

We are really a university of the Third Age

By Donald Feist, Chairman of U3A Dunedin

At a recent Board meeting, we were discussing comments from our members about our courses. We were told that one woman was disappointed that some of our courses were not led by University staff. This led me to think that I might well use this opportunity to clarify one or two things.

First of all, it is clear from the sets of course advertisements we send you three times a year that many of the presenters in our courses are current University staff. Quite a few more are retired staff members. We are very grateful for this and we regularly get feedback from these presenters that they too enjoy interacting with U3A classes because we are so attentive, so ready to question, and so appreciative.

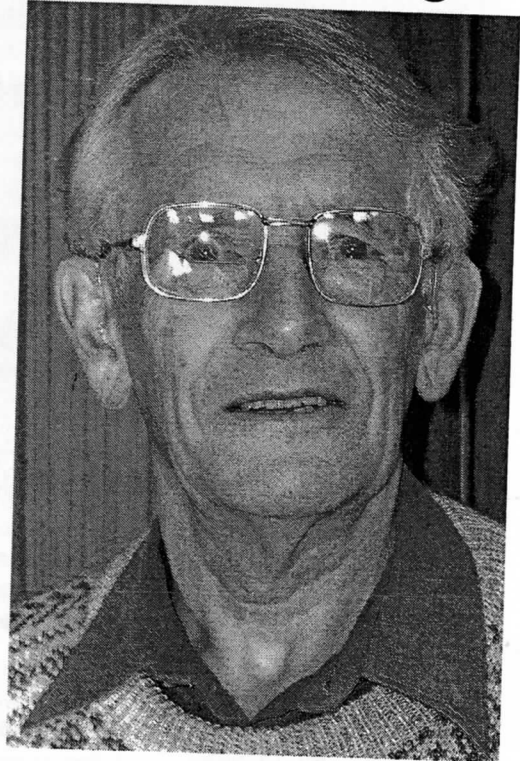
In addition the University as a whole is glad to co-operate with U3A because, in the absence of the old University Extension, we offer them a major way in which they can do something about their commitment to serve the Dunedin community beyond the University. This close co-operation and the extent to which we use University staff to head courses make Dunedin U3A rather different from most others in New Zealand.

The fundamental idea of U3A, from the time the movement reached England in the early 1980s, has been that it should be a University OF the Third Age, rather than a University FOR the Third Age.

By that I mean that U3A is intended to be like the earliest universities — communities who gather so that learning can be mutual and interactive. There should be no hard and fast line between teachers and learners. Most other U3A groups in New Zealand rely on the resources of their own members much more than we do.

A few years ago your Board decided to aim to have one-third of the courses led by University staff, one-third by others from the community, and one-third by our own U3A members. I hadn't heard of such a clear-cut ratio in my time on the Board — until this recent discussion I've just referred to. But it has always been clear among us that we do not want all our courses to be lecture-style ones, nor should they all be led by University staff.

Just as we aim for as wide a variety as we can manage in topics, so we aim for variety in style or format, and from where we draw our course leaders. That variety is important to us on the Board, and the number of enrolments for courses suggest to us that it is also widely valued by our members.



Donald Feist

Team elected to your Board

The following members elected to the U3A Dunedin Board were announced at the AGM held on July 3 at Salmond College.—

<i>Graham Batts</i>	<i>Gary Blackman</i>
<i>John Burton</i>	<i>Susan Cathro</i>
<i>Judith Cowley</i>	<i>Mayford Dawson</i>
<i>Donald Feist</i>	<i>Bill George</i>
<i>Judith Gray</i>	<i>Sue Harvey</i>
<i>Graham Mortimer</i>	<i>Elizabeth Timms</i>
<i>Bill Wilson</i>	<i>Antony Wood</i>

[The board was to elect its new Chairman at its first meeting on 8 July, after we will have gone to press with this newsletter.]

STOP PRESS: *Graham Mortimer* has been elected by the new Board to the post of chairman, after the retirement of Donald Feist from that post.

ADMINISTRATION

Bogey of the ballot

By Judith Gray, Secretary

Among the brochures enclosed with this newsletter there should be something to appeal to most tastes. This set of seven courses is the result of a great deal of work from many members of the Board and of the willingness of the people who agree to present the courses for us.



Judith Gray

One of the difficulties the Board faces is providing enough courses to satisfy demand and as there is only a limited number of appropriate venues and Board members, and days of the week, it is inevitable that sometimes members miss out entirely in the ballot for the available courses.

After a bad run in 2006, the number of members missing out entirely in 2007 was very small. This year, although only one person missed out in Series 1, Series 2 has had 10 members (out of the 265 members who applied) who were unsuccessful in the ballot. This is because a considerable number of members applied for only one course; it is always worthwhile to put in another choice or two.

The Board has recently agreed that where a member misses out entirely in one series they will be guaranteed a place in one of the course options for which they apply in the next series.

We do have almost 500 members, and an ever-increasing waiting-list so the problem of access to courses will not go away.

Please remember that the closing date for applications for Series 3 courses is midday on Wednesday, 13 August.

Pensioners stick to it

A martial arts expert in England provides special weekly walking stick self-defence classes for pensioners. He teaches 'basic stuff' that pupils can remember — he is not 'trying to make them into great-haired ninjas.' A recent success was an elderly woman who fought off two boys who grabbed her arm and tried to take her handbag. After the incident the woman reported to the police that she was worried about having hurt the louts.

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

Address: C/o The Secretary,
PO Box 117, Dunedin, 9054
email: graysinn@clear.net.nz

Chairman: Donald Feist ph: 476 3268

Secretary: Judith Gray ph: 471 9913

LOOKING AHEAD

Seven to choose fromBy Sue Cathro
Programme Co-ordinator

We are delighted that we are able to present seven courses in the Third Series for 2008. The late confirmation of *Sir Ed, Mount Everest and the Sherpa* as a course was too good an opportunity to miss and it was added to the list.



Sue Cathro

There has been a change in title for two of the courses on offer. They become *A Bitter Truth — the Effects of the Great War and its Aftermath on the Arts*, and *Triumphs, Disasters, Frauds and Scandal: Some Episodes in the History of Medicine*.

These, with the other four courses — *Contemporary Otago Writers*, *History of Embroidery*, *All at Sea*, and *The World of Waitangi* — give members the choice of a wide variety of subjects.

Courses for Series 1, 2009, are well under control, with five already confirmed and another in the 'pipeline.' You can look forward to courses on climate change, genetics, the 'Metaphysical Poets', law, and philosophy (*Science and Pursuit of Truth*).

Please continue to return the evaluation forms from each course that you attend. Your comments, and suggestions for future courses, are very helpful and are taken into consideration by the Board when reviewing each series and organising future ones.

U3A Online study courses

Reminder: U3A members in Australia and New Zealand are able to study at a low concession rate (A\$20 per course) in U3A Online, the world's first virtual U3A, which allows older people to study at home or elsewhere via the Internet.

No qualifications are needed, there are no exams and no degrees awarded.

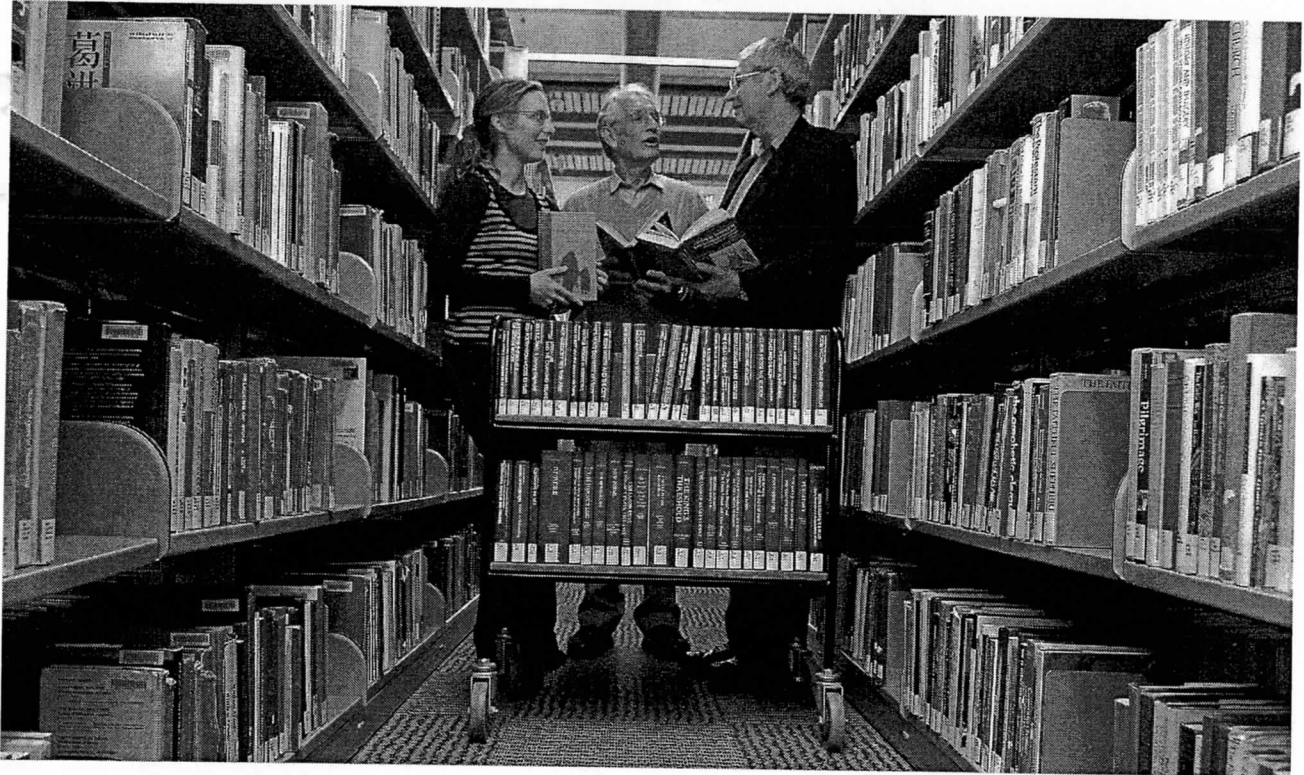
U3A Online is based at Griffith University, Queensland, and run by volunteer enthusiasts. The purpose is learning for pleasure, or learning for leisure — at bargain rates. Visit the website at www.u3aonline.org to view courses and more information, or email questions to info@u3aonline.org.au

The website also provide a useful list of U3A addresses, news and other useful data.

Missed the AGM?

Copies of the papers from the Annual General Meeting are available from the Secretary if any member was not present and wishes to get them.

Please note that Rodgers & Associates has changed its name to Rodgers Law; it moves to the fourth floor of its present building in about a month's time.



U3A donation provides books to aid Irish Studies in Otago

U3A Dunedin's gift of \$5,000 to the University of Otago to be spent on library resources for the new Irish Studies Department was publicised in May.

The money has been spent on about 60 books, all designed to be used primarily by students in the department established last year. Among the titles are many of the well-known Irish Literary Series, including one written by Prof Peter Kuch, the inaugural head of the department, and several volumes, play transcripts and analytical works published by English publisher Colin Smythe.

Prof Kuch said his students were 'surprised and pleased' to learn of the donation. 'It was a real morale boost for them to realise what they are doing is valued.'

In the past our U3A Trust has made grants to the Departments of Theology, Religious Studies, Law and Music in the University.

Footnote: At its June meeting the Board agreed to make another donation of \$5,000 to the University. It is intended to thank the Department of History and Art History for its support of U3A and may be earmarked to help the new chair in Scottish Studies. It will probably be used for the purchase of library books.

Beware: NO PARKING!

Members who attend a course in the Leith Bowling Club should be alert to the fact that there is a "No Parking" zone that begins just past the Bowling Club. At least one U3A person has received an unwanted \$40 fine.

University of Otago collection development librarian Paula Hasler, Donald Feist, U3A Dunedin chairman, and Prof Peter Kuch, holder of the Eamon Cleary Chair of Irish Studies, with some of the 60 books on Irish literature donated to the University Library by U3A Dunedin.

Photo by Jane Dawber, (courtesy of *Otago Daily Times*)

Senior with 'age rage'

Joan Bakewell, former BBC news reader, had to visit a doctor in central London and parked on a Westminster street without any parking meters. A sign instructed her to pay by mobile telephone. She called the number, pushed buttons and followed instructions — but found a parking ticket when she returned to her car. Joan then tried to explain her case to the local Council. They increased her fine to £160!

She wrote back saying the system was really hard for old people. Then a tribunal found the council had not provided any proof that she had not paid, and so she was let off. The story became national news in the UK. The *Daily Mail* published an article by Joan titled 'Age Rage.'

Barry Cryer called her saying: "Don't stop pretending you're old." Joan's basic case was that the parking system, by insisting on a mobile phone, discriminated against the elderly. 'The Council said they had done a survey but how many over-60s did they ask?

'There are irritating things about being old but also lots of nice things — you don't care about speaking up about things. Older people are slower to learn new tricks, so I thought I would speak up. The funny thing is that when I first noticed my hearing going and they told me I was going deaf, "You're going through a loss of hearing commensurate with your age." the doctor said.'

Wacky ways with pert word play/ ploys from US

The *Washington Post* recently asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are some winners.

Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.

Intoxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.

Cashtration: The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.

Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

Bozone: The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.

Glibido: All talk and no action.

Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's, like, a serious bummer.

Inoculate: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

The US newspaper also published winning entries in its annual contest in which readers supply alternate meanings for common words. Some samples —

coffee (n): The person on whom one coughs.

balderdash (n): A rapidly-receding hairline.

flatulence (n): Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller.

lymph (v): To walk with a lisp.

negligent (adj): Absent-mindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.

testicle (n): A humorous question in an exam.

flabbergasted (adj): Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained.

abdicate (v): To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

esplanade (v): To attempt an explanation while drunk.

willy-nilly (adj): Impotent.

gargoyle (n): Olive-flavoured mouthwash.

For those seeking new web feats

Some websites that readers might try to visit:

www.themovieinsider.com has latest news, reviews and more from the movie world.

www.howitshouldhaveended.com exists because 'sometimes movies don't end the way we'd like.'

www.mapsofwar.com uses clever animations to illustrate history, apparently revealing how time and geography affect war.

www.consumer.org for NZ test reports, ratings etc.

www.librarything.com is an easy catalogue for your books and can connect with readers of similar tastes. Sort of a worldwide fan club for books, their authors and readers.

www.rathergood.com provides quirky songs that are near 'cult' status.

<http://blogcritics.org> — an international magazine and community of writers and readers. Also look at <http://bbc.co.uk/dna/getwriting/minicourse>

www.papertoys.com might keep visiting grandchildren happy and off your computer.



www.mozarteum.at has an enormous amount about Mozart. (Click on English at this Salzburg site, unless you can read German.)

www.oldbaileyonline.org has 200,000 British criminal trials from 1674 to 1913 searchable.

www.archaeolink.com helps people interested in archaeology, anthropology and ancient civilisations.

www.epistemelinks.com/index.aspx includes over 19,000 links to philosophy resources on the Internet and has several additional free features.

Original spam

Like climate change, spam is a lot older than you may think. The first occurrence of unwanted electronic mail was in May 1864, when a London dental practice telegraphed politicians and eminent folk to advertise its services. A recipient wrote to *The Times*: 'I have never had any dealings with [them] and beg to know by what right they disturb me by a telegram which is simply the medium of advertisement?'

Post haste

Overheard at a recent county cricket match at The Oval, England: A retired gent: 'Have I got your email address?' Second retired gent: 'I don't have one.'

1st gent: 'I thought you could receive emails?'

2nd gent: 'Yes — I get them by post.'

Edited by Geoff Adams

Phone: 467-2278

Email: hgadams@slingshot.co.nz

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 this publication.