



U3A



DUNEDIN

Newsletter, Issue No 2

Date: March, 2004

From The President:



From the time I was a boy I have been fascinated by science. This is not to say I have no other interests, but science was my passion, and for many years I did not appreciate that others did not necessarily share my interest. I am always a little disappointed at the

relative paucity of science topics in the courses offered by U3A. I suppose I should not be surprised; it is very difficult to make much sense of many areas of science without some previous knowledge, and in particular some knowledge of the language of science, that is, mathematics. This can make it difficult for a scientist to present his ideas, particularly his current research, to an audience consisting largely of non-scientists. I have always been hesitant to talk about my own research and instead prefer to talk about subjects that interest me but on which I am far from expert. This has its own problems. Giving a talk on a topic with which you have only a nodding acquaintance is almost as good as knowing you are to be hanged in the morning for concentrating the mind.

Despite my love of science I know it can be mis-used. I am not sure how much blame should attach to scientists and how much to politicians (and others) but I do believe some scientific work to be morally wrong. I include here research projects

aimed solely at killing and torturing people, such as the research designed to make napalm stickier and thus more "effective". In a letter written shortly before his death some 20 years ago Martin Ryle, the Astronomer Royal expressed his concern at the misuse of science. He lamented the fact that many of his PhD students had gone on to work in the field of Defence and he asked the question "Should fundamental science (in some areas now, others will emerge) be stopped?"

I do not think that fundamental research should be so constrained. All scientific knowledge brings with it the possibility that it will be abused, but in my view banning research in a particular area is much more dangerous than allowing it to proceed. And who would decide which areas were taboo? Politicians? The Military? Philosophers? Religious leaders? The possibilities of abuse are endless. Instead I think we must all make our own moral judgments as to what is or what is not permissible.

(I thank Margaret Andrews who drew my attention to Martin Ryle's letter.)

J.G.T. (Sam) Sneyd

Editorial

How wonderful! We have so many messages that there is no room for an editorial. I'll try again next time.

Brian O'Rourke

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Dr
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Matthewson

In addition to the learning opportunities that U3A provides, the Otago Summer School also offers courses over a six-week period. The School was not established just for currently enrolled, 'standard' students; it was established also to widen learning opportunities for members of the wider community.

Many papers in this year's School attracted people simply wanting to learn something new or more in a particular subject area. The Sun, Earth and Universe paper from Dr Craig Rodger (a U3A supporter) is one example. The papers on Drugs and the Human Body, Spirituality in NZ Literature, Introductory Latin and Death and Dying: a Cross-cultural Perspective also attracted people not needing or wanting to pursue a degree.

A big plus for this intensive six weeks of learning is the generally uncrowded campus. Parking is easy and classes are small. Next year, Summer School classes will run from 10 January to 18 February (usually three-to-four classes a week per paper). Already several new papers have been proposed that could hold much interest for single-paper enrollees from the community.

The U3A University of Otago partnership ran smoothly throughout the Series Three 2003 programme. The 2004 Series look set to achieve similar outcomes.

Looking Ahead



We realise that members will share our disappointment that there will probably be only three courses available this term. Unfortunately, for various reasons, we have had to postpone some of the courses that we had planned for this second series and it is proving almost impossible to organise others in time to take their place. The middle of the year

is often very busy for speakers who must, of course, put their work commitments first.

On a brighter note, Series 3 at the moment looks very promising. We should have two literary courses: one on

classical tragedy, presented by Dr Harry Love; and another on a more modern topic, possibly Shakespeare, by Professor Alan Horsman. In addition, we hope to present courses on justice and on psychology, and the Book Group, too, will be continuing from Series 2. Other possibilities for the future, either the end of this year or the beginning of 2005, are courses on nutrition, computing and genetics. Also in the pipe-line are more literature and history and, a new topic for us -- architecture, archeology and culture.

But we are always open to more ideas and we consider carefully the suggestions members make on their evaluation forms. We would also like to see members contributing more to the presentation of courses so, if you have an area of expertise which you feel might interest other members and which might form a course or part of a course, please let us know.

Addendum

As you will see from the accompanying brochures, we have in fact at the last moment been able to organise two more courses for this series: one is a repeat from a few years ago, The Otago Harbour— Shipping and Sea Transport; and the other is a new course, The Southern Ocean.

Jenny Laws, Programme Co-ordinator

BOARD BUSINESS

BOARD MEMBERSHIP - Retirement of Past Chairman, Brian Maguire.

At its February meeting, the Board received notice of the immediate resignation of Brian Maguire from the Board, due to ill health. His resignation was accepted with regret, members being aware that Brian had been unwell, and had spent some time in hospital.



Brian has been an active member of the U3A Committee, then the Board since 1998 and was our Chairman for two years from July 2001 to July 2003. His time in office was far from routine since it covered the retirement of

long-serving secretary Katherine Dolby, with consequent redistribution of administrative duties, as well as the move to closer relations with the University. Over the years Brian has been an enthusiastic organiser of courses including "How Dunedin Works" (the DCC); "Media in Dunedin"; "Shipping and Sea Transport in the Otago Harbour"; "The Regional Council" and "Heraldry".

We thank Brian for his contribution to U3A management, and wish him well for a rapid recovery so that he may once again enjoy participating in U3A courses.

The photograph shows Brian Maguire (second from left) talking with leader Bill Brockie at a vantage point on the Coronet Peak road during the "Central Otago" course in 2001.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD 2004-5:

With the AGM fast approaching early in July, it's time to think of the Board membership. Are you interested in joining the Board yourself? Or do you know of someone who would be particularly suited? If you would like more information, contact a current Board member. The Board may have 14 members elected at the AGM. The Board then elects its Chairman at the following Board meeting.

U3A DUNEDIN BOARD, 2003-2004:

Chairman: Sam Sneyd
Secretary: Judith Gray
Treasurer: Bill George
Course Convenor: Jenny Laws
Immediate Past Chairman: Brian Maguire (Retired from the Board, February 2004)
Deputy Chair: Elizabeth Timms
Members: Honor Anderson, Michael Andrewes, Judith Cranefield, Wilson Daniel, Eldora Gilbert, Mike Shelton, Merv Smith.

AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT:

Last year we had a number of problems with our audio-visual equipment, which caused frustration for speakers, members and course organisers alike. We are indebted to the technicians at Knox and Salmond who set up the equipment for us, check that it is working, and replace routine items such as batteries, as well as helping in an emergency. However the regular sound equipment and the slide projector are owned by U3A. We have the ultimate responsibility.

Board members are happy to organise courses, but being mere mortals, most of us are not skilled in diagnosing and correcting equipment malfunctions, particularly in the middle of a presentation. Luckily for us all, Bill George, our Treasurer, has expertise in this field. Over the summer he has systematically checked all our audio-visual equipment, corrected various mal-adjustments, simplified the connection system, marked the normal dial positions, and has written instructions for Course Organisers. In addition he attended the first session of each course this year to ensure that

all who were dealing with the equipment had a practical demonstration of its use.

We hope that no one attending courses this year has found a problem with the equipment. If you do any time, please let the course organiser or Bill George know immediately.

Elizabeth Timms

IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ THIS:

Members will find the brochures for Series 2 enclosed with this newsletter. The deadline for return of your applications and course fees before the ballot is Wednesday, 19 May. Please remember to indicate your choices on the forms. If you do not receive a letter from Rodgers and Associates by 28 May, you may assume that you have gained entry to your first choice course. If you have any queries about your acceptance for any Series 2 course after the ballot, please contact Rodgers and Associates.

Annual General Meeting:

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust will be held at Salmond Hall, Knox Street, Dunedin on Thursday, 8 July 2004, following a luncheon which will commence at 12.15 pm.

Nominations for membership of the Board for 2004-2005 will be welcome and nomination forms are available from Jenny Laws (telephone 467 9890), from Rodgers and Associates (474 0847), or, after 14 June, from Judith Gray, Secretary to the Board (467 2619). Nominations close with the Secretary on Friday, 25 June 2004.

If you wish to attend the annual luncheon, please complete the form enclosed with this newsletter and return it to Rodgers and Associates, P O Box 6200, Dunedin North, with your cheque (made out to Rodgers and Associates) no later than Friday, 25 June 2004.

A Thought:

*"The great end of life is not knowledge but action."
Tom Huxley*

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?

U3A INVERCARGILL

Invercargill ran its first U3A course in the Spring of 2002, the topic being 'Southland History'. This had followed soon after an inaugural public meeting at which Brian O'Rourke had talked about the concept of U3A and had outlined ways in which it might develop.

Mary Webb had for some time been mentioning U3A to people she knew, finding many interested to join courses. She was aware of U3A from friends in Wellington and Dunedin as well as from talking with Brian O'Rourke. The final move to establish U3A in Invercargill sprang from a chance meeting in a supermarket of two recently retired couples - the Webbs and the Lucys. The outcome of this casual encounter was a resolve that the four should get together and get things going. An approach was made to the Southland Institute of Technology which agreed to provide a venue for U3A activities free of charge, and also to help with administrative matters such as printing.

A public meeting was called and publicised through local media, with some 60 people attending. A committee was set up with Brian Lucy as Chairman. The membership now is closed at about 120 members.

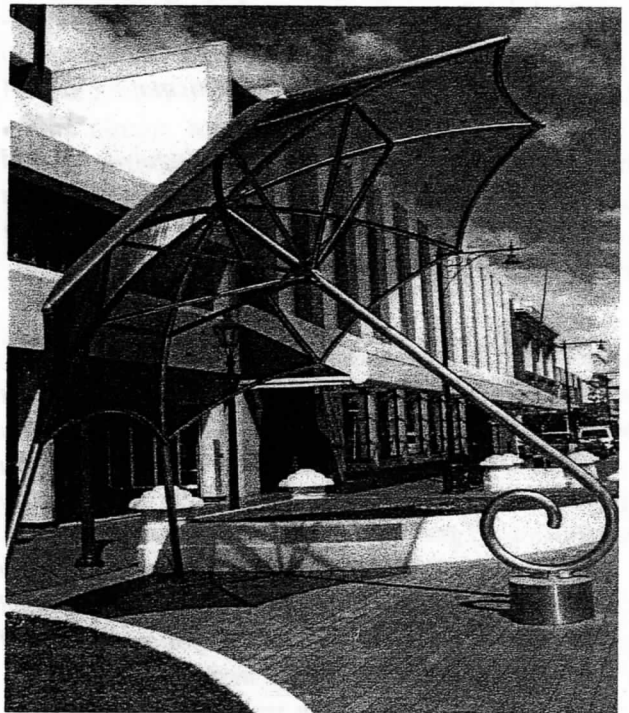
Following the first course in 2002, the 2003 programme included a variety of courses of varying length which ran consecutively:

Astronomy, Geology of Southern New Zealand, History of Art, Comparative Religion,

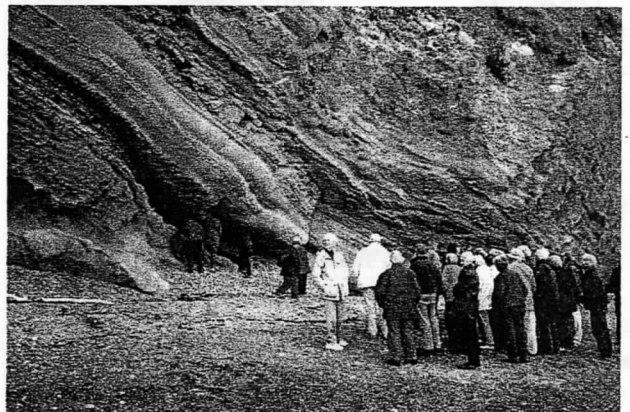
Famous Battles and Genetic Engineering.

The topic for the first course for 2004 is 'Water' ranging from water supply to waste-water treatment. Speakers have been found locally or brought from as far afield as Wellington.

(Contributed by Mary Webb, U3A, Invercargill)



(An Invercargill street scene)



The above photograph was taken on an "Aspects of Otago Geology" course, in the first series of courses in 1998, which consisted of 8 sessions. All speakers were from the University of Otago Geology Department.

A Thought:

"Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another"

G.K. Chesterton