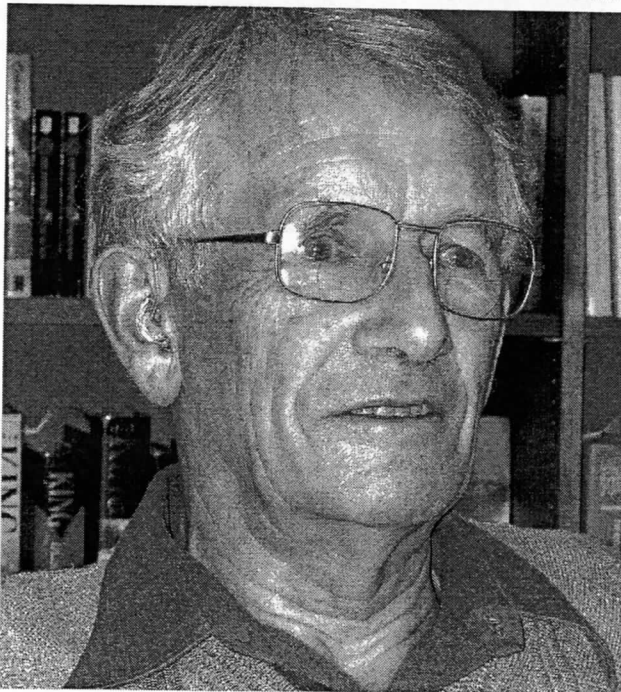


# Grappling with our problems of popularity

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Donald Feist: *'... may be a pointer that there is scope for, and a need for, another U3A in Dunedin — one which will not be a copy of ours, but will develop its own style.'*

Donald Feist, chairman of U3A Dunedin, gives this message to members:

It's an honour to follow such able people as Honor Anderson, Wilson Daniel, Elizabeth Timms and the others who have served as Chair of the Board of U3A Dunedin. But in the three years I have been on the Board I've found it to be a hard-working and harmonious group, served by a very efficient secretary, Judith Gray, and treasurer Bill George, so I don't foresee chairing the Board as being at all stressful.

Most of the Board's work in the coming year, as in the past, will be the on-going task of offering you all a range of up to half a dozen interesting courses, three times a year, of the same high standard we have all come to expect. Beyond that, the (foreseeable) problems the Board must grapple with are problems of our popularity.

Honor Anderson, in addition to drawing attention to this in her Annual Report, earlier this year prodded the Board into appointing a working party "to review matters relating to course venues, capping membership numbers, and increasing the numbers accepted for certain courses". The first result of this working party's working has been a decision by the Board that in 2008 some courses will be held at the Leith Bowling Club rooms in Duke Street, bounding Woodhaugh Gardens. This will allow us to accept at least a hundred members for those courses, and will be in addition to using Knox and Salmond Colleges. The working party has not finished its work, and will continue to look at how we may better serve our large membership.

Using a larger venue should mean that up to perhaps a hundred more people are able to attend a course of their choice in each series. And that's good. But I confess to having mixed feelings about this move. A course with an attendance of around a hundred will inevitably be mainly lecture, with little chance for active participation. This is an appropriate form for some subjects. But the model of mother-bird regurgitating material for her chicks is not the only, and not the most effective, model for learning. And while I hope we will always make good use of the excellent course leaders available to us through the University, I'm disappointed that we don't have more courses in which course members take an active part — either in a discussion format, or by way of doing some homework, finding things out, and sharing what they've found with the rest of the group. Perhaps it is inevitable that a U3A with 500 members will major on lecture-type courses. And that may be a pointer that there is scope for, and a need for, another U3A in Dunedin — one which will not be a copy of ours, but will develop its own style.

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Decisions on subscriptions & membership of U3A Dunedin

## ADMINISTRATION

## Those forms needed for membership

By Judith Gray, Secretary

The membership renewal form for 2008 accompanies this newsletter. It is largely the same as last year's form.

I am aware that some members find providing the same information each year annoying, but the date of birth, gender and citizenship details are needed by the Ministry of Education as part of their requirements if courses are to continue to be funded by the Ministry,

Please note that membership renewal forms should be received by 31 December, and certainly not later than 20 January, and that the annual fee is now \$10.00 per member.

As all our active members will know the sheer size of the U3A Dunedin membership has presented difficulties for the Board and disappointment for members with regard to acceptance for courses. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, the Board intends to try out a larger alternative venue in 2008 for some appropriate high-demand courses and this may ease pressure in some situations.

The Board has recently made some decisions, again mentioned elsewhere, regarding membership numbers now that the 500-member cap has been reached. We regret the somewhat rigorous nature of our decisions but feel that in order to provide the best possible service to members we are justified in taking these actions. Any variation will be at the discretion of the Board.

The mail-outs three times each year containing course information and the newsletter will still continue to be sent on a household basis and members of a household will continue to apply for courses as at present.

In the past there have been instances when members from different addresses have applied on one course application form because of transport considerations. It has been decided that this practice can no longer continue, as we can no longer guarantee that such applications would be successful. The number of people applying for our most popular courses is now such that meeting these requests is almost impossible and probably unfair.

### Age abuse

A writer in the London *Independent* newspaper writing of Bob Dylan's guitarist, Bruce Langhorne, once stated: 'Although he turned 66 last May, he still possesses intelligence, humour, poise and playfulness.' Did he think that this was such a miracle?

### Tip for Grannies?

Melanie, aged 5, visiting her grandmother one day asked "How old are you Granny?" Granny replied she was so old she didn't remember any more.

The little girl said: "If you don't remember you have to look in the back of your panties. Mine says 'five to six'."

**Deft definition:** Someone said "A lecture is a device by which the notes of the lecturer become the notes of the students, without passing through the mind of either."



Judith Gray

## LOOKING AHEAD

By Sue Cathro  
Programme Co-ordinator

For my first 'Looking Ahead' I am pleased to be able to report that the topics that were only proposals in the August newsletter have been firmed up and promise interesting and challenging series in 2008.



Confirmed for the first series are Sue Cathro *Mozart's Milan Operas, Every Picture Tells A Story*, a series of lectures from the Department of Human Nutrition, *The Printed Word* and two smaller group courses on Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and *Book Plates*.

Times and places are yet to be finalised, but one or more of these courses may be held in the larger venue of the Leith Bowling Club, which would allow for a greater number of participants to take part.

Looking even further ahead, other proposals include *Women in Society, Digital Photography, Photography as Art, The Arts in the Time of the Great War, Neurology* and several others. Board members are sure that you will find something to catch your interest in 2008.

### Gifts to University, Colleges

Further donations are being given to the University of Otago, Knox and Salmond Colleges, recognising the support given by them to us. \$5000 has been given to the University to pay for the development of holdings for the Department of Music; \$2,500 each has been given to Knox and Salmond Colleges to assist the Hewitson Library and to provide a large fixed screen and data projector for the Salmond lecture room.

### Quick quotes

*Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.* ~ Thomas A. Edison.

*The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.* ~ Socrates.

*The only dumb question is a question you don't ask.* ~ Paul MacCready (Inventor).

*Thinking is more interesting than knowing, but less interesting than looking.* ~ Goethe.

*A wonderful harmony arises from joining together the seemingly unconnected.* ~ Heraclitus c.500 BC.

*We are what we repeatedly do.* ~ Aristotle.

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

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# Leith Bowling Club trial for our major venue

As a trial for the first and second series in 2008, U3A Dunedin will hold one or two courses at the Leith Bowling Club at the western end of Duke St, (Woodhaugh) the Board decided in September, on a recommendation from its Policy Working Committee. These will be courses where it seems likely that there will be significantly more than 50 applications.

The Working Party was reconvened after a suggestion from Honor Anderson that it was time to review matters relating to course venues, capping membership numbers, and increasing the numbers accepted for certain courses. It quickly agreed:

1. *That it's not desirable either to increase or decrease the cap on numbers. (500 is the present cap on membership.)*
2. *That the number of people being excluded from the courses they wished to attend is too high.*
3. *That Knox and Salmond between them cannot easily cope with more courses than at present.*
4. *That Board members could not easily cope with arranging more courses per series or per year than at present.*

The Working Party reported that it then concluded it should see whether it is possible to offer some courses in a venue larger than either Salmond Hall or the Frank Nichol Room at Knox College could offer — preferably a place that could cater for 100 or a little more.

From a list of about 100 venues for hire in the area from Waikouaiti to Middlemarch and Taieri Mouth, about 20 were discussed and it was decided to focus on the areas: University, North Dunedin, Maori Hill, Leith Valley, and North East Valley.

The Southern and Eastern parts of the city were left clear for another U3A to operate in, if or when one should be started up.

The list was whittled down to seven locations appearing worth further investigation: Maori Hill Presbyterian Church (Drivers Rd), Otago Golf Club (Balmacewan Rd), Leith Bowling Club (Duke St), St Martins (Anglican) Church Hall (North Rd, NEV), NEV Baptist Church Hall (North Rd), Cameron Hall (Knox College), Hutton and Marjorie Barclay Theatres at Otago Museum.

These seven were then investigated in regard to the following factors.—

*Is it available for 3 hours in mornings and/or afternoons?*

*Available for up to 6 weeks in succession?*

*Could we make firm bookings about 3 months ahead?*

*Possibilities for catering cups or tea or coffee?*

*Adequate heating and how is it paid for?*

*Seating — capacity and quality?*

*Rental charges for 3 hours?*

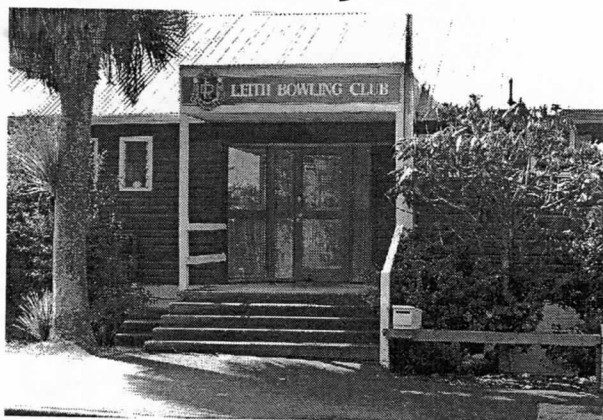
*Available parking? How accessible by bus?*

*Any difficulties for less mobile people?*

*Can it be blacked out for audio-visuals?*

*Adequate screen? Projection equipment?*

*Any storage space for our own projection equipment — or could we install lockable cupboard?*



Entry to Leith Valley Bowling Club, at 2 Duke St.

When people reported back, it quickly became clear to the Working Party that "whereas two or three venues could provide most of what we are looking for to a reasonable standard, the Leith Bowling Club scored highly on every one of the criteria." The biggest negative was that some high windows in the north did not at present have very good blackout — but the club itself is already considering action about the existing curtains.

A U3A member suggested the Otago Yacht Club rooms to the group, but on inquiry it was "clear that this would not meet our needs."

Secretary Judith Gray reported that "it is almost certain that alterations to the School of Ministry Building will make the Frank Nichol Room either unavailable or unsatisfactory for much of 2008."

Both Knox and Salmond are very pleased to have U3A, as the Board and course members are very satisfied with the locations. So it is not suggested that we give up either Salmond or the Frank Nichol Room. But there is a limit to how many times a week they can comfortably cope with us.

It is considered that organisers of courses will need to decide early on whether to plan for a small group (fewer than 30) to allow for substantial group participation, a group of up to 50 as at present, or a group of 100 to 120 majoring on lecture format with limited opportunity for discussion.

## Working Party

Members of the Policy Working Party were: Donald Feist (chair), Honor Anderson, Jenny Laws, Elizabeth Timms, Bill George, Judith Gray, and Sue Cathro.

## Einstein's other theories

I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world. ~ Albert Einstein  
The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them. ~ Einstein.

The important thing is not to stop questioning. ~ Einstein.

**Leonardo Da Vinci's recipe:** 'Every now and then go away, even briefly, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgement will be surer; since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power.'

**Thought:** There are two kinds of people, someone said. Those who divide everyone into two kinds of people — and those who don't.

## Managing the membership waiting list

At its October meeting the U3A Dunedin Board approved further important recommendations from its Policy Working Party regarding subscriptions and membership. It was noted at the meeting that the present membership had reached 500, with a waiting list of about seven.

These decisions were taken:

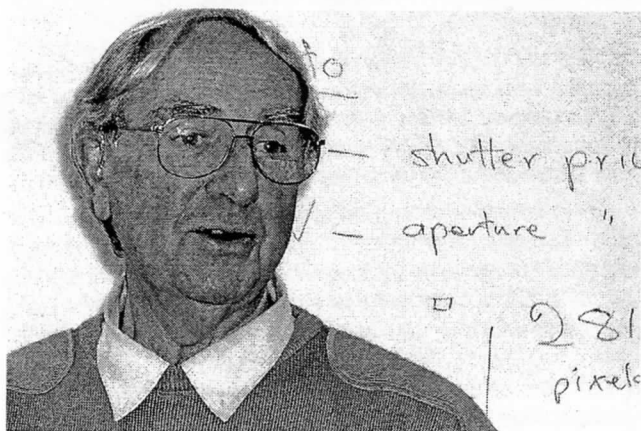
1. *That when the membership numbers allow, new members be accepted from the waiting list strictly in date order of their applications being received.* [This means, for example, that the spouse of an existing member, or a former member wishing to rejoin, will not get preference.]

2. *That the membership year continues to be the calendar year. The sub for the year starting January 1 will be payable in advance and should be paid before December 31. If the sub is not received before January 20, membership will lapse and an application after that date will go to the bottom of the waiting list.* [This also means that we cannot provide for leave of absence from membership.]

3. *That the subscription be \$10 per member.* [For a household of two persons the membership will be \$20.]

It was pointed out to the Board that the membership year is unchanged. The date of January 20 for payment deadline is so that there is clarity and certainty before the posting for the first series of courses in the new year goes out.

### Reg Graham, photographer



REG GRAHAM died suddenly on August 23. U3A Dunedin cancelled the popular lecturer's repeat course on digital photography due to begin a few days later. A crowded service was held at Knox Church on September 7.

Reg, well known in education circles, was also a top New Zealand portrait and theatre photographer (his book *Click* was published last year). Reg also took an earlier U3A series on 35mm photography.

[Photo of Reg taken by the editor during Reg's Digital Photography course last year.]

### James Robinson, scientist

We are also very sorry to record the death in September of Emeritus Professor of Physiology James Robinson, aged 93, one of our keen and most senior members featured in the newsletter earlier this year,

In the past the U3A subscription has been on a 'per household' basis. This led to some ambiguity as to whether or not two people living together are both members. To cope fairly with the 500-member ceiling it was thought best to remove this uncertainty.

Points made in the Board discussion were:—

That persons must be financial members to apply for our courses. A person does not qualify by being a spouse or partner unless also a member.

Every member who enrolls for a course should make an effort to attend all sessions, if possible, since other members are often deprived of that same opportunity by the ballot process. Empty seats seem to insult the situation.

The Working Party has not yet finished its deliberations. It will meet again to consider any further recommendations to the Board.

### Untangling the Web again

<http://www.uk.imdb.com> may be the best and most comprehensive archive of information about films; full credits, links to reviews and trailers, fully searchable and free.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk> is reputedly Europe's most popular website after the search engines, and certainly one of the biggest. Great for news, and much more.

<http://www.elderhostel.org>: The U3A movement has not yet flourished in the USA; this is its nearest equivalent. A strong focus on educational travel, but offers a range of other activities including online study groups.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lostgospel> explains the magazine's involvement with recently discovered Gospel of Judas. Is it genuine? NG provides some scholarly insights.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onemusic/howto/download/downloadp01.shtml>: A guide to downloading and playing music of any and all sorts from the web — legally.

<http://www.allmusic.com>: free source of information about music recordings and the artists who make them. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/muze> gives access to authoritative "Encyclopaedia of Popular Music."

<http://www.artdaily.com>: An art and art history resource, fully indexed. One interesting area is "Art In Motion", where buildings, statues, or famous places are described, with a 3D animated view. Or check out "This Day in History"

<http://www.heavens-above.com> aims to provide you with all the information you need to observe satellites such as the International Space Station and the Space Shuttle, spectacular events and other spaceflight and astronomical information.

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