



## Our pride in Hector Map preservation

By Sue Cathro,  
Chairman, U3A Board

On Wednesday, March 16 a number of your Board members attended the presentation of Hector's Map at the Hocken Library. This was the fruition of a project originally proposed in 2009 and funded by U3A Dunedin, to conserve and digitise James Hector's hand-drawn map of Southern New Zealand.

It was a real thrill to see the original restored and the two digital copies of it. One of these has been framed and given to the Geology Department who housed the original for many years, the other will be made available for teaching and researchers to study. The nearly 150-year-old map has been described as one of the Hocken Collections' outstanding treasures. We can be justly proud of our part in its preservation. (More information on the map and the presentation is on page 3 of this newsletter).

When I was at high school, essay writing was one of the English exercises we were given – sometimes to be written in class, at other times topics were to be thought about and we were given some days before it had to be finished. One topic I remember was 'Armchair Travel'. I thought about it and did quite a bit of research, finally writing about the increasing comfort of travel, from wooden cart and horse, through horse-drawn carriages, early motor cars to aeroplanes — all becoming increasingly comfortable for the traveller.

I got a reasonable mark as I remember – obviously for the work I had put into the essay, even though I had completely misinterpreted the topic! This is rather a long-winded explanation to say that Bruce and I have completed our true 'armchair travel' and will be experiencing my teenage version, via plane, bus, boat, car and train through Eastern Europe, Ireland and Scotland during May and June.

John Burton will step in as chairman of the Board while I am away. I am very grateful that he has agreed to do this and I know that I leave everything in good hands.

[March 16 also happened to be pioneer geologist James Hector's birth date anniversary — a good excuse for the celebratory cake that Sue was asked to cut at the function! — Ed.]

## U3A gives its slice!



The Hocken Librarian Sandra Dell watches Sue Cathro cut a birthday and commemorative cake, iced with a small representation of James Hector's historic map.

*Photo and report, page 3*

## Gifts made to Sinfonia and University Library

The Southern Sinfonia will receive a donation of \$5,000 from U3A Dunedin, the Board decided at its March meeting. It was agreed to support the regional orchestra because of its funding difficulties and its help in providing two courses for our members in recent years.

Other gifts agreed on by the Board were as suggested by the University of Otago Library, in order to benefit departments that had supported us in our work. Money was granted for the purchase of the following: *Oxford Encyclopedia of Western Music* (electronic) \$2,000; *Green's Dictionary of Slang* \$640; and *Renewable Energy* \$1,700.

### Bin Laden? (Not Osama)...

Bill George, U3A Dunedin treasurer, tells of a colourful conversation between two Dunedin residents, whose names have been changed to protect the innocent. The tale perhaps offers some commentary on public interest in our new rubbish collection and its timetables?.

Jock: Where's yer bin?

Terry: I've bin in Invercargill!

Jock: Nay, Where's yer *wheelie* bin?

Terry: Well- errrr, I really bin in gaol — but I tell folks I've bin down in Invercargill. . .

## ★ administration

By Judith Gray Secretary to the Board

It is still March as I am writing this, but my mind is firmly fixed on June and July: on Series 2 and the Annual General Meeting. As usual this mailout includes six course brochures and the application form. The deadline for applications is noon on Wednesday, 11 May.

Please ensure when filling in the course application form that your choices are clearly marked, and only one first choice should be listed.

There have recently been several queries about a number of administrative matters.

1. The Board's policy concerning the refund of course fees is as follows:

*Any member who has to withdraw from a course because of illness shall be entitled to a full refund of the course fee paid provided that he or she notifies the Secretary, the Treasurer or Rodgers Law before the course begins.*

*Any member who withdraws from a course for any other reason shall be entitled to a refund of 80% of the course fee, provided that he or she notifies the Secretary, the Treasurer or Rodgers Law before the course begins.*

*No refunds shall be given once a course begins.*

*The Chair of the U3A Board may vary these refund conditions in individual cases.*

*Once approved, a refund may take several days to reach a member's bank account.*

As our courses are so often over-subscribed it is always appreciated if a member advises of a withdrawal as early as possible. This allows an opportunity for another member to fill the place.

2. Members aged over 90 years have automatic admission to one course in each series, prior to the ballot taking place. Applications should, however, be made in the usual way and be accompanied by the appropriate course fee.

The formal notice about the Annual General Meeting of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust appears on page 4 of this newsletter, and the invitation to attend the accompanying lunch is enclosed with it. Please note that nomination forms for membership of the Board are available from me. Both completed nomination forms and lunch acceptances should be returned by 17 June.

**Diary note:** Luncheon & AGM  
Thursday, 7 July — 12.15pm



## ★ looking ahead

By John Burton Chairman, Programme Committee

In the last issue I wrote about the evaluation forms and the very good ideas that often come from members. It is interesting to note how many of them are eventually 'picked up'.

The programme subcommittee starts by looking at possibilities that will interest members and will provide a balanced programme for something like 350 people; this is about the average total number of members attending any one series. Members will appreciate that university staff (and we number many among our presenters) are not free to lecture to us at the drop of a hat. Sometimes up to a year's notice is necessary to get a course organised and it's not at all unusual for 18 months to pass between first thoughts of a course and its presentation to a U3A group.

Occasionally, we are extremely fortunate in that someone says "I've got a course that I'd like to present to U3A" but that is the exception rather than the rule; however, there has been such an offer for the Spring series this year!

The first question to potential presenters is "Are you willing and able to present the course?" The second is "When can you/your team present it" - and sometimes there is very little choice and a narrow window of opportunity.

Next comes "Do you have a preferred venue?" Usually this depends on how popular we think the course may prove to be. Sometimes it may depend on things like the availability of a particular venue or something as simple as a decent piano.

Then it's the job of the Programme subcommittee to develop the fine detail of the course and confirm the venue.

Final approval for each course comes from the full Board. It's worth remembering that all our presenters give their time free of charge.

The forthcoming winter series has been particularly hard to finalise. Four courses which were originally proposed have either had to be abandoned or rescheduled for a variety of very good reasons and the committee has had to work hard to find replacements. However, as I write we have good prospects before us.

Courses on 'Dunedin and its future', the 'Orokonui Ecosanctuary', 'current issues in the Asia-Pacific region', 'radical religion in Cromwell's England', a further 'My life in....' course and a repeat (well, almost) of one of Ross Grimmett's popular art courses are now well developed and should reach fruition in time for a start early in June.

The good news is that prospects for further ahead look bright with the spring programme almost finalised and 2012 beginning to take shape. Bon appétit!

**Digital photography**

Brian Miller, the presenter of the popular *Digital Cameras the Easy Way* is holding courses similar to those he held for U3A in 2009 and this year to the general public in Dunedin, having realised there is a great demand for them. Some members of U3A who were unable to secure a place in the U3A-sponsored course have already enrolled. Brian can be contacted on 476-1453 for details and bookings.





## Celebrating 'the map that changed the south'

Speakers at the 'unveiling' of the restored 1860s Hector geological map of Otago' held in the University of Otago Hocken Collections last month, thanked U3A Dunedin for supporting the big conservation project.

Professor Ewan Fordyce, head of the Geology Department, called it 'the map that changed the south.' Until well into the 1900s it would have been the only large (1.5 m wide) and detailed map available for southern New Zealand.

By the 1970s the original manuscript map (it was never published) was in a deteriorating state and sent for conservation to Auckland, where it was then lost track of and forgotten for quarter of a century — until sought by Prof. Douglas Coombs and others.

Through the generous support of U3A and the efforts of staff of the Hocken Library, the original has been restored and duplicated twice in a smaller size for posterity. The original is too delicate to be always on public display, but it will be one of the Hocken's treasures. One of the copies will be hung in the University's Geology Museum.

### Visit the website:

[www.library.otago.ac.nz/hocken/hector/map.php](http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/hocken/hector/map.php)  
to view a digital copy of the historic map.

The website was created to allow the map to be seen around the world and it includes good articles on its history and a biography of Hector.

James Hector was a Scottish doctor who came to New Zealand in 1862 to become Otago Provincial Geologist after his earlier explorations in western Canada. He explored all of Otago and Southland between 1862 and 1864 and soon

Sharon Dell (left) shows the giant, restored original Hector Map to guests at a Hocken Collections function held on Hector's birthday (March 16.) U3A board member Judith Cowley is at the centre beside Sue Cathro.

moved to Wellington to found the NZ Geological Survey. Hector became a dominant scientist in 19th century New Zealand.

'He was a major figure, perhaps the major figure, of New Zealand science in the later 1800s. Hector was a polymath, a science administrator, a director of government organisations, and an editor,' said Prof. Fordyce.

Hector's many contributions to New Zealand science were reviewed recently in a book, *The Amazing World of James Hector*, edited by Simon Nathan and Mary Varnham. Our geologists celebrate March 16, his birthday, as 'Hector's Day'; this year was a very special Hector's Day in Dunedin.

## Napping good for the brain?

That midday nap markedly boosts the brain's learning capacity. An hour's nap can dramatically improve and restore your brain power and make you smarter, according to some research — see <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/02/100221110338.htm>

## UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust will be held at Salmond College, Knox Street, Dunedin, on Thursday, 7 July 2011, immediately following a luncheon which will commence at 12.15 pm.

Nominations for membership of the U3A Board for 2011/2012 will be welcome and nomination forms are available from Judith Gray, Secretary to the Board, (P. O. Box 117, Dunedin 9054; email address: [graysinn@clear.net.nz](mailto:graysinn@clear.net.nz)). Nominations close with the Secretary on Friday, 17 June 2011.

Copies of the agenda and other papers for the Annual General Meeting will be sent to all members who accept the luncheon invitation, or will be available on request from the Secretary.

Judith Gray  
Secretary to the Board

## Waiting list for new members

Membership of U3A Dunedin stood at 492 members, the Board was told at its March meeting. There was then a waiting list of 102 (mostly people who registered no further back than April or May the previous year, although the top two were from 2009.)

Although our membership is officially capped at 500, the Board agreed to accept 15 new members from the top of the waiting list immediately. Others will be accepted as vacancies occur.

The board voted to consider guidelines for handling the waiting list, including the possibility of some benefits for past presenters in our courses.

## P.D. James wields her handbag!

Britain's *Oldie* magazine selected writer P.D. James as its "handbagger of the year" in 2010 for the way she persevered in castigating the Director-General of the BBC. She threw questions at him about the BBC having a Director of Marketing, Communications and Audiences (on a £300,000 salary) and also a Director of Communications and a Director of Audiences in the executive ranks.

James compared the BBC to "a large and unwieldy ship taking on more and more cargo, building more decks ... recruiting more officers all very comfortably cabined (usually with salaries far greater than their predecessors enjoyed), with a crew that was somewhat discontented, with some a little mutinous, the ship rather sinking close to the Plimsoll line, the customers feeling they have paid too much for their journey and not sure where they are going, or indeed who is the captain."

The Director of M C & A finally departed from the BBC.

## Any pangs to test a ping?

[www.pingtest.net](http://www.pingtest.net) is said to allow you to test the quality of your broadband connection. Most Internet usage requires more than just raw speed; measurements include packet loss (while transmitting or receiving data), ping (how long it takes for data to travel from your computer to an Internet server and back) and jitter (don't ask!) This test may be useful if you have broadband.

## Wound-healing gel discovery after challenge by son

Emeritus Professor Brian Robinson, a U3A Board member, played a major role in developing a ground-breaking gel to heal wounds after sinus surgery. The gel has been successfully commercialised by a collaboration of two Universities, Otago and Adelaide, and a Wellington company.

A leading US-based medical technology firm, Medtronic, has purchased the patent in a deal brokered by Prof Robinson (Otago University Chemistry Department), Prof Peter-John Wormald (Adelaide), and ENT surgeon Mr Simon Robinson, of Robinson Squidgel Ltd which performed clinical trials. Otago Innovation Ltd was also involved.

Work began on the project five years ago after Brian's son Simon challenged his father to come up with a biological substance to help solve annoying post-operative complications after sinus surgery.

The gel is derived from chitosan, a polymer extracted from crab shell and squid. It has had successful sheep and human trials over four years.

## Writing competition

U3A Sunshine Coast (Australia) is holding its fourth Writing Competition, open to anyone retired or semi-retired and thus eligible to join a U3A. Guidelines and entry forms are now available from our Secretary or for download from this website: [www.u3asunshine.org.au](http://www.u3asunshine.org.au). The competition closes on June 10, 2011.

There is a new category this year: 'Short Story - Autobiography' as well as the ones from previous years. These are: Short Story - Fiction, Rhyming Poetry, Free verse and Challenge. The Challenge this year is to write a story with the theme: 'Oh, no! Not again?' This can be the title, theme or just included in the text (or all three!)

Any queries, email convenor Jenny Riley: [bjriley63@westnet.com.au](mailto:bjriley63@westnet.com.au)

## On the leash?

The Isle of Skye U3A was launched in September 2010 with membership of 43. Monthly meetings are held in Portree and it has a variety of interest groups, meeting in various points around the island. These include photography, art, walking, archaeology, genealogy, literature and dog owner training (yes that's right, dog *owner* training — they believe it is the owners who need training, not the dogs.)

*Edited by Geoff Adams*

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