



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# DUNEDIN *newsletter*



No. 19 November 2008

## Leith Valley venue is of benefit to members

★ chairman's  
message

U3A Dunedin rotates the Board Chair annually and so Donald Feist has now completed his term. A number of important policy issues were addressed under his leadership and the decisions reached seem to have been well received with no concerns heard from members at our recent AGM.

The new venue at the Leith Bowling Club is working well with the earlier problems now largely resolved. One hundred or possibly a few more members can be housed comfortably there and hereon it is available for one or two sessions each week.

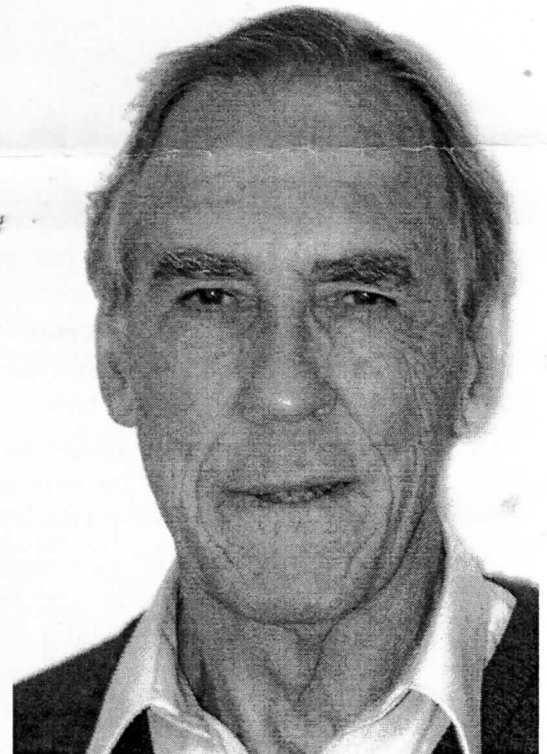
The overall membership hovers between 480 and 500, even after some tightening of membership eligibility in 2007. A short waiting-list remains but movement to full membership is occurring regularly.

Failing to achieve your first choice of course does still occur occasionally and so some prior wisdom is required from the Board to allocate the larger venue to the course most likely to be the most popular! Where possible, and with the contributor's agreement, some of the oversubscribed courses will be updated repeats in future years.

The numbers of courses is now probably close to the maximum that a group of willing and enthusiastic volunteers, which we are, can mount and present each year. And the variety of choices is wide. In the recent Series Two 2008 there were six courses with 288 places and for Series Three 2008 there are seven courses, with 450 places offered. And so we are hopeful that you will each be allocated a course that really appeals to you.

Your Board is well into planning for 2009, with some courses for Series One already approved. We are also currently addressing a long list of suggested topics and ideas and possible presenters and organisers so that 2009 will be another rewarding and informative experience for members. Dunedin is so richly endowed with educational options that making those choices is a demanding but highly rewarding task.

— **Graham Mortimer**  
Chairman, U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust



Graham Mortimer

### Reticent writers — don't be shy!

The Editor of the newsletter is surprised he has never received any letters from U3A members for possible publication in its columns, published four times each year. Why no grins or grizzles?

We know senior readers are not too old, shy or backward to express their opinions. Feel free to share them with others in our Dunedin branch.

You are invited to write in about U3A Dunedin, and its courses, or current issues in the group, the world or our community. If you ask questions or want to grumble about something the newsletter will endeavour to get a reply or answering comment.

Normal newspaper rules of selection and editing will apply. Letters must be topical, brief and signed. They can be sent to:

Editor, U3A Dunedin Newsletter,  
2 Pollock St, Maori Hill, Dunedin  
[email: [hgadams@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:hgadams@slingshot.co.nz)]

## ★ administration

by Judith Gray

*Secretary*



The membership renewal form for 2009 is enclosed with this newsletter. Please note that in order to retain your membership the completed renewal forms should be received at Rodgers Law by 31 December 2008, and certainly not later than 20 January 2009. The annual membership fee of \$10 per member should accompany your form.

The renewal form should not be used by anyone joining U3A Dunedin for the first time.

The first course information mail-out for 2009, along with the next newsletter, will be sent to you in late January, with courses beginning in early March.

Membership of U3A Dunedin has reached the 500 person cap agreed some time ago by the Board and, although several new members were accepted earlier this year to fill available places, we still have a waiting list of over 30 people keen to join.

This year the number of applicants for each of the three series of courses has been fairly consistent: 257 in Series 1, 263 in Series 2, and 275 for the most recent series. Series 1 had six course offerings, and no applicant was unsuccessful in gaining a place on one course.

Series 2 again offered only six courses, but of these, three were for smaller groups. Ten people missed out altogether, though several of these had only submitted one option. The current Series 3 has offered the largest number of places ever: 450. However, not all these places were taken up, and one course was moved to a smaller venue. No-one missed out entirely, and everyone who requested, and paid for, more than one option, was accommodated.

### Worth repeating

Some of the most popular of the U3A Dunedin courses are worth repeating and should be put on a "bring-up" file to consider repeats at least every two or three years. This is the opinion of Donald Feist, backed by other U3A board members in a discussion.

## ★ looking ahead

by Sue Cathro

*Programme  
Co-ordinator*



2008 was a challenging year for your Board but we were pleased to be able to offer a wide variety of courses. The use of the larger venue of the Leith Bowling Club was a success, allowing a greater number of participants to take part in a course. Parking was easier and the unforeseen, minor problems were dealt with promptly. We intend to continue using this venue for courses in 2009.

Confirmed for the first series in 2009 is *The New Genetics, The Metaphysical Poets, Climate Change: a New Zealand Perspective* and *The Real Thing – 170 years of Photography*. Two other courses are being finalised.

Looking even further ahead, many will be pleased that Dorothy Page has agreed to repeat her *Women in Society* course in Series 2. Other proposals include a course on the New Zealand legal system. Several other topics are being pursued for later in the year.

The Board is always open to suggestions. The course evaluation forms are a good source of ideas, but if you have an idea at any time, please contact a Board member so that he/she can bring it to our meetings.

### Diet protects our brain?

Fernando Gómez-Pinilla, a fish-loving professor of neurosurgery at the University of California believes appropriate changes to diet can enhance cognitive abilities, protect a person's brain and counteract effects of ageing. *The Economist* published a report about him (website [www.economist.com/science](http://www.economist.com/science)).

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

Address: C/o The Secretary,  
PO Box 117, Dunedin 9054

Email: [graysinn@clear.net.nz](mailto:graysinn@clear.net.nz)

Chairman: Graham Mortimer ph 477 9867

Secretary: Judith Gray ph 471 9913

## Happy 90th!

Congratulations to Professor Alan Horsman (right), who celebrated his 90th birthday on October 24.

Over the years Alan has been involved in at least 15 of our courses. He was a joint contributor to 'The Peopling of Otago,' one of the first offerings. Since then he has presented courses including six on Shakespeare; five on novelists (George Eliot twice, Anthony Trollope, the Brontes, and Dickens); three on poets (Yeats and T.S. Eliot, Auden and English Romantic Poetry.)

To express U3A's thanks and help celebrations the Board presented the distinguished emeritus professor of English at the University of Otago with some Central Otago wines.

Photo: Richard Higham



## Bridging U3A gap in North Otago

Wednesday, 24 September, was the day the first session of the first course of a proposed North Otago branch of the U3A was held. Ken Bridge, of Hampden, a member of U3A Dunedin, is to be congratulated on being a driving force in formation of the branch.

Mr Bridge, on the waiting list to join our members last year, joined us earlier this year after a vacancy. He has been in the George Eliot and Otago Writers courses, as well as being a member of the Book Group. "They were wonderful. That's why I was keen to start a group in North Otago," he told this Newsletter.

The response was "fantastic." When contacted he already had 80 people interested in joining and the course on North Otago History was launched with six out of the 10 sessions arranged. The new U3A may be launched on November 27 when its first general meeting will be held.

The new branch will not hold all meetings in Oamaru but also in Palmerston, Glenavy and other centres in the region. Mr Bridge, a former principal of the Temuka High School for 12 years, hopes not to be too involved in its administration. "My idea of heaven is no meetings and no telephones," he said.

But he hopes being a member of a North Otago U3A (as well as remaining a member of U3A Dunedin) will be a blessing. "Its time has come."

## Courtesy suggested

At its September Board meeting your U3A Board discussed a report that a member of the "Dunedin Our City" course was seen sound-recording one of the sessions — apparently without the knowledge of the tutor.

Some concern about intellectual property and possible copyright issues was aired; also it was suggested that recording a speaker without permission was a breach of confidence. Some members felt that tutors (and perhaps even members of an audience making comments or asking questions) should give consent before they were recorded.

Our speakers sometimes have detailed notes and make them available to participants, others only have brief notes and some speak without any notes at all. They could have different views on whether they mind being recorded. — but such material could of course not be misrepresented or wrongly attributed.

Normally information given in our courses is in the public arena and we suppose it will be made clear by a speaker if anything is "off the record" or to be kept "in house." However, any members wishing to record the spoken word, rather than trust to their memory or written jottings, should (as a courtesy) ask the speaker, to make sure there is no objection.

**Footnote:** Please switch off cellphones during U3A sessions and do not annoy others by taking or making calls. Those jangly ringtones are rude and distracting!

---

### Fiery Quotes

---

*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. ~ W.B. Yeats*

*The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled. ~ Plutarch*

*Men are born ignorant, not stupid; they are made stupid by education. ~ Bertrand Russell*

# Want to enjoy webbed feats? . . . once more into the Net

Sites on the Worldwide Web that may keep your computer's mouse nibbling happily over the coming summer.

<http://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.

WorldU3A is very pleased to announce its new interactive website for classical music lovers. Click on <http://u3amusicgroups.pbwiki.com>

<http://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.

[www.seniority.co.uk](http://www.seniority.co.uk) is a good British site for over-50s.

<http://booksearch.blogspot.com> is run by Google and works just like a web search. Has a soulmate in . . .

<http://books.google.co.uk> Try a search here and if the book is out of copyright, or the publisher has given permission, you'll be able to see a preview of the book, and in some cases the entire text. If it's in the public domain, you're free to download a PDF copy.

## New life begins at 80. . .

Correspondence in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper in September made interesting reading:

'Katharine Whitehorn says women write to her agony column "saying they've got plenty of women friends, but would so like to meet a man because they're sick of talking about health all the time." . . . 'She goes on to say: "I tell them to stop hoping to bump into a literate widower and join the University of the Third Age, a self-help organization providing courses and companionship." Well a couple of years ago I did both. I met my literate widower at U3A and, yes — reader, I married him! We celebrate our first wedding anniversary in a few weeks. He is almost 80 but I am not. He taught me to read the *Guardian*. Great success story all round. — **Caryl Heley** (Lee-on-the-Solent, Hampshire)

A shorter letter was underneath it:

'Katharine Whitehorn is right to say that "the over-80s are terribly concerned about health.' but there can be a positive side to this. Having spent a large part of the past two years at my local hospital, I got involved in the foundation trust and was elected as patients' representative to the members' council. Now at 80-plus, a whole new world has opened up, and I am involved, among other things, in helping to plan a new innovative HIV and sexual health centre. Exciting? Absolutely! — **Chris Birch** (London)

## ★ internet links

### Healthy websites?

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk) has the same health information provided by GPs in UK to patients during consultations.

[www.wrongdiagnosis.com](http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com) an independent, objective source of factual, mainstream health information for consumers and health professionals

[www.gpnotebook.co.uk](http://www.gpnotebook.co.uk) an online encyclopaedia of medicine provides an up-to-date reference resource for clinicians in the UK and internationally.

[www.netdoctor.co.uk](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk) similar to 'GP Notebook' above but language easier for non-doctors — big section on seniors' health.

[www.tinyurl.com/5kogxr](http://www.tinyurl.com/5kogxr) for vitriolic debunking of homeopathy.

### Useful computer tip

Really useful tip: hold down Ctrl and rotate the wheel on the top of your mouse to increase or decrease the document size on the computer screen. Works with Firefox, Opera, Microsoft Word and some other programs.

## Ladyes' leap lawe?

Just before this Leap Year 2008 ends, having had its extra day in February, heres's a look at its customs culled from an old volume, printed in 1606, entitled *Courtship, Love, and Matrimonie*. It was reprinted in a Welsh newspaper, *The Cambrian*, dated February 1, 1840:

'Albeit it is now become a part of the common lawe, in regard to social relations of life, that, as often as every bissextile year doth return, the ladyes have the sole privilege during the time it continueth, of making love unto the men, which they do either by wordes or lookes, as unto them, it seemeth proper; and moreover, no man will be entitled to the benefice of clergy who dothe refuse to accept the offers of a ladye, or who dothe in any wise treat her proposal with slight or contumely.'

*Edited by Geoff Adams*

Ph. 467 2278 Email [hgadams@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:hgadams@slingshot.co.nz)

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.