



# U3A

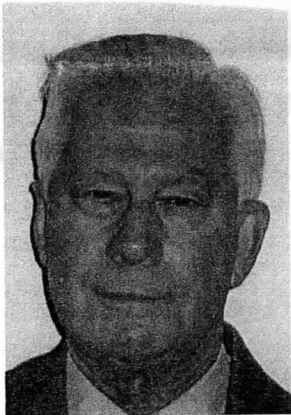


## DUNEDIN

Newsletter, Issue No 7

Date: November, 2005

### From The Chairman:



Not long after I moved from Napier some four years ago to settle in Dunedin for the fifth time in my life, my long-standing friend, Albert Moore suggested that I join U3A Dunedin and later stand for election to the Trust Board. I was readily persuaded and have subsequently enjoyed the educational stimulus, besides socialising and meeting several new friends.

In reflecting recently on the nature and purpose of the now world wide U3A, established in France in the mid-70s, and also on the wide diversity of courses offered by other branches throughout N.Z., I was reminded that the organisation was formed, not just for an academic elite, but rather for people from all walks of life and backgrounds in their 'senior years' as an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and experience of our world and of all aspects of human activity and endeavour. In this respect my old high school Latin motto "Non Scholae Sed Vitae Discimus" (Not for School but for Life we are learning) seems directly relevant. These words of Quintilian, the first century Spanish-born Roman rhetorician, were addressed to budding barristers - not to forget the essential requirement that they become well-rounded human beings as well as learned exponents of the law.

Included in this Newsletter is a questionnaire as part of a membership survey. Hopefully your carefully considered responses will help your hard-working Board to meet your needs and expectations more effectively and give rise to suggestions concerning the future direction of our Dunedin branch.

Celebrate Christmas well with your families, - enjoy your holidays and look forward to a varied and interesting Series I of the 2006 Course Programme.

Wilson Daniel

### Important - Please read this

Enclosed with this newsletter is the Membership Renewal form for 2006, which should be completed and returned with your cheque to Rodgers and Associates. Also enclosed is a survey form from the Board. We would appreciate your response. The completed survey should be returned to the Secretary, U3A Dunedin, 5a Fifield Street, Roslyn, Dunedin".

### Farewell to Editor

With this issue we say good bye to Brian O'Rourke as Editor. We are greatly indebted to him for his foresight which first promoted the idea of a newsletter as a means of keeping in touch with our expanding membership and also his willingness to take on the role of Editor to get it established (particularly when it came at a time when he was winding down his active involvement in U3A administration).

Brian has played a major part in U3A Dunedin from the time of his move back to Dunedin in 1996.

Our very best wishes to Brian and our grateful thanks for his wide contribution to U3A over very many years, both in his professional life, and in retirement.

Elizabeth Timms, Past President

### Comments on Courses

In both 2004 and 2005, I was a member of the **book discussion group**. In both years I found this an interesting and instructive experience. I heartily recommend it for consideration by members if it is offered again in future years.

Prior to 2004 I had considered applying for membership of the group but did not pursue the idea in the belief that my literary

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experience would hardly qualify me for inclusion in such distinguished company. I soon realised that such a fear was groundless. From the first session I was made very welcome.

If my choice of books for discussion proved embarrassing to other members, they did not make me aware of this. For myself, membership has widened and enriched the scope of my reading, which in itself can only prove beneficial as aging means reduction in physical abilities.

John Ravenwood

Nine U3A members met with our leader Donald Feist on six occasions to discuss the little book entitled "**God or Godswallop - That is the question**" by Marion Barnes.

The author, a practising Funeral Celebrant who having rejected orthodox Christianity, set about forging a way forward that satisfied new thinking and understanding in our secular age. Essentially, the book expressed much of what has already been said by Lloyd Geering, John Spong, or for that matter, Ian Harris in his ODT articles.

Despite diverse backgrounds and experience, the participants of the group were able to discuss the issues raised in the book freely.

We were glad, however, to have our leader Don Feist keep us on the track, and to have the presence of Dr Albert Moore to provide a good balance.

The group was sorry to come to the end of the course.

Graham Batts



## Extracts from a new U3A Dunedin pamphlet

### What is U3A?

The concept of U3A evolved in France during the early 1970s when many older people were beginning to seek further education during their retirement. It was recognised that this third stage of life, following those of childhood and work/child rearing, could be most fruitful for learning.

The approach adopted in France was to follow the style of medieval universities. This involved setting up communities of those who sought greater understanding through interactive learning. Hence the name "University of the Third Age"

### How does U3A work?

U3A, which has now spread through the Western world, continues to be a concept rather than an organisation. Because of this each U3A group is an independent body even though some regional and national networking structures have been set up.

Individual groups have put U3A into practice in many ways.

There are, however, common characteristics:

- Courses take place during daylight hours
- Learning topics are selected by the members of the group
- The style of presentation is determined by group members
- Presenters/facilitators are frequently members of the group but experts from many fields are invited to contribute on a voluntary basis

- The atmosphere for learning is friendly and informal - discussion is encouraged
- There are no compulsory activities
- There are no examinations
- As U3A is a non-profit making organisation, course costs are kept to a minimum

### What are the special characteristics of U3A Dunedin?

The group has been presenting courses since 1994 and there are at present about 450 members, aged from 50 to 90plus who come from all walks of life and who are all intellectually active.

- U3A in Dunedin has now been set up as a Charitable Trust managed by a Board elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. A members' luncheon is held in conjunction with that meeting.
- The Board meets regularly to consider reports on completed courses and to develop ideas for new courses.
- Normally three series of four or five courses are run each year, during autumn, winter and spring.
- The courses cover many branches of learning including literature, biological and physical sciences, philosophy, art, music and the social sciences.
- The maximum number accepted for each course is normally 50, though smaller classes are held when appropriate. As all presenters give their services on a voluntary basis, course fees are kept to a minimum.
- As applications for many courses exceed the available places, a ballot is held to determine who will attend.
- Courses are normally held at Knox College or Salmond Hall. Both venues are easily accessible and not far from public transport.
- Each course usually consists of six to eight two-hour sessions (including a tea break of about twenty minutes) held on a weekly basis. A Board member takes responsibility for organising each course and for chairing its sessions.
- Each session usually consists of a lecture with time allowed for questions and discussion. This format is flexible and depends on the topic and the speaker.

- A small annual mailing list fee is charged per household.

### Relationship with the University of Otago:

In 2003 the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust entered into a partnership with the University of Otago aimed at enhancing our shared community of interest by continuing to provide a programme of non-credit educational courses. This enables us to utilise the expertise and resources of the University as well as those of members of U3A and of the wider community.

Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave.

(Attr) Lord Henry Brougham

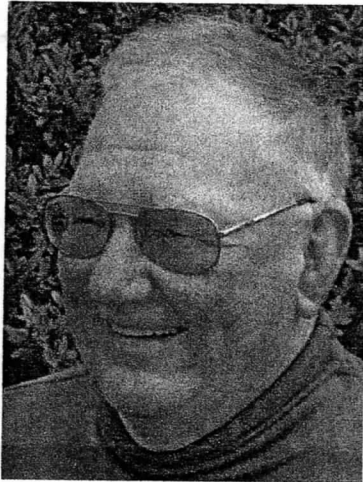
### COURSE STATISTICS, 2005

Courses	Enrol Limit	Total Applications	Successful in ballot *	Unsuccessful **	1st Choice Unsuccessful
<b>Series 1:</b>					
Medieval World	50	105	51	54	31
Topics in Human Nutrition	50	64	51	13	0
Genetic Engineering	50	64	47	38	0
Napoleon to De Gaulle	50	59	50	9	0
Enigma of the Atom	50	34	24	9	0
<b>Series 2</b>					
Freedom / Relig / Spirit discussion	30	20	14	6	0
The Orchestra	50	77	50	27	0
What it means to be Human?	50	136	50	81	48
Remarkable Immune System	50	80	51	29	1
Book Group	12	12	7		
<b>Series 3</b>					
Is Justice in NZ Just? (repeat)	50	102	53	49	15
The World in 1900	50	88	52	36	9
Shakespeare	50	47	42	5	0
Word & Image	50	60	42	18	2
Medieval Studies discussion	15	11	9	2	0
God or Godswallop discussion	15	12	8	4	0

\* Numbers Successful: Figures exclude Course Organisers and Assistants for their particular courses.

\*\* Total unsuccessful include <sup>application</sup> all irrespective of preference, or number of courses applied for.

# The Editor Retires



Brian O'Rourke, Editor of our Newsletter for the past two years has decided to hand on the reins to a successor.

"My role in starting the Newsletter was to get it going as I believed that frequent communication was essential in an organisation such as ours. Things seem to have worked out reasonably well and so I believe that it is time for me to step aside with the hope that change and development

will continue"

Brian's association with U3A Dunedin started before it began. As Director of the Centre for Continuing Education at the

University of Canterbury he had facilitated the creation of the first U3A group in Christchurch in 1992.

"It got off to a flying start and it wasn't long before inquiries from Otago resulted in the setting up of a Dunedin group based largely on our experiences in Christchurch".

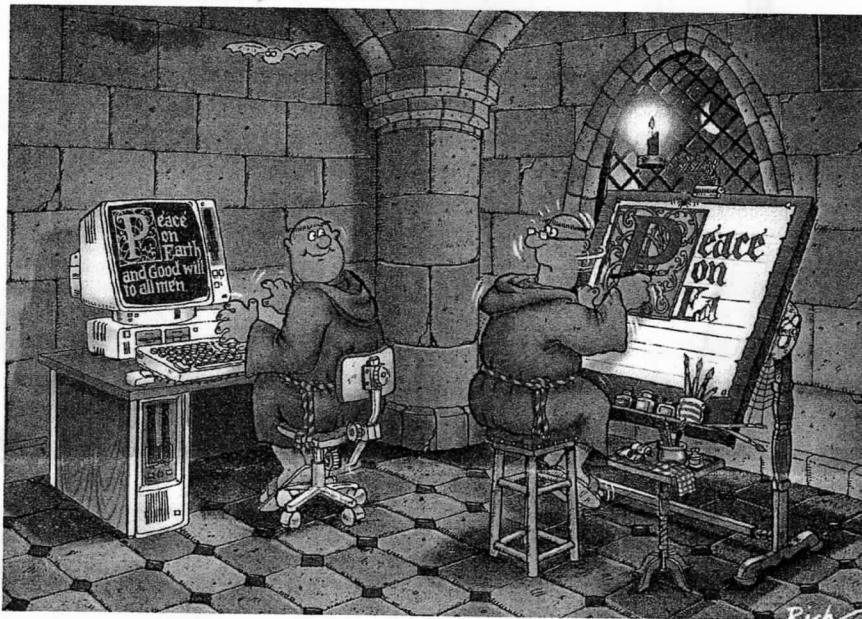
Brian comments, with amusement, that when he retired in 1995, the waiting list for admission to U3A Christchurch was so long that he realized that he would have to live well into his 90s before he would be eligible to attend lectures.

"Fortunately, Adair and I, as original Otagoites, had decided to retire back to Dunedin and so we were delighted to be able to join in here in 1996 without getting into a queue."

Brian was rapidly drawn onto the then Committee and has been immersed in U3A affairs since as Committee and Board member, teacher, course organiser and negotiator with the University of Otago.

"I really enjoyed working with Mervyn Cranefield on the Newsletter. However, certain incompatibilities between our computers, software and copiers produced some amazing and undetectable blues which we are still embarrassed about. It's all part of the learning process, I guess."

"My very best wishes go to the members of U3A Dunedin for the future."



A Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all, from the Board and Newsletter Team

The Newsletter Team : Brian O'Rourke (Editor), Mervyn Cranefield (Layout and Design), Elizabeth Timms (Board Liaison).