



## Subscriptions and course fees to rise: Board faces up to some 'tough decisions'

As your new board chairman I would like to briefly introduce myself. I joined U3A in 2005 and was elected onto the board the following year. For the last three years I have been programme co-ordinator, with a small sub-committee of four. In 2009 I became deputy chairman in anticipation of the step this year to chairman.

In my previous life, after graduating, I was a secondary school teacher, and then worked for 25 years in the Department of Economics at the University as a research assistant, retiring from there in 2003.

I welcome the three new members to the board: Jane Higham, Rosemary Hudson and Brian Robinson. I look forward to working with them and the remaining board members who have offered their services for another year. The courses that are being planned for you will offer a great variety of topics and we are confident that you will all find something to interest you.

At our first meeting, your board had to face some tough decisions – as you will all know, the Government has now drastically cut its budget for adult and community education in universities as well as high schools. From 2005 our U3A has been fortunate to receive support through the University's Continuing Education Board, and as a consequence of the tightening of its budget this support has had to be reduced for 2011. Therefore your board had to think hard about both the member's subscription to U3A and the course fees. It was decided to raise the subscription fee for 2011 to \$20 per person. We feel that this is still a reasonable amount to pay to belong to the organisation.

The other decision was that course fees should be increased to \$40 per course. This simply takes the fee back to what it had been up until 2005. The current \$30 fee does not cover the cost of each course – the morning and afternoon teas take most of it - which leaves little for expenses. The treasurer, Bill George, will give the background to the necessity for these increases in his article. [See page 3.]

By Sue Cathro

Chairman  
U3A Dunedin Board



To remain viable and to continue to make donations to departments who allow staff to give courses, to pay the venues that house us and to maintain and improve our equipment, an increase was necessary. We hope that these fees will remain unchanged for some time.

By the time you receive this newsletter, Christmas will be looming. On behalf of the board I send season's greetings to you all, and wish you all a Happy New Year.

## Progress on the Hector Map

Progress on the Hector Map project, sponsored by U3A Dunedin [April 2010 newsletter], was reported by the University of Otago Library in September. Materials have been ordered and received for necessary conservation of the 1500 x 1300mm map; acid-free board has also been purchased to make a storage box for the precious map of the geology of Otago province in 1864.

The map was photographed on the evening of 19 August and some rephotographing is required for necessary detail. (It is intended to provide a framed copy of the map for the Geology Department, honouring its historical association.) Investigations on printing a copy of the map are in train, special factors being the size of paper needed and choosing a printer using archival inks

Work is also under way to plan the online exhibition of the map and complementary material within the Hocken Collections is being identified. The potential of digitising James Hector's notebooks from field trips he made to compile this map is being explored.

The project to preserve this national, scientific icon seems well on track. We can be proud of our sponsorship.

## ★ administration

By Judith Gray

Secretary to the  
Board

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a membership renewal form for 2011. Completed renewal forms must be sent to **Rodgers Law** by **31 December 2010**, and the annual membership fee of **\$20.00 per member** should accompany your form. In line with U3A Dunedin Board policy, members who do not renew by the deadline may be removed from the mailing list and placed at the bottom of our ever-growing waiting list.

It should be noted that 53 members this year did not make use of their membership to apply for any courses, compared to 86 last year. We have a waiting list of over 80 people who wish to become members, some of whom have been waiting for almost 18 months.

Working within our capped membership of 500 has meant that when applying for courses not all members are accepted for their first choice but are successful in a second or third choice. This year only eight people missed out entirely. In seven cases the members concerned only provided one option and in the other the member applied late.

Series 3 saw the highest number of applicants ever: 342. Where courses have proved to be very popular and the number of unsuccessful members is high we will try to negotiate a "rerun" at a later date, but that is not always possible, especially for courses with multiple very busy presenters.

The first mail out for the 2011 year will probably be sent out about 21 January with the ballot taking place on 9 February. Courses are likely to begin in the first week of March.

## Wiser with age?

'As we grow old do we get wiser, and does it matter?' Aged 90, thriller-writer P.D. James, was recently questioned by *Oldie* magazine in Britain. She replied: "When you're young you believe there's some great mystery, some great central certainty, and that when you get old you'll have wisdom that will explain life. There's no great central truth.

If I believe there is anything profoundly true it is what Keats described as 'the holiness of the heart's affection' — love and the relationships between human beings. . . .'

James put her longevity down to 'genes and luck.' The writer adds: 'Growing old can be painful, the knowledge that powers are draining away. My short-term memory is dreadful, names disappear. And I was a great walker, now I don't walk more than 100 yards without sitting down. It doesn't make me angry. I am lucky to have lived so long.'

## ★ looking ahead

By John Burton

Programme  
Co-ordinator

The programme committee exists to assist the Board in ensuring that a full and balanced programme is made available to members. This is a far from easy job. Our relationship with the University of Otago means that we utilise the services of a large number of staff. Their time is very precious and we are always grateful to them for giving some of it to U3A. Sometimes this may be just a single lecture but at other times it is a complete course.

It must be pretty obvious to members that a great deal of work often goes into the preparation of the presentations and it is good to see that members acknowledge this in their evaluations. Adjectives like 'outstanding' and 'brilliant' are common.

There are, however, two acknowledged ways of running U3A organisations. Here at Dunedin we tend to follow the original French Model (started in 1972) offering a programme of lectures and making use of university facilities.

There is another model, known as the Cambridge model, which was initiated at the instigation of Professor Peter Laslett a few years later. This model is widely used throughout the world and we are probably the only U3A in New Zealand which has been able, thanks to the generosity of the University, to continue to follow the French Model.

The Cambridge model is much more about 'self-help' and 'assisting each other to learn'. Presentations tend to come from within the group rather than being provided by an outside expert or experts. With the tightening of finances within the Universities, we may well have to look more towards this model.

In the second series this year, the course 'The Victorian Age' organised by Judith Cowley, Jenny Laws and Graham Batts was described as 'somewhat experimental' as members were asked to contribute. Whether this was responsible for the lower than expected number of applicants is hard to assess. From all accounts it was a successful course with many of the members contributing and getting great pleasure from doing so. One person thanked the organisers for 'providing me with the opportunity to talk about a subject I love for the very first time.'

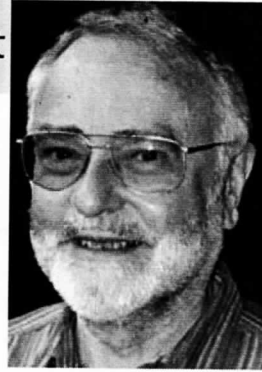
Some chose not to participate actively, and this was expected. What I found disconcerting, though, was a comment on an evaluation form that 'volunteers without public speaking experience should be eliminated'!

With the financial restrictions being put on the universities, U3A members may well have to adapt to courses in which they themselves play a more active part, just as many U3A members throughout NZ currently do.

Meanwhile I am pleased to report that a full and interesting programme has been arranged for the beginning of 2011; more later!

## ★ finance /equipment

By Bill George

*Treasurer to the Board*

First, wearing my equipment supervision hat, the ubiquitous Microsoft PowerPoint computer presentation is rapidly becoming the standard for our lectures. No longer are a few slides, and/or over-head projector 'illustrations' satisfactory.

We have, of course, the necessary equipment, and most presenters want to use the best methods. It has been noted by your board however, that not everyone has the knowledge or ability to program a presentation using PowerPoint, and asks if any of our members would be willing to give a helping hand when required, to assist in the task.

It would be helpful if we had several members willing, as this would spread the load. Please consider this request and email myself at [MargBill.George@xtra.co.nz](mailto:MargBill.George@xtra.co.nz) or secretary Judith ([graysinn@clear.net.nz](mailto:graysinn@clear.net.nz)).

On a more sober note (and we must always be sober at some stage), chairman Sue has noted [page 1] the fee increases decided at the last board meeting.

While the easy out is to blame 'the gummint', as usual, and economy measures are certainly a major factor, there are many influences. GST is not of itself a major increase, but increases in the costs of paper, postage (20%), and collation, are what has caused the increased membership fee.

Our course costs as Sue points out, need a boost if we are to further carry out our role as a charitable trust. Education and information dispersal is our basic role, and in this we receive an enormous amount of help from the University of Otago and its individual departments and staff members. We reciprocate as best we can. Your board always works to maintain costs at a minimum, and be as effective as possible.

After all, where else does one get 12-16 or so hours of quality lectures, plus of course, housing and delicious teas, for \$40.00?

May the holiday break refresh and recharge your neurons, we have a great year of courses for 2011 (and not *one* on Rugby).

## UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

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## King Arthur and Knights of the Round Table

Next January's University of Otago Summer School and Continuing Education programme includes a course on King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, as well as two short courses on Scottish genealogy and the Scottish clans.

The Arthurian Summer School will be directed by Dr Victoria Condie (an Otago honours graduate with a doctorate from Oxford). It will cover literature from the Middle Ages to Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, concluding with Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in the Court of King Arthur*.

Also covered will be relevant fiction by women writers and the way artists have imagined the world of King Arthur.

Those interested in connections between text and image in treating this famous story through various cultures should consider registering for this school, that runs from January 24 to 28 from 9am to 12.30 each morning.

The Scottish Summer School has two one-and-a-half day courses (genealogy January 25-26, and Scottish clans January 27-28). It's for those wanting to learn more about 'the big picture' of Scottish migration and their Scottish ancestry.

[For further information on the Summer Schools phone 479-9181.]

### Hint for the computer wiz

PDFmyURL' at <http://pdfmyurl.com> is an easy online tool that will quickly generate a PDF file from any Web page. Simply enter the URL (that's the address shown at the top) of any page and, usually within a few seconds, it will be converted to a PDF for download.

### U3A Conference at Singapore

The U3A international conference at Singapore is scheduled for August 8-9, 2011. See the website: <http://u3a-singaporeinternationalconference2011.org>

## Name game for Grans

**The New Grandparents' Name Book**, reported to be published recently in the US, gives some interesting options for seniors who would like to have alternatives to the plain old titles of Granny and Grandad. Some other monikers to ponder:

The superhero type of grandfather could become 'Granzilla.' For the ecologically-minded there's 'Greenpa,' and 'Granola' for a health enthusiast.

For a glamorous couple perhaps 'Glammy' and 'Grandbeau?'

The suggestion of 'FauxMa' and 'FauxPa' for step-grans is surely going a bit too far.

## 'Retarded' grandparents

After last Christmas, a teacher asked her young pupils how they spent their holiday away from school. One child wrote the following:

'We always used to spend the holidays with Grandma and Grandpa. They used to live in a lovely big two-storeyed house but they got retarded and they moved to a retirement village near Tauranga. Now they live in a box sort of house and have rocks painted green to look like grass. They ride around on their bicycles and wear name tags because they don't know who they are any more.

'They go to a building called a Wreck Centre, but they must have got it fixed because it is all OK now. They do exercises there, but they don't do them very well. Sometimes they sneak out to golf but their bits are getting stiff. Also they need operations to fix some of their parts. Especially poor old Grandma.

'There is a swimming pool too, but they all jump up and down in it with hats on.

'At their gate, there is a dolls' house with a little old man sitting in it. He watches all day so nobody can escape. Sometimes they sneak out, and go cruising in their golf carts.

'Nobody there cooks, they just eat out. And, they eat the same thing every night — early birds.

'Some of the people can't get out past the man in the dolls' house. The ones who do get out, bring food back to the Wrecked Centre for pot luck.

'My Grandma says that Grandpa worked all his life and so did she to earn their retardment and says I should work hard so I can be retarded someday too.

'When I earn my retardment, I want to be the man in the dolls' house. Then I will let people out, so they can visit their grandchildren.'

[Reported to a U3A source by a teacher.]

## Pertinent observations

Obituary in the *Tenby Observer* included: 'She smoked Players untipped to the end. On St David's Day her ashes are to be dropped from the Severn Bridge.'

A Vicar, aged 96, asked if he contemplated retirement, said: 'No, why would I? When I took this job on, no one said it was only temporary.' [U3A Online]

## Samuel Beckett and some books

There will be a small group course on the poetry, prose and plays of Samuel Beckett (1906-'89) in Series 1, 2011, to be given by Professor Chris Ackerley, of the English Department, University of Otago.

While a handout including the poems to be discussed will be provided, group members will need access to the texts of the play *Waiting for Godot* and the novel *Murphy*. It will take about four weeks for University Book Shop to get new copies of these works (price about \$28). Secondhand copies are available from [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) at cheaper prices. [AbeBooks *not* AbcBooks..]

Those who have attended Chris' courses in the past will know how enjoyable they always are, and we will be privileged to have him talk about Beckett, as he is an acknowledged authority on the writer.

## Parky 'too boring'

Michael Parkinson has been rejected from BBC1's hit genealogy series *Who Do You Think You Are?* because his family history was so 'boring,' the *Guardian* newspaper reported.

The former chat show host was approached to take part in the show, but told producers he thought his story was not interesting enough. The team did not believe him and undertook its own research, but six weeks later he was told he was right.

"I'm addicted to *Who Do You Think You Are?*," Parkinson told the *Radio Times*. "It's the fascination we all have for our roots, the intriguing story of our lives. Some are more interesting than others.

"I had known for some time that the story of my genealogy was unremarkable. On my father's side miners and farm labourers; on my mother's railwaymen and domestics. So when *Who Do You Think You Are?* called and asked if I was interested, I said I would be delighted, but warned that my own research had unearthed nothing of note. 'Oh, they all say that. But we always find something,' they said. Six weeks later they phoned to apologise. My story was so boring they had to cancel the entire project. I was gutted."

## Not moosical?

A Cheshire businessman received a letter from the Performing Rights Society for Music, in Britain, telling him he must by law have a music licence for playing music to staff and customers. This surprised him — he runs a farm for a rare breed of cattle. Although it has a shop and offers tours to see its Red Poll cows, he claims it's not a musical environment at all.

The cows are tranquil and would not appreciate being disturbed by any sort of music. The man whistles to them when he moves them to another field; his whistling is not musical either, he says.

*Edited by Geoff Adams*

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