



Happy New Year!

Kia ora koutou to all our members of U3A Dunedin.

What a great organisation we belong to with so many of you participating in courses, Interest Groups, also leading, convening, and coordinating to ensure our continued success over 2023.

At the time of writing, Christmas and New Year has not been celebrated but of course when you read this, we will be in 2024. I hope you found peace and comfort in whatever you chose to do for Christmas and that 2024 has started well. I ponder what 2024 might bring both internationally and nationally, as we think about those who are less fortunate. How might our leaders respond to the many crises in our world. Hopefully with thoughtfulness and wisdom. We are fortunate to live in Dunedin, with all its assets and challenges, with peace and dignity.

I have been in the Chairperson role now for almost three years and I have been co-chairing the Programme Committee for four years. Although no constraints are put on the timeframe, I know it is time to hand over my roles to another member. I do intend to remain on the committees and do whatever I am able to support and mentor our new leaders. I am a huge advocate of U3A Dunedin and am proud of what we have achieved.

Dr Elizabeth Wilson has been elected to the Vice Chair position on our Board with a view to be the Chairperson after the AGM in February 2024. I am extremely



Linda Kinniburgh

pleased Elizabeth has agreed to do this. Her educational expertise, extensive cultural pursuits, and her calm and thoughtful manner will mean you will be well served in U3A Dunedin. Elizabeth has kindly written a few words of introduction in this newsletter.

Our AGM will be held at the Otago Golf Club on Thursday 8th February 2024. I am hoping to see many of you there and of course those who wish to support U3A Dunedin further we would welcome you to consider putting your name forward for our Board.

I will finish with sharing a whakatauki (proverb) which is important to me:

**He aha te mea nui o te Ao?
What is this most important
thing in the world?**

**Te tangata, te tangata, te
tangata. It is people, it is
people, it is people!**

I wish you all a successful, happy, and productive 2024.

**Linda Kinniburgh
Chairperson,
Board U3A Dunedin**

Our new Vice Chair: Elizabeth Wilson

One of the pleasures of retirement is having the time to take up new interests and become more actively involved in the community.

Dunedin has been my home since 1981 when I moved here from Christchurch to become Principal of Columba College. After retirement I began full-time study at the University of Otago, graduating with a PhD in English Literature in 2020.



I am secretary of the Friends of First Church, an Inaugural Trustee of the Dunedin Public Libraries Heritage Foundation, a committee member of the Friends of the Library, a member of the Otago Decorative Fine Arts Society, the Friends of the Hocken, the University Club and volunteer at the Otago Hospice Shop. My interests include gardening, reading and playing bridge badly.

As the new year gets underway and the AGM approaches, I look forward to deepening my commitment to and involvement with U3A Dunedin.

Best wishes to you all for the year ahead!

Elizabeth Wilson

Programme Committee Report

The Year ends!

You may well think that at the years end with the Spring Series well behind us that we have a lull in our activities where we can sit back and take stock, enjoying the satisfaction of a successfully concluded year.

This is only very partly true as we have the Autumn 2024 programme looming ahead, with enrolments opening on 5 January, very few days away. So the months of November and December are in fact rather busy ones for us with much detail to attend to: assessing and acting on feedback, writing thank you letters, finalising the next set of courses, gaining approvals, making last-minute changes, proofing, organising illustrations, writing for Forum, checking with venues, etc. and at the same time looking ahead to Winter 2024 as best we can. For our brochures editor, Prue Harwood, especially it is rather a frantic few weeks. There is little time to spare with Christmas/New Year making their own demands on the families of those involved.

However, as usually happens, somehow we get there despite the tight deadline and our members will very shortly receive the first of the coming years offerings for you to choose from. The selection is varied as you will see: an historical overview of the history of transport in Otago in all its forms from traditional Maori to the present day organised by Andre Smith; fossil treasures of Aotearoa New Zealand de-

veloped by Daphne Lee of Foulden Maar fame but is much more than that; Housing Matters which is especially directed towards the needs and interests of our demographic; the ever popular Terry Doyle will be speaking on interesting facets of European science and society in history; for the many teachers and educationalists amongst us there is an historical overview of education in New Zealand, leading up to an assessment of future direction in a Winter course; and finally for music lovers Paul Wheeler will be showing us how composers unusually have used nature in their music, his course being intriguingly titled Winter, Spring, Birds and Bees. Not maybe what you are thinking! This last is a shorter course of four weeks, which could well suit some with grandparenting responsibilities, steering well clear of the moving feast of Easter, always something of a scheduling difficulty for our Autumn programme.

You will notice that the base fee of each standard six-week course has been held at \$50; for a shorter course we adjust this downwards as with the upcoming music course; and for ones with greater expenses, such as speakers travel, the fee will be greater. Courses do vary with the income they bring in line of enrolment numbers, but this is not a consideration in fee setting as we regard all courses as being of equal merit regardless of popularity. In any case it is not possible to estimate reliably in advance how popular any course will be.

So, for the Programme Committee, our work never rests. In the meantime, we hope you have had a very pleasant, Merry Christmas and are able to look forward to another interesting year with Dunedin U3A.



**Linda Kinniburgh
Stuart Strachan
Co-chairs
Programme Committee**

U3A Email Directory

Sending email correspondence to U3A Dunedin? Using addresses below will take your messages to the person who can assist.

General information:

contact@u3adunedin.org.nz

Courses: courses@u3adunedin.org.nz

Membership:

membership@u3adunedin.org

Forum: newsletter@u3adunedin.org.nz

U3A Phone Directory

To discuss any problem with U3A Dunedin please phone the appropriate person:

Chairperson: Linda Kinniburgh
021-735-614

Board matters Phyll Esplin
467-2594

Membership : Lynda Jackson
027-473-6947

Interest Groups: Andre Smith
022-024-0088

Programme Committee

Stuart Strachan 482-2339

Courses: Phyll Esplin
467-2594

Biology

Save the World's DNA!

There is a rescue mission aiming to analyse every plant, animal, and fungus before it's too late.

The evolution of life on Earth—a process that has spanned billions of years and innumerable strands of DNA—could be considered the biggest experiment in history. It has given rise to amoebas and dinosaurs; fireflies and flytraps; even mammals that look like ducks and fish that look like horses. These species have solved countless ecological problems, finding novel ways to eat, evade, defend, compete, and multiply. Their genomes contain information that humans could use to reconstruct the origins of life, develop new foods and medicines and materials, and even save species that are dying out. But we are also losing much of the data...

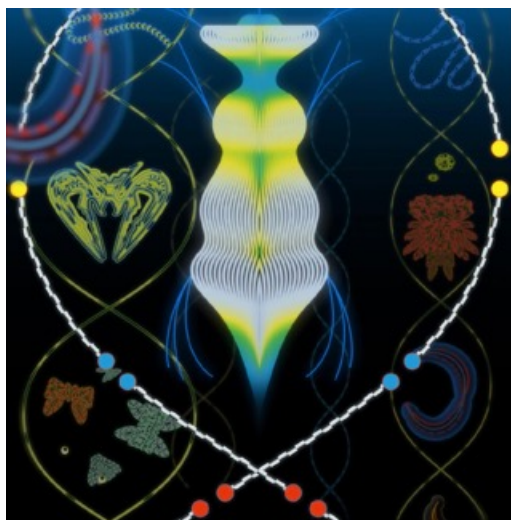
Scientists are mounting a kind of scientific salvage mission. It is known as the Earth BioGenome Project, or E.B.P., and its goal is to sequence a genome from every plant, animal, and fungus on the planet, as well as from many single-celled organisms, such as algae, retrieving the results of life's grand experiment before it's too late...

For hundreds of years, biologists have roamed the globe in an epic effort to collect and categorise the life on Earth. In the seventeen-hundreds, after traversing Sweden to document its flora and fauna, Carl Linnaeus helped create the system that scientists still use to classify and name species, from *Homo sapiens* to *Poecobius meseres*. In 1831, Charles Darwin set out aboard H.M.S. Beagle to collect living and fossilised specimens, which inspired his theory of natural selection. The discovery of DNA, in the twentieth century, offered a new way to classify species: by comparing their genetic material. DNA's four building blocks—adenine (A), thymine (T), guanine (G), and cytosine (C)—encode profound differences between organisms. By studying their sequence, we might come to speak life's language.

Scientists didn't even begin to sequence a DNA molecule until 1968. In 1977, they sequenced the roughly five thousand base pairs in a virus that invades bacteria. And, in 1990, the Human Genome Project started the thirteen-year process of sequencing almost all of the three billion base pairs

in our DNA. Its organisers called the endeavour "one of the most ambitious scientific undertakings of all time, even compared to splitting the atom or going to the moon." Since then, researchers have been filling in gaps and improving the quality of their sequences...

Natural-history museums already have some of the samples needed to outline a genetic tree of life. The Smithsonian, for instance, has about fifty million biological samples. But, because DNA degrades quickly, it's difficult to extract a high-quality sequence from, say, a frog in formaldehyde or an old taxidermy parrot. For this reason, the E.B.P. usually restricts itself to recent samples, which are often frozen. It relies on the Global Genome Biodiversity Network to keep track of who has what; another database, called Genomes on a Tree, tracks which species have been sequenced already, and whether they meet exacting standards...



One goal of the E.B.P. is to compare and contrast large numbers of genomes, revealing how they are related... Right now, the sequencing process is so cumbersome that scientists can't hope to repeat it a million-plus times in the coming decade. To achieve the necessary pace of hundreds of genomes a day, they will need to automate much of it, perhaps with robots...

In the nineties, scientists from the Human Genome Project argued that DNA sequences should be in the public domain, meaning that anyone, anywhere, would be able to use them... More recently, views have changed. "*Public domain* is a deceptive term used to deny Indigenous peoples rights from things important to them," Ben Te Aika, an expert on the traditional knowledge of the Māori people, in New Zealand, insists. "It would be more honest to say *domain of the elites*."...

After centuries of European colonialism, his community has been reasserting its mana, or traditional authority, over native species. He argues that the Māori people should have the opportunity to benefit from any scientific samples that are gathered in New Zealand. With a colleague from Ireland, Ann Mc Cartney, Te Aika has co-authored papers in support of data sovereignty, or the right of local and Indigenous people "to control data from and about their communities, land, species, and waters." They described E.B.P. as "an opportunity to leave no one behind."

[This article is abridged from the [New Yorker](#) under license. Read the [original article](#).]

Word Wonders

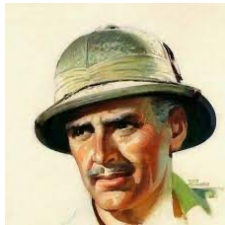
Reminders of the Raj!

John Hale

Re-reading the *Raj Quartet* by Paul Scott has made me wonder, what remains in our own word-stock from the British Raj -- from the languages of the Indian Empire?

The Raj was once the “jewel in the crown” of Queen Victoria: Raj means “kingdom,” hence “Rajah,” from the same root as rex, roi, royal, regime, camino real, real tennis etc.

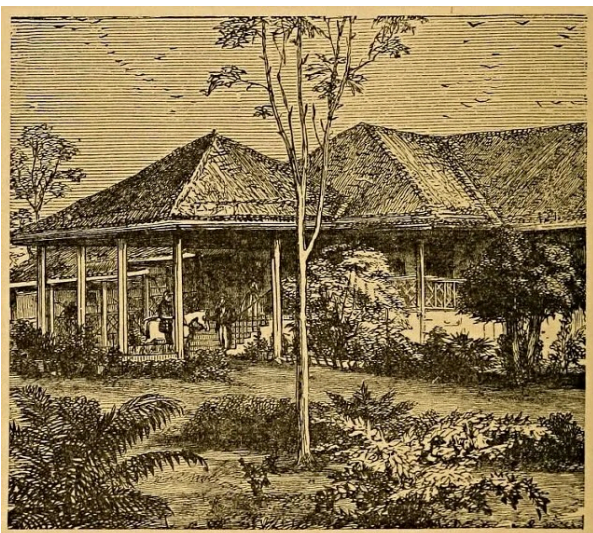
To view its relics in action let’s follow the persona of an imaginary Colonel, Desmond ffoulkes-Smythe:



Our man, retired from the Indian Army, and a pukka sahib, is living through a typical day of “staying on” in the Raj.

Pyjamas -- Each morning, at a civilised hour, he clambers out of his cot. Cot comes from Hindi khāt ‘a light bedstead, hammock’. He stays in his pyjamas for an hour or so. They are named from Urdu words for leg-clothing: pay- + -jama is Persian then Urdu for “leg” + “clothing.”

Bungalow -- He dwells in a bungalow. That’s a house “built in the Bengali style,” bunga-low— from Gujarati, though, not Bengali – two more contributory languages of India.



Shampoo --After breakfast it’s time to ablute and dress. He washes his hair and sculptured moustache, using shampoo: campo, (“Press!”) is the imperative of the Hindi verb to “press,” linking it with the massage aspect of a Turkish bath.



Turban and Tulip -- Speaking of Turkish: He saunters into his garden, where he grows tulips: These have the shape of turbans, a Persian name which tulips (name and thing) somewhat resemble.



They are the same word, misheard by European ears. Once they (the tulips not the ears) have flowered, they become less visible, and disappear into the jungle which is taking over the

corners of his property. Hindi jangal = a wasteland.

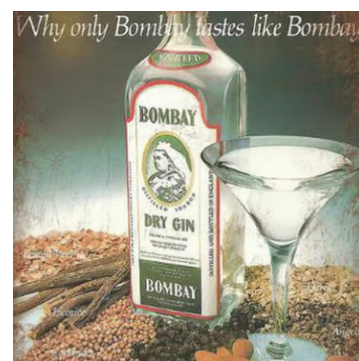
Thugs -- What’s this?! What’s up? He spies some thugs hiding in that jungle. Thugs = thieves.

They are laden with loot. Lut = loot. Quick as a flash, before they can stash their loot, he brandishes his trusty revolver. Bang! They flee. They drop the loot, the whole lot.



Chutney and All That -- All this activity makes our hero hungry: it’s tiffin time. Hm, let’s see, what’s it to be? Curry (Tamil for “sauce”)? poppadoms (“flattened discs”)? chapati, dhal and naan breads, tikka masala, slathered with chutney????? Washed down by an IPA or two?

Postprandially -- Time, adventure, and a major lunch have tired him out. It’s time for a nap. In his dreams he sails down the mighty Brahmaputra river in his dinghy (“rowing-boat,” Hindi). And the long day is not yet over: time soon for a sundowner.



Opinion

Smoking Cessation!

Phyll Esplin

Last week on National Radio David Seymour said he learnt from history. Well, I wish he had learnt something about the history of smoking and its appalling health results before deciding to repeal the Bills of the last government.

In the mid 80s I was contracted to write the first Smoking Cessation Programme for the Otago Area Health Board (OAHB).

Why was this so important at this time? In the 60s and 70s evidence had proved that there was a causal link between smoking and lung cancer and other diseases such as heart attacks, strokes, emphysema, and bronchial pneumonia all of which clogged our hospital system. There was also evidence that second hand smoking also caused disease. To reduce the stress on the hospital system a smoke free week was called for in late 1973. (My mother gave up during that week having smoked since her war days). It was successful for some but many people found that giving up cold turkey was just not possible. Hence Smoking Cessation Programmes were called for in the 80s.

My work created a behavioural change programme lasting 6 weeks. I trialled it, amended it, trialled it again and then trained nurses and doctors to run it all over Otago.

The first course was memorable. People who enrolled were dedicated smokers trying desperately to give up their habit. Really desperate people. Each course met up again after 3 months and like all programmes of change I had some success and some not so successful who came back for repeat courses. One success was a 74 year old who had chained smoked for 60 years. He came into the room and gave me the biggest hug and said I had changed his life. He didn't smoke, had more money and felt better.

Smoking had become a norm for both men and women in the second world war. These people were now the parents of the boomers who thought it was a right of passage to smoke and were invincible. However, once they started smoking, they were addicted and would continue

to need their "ciggie" at smoko times. Each cigarette takes 10 minutes to smoke; smoko was only 10 minutes so inevitably workers would take 5 more minutes to get back to the job. Over a week this was a loss in productivity for employers. This loss meant lower productivity for the country (lower GDP).

Other work implications were smokers got bronchial troubles and had to have time off work, again a loss of productivity, became sicker and lost their jobs and became a drain on the health system and the tax system because if you don't work you pay no tax. Families were affected as they lost income and so lost spending power. All in all smoking took a lot out of the community.



By having a Smoking Cessation Programme it was hoped to reduce the number of present day smokers and prevent youngsters from starting. As numbers decreased the aim for a smoke-free society came to be believed in. So many have worked so hard to reduce the harm this substance has on the human body and society that it is incredulous that the government will repeal the legislation to make NZ a smoke free country.

Some think it is nanny stating to put such legislation in place but the problem is that the young, who as elders we should be protecting, have not the wisdom of age yet and cannot make a totally informed choice about such activities.

Please Mr Seymour, learn from History!

U3ADUNEDIN CHARITABLE TRUST

Website: u3adunedin.org.nz

Address: **Secretary to the Board**
U3A Dunedin, PO Box 6491
North Dunedin, 9059.

Email: contact@u3adunedin.org.nz

Phone: 03 467 2594 / 027 696 0408

Chair: Linda Kinniburgh,
Phone: 021 735 614

Registered Charitable Institution -
#CC22345

Travel - John Hale

Glimpses...

They say travel broadens the mind, but I am haunted by places not visited, only seen on the horizon. Although I may never visit them now, they have created strong feelings.

Reasons for Travel

Why do we travel, what's the point of it? If you belong to the Hundred Club you organise your wanderlust into the lust to collect and to compete, aka bragging rights. We knew a man who went to the border of Argentina and Brazil in such a way as to collect Paraguay too. Money doing it notched up another country. That is travel with a purpose, but this bug has not bitten me.

Madagascar

Contrast my experience of Madagascar. From the plane flying back from Johannesburg I could just see its peaks at its southernmost tip, brooding in late twilight. It became a symbol of a world apart, its unique life-forms, from language to lemurs; a road not taken.

Delta

On another conference-going flight at dusk, from Texas to Savannah, the plane passed south of the Mississippi Delta. I saw it as a delta, the shape of Greek uppercase /D/, Δ. Instead of its hundreds of rivulets and swamps, experienced previously from a small boat, I saw nothing but the thing as a whole, the spectacular end to a thousand miles of a river which drains half a continent.

The Andes

Scale, and distance and absence, can sometimes make you see a thing as it is, just as close contact is more often needed. One such moment was the Andes, seen as a colossal wall out eastwards from Santiago. To think, that this same range runs thousands of miles in both directions.

Alaska

Long flights do leave a discontent at missing out so much — whole continents, maybe. On my sabbatical way from Japan to England, Alaska was a place seen and even set foot on, yet so far remote as not to be truly experienced. I flew in to the airport in the central plain. It was ringed by snowy mountains in high summer. They seemed a hundred miles away. They were big. I was awed by the scale.



On this transit I lost track of time, too, of night and day. The summer day so far north stretched and stretched, We flew on across the North Pole. Night followed, miserably short. Landed in London, short

on darkness, I had my worst jetlag ever. Almost hallucinating. In central London the pavements felt as if rising up to meet my nose. The other pedestrians seemed uniformly tall, and hostile. Was it their blank London faces or an infection of my eyes and senses? I slept at long last but woke up in the small hours. No more sleep came. I just felt cold and alone. It took days to come right.

Central Asia

From the air, involuntarily, I glimpsed the Gobi desert, flat and lightly-snow-covered. I glimpsed the Aral Sea, where the Oxus river runs out, that "foiled circuitous wanderer." And I glimpsed the bright Caspian Sea —and Baku's hideous installations, belching smoke.



Greenland

These far-off sights remind me of walls. They may beckon but they exclude. The cabin windows are one wall, perspex and aircon, and vainly trying to pace around. The faraway outside world is another wall. I saw Greenland this way. I saw the wall of its icy mountains of the west coast from the jumbo. The wall broke into a scatter of icebergs at their foot. Straight after on this flight Greenland was a wall, now of fog. Another time it was an interior plateau of strange brown rocks.

The Olgas

Or the Olgas, in the Australian Outback, looming dusty red in the heat from my plane crossing over the island continent. Curved bumps away down to the left from my peephole at the back of the cabin.

Iceland

Iceland, that northernmost outpost of our own language, is another unattainable. I watched along its southern bays and ranges. Grandstand view, but it was seeing without understanding. When I do my travel nowadays by playing Globe and Wordle, I yearn to see that NW crab's claw, from the air, to witness the unique shape, preferably before the next volcano erupts. Iceland is the farthest of something, no matter how you see it. Like all these sights of denial it wakens imagination.

Wonderment

Every one of these glimpses came as a surprise, gratuitously. That unexpectedness makes you marvel, and wonder. Nor am I a great traveller. For that reason too, the roads not taken mean more not less. They speak to a sense of wonder.

Travel

Travel Cards - No!

Travel money cards sound great, but there are some major issues. *Don't use a travel money card.* That's the gold nugget of advice. Don't go anywhere near one.

To clear things up, a "travel money card" is different to a standard credit or debit card. These are products offered by numerous institutions now that allow travellers to buy a certain amount of foreign currency and load it onto a card, which can then be used like a standard debit or credit card. Sounds great on face value, but there are some issues.

Tripologist Michael Gebicki explains: "The exchange rates, to start off with, are pretty lousy. And then there's the fee structure, these can be as high as 8 per cent".

The secret to success, Gebicki says, is to have a wallet full of diverse financial options. "Credit cards are great for paying off your hotel bills, etcetera. As long as you're not incurring foreign conversion fees".



There are cards that will allow you to travel without being hit with those fees. There's even a travel money card – just one, mind you – that Gebicki says many financially savvy travellers are now turning to. (Hint: it's Dutch -- but be careful: these things change!)

Notice to all U3A Dunedin members

The AGM of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust will be held on :

Thursday 8 February 2023

10:30 a.m. at the **Otago Golf Club**

Guest speaker: Julia Watkins, inaugural recipient of the U3A Dunedin 150" Postgraduate Scholarship.

Following the meeting a light lunch will be served.

Notices of Motion and/or Board Nominations must be with the Secretary to the Board, Phyll Esplin, phyllesplin@gmail.com, by 1 February.

Quiz - Travel!

- Which Cantonese term means 'drink tea'?
 - Dim Sim
 - Sichuan
 - Yum Cha
 - Kung Pao
- Where is the 232-kilometre Icefields Parkway?
 - Norway
 - Argentina
 - Canada
 - Switzerland
- The 1917-built *Oosterschelde* is retracing the journey Charles Darwin made nearly 200 years ago, aboard what ship??
 - HMS Baskin
 - HMS Beagle
 - HMS Bulldog
 - HMS Bounty
- What can you see from the luxury campsite Longitude 131°?
 - Uluru, Australia
 - Great Sphinx, Egypt
 - Northern Lights, Norway
 - Eiffel Tower, France
- In which city can you dine at Sardi's?
 - Paris
 - London
 - Rome
 - New York
- Avebury in Wiltshire in England is best known for what?
 - Lowest point in the UK
 - Neolithic monument
 - Birthplace of Shakespeare
 - Rocket launches
- What jet aircraft emission produces contrails?
 - Water vapour
 - Carbon dioxide
 - Hydrocarbons
 - Aviation fuel

(Answers: p.8)

Poetry pieces

Borges

Emeritus Professor Chris Ackerley has been introducing us to Jorge-Luis Borges, the great Argentinian writer; and naturally has been examining Borges' labyrinthine and paradoxical fiction.



Though universally acclaimed for his stories, Borges always considered himself first and foremost a poet. Let's look at a couple of his poems.

An ancestor, one of his great grandfathers, Colonel Manuel Suárez, led a cavalry charge in a battle of Simón Bolívar's, in the South American wars of independence: the Battle of Junín - which was seemingly lost when against all odds Suárez urged his horsemen forward and turned the defeat into a victory. Borges celebrates him in a great poem, composed in the early 1960s. Here is the last stanza:

*His great-grandson is writing these lines
And a silent voice comes to him out of the past,
out of the blood:
"What does my battle at Junín matter if it is only
A glorious memory, or a date learned by rote
For an examination, or a place in the atlas?
The battle is everlasting and can do without
The pomp of actual armies and of trumpets.
Junín is two civilians cursing a tyrant
on a street corner,
Or an unknown man somewhere, dying in prison".*

With his libraries which have no endings, and gardens of forking paths - complexes of paradoxes - Borges is at the same time resolutely honest. He looks unflinchingly at death, at loss, at himself. Here's a small poem touching on these:

Things

*My cane, my pocket change, this ring of keys,
The obedient lock, the belated notes
The few days left to me will not find time
To read, the deck of cards, the tabletop,
A book, and crushed in its pages the withered
Violet, monument to an afternoon
Undoubtedly unforgettable, now forgotten,
The mirror in the west where a red sunrise
Blazes its illusion. How many things,
Files, doorsills, atlases, wine glasses, nails,
Serve us like slaves who never say a word,
Blind and so mysteriously reserved.
They will endure beyond our vanishing,
And they will never know that we have gone.*

(From the Spanish, by Stephen Kessler.)

Member's Notice

FAQs!

Alan Jackson

Do you make use of FAQs???

They can be very useful. FAQ means *frequently asked questions* – the sort of thing that the Team who manage U3A Dunedin are most often asked. We have a section on the web site (underneath "Courses and Resources") called [FAQ](#). You might be surprised at what's in there.

Member's Notice

Film Society!

Your *Forum* editor helps manage the Film Society...

Our new season begins on the 28th Feb, at the University's Castle One theatre, at 7.30. Unwaged membership is only \$60 for 30 films -- it's the most affordable entertainment in Dunedin! Three movie passes are also available at \$25.

We screen a wide variety of films, including older classics, film noire, contemporary art-house and world cinema. Our age range is wide, from teenagers to eighty-year olds -- come along, you'll feel welcomed!

Do see our [website](#) for full details, and our complete programme for '24!

Quiz: 1c, 2c, 3b, 4a, 5d, 6b, 7a

Forum Editor: Bill Stanford
Email: w.stanford@protonmail.com
Phone: 027 461 5343

