



## September 2024 Newsletter

### From the President

A warm welcome to our new members. We trust you will enjoy good fellowship and be informed about interesting and varied topics by regularly attending our meetings. I recommend also joining one of our Interest Groups.

Last month I attended a meeting of the U3A Canterbury Network. This incorporated society has operated for several years, serving as a link between the 18 U3A groups in our region. In common with many voluntary organisations, the Network has struggled recently to attract people to take on leadership/admin positions. Consequently, the main agenda item for the meeting was a motion for the U3A Canterbury Network to disband, and this was passed unanimously. Then, a second motion was tabled for a less formal (non-incorporated) organisation, with less ambitious objectives, to be formed. This motion was also passed unanimously. Sufficient attendees at the meeting were willing to join a steering committee to plan how the U3A Network can go forward. I am pleased that the Network will continue because its main purpose for existing has been the sharing of speakers' details, making our job of identifying potential high-quality speakers for our future meetings much easier.

I am frequently surprised when I meet retired people who have not heard of U3A, whereas Probus is more widely known. We could promote ourselves more vigorously in local media, but this might stimulate expectations of immediate membership, which we cannot always meet. I became interested in the history of U3A, and carried out some internet research. The outcome, a short essay, is at the end of this newsletter.

### Our August speaker

**Barry Maister** – "Behind the Rings – an insider's view of the Olympic Movement"

We were treated to a very interesting presentation by Barry, covering the colourful history of the Olympics since its beginning in Greece in 776 BC. He explained the distinction between the Olympic Games (which are huge events for around two weeks every four years) and the Olympic Movement (a 24/7, all-year-round business). The income that International Olympic Committee receives from the Games is invested in sports development all over the world, particularly where the needs are greatest.

## Upcoming speakers

### Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September

**David Simmons**, Emeritus Professor, Department of Tourism, Sport and Society, Lincoln University – “Rethinking tourism”

David is arguably the leading tourism expert in New Zealand. His bio reads: “I work globally on tourism policy and planning and am a Fellow of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism. My research focuses on managing tourism at the destination area. It is informed by human geography, resource economics and the social sciences but increasingly adopts a multi or interdisciplinary epistemology. I examine broader questions of tourism governance and evolution and public participation in tourism planning. I also focus on economic and sustainable tourism ‘yields’ to direct positive outcomes at the local level. My work significantly informs the development and implementation of the New Zealand Tourism Strategy. With funding from the National Science Challenge, I am now working on two risk management projects for New Zealand tourism: social resilience building through the lens of transient populations (including tourists and sector employees) and longer-term risks around tourists such as biosecurity and bio-health disease vectors.”

### Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October

**Fiona Brooker**, Chief Memory Officer and Genealogist at Memories in Time – “The Magic of DNA”

Fiona writes: “My passion is to help people trace their family history and then to discover ways to share the stories and memories with their families. Based in New Zealand, I'm researching all over the world.

Memories in Time grew from my research, and helping other people with their research.

Now I'm lucky to be able to do what I love as my full-time career. A combination of researching, mentoring, DNA analysis, teaching family history and publishing which I love. There is nothing better than getting someone else addicted to the hunt for their ancestors.”

Fiona has appeared as a genealogy consultant on the recent series, “My Family Mystery”, on TV One

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## Your committee for 2023/24 is:

**President** – Errol Wood, **Vice-President** – John Prendergast, **Secretary** – Nancy Borrie,

**Treasurer** – Neal Borrie, **Interest Groups Coordinator** - Lyn Minchington

**Tea Team coordinator** – Warren Greenwood, **Membership Coordinator** – Dorothy Jordan

Our email address is [u3aellesmere@gmail.com](mailto:u3aellesmere@gmail.com)

# The History of U3A

## What is the “Third Age”?

The 'third age' is defined by a time in your life (not necessarily chronological) where you can undertake learning for its own sake. There is no minimum age, but there is a focus on people who are no longer in full-time employment, or raising a family.

## The first University of the Third Age

U3A started in France in 1973 by Professor Pierre Vellas at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Toulouse. In France, each University of the Third Age University group is mostly associated with a local university. This extramural “academic model” is now used in many other countries, in particular in continental Europe. Study groups are taught by working academics, so this U3A model is a type of “continuing education”.

## A different model of U3A

In 1981, in the UK Peter Laslett and Nick Coni discussed the success of U3A France and wondered whether a similar venture would work in Cambridge, England. To find out, a public meeting was held in the Guildhall in London in July, resulting in the formation of U3A in the UK. The “English Model” that they evolved, stresses that

***“those who teach shall also learn and those who learn shall also teach”.***

The U3A movement in the UK aims to encourage groups of people in their third age to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning in subjects of interest to them. From the start, the guiding principles were to promote lifelong learning through self-help interest groups covering a wide range of topics and activities, as chosen by their members.

The founders envisaged a collaborative approach with peers learning from each other. The U3A movement was to be self-funded, with members not working towards qualifications but learning purely for pleasure. There would be no distinction between the learners and the teachers – everyone could take a turn at being both if they wished.

## U3A arrives in Australasia

U3A began in Australia in 1984, and by 2023 had grown to around 300 U3A groups with approximately 100,000 members. These are based in metropolitan, regional, and rural areas. They follow the British self-help model of teaching and learning over a wide range of subject areas.

The U3A concept arrived in New Zealand in 1989, with the first local group launched at the University of Canterbury Department of Continuing Education. Soaring demand led to a second group, U3A Christchurch, starting in 1996. The idea proved very popular and soon more groups were formed. There are now 89 U3As throughout the country, all operating on the “English Model”. There are currently 18 U3As in Canterbury.

## U3A Ellesmere

Some U3As provide lecture series, which give an opportunity to explore topics in more detail. However, at U3A Ellesmere we mostly invite speakers for one-off presentations on a diverse range of topics in science, history, literature, art, music, environment, politics, travel, social issues, health, law, and finance. We also have interest groups which focus on specific areas of discussion in science, travel, gardening, books, movies, TED talks and current affairs.

The Law in New Zealand is that we cannot use "University" in our "U of the 3rd Age" title. "University" is reserved for the current university qualification institutions. It has been suggested that we should rebrand ourselves in NZ as; "Universally of the Third Age", or "Universe of the Third Age", or "United in the Third Age", or even "Uni of the Third Age"

There are now over 3000 groups spread over all continents (except Antarctica), and there is an International Association, AIUTA which holds an International Conference every three years. The U3A motto is "*It's never too late to live, laugh and learn.*"

Here is a link to a more comprehensive article on the international U3A movement:

<https://worldu3a.org/resources/u3a-worldwide.htm>