



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

DUNEDIN newsletter



No.22 July 2009

Getting membership numbers right ★ chairman's message

With our membership of 500 and a waiting list of around 30, your Board tries to provide enough places for those who want to attend any of our three series of courses. And we try to have good audiences in the best venues for our speakers, all of whom are unpaid, yet make a special effort for U3A.

The variety and quality of our courses are both now very impressive. Many of the course proposals are submitted to the University for approval where their content is reviewed in respect of the University's need to share its expertise and resources with the community and the Government's strategies for lifelong learning. U3A is the actual provider of this community education and also engages other non-University speakers when those are the best qualified on any chosen topic.

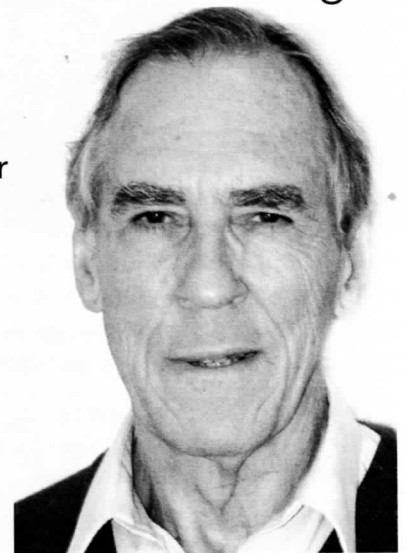
U3A Dunedin membership has been capped since 2007. The cap of 500 was arbitrary but is needed so that our learning groups can participate interactively with the speakers and profit from each session.

The venues available determine the maximum course numbers. Selecting the best venue now entails predicting the likely popularity of a course. Leith Bowling Club has proved to be quite acceptable for around 100 and has allowed us to offer more places in each series.

Just a handful of applicants have missed out completely, usually because they gave us a first option only for a very popular course or were late with their applications. Fortunately we often repeat such courses.

The overall take-up of places for each series has been around 290-320. After all applicant's choices are met, the subsequent attendance is a consistent 85-86% for each series, which is maybe a little disappointing, but we know many factors can affect attendance on the day.

And the course assessments do not suggest that failure to attend is due to any particular dissatisfaction. So far the University has not had to deal with any complaints about U3A 'students,' nor has the U3A Board. In fact the quality of our audiences receives regular tributes from the speakers – 'so much better than talking to undergraduate 101 students who often pick up the course notes and leave before the lecture,' according to one of our professorial speakers. So, well done U3A Dunedin. — **Graham Mortimer**



Graham Mortimer

The voice of history

'Practices of the unscrupulous money-changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men.'

'True, they have tried, But their efforts have been cast in the pattern of an outworn tradition. Faced by failure of credit, they have proposed only the lending of more money, Stripped of the lure of profit by which to induce our people to follow their false leadership, they have resorted to exhortations, pleading tearfully for restored confidence. They only know the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish.'

'Yes. the money-changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilisation.'

~ **Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 1933.**

★ administration

Judith Gray

Secretary



It is hard to believe that half of 2009 has gone and that this newsletter will accompany the brochures for the last series of courses for the year. The Board hopes that there will be something among the collection to appeal to you.

With almost 500 members (and still a waiting list of 30) it is not always possible to satisfy demand, but from Series 3 2008 onward, there has been only one person who has missed out on a series completely and that person had chosen to apply for one option only.

It is now more difficult to cater for late applications unless there are any unfilled places, and this is rare.

There were 286 applications for Series 2. The majority of these, 149 members, applied for one course and were accepted for one of their choices.

When a course is repeated we try to ensure that those who missed out in the original series and who apply again (as a first option) do get accepted, but I know that there have been occasional lapses in this and we apologise for that.

Thank you for completing course evaluation forms. They continue to provide useful comments and in particular, ideas for future courses. Not all of these can be followed up, but the Board tries very hard to develop courses which will have broad appeal.

Members who were not present at the Annual General Meeting on 2 July, and who would like a copy of the meeting papers, should call me and I will forward a set.

When completing your Series 3 application form please make sure that your choices are clearly marked on the form, and only indicate ONE first choice. A number of members have listed two first choices, and an arbitrary decision has to be made at ballot time. Would you please also ensure that the name and address panel on the back of the form is completed, including your post code.

The deadline for Series 3 applications is midday on Wednesday, 12 August.

Your board was re-elected

There were no changes to the general membership of the Board following the Annual General Meeting, as the only nominations received were those for persons in the 2008-9 Board. All vacancies were filled.

Those re-elected were: Graham Batts, Gary Blackman, John Burton, Sue Cathro, Judith Cowley, Mayford Dawson, Donald Feist, Bill George, Judith Gray, Sue Harvey, Graham Mortimer, Elizabeth Timms, Bill Wilson, and Antony Wood. (Officers are elected at the first meeting of the 2009-10 Board, too late for this report.)

★ looking ahead

Sue Cathro

Programme
Co-ordinator



We have five confirmed courses in the third series and another is being finalised. You will have the choice of courses on: *The Middle East and the Caucasus*, a small group on *Digital Photography — the easy way*, *The Novels of Joseph Conrad*, *Impressions of Art*, *New Zealand Legal System* and *Five men who changed the way we see the world*.

Courses for the 2010 Series are being planned now. You can look forward to courses scheduled for Series 1 on the Scottish Poets, Dunedin's Written Treasures, Australia and Public Theology, to name a few.

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. If you are able to, when you suggest a topic, you may also suggest some names of people who might be approached to present the course.

You do not have to be on the Board to organise a course. We have a member of U3A who is presently organising a course for Series 2, 2010.

Getting their kicks?

Celebrating this year's Six Nations championship, the hard-nosed English Rugby Football Union formed an unlikely liaison with romantic book publishers Mills & Boon to back a 'red-hot, sexy, new series of novels on a rugby theme.' The mind boggled as marketers for Twickers and M & B trumpeted their mission: 'melding the great game's glitz and glamour with attractive ladies and hunky alpha males.'

Each volume in the series was to include an info pack about the laws of the game and etiquette for first-timers at a match. Hopefully no mention of rucking, cauliflower ears, or dressing-shed jokes and ballads. . .

Quick Quote: 'Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.' ~ Marie Curie

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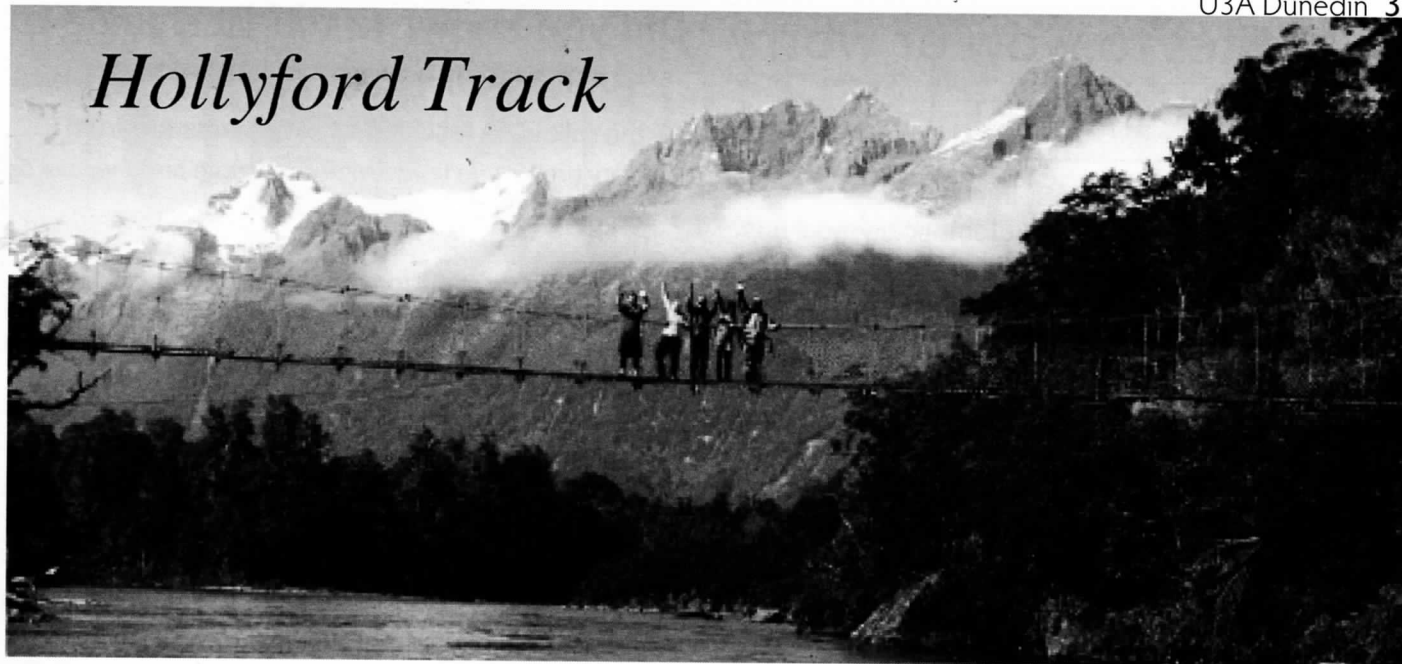
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Hollyford Track



Walk in jeans?

U3A Dunedin members are being offered a discount to do the famous three-day, two-night guided walk on the Hollyford Track.

The dramatic Hollyford, in Fiordland National Park, is one of New Zealand's greatest walks taking in inspiring scenery, from snow-capped mountains of the Southern Alps, ancient native rainforest, pristine rivers and lakes, to the remote sand dunes, reef and surf of the rugged West Coast.

Normal cost is \$1,655 per person. Members wanting to take advantage of the offer in the shoulder season (21 October - 18 December and then 2 April - 18 April) can save \$406, making the price \$1,249. To travel in the high season (19 December - 1 April) the offer is \$206 per person, bringing the trip down to \$1,449.

The guide brings to life the diversity of landscapes, vegetation and wildlife within the Hollyford, as well as stories of the original Maori and early pioneers.

Talk on genes

Jim Neilan took the photo below at the final session of the popular 'New Genetics' series. Answering astute questions is Prof Mark Henaghan (centre).

Experiences include hiking through a 'World Heritage Area' environment, native wildlife encounters, wilderness jet-boating, exploring historical sites and a scenic flight to Milford Sound. All meals are prepared and served by friendly hosts, and you relax in comfortable private lodges for two nights. (Maximum of 16 people in a group.)

U3A members can book or get more information (or free booklet) by freephone 0800 832 226 or email to info@hollyfordtrack.co.nz (website www.hollyfordtrack.com). The company normally needs a minimum number of 10 bookings for a special departure just for U3A members, but is also willing to extend its offer so that members can join existing departures, every two to three days from 21 October to 16 April next year.

If interested in going in a U3A group, please contact John Burton (477-7371 or jburt@actrix.co.nz) for more details and with dates you are available. Or U3A members can book individually, get more information, or free booklet, by freephone 0800 832 226 or email to info@hollyfordtrack.co.nz (website www.hollyfordtrack.com).

The price includes a pre-departure briefing the evening before starting the walk, and return coach transfer from either Te Anau or Queenstown to the start of the Hollyford Track.



Websites to wow or worry

★ internet links

A selection of websites for Internet addicts (your computer's browser should automatically add *http://* to the front of each website address):

www.europeana.eu is a huge EU online museum and library project — 3 million artefacts from top museums, like the Louvre in Paris.

www.bonzer.org.au is *The Australian Online Monthly Magazine* by, for and about wise elders. Regular features, plus an area for submitted articles on a theme.

worldu3aconference2010.org is the website for the world conference organised by the Indian Society of U3As in association with Chitrakoot University and WorldU3A.org

openwriting.com/archives features a feast of words from regular columnists and U3A writers and other authors. Every day there is something new. Interesting links too.

www.seniority.co.uk is a good British site for over-50s.

u3amusicgroups.pbwiki.com WorldU3A has announced an interactive website for classical music lovers. To join the discussion section you will need the password 'bach'.

academicearth.org offers thousands of video lectures from 'the world's top scholars' free of charge. It's supported by US universities (Berkeley, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford and Yale).

www.mindbluff.com to find optical illusions, puzzles, riddles

Wanaka on Friday mornings

Alison Brown, programme co-ordinator of the Upper Clutha U3A (Wanaka) has provided more information on the Wanaka group.

Upper Clutha U3A was formed at a public meeting in March 2005; 25 people attended and a further 20 sent apologies so there was clearly interest in such an organisation.

'We run four courses a year, each of four 2-hour sessions held on consecutive Friday mornings,' writes Alison. 'Membership is now at 152 households with 252 members.'

'The group has decided not to restrict participation so attendances are usually in the 80's and 90's. Fortunately people in the Upper Clutha are relatively mobile so we've never had to turn people away. We use the Armstrong room of the Lake Wanaka Centre.'

Courses have included topics such as Geology in Central Otago, Flora and fauna of Central Otago, Challenges for Lake Management, How (Not) to Compose an Opera, Genetics, Windows on Members (using the skills of members), Present and Future Electricity in New Zealand, World Religions, Antarctica, New Zealand Art, Central Otago Architecture, Changing Land Use in Central Otago, Crime, the Law and New Zealand Society.

The U3A committee has never advertised its programmes; 'word of mouth' has been more than adequate. Clearly U3A has a very important role in meeting the needs for life long learning in this corner of the country.

Did you know? (a tourist's guide to our never-ending universe)

All the following fascinating statements are true!

1. Every breath you take contains an atom breathed out by Marilyn Monroe.
2. There is a liquid that can run uphill.
3. You age faster at the top of a building than at the bottom.
4. An atom can be in many different places at once, the equivalent of you being in New York and London at the same time.
5. The entire human race could fit in the volume of a sugar cube.
6. One percent of the static on a television tuned between stations is the relic of the Big Bang.
7. Time travel is not forbidden by the laws of physics.
8. A cup of coffee weighs more when it is hot than when it is cold.

To learn how they are true you will need to read *The Quantum Zoo*, subtitled 'A Tourist's Guide to the Never-Ending Universe,' by Marcus Chown. It's at the Dunedin Public Library — and written in simple language by the award-winning science writer.

Life magazine photos on show

Google is putting online the image archives from *Life* magazine — 10 million images in all. The archive has images dating back to the 1750s, before photography was invented.

The effort to bring offline images online was inspired by Google's mission to organise all the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

Only a very small percentage of these images have ever been published. The rest have been sitting in dusty archives in the form of negatives, slides, glass plates, etchings, and prints. They are being digitised and Google will be adding the entire *Life* archive. The searchable image database is at *images.google.com/hosted/life*

O'Bama — a bit of the blarney

A song has been written to celebrate the US President having a small percentage of Irish blood. His great-great-great-grandfather Fulmark Kearney emigrated from the village of Moneygall (population now 300) to New York in 1850. A sample of the lyrics: 'There's no one as Irish as Barack O'Bama. He's in the White House. He took his chance. Now let's see Barack do Riverdance. . .'

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.