Moore remembers it as 'a mammoth course covering the zoology, geology and history of Otago. The lecture room at Salmond Hall was filled to capacity. At least 40 attended. There were 10 sessions plus a memorable walk up the Flagstaff track and a picnic on the summit.' From then on, as Albert recalls, 'U3A Dunedin took off. We never looked back.'

## ADMINISTRATION

## New format for course brochures

By Judith Gray, Secretary

With this newsletter you will find the course brochures for Series 1, 2007, and a copy of the new course application form.



Judith Gray

The information contained in the course brochures is much as before, although with a different layout.

The single application form covers all the applications and preferences for a household, or for two people who apply together for transport reasons etc. Each person should indicate the course(s) for which he or she wishes to apply, and the order of preference. The completed form, along with your cheque, should be returned to Rodgers and Associates before noon on Wednesday, 14 February. Please make sure that all sections of the form are completed, including, and particularly, the name and address panel on the back.

After the ballot, the success or otherwise of each application will be recorded on the form, and the entire form returned to you within about ten days. A photocopy of the form will be kept for record purposes.

This is a new form and we hope that it will assist members, Rodgers and Associates, and U3A administration to process and respond to applications as quickly and accurately as possible. We hope that there will be no confusion or difficulties as we implement these changes.

You may hear of members who have not received this mailout. This may mean that their membership renewal form for 2007 has not been received by Rodgers and Associates. Please suggest that they contact either me or Rodgers and Associates.

### Quick quotes

*Every truth has four corners: as a teacher I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three.*

~ Confucius

*All men who have turned out worth anything have had the chief hand in their own education.*

~ Sir Walter Scott

*People who walk dogs walk more than those who don't walk dogs.*

~ American Journal of Preventative Medicine

### Fate of the Daleks?

Enjoy watching *Dr Who* back in the swinging '60s? The recent revival TV series perhaps did not have the same entertaining effect. It reminded one member of a cartoon showing a tombstone labelled 'A Dalek' and its inscription: 'Rust in peace.'

## WHAT'S COMING?

By Jenny Laws, Programme Co-ordinator

We cannot, of course, always comply with requests for particular subjects as we rely for our experts on very busy people who are often fully employed in their professions. The miracle is that so many of them do willingly give up their precious time for us without any financial reward.

We had hoped to be able to run a small group on stained glass in this series, but that has had to be postponed until later in the year. Unfortunately, this leaves us without a small group, at least one of which we do try to include in each series. One advantage of the study/discussion groups is that we can often rely on ourselves and the expertise among our members, rather than on experts outside U3A. So please come forward with any ideas you might have for such courses in the future.

### Tailoring language

Marks & Spencer's, the British clothing chain store, pleaded guilty in the Birmingham Magistrate's Court to misleading the public. Investigating inspectors found that many of its 'Italian' range of clothes were actually made in Egypt and India. A spokesman for the firm said: 'We used this branding to create an Italian feel. . . We apologise to customers but reassure them that it was never our intention to mislead them.'

### You're welcome

The memorial service for Sir Peter Ustinov held in St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, was a celebratory occasion for that great man of formidable talents. Among the anecdotes recalled was the New York cab driver who wished him 'Have a nice day.' Sir Peter's reply was: 'Thank you, but I have other plans.'

### Not permitted

Some 34 members of the Newark and District Young Archaeologists Club, with help from 10 parents, built a replica Iron Age hut. Its frame was stakes interwoven with willow. There was wattle and daub on the exterior, and the rafted roof was covered with sedge. The effort won praise and won back the cost of the project (£300) as a prize from the British Archaeology Award group. Alas, the builders had not got the required planning permit; the hut was accordingly demolished.

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

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## YOUR FEEDBACK

*Reports on courses held in the third series of last year, between September and November:*

**After the Great Dictator — tensions, politics and culture in the Soviet Union after 1953:** This was part 2 of the course on the Soviets and focused on society and politics, with five lectures and a film showing. (U3A members not enrolled in the course still had a chance to see *The Cranes Are Flying* at the Red Lecture Theatre, Medical School, and the gold coin donation entry netted \$52.)

The innovation of a two-term inter-disciplinary course was very successful and could serve as a model for future U3A presentations, reported the organiser Judith Cranefield.

A number of class members asked for a future course on film studies, and topics on China were also requested by several people.

**Contemporary New Zealand Fiction:** 52 members in this course, much appreciated for expert lecturers and an informal address by Burns Fellow Diane Pettis, and concluding with a visit to Janet Frame's Cottage in Oamaru, (and the Forrester Gallery) which gave greater insight into Frame's writings.

Salmond Hall kindly lent their table lectern to act as a stepping-stone when the bus arrived without its own box — although the company had been properly informed it was carrying a group of senior citizens!

Jenny Laws reported that suggestions for future courses included many for more on New Zealand literature and also Australian and Canadian writing — as well as art history and appreciation, justice and ethics, opera, and other topics.

**The Biodiversity of Otago and the Orokonui Ecosanctuary:** an eight-week course attended by 53 people that included a field trip to Orokonui. The expert speakers gave a good overview of things ecological in a Dunedin resource and how science will allow the return of the valley to its pre-European state, reported organiser Graham Batt. Two members hated the dead birds that were "passed around", while the majority loved them!

Future course suggestions included more related to the Dunedin environment, geology and botany, global warming and its consequences, and requests for repeats of courses on judicial systems and local architecture.

**Digital Photography:** there were 22 participants in this number-restricted class, which may well be repeated for U3A. Evaluation forms contained many references to the easy style and large amount of knowledge that was imparted by the lecturer,

photographer Reg Graham — frequently referring to how much the participants' confidence and ability had been enhanced.

Organiser Bill George reported suggestions for future courses that included perhaps our own U3A photographic group, instruction on photography of particular subjects (animals, architecture, people, etc), and perhaps a course on computer processing and manipulation of photos.

**Book Discussion Group:** 13 members applied to join this group, including the two organisers. One withdrew before the starting date and another, due to illness, was able to attend only one of the eight sessions, so on average eight persons attended each session. It takes some effort to study and present a book effectively and this effort would be better recognised if there was a larger audience.

Books that members presented this year covered a wide spectrum of interest, but none were abstruse or hard to find. The majority of members hoped that the group would be offered again in 2007 — one of the factors most appreciated was the expansion of personal reading horizons.

## World U3A Climate Study

A World U3A Climate Study group has assembled many recent authoritative articles from all over the world relating to the science of climate change, practical actions and varied opinions including sceptics' views.

<http://u3aclimatestudy.pbwiki.com> was started by Malcolm Crocker of U3A Henley-on-Thames and Tom Holloway of U3A International UK. It invites you to respond by joining a study group which will sift through the evidence and the latest developments to try to build a better picture for the general public. The site contains over 150 pages. It is a 'wiki,' which is a special kind of website that anyone can edit!

**Grace note:** When Sir Elton John was celebrating a birthday he told a magazine reporter: 'I'm 57. I can't look like a 30-year-old. You try to hold old age at bay but there comes a point where you just have to give in gracefully.' Sir Elton was wearing a morning coat with satin lapels, red silk wing-collared shirt and jabot, fluorescent socks and red and black patent leather shoes. [A jabot is not related to the jabberwocky; it's an ornamental frill on the front of the shirt — Editor.]

**Tacky?** Ruskin said that Beethoven's music reminded him of the 'upsetting of a bag of nails, with here and there a dropped hammer.'

**Were you bowled out?** Sorry, [www.cricinfo.com](http://www.cricinfo.com) is the proper address on the Internet for great information to cricket fans — "www.crickinfo.com" (wrongly spelt in last newsletter) only takes you into a US online shopping site called Megago.



## Oh! What a tangled web...



U3A web-surfers may care to share personal favourites. (Email interesting or unusual websites to [hgadams@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:hgadams@slingshot.co.nz))

[Warning: these were going well last time checked — but things can change quickly on the Internet. Sites can suddenly pack up or get a new address! Google search for them if necessary!]

[www.sherlockholmes.org.uk](http://www.sherlockholmes.org.uk) where the Sherlock Holmes Society of London provides a huge resource — including a brief report on The Annual Cricket Match Between The Sherlock Holmes Society Of London And The P.G.Wodehouse Society.

[www.classicspage.com](http://www.classicspage.com) for news, information, games etc about the life, literature, art and archaeology of ancient Greece and Rome. An 'Ask the Oracle' feature for your queries on this subject.

[www.escapeartist.com/travel/howfar/](http://www.escapeartist.com/travel/howfar/) will tell you the distance between any two places (as the crow flies). Dunedin to London, UK is given as 11,849 miles, 19,070 km or 10,297 nautical miles.

[www.childrensbooksonline.org](http://www.childrensbooksonline.org) run by the Rosetta Project is a facsimile library of antique illustrated books for children — recover those memories.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/htbg/> is an excellent BBC website with an eight-module free course, "How To Be a Gardener."

[www.zefrank.com/scribbler](http://www.zefrank.com/scribbler) is a diversion that will do your doodling for you once you provide initial inspiration.

[www.whistlingrecords.com](http://www.whistlingrecords.com) would you believe, is a serious guide to this very specialist musical subject.

[www.mindbluff.com](http://www.mindbluff.com) is the place to find optical illusions, puzzles, riddles and free games.

[www.whichbook.net](http://www.whichbook.net) provides a means of finding out books based on story characteristics or plot lines — but you'd need to go to a library to see if they have the suggestions in their collection.

[www.annoyances.org](http://www.annoyances.org) answers questions commonly asked by annoyed users of Microsoft Windows.

[www.twbooks.co.uk](http://www.twbooks.co.uk) is a useful database of crime and mystery fiction with recommendations and interesting links.

[www.bbc.co.uk/languages/yoursay/newsletter](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/yoursay/newsletter) is the BBC's monthly highlights of news on language courses and resources.

## Travellers' tales

When a U3A member visited the Soviet Union back in the 1960s he received advice to take a Universal Sink Plug with him — sure enough, none of the hotels then had any plugs in their washbasins or baths!

More recently we read of a woman who rented a New York apartment for a month, which had no plug for the washbasin. Her daughter told her that she never travelled without a tennis ball. It can be cut in half and fits over all plug holes and does the job brilliantly.

Those elastic washing lines with suction pads each end are handy for travellers' clothes. And a rubber door wedge is great for ensuring that a bedroom door with broken locks can't be opened while you're asleep.

## Phony talk

Prof Michael Hulme, of Lancaster University, has researched the relationship that the young have with their cell phones. He told the *Daily Telegraph* that mobile telephones had 'infantilised' young people. 'They are constantly asking their friends questions, but a lot of the conversation is very puerile. It really is a way of comforting and defining themselves.'

## IN LIGHTER VEIN

A senior couple were invited to dinner at another couple's house. After eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two men talked. One said: 'Last night we went out to a new restaurant, and it was great. I'd recommend it very highly.' The other asked: 'What's its name?'

The first man had to knit his brow in obvious concentration. He finally said: 'Oh, what's the name of that red flower you give to someone you love?' His friend replied: 'Carnation?'

'No, no. The other one.' — His friend offered another suggestion: 'Poppy?'

'No,' growls the man. 'You know; the one that's red and has thorns.' — 'Oh. You mean a rose?'

'Yeah, that's it. Thank you!'

The first man then turns towards his wife and yells: 'Rose — What's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?'

## Quick quote

*I can remember everything absolutely clearly, whether it happened or not.* ~ Mark Twain

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