



Great to be in Dunedin!

Kia ora koutou to all our U3A members, what a year it has been, but we are in the middle of September, and we are optimistic for our future, particularly as we choose to live in Dunedin.

U3A, once again, has delivered two Series this year and almost completed our third. We have over 500 members attending each Series, with such positive feedback from members about topic areas and presenters. In fact, I am hearing about the challenge of choosing which courses to attend as all have much to offer us, all are interesting and educational. I have noticed an increase in casual attendees which means you are reading the brochures and picking out topics of interest and coming along.

Our Interest Groups are thriving and those who attend these regularly your enjoyment is captured in the fantastic monthly newsletter.



Linda Kinniburgh

I wonder how many of you were lucky enough to attend the 2023 Film Festival?

One documentary, titled *Ms Information*, was about Siouxsie Wiles, Scientist. Our insider view on Siouxsie's world demonstrated the unkindness and vitriol of a few New Zealanders who chose to target her with hate mail. Like many of you, I was shocked at how angry the words were.

Siouxsie came to talk after the movie and one consequence of all the threatening letters and emails is that she needs a security guard with her now as she moves about in society.

Another documentary, *The Grab*, illustrated the political contests for food and water resources. A sobering movie, with world powers dominating those with resources, thinking they are there for the taking. Then you could watch *Beyond Utopia*, the struggle of North Korean people to move to South Korea. This film followed several families, on a journey both perilous and scary.

I use these examples of a different world view to reiterate how fortunate we are, and our ongoing gratitude to our government for our safety.

This leads me to the upcoming elections. Please vote, it is important and our democratic right to do so. Let us not take anything for granted.

Noho Ora, Kia ora (Stay safe and well)

Linda Kinniburgh
Chairperson,
Board U3A Dunedin
021 735 614

Programme Committee Report

It's Spring!

It's definitely Spring, the Blossoms and Magnolias are magnificent at the moment, with single digit temperatures hopefully left behind in August.

We are enjoying our last courses for the year with some really interesting subjects and some great speakers. All are hot topics leading up to the election. The 3 topics I'm attending are both entertaining and stimulating, I've heard very appreciative comments on all the courses from others.

Attendance figures have held steady around 80%, and our earlier good work and high vaccination rates seem to have kept most of us in good health over winter.

Series 1 for Autumn 2024 covers a range of topics including; The History of Transport, Paleontology, Housing Matters, Science meets Society, and Education. This Series will be confirmed at our meetings mid to late October.

Series 2 for Winter next year will also be progressed by the end of the year, with talks proposed on Music,

Art, Drugs, Education, and Water amongst others.

Members on the Programme Committee are working away developing courses for Series 3 from suggestions and ideas for this time next year.

I hope you are all feeling energised by not only the sunshine and warmth from the weather and also from gathering together in friendship and hearing stimulating ideas and discussions. We are extremely grateful for all the speakers, who give so generously of their time, knowledge and enthusiasm.



The lyrics of Tom Lehrer's song "Poisoning Pigeons in the Park" come to mind:

*Spring is here, spring is here.
Life is skittles and life is beer,
I think the loveliest time of the year,
Is the spring, don't you?*

Lehrer is a American musician, singer-songwriter, satirist, and mathematician; and my father played his records on our old gramophone so often in the 1950's the words are imprinted in my brain. like the grooves in the LP.

**Averil McLean,
Programme Committee**



U3A Email Directory

Sending email correspondence to U3A Dunedin? Using addresses below will take your messages to the person who can assist.

General information:

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Forum: newsletter@u3adunedin.org.nz

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Programme Committee

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Architecture

Butterflies can teach us!

Almost all buildings today are built using similar conventional technologies and manufacturing and construction processes. These processes use a lot of energy and produce huge carbon emissions.

This is hardly sustainable. Perhaps the only way to truly construct sustainable buildings is by connecting them with nature, not isolating them from it. This is where the field of bioarchitecture emerges. It draws on principles from nature to help solve technological questions and address global challenges.

There are so many aspects of nature we can draw on. Picture cities with shopping centres based on water lilies, stadiums resembling seashells, and lightweight bridges inspired by cells.

Water lilies can teach us how to design large buildings efficiently with smooth pedestrian circulation. Seashells can inspire the walls of large-span buildings without the need for columns. Cells can show us how to develop lightweight suspending structures.

Bioarchitecture works with nature, not against it! Bioarchitecture can reinvent the natural environment in the form of our built environment, to provide the ultimate and somehow obvious solutions for the threats Earth is facing.

Most industry-led and research-based approaches focus on the “technology to save us” from climate change. In contrast, bioarchitecture offers a more sustainable approach that aims to develop a positive relationship between buildings and nature.

Living organisms constantly communicate with the natural world. They move around their environment, employ chemical processes and undergo complex reactions, patterning their habitat. This means living systems constantly model and organise the environment around them. They are able to adapt and, in doing so, they change their environment too.

Can buildings do the same in cities? If buildings could grow, self-repair and adapt to climate, they might ultimately become truly sustainable.

Early examples of bioarchitecture can be found in traditional and early modern buildings. Their architects observed nature to copy its principles and design more habitable, locally made and environmentally friendly buildings. For example, Gaudi’s Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain, is inspired by natural shapes that give the church its organic form.

More recent works showcase bioarchitecture that learnt from nature coupled with technology and innovation. Examples include using bio-based materials such as wood, hemp and bamboo, applying biophilia through using greenery on external walls and plants indoors to boost our connection with nature, and restoring the environment by making buildings part of it.



Considering the climate emergency, we should strengthen buildings’ coherence with nature. Bioarchitecture can do this. So what can a butterfly teach us?

The blue Menelaus butterfly offers another striking example of design solutions from nature. Despite its radiant blue colour, it is not actually blue and does not have any pigments. Producing and maintaining pigments is expensive in nature, as it requires a lot of energy.

The Menelaus butterfly has an ingenious way to achieve its unique colour without pigments. Its brilliant blue shine comes from scattering light, similar to soap bubbles glimmering in rainbow colours under the sun, despite being completely transparent. The light is scattered by micro-grooves on the butterfly’s wings – so small that they can only be seen with an ultra-high-resolution microscope.

This is nature’s way to achieve high performance with cheap forms instead of costly materials. Learning from the Menelaus butterfly, we can have windows with climate-adaptable properties – changing their colour and scattering light according to the position of the sun...

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Feature Article

Aussieisms!

John Hale

From a recent visit to Australia I am reporting on some of their special ways with our language.

Longs and Shorts

At the filling station we were helped by two ladies who called each other Shirl and Darl. They looked and spoke like characters from Bluey. So you modify by shortening and by lengthening—or by a mixture. The centrepiece of a fish-and-chip meal was not a whiting but a whitlee. A chilly-bin was an Esky, from its brand-name Eskimo.

Names

Names especially attract these modifications. The house where we stayed belonged to a family named Hopkins. Visitors in their written tributes referred to Mr H as Hoppy or Hops, showing both tendencies. And names of places get the same treatment. I flew from Wellington to Brizzy. Then we drove down the coast to Cooly (Coolangatta.)

**Hinterland**

Like place-names, descriptors vary, in accordance with the different terrain. Any coast can have a hinterland, or “land behind,” but only in Australia have I seen road signs pointing you into one. Their hinterland is indeed a world apart, colossal and you feel it. Unlike the developed, touristic coastline the hinterland is smothered in trees, higher and higher up the Great Dividing Range. Lengthwise, too, north-south, it runs for thousands of miles, in fact continuing into Antarctica, from the time when Australia formed part of Gondwanaland.

**Creeks**

Creeks have a related difference. The many signs down the coastal highway identified which Creek we had reached. The creeks were many and wide river-like, but when we met the River Clarence it was enormous. This distinction of size between creek and river is at the other extreme from UK English, where a creek is just a rivulet, probably tidal. NZ’s creeks seem to occupy the middle of this scale. My favourite Australian creek was Unnamed Creek, proclaimed so on its sign. What’s in a name?

**Drive carefully**

Drive carefully in Australia, lest you incur “DOUBLE DEMERITS,” as motorway signs warn you. A more pleasing feature is the koala-crossing bridges: broad stone bridges with trees growing all over the top.

**Place-names**

Back to place-names. What a jumble as you drive along! Urunga-Sawtell-Bonville-Boambee-Toormina-Coffs Harbour... I prefer the aboriginal names, which sound so memorably different and mean something as perceived by first people. Boambi was the call they made when hunting wallabies. But its earlier name was Bongil Bongil, a place that you stayed a “long time, long time”. Double for plural or emphasis!

Fluidity

Or was it Bongo Bongo? There’s a lovely laxity in their English spellings, as if European ears just can’t get the music exactly, and know it. How could they? There are 250 languages and 800 dialects out there, similar to the number of the species of eucalypts—all over the enormous Hinterland. As Shakespeare put it, “I have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen these scraps.”

Feature Article - John Hale

The Greeks had a word for it!

It used to be a byword! “The Greeks had a word for it”: supposedly to conclude or win an argument. And though Greek is out of fashion, Greek words are still invoked for this purpose. And coined, not to mention parroted and misunderstood, or of course reinterpreted within the general flux of language evolving.

Medical

Doctors would be lost without their Greekish jargon, but it can hinder as well as advance understanding. If a medical voice tells you about your thyroid balance, listen with utmost care to the second syllable: are you *hypo*- or *hyper*-thyroid? Same with *hypo*- and *hyper*-thermia,

Outside

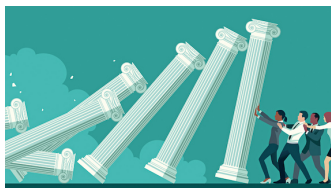
Outside medicine, beware of *hypocritical* and *hypercritical*. On a bad day, you could be both at once. (That reminds me of Groucho Marx’s maxim: “Outside of a dog a book is a man’s best friend. Inside of a dog it’s too dark to read.”)

Buzz-words

Where was I? Yes, inside a selection of Greek buzz-words. Avoid, please, synthetic: too hard to thay if you have a lithp. Critical means anything from alert to judicious to cap-tious to downright crabby. What’s the good of a word that must be made clear by more words?

In Election Season

Democratic in use often reminds me of Humpty Dumpty, who said, “Words mean what I want them to mean.” Even in ancient Athens, home of *democratia*, “rule of the people,” the legislative assembly excluded women, slaves, and resident aliens. Choose with care which “Democratic” Republics to visit.



Clerical Clergy Clerk

Words just don’t stay put. They change their coverage. My favourite is *kleros*, meaning originally, “lot” or “ballot.” Clerics and clerical were named from whatever *kleros* ordained them. Because around 1000 AD clergy as a group could read and write when most could not, clerical came to mean “doing the writing down” of transactions, and so to the names Clerk, Clark, and Clarke,

Conclusions

Read my favourite book on word-change (1960), *Studies in Words* by C. S. Lewis. Entertaining and profound and not in the least out-dated, on key words like “Sense,” or “Wit,” or “Nature.” Words reflect life, which embodies both changes and continuities. So do words.

Feature Article

Greenwashing...

Graham Corbett

Oh dear, greenwashing is an emotive expression isn’t it? Useful shorthand, but potentially upsetting. I apologise for any offence caused, but we do need to think about it because there’s a lot of it about and you may already be doing it by association.

I’m a church school boy, so I “KNOW” it’s wrong to keep doing the same “bad” old things whilst boasting of the “planet saving” actions I’m taking to “offset” them. Sin is just bad. Many organisations do that though.



Take a vacation abroad, “offset by planting trees,” they say! I’ve heard that air travel is responsible for 5% of all emissions. That’s huge! Most air travel isn’t essential. How good is it to promote tourism and then say you’ve offset it planting trees? Take a “staycation” instead. 5%!

Trees are good, but these aren’t saplings from the garden centre. They mean plants as big as your thumb. Next year they might be as big as two thumbs. That’s really slow carbon capture for ages. Imagine that you have a big bag and are holding it over the back of a jet engine to catch all the gases. Keep the brakes on, but gun the engine like for take-off. How big will your bag need to be after even only a minute or two? That’s really fast carbon burning right now. Way faster than your thumb sized tree can capture carbon and the plane does it for hours to get away from NZ.

Anyway, we’re talking about climate change here, but planting on “marginal” land. What if climate change makes that land useful for something more profitable? How long do you think your trees will get to stay there? Or, climate change could kill your trees on that marginal land instead, negating all your good intentions.

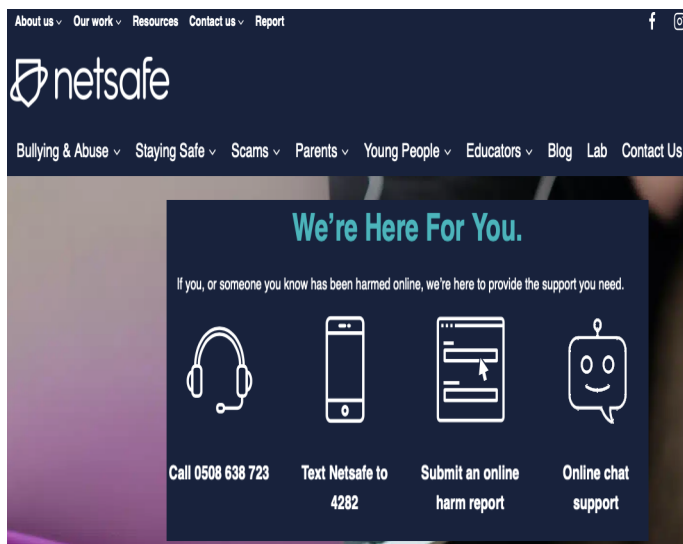
Obviously the solution isn’t as easy as just paying to plant trees. Most people want to help though, so we need to have a conversation about how. 5%!

Tech Edge

Netsafe

Alan Jackson

Following on from our recent discussion, I'm pleased to send you some initial resources for older people to share with the SeniorNet network, if you'd like to.



As part of Netsafety Week 2023 which ran from 24-30 July, [Netsafe](#) and Chorus were pleased to launch a [Scam and Fraud Prevention video presentation](#) created with seniors in mind, featuring NZ Anti-Fraud Award winner and Netsafe 'Scambassador' Bronwyn Groot and Netsafe's Chief Online Safety Officer Sean Lyons.

This is the first initiative as part of a partnership to create online safety resources for older people, so they can enjoy the benefits of technology while being confident and safe online.

Watch this video and share it with older friends and family members, for tips, advice and resources on how to avoid being scammed online.

You'll also find other helpful tools and resources on the same webpage, including a PDF version of the [Little Black Book of Scams](#) which is free to download, print and keep on hand for reference, and the [CheckNetsafe](#) tool, which tells you if a website or link is likely a scam or legitimate.

Top tips for older people - [Netsafe](#) – social media and online safety helpline!

Member's Notice

History of Medicine Course

Alan Jackson

Participants: Professor Doyle has suggested that U3A Dunedin members may like to have their name included for the circulars for the Alumni *History of Medicine and Science Lecture Series*.

As you see from the title, the lecture series is expanding beyond the boundaries of medicine and will extend beyond science also. If you are not already on that list and you would like detail of the monthly lectures at Otago, please write to him at terence.doyle43@gmail.com

Member's Notice

U3A Everywhere!

Ruth Houghton

Even if you're not feeling lonely – U3A is a very good idea! We're never alone!

From *The Guardian*, Mon 15 May 2023

Feeling lonely? Try a university challenge: Re loneliness (Editorial, 8 May), I would recommend U3A (University of the Third Age) to anyone no longer in work, whether they were lonely or not. I moved to a new area knowing no one locally. I was made welcome and quickly made friends. There are 1,035 branches of U3A across the UK and the average cost of membership is £20 a year. It provides a wide range of activities and opportunities to meet up for company and fun. (Janet Hawkins, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire)

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Feature Article

Food Supply

Supermarket customers around New Zealand are noticing gaps in the grocery aisles that have nothing to do with the global pandemic or Ukraine war. It's clear domestic food supply chains have been increasingly challenged by natural disasters and the ongoing impact of climate change.

Countdown [Woolworths] recently warned customers that certain foods would be in short supply due to flooding on the East Coast. Time and again, we have seen such shortages and significant increases in the price of certain foods, particularly fresh produce.



The question is whether we have just been unlucky, or are these disruptions a result of deeper issues in the New Zealand food system? Are we more vulnerable than other countries, and if so, what does this mean for our food security?

Over the decades, New Zealand has centralised its food system and increased the risk that a single regional event could reverberate nationally. But it's not too late to diversify and increase resilience across our food supply system. Modern food supply chains have largely been optimised for economic efficiency rather than resilience to supply-side shocks...

The outcome is a relatively small number of large-scale processing factories and the concentration of enterprises in specific regions.... Food is brought to just a handful of distribution centres before being dispersed across their networks of stores.

But disruptions in one region can affect the entire country!

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Quiz - General knowledge

1 According to William Shakespeare, all that glitters is not ... what?

- Diamond**
- Silver**
- Gold**

2 The oceanic pole of inaccessibility, also known as Point Nemo, is located in which body of water?

- The Pacific Ocean -- the Mariana Trench - the deepest oceanic trench on Earth.**
- The Sargasso Sea - in the Atlantic Ocean bounded by four currents forming a 'gyre'.**
- Pacific Ocean. The point in the world's oceans that's furthest from land.**

3 In the Beatrix Potter series, what type of animal is Mrs Tiggy-Winkle?

- A rabbit**
- A hedgehog**
- A squirrel**

4 Is an aircraft flying at Mach 1 travelling at

- The speed of light?**
- The speed of sound?**

5 In which way do the national flags of Japan, Palau and Bangladesh closely resemble each other?

- They all contain a circle in their design**
- They all feature red prominently**
- They all contain stripes**

6 Who is the Greek goddess of reason, wisdom and war?

- Hera**
- Aphrodite**
- Pallas Athena**

7 Which country is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty?

- China**
- India**
- Russia**

8 Swimming pools are a reoccurring motif in which British painter's work?

- Lucian Freud**
- David Hockney**
- Francis Bacon**

(Answers on p.8 below...)

Poetry pieces

Two poems

Alan Roddick

We're honoured to reprint two published poems by Alan -- each tellingly evocative. (The first here has one think of Ezra Pound's "but seems like a person just gone...")

On a Photograph

i.m. John Whitcombe

The mountains were so much part of you
their bright air about, unburdened
 quick white water
great peaks standing separate

even this simple frame must seem unfamiliar
now you are gone for good to your high-country
leaving us to live on within our frames

more easily at home there than you were
yet suddenly aware of them, with your going.

[From *The Eye Corrects*, 1967]



Equinox

Sleek sailboats
 fast
on their own
reflections

or whole gales
 still
seething in these
contorted trees –

heads, or tails?
 Look –
already
as you tread

the knurled edge
 between
harbour and hill,
it's turning. Call!

[From *Getting It Right*, 2016]

Science Slice

Floating Panels

Vast arrays of solar panels floating on calm seas near the Equator could provide effectively unlimited solar energy to densely populated countries.

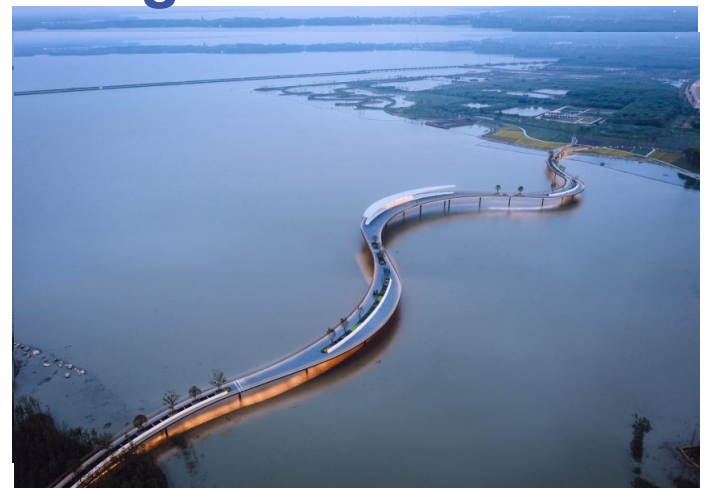


New research shows offshore solar in Indonesia alone could generate about 35,000 terawatt-hours (TWh) of solar energy a year, which is similar to current global electricity production (30,000TWh per year).

And while most of the world's oceans experience storms, some regions at the Equator are relatively still and peaceful.

[from [The Conversation](#) under license.]

Design Corner Bridges!



[A bridge](#) that incorporates spaces for play, rest and planting connects two areas of wetland across Shanghai's Yuandang Lake. A bridge, or a sea snake?

Quiz: 1c, 2c, 3b, 4b, 5a, 6c, 7b, 8b

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