



OUR FIRST

TWENTY FIVE YEARS

1991 - 2016

U3A OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES — A NEW ZEALAND VERSION

Objectives:

1. To provide educational and interest activities for older people who are not in gainful employment.
2. To provide opportunities for retired people to meet, share experiences and pursue interests held in common.
3. To make those in their later years aware of their intellectual, cultural and aesthetic potential and of their value to themselves and to their society and to assail the dogma of intellectual decline with age.
4. To provide from amongst the retired the resources for the development and intensification of their intellectual, cultural and aesthetic lives, in this way helping them make effective and satisfying use of their freedom from work.
5. To create for these purposes an institution which is affordable, where there is no distinction between those who teach and those who learn and the activity is voluntary, freely offered by the members.

Principles:

Each U3A is independent and is free to arrange its own programme. However, there are certain basic principles. U3As in Britain, following Peter Laslett, adopted nineteen principles, not all of which are applicable to New Zealand. The Auckland Network has summarised and reduced these to five, which are as follows:

1. There is no distinction between teachers and those taught.
2. No qualifications are required to enter and no qualifications are given.
3. U3As are voluntary self-help organisations. There is a small annual subscription to cover running expenses, but no course fees are charged. The “teachers” [group facilitators] are normally U3A members and get no remuneration.
4. U3As use the great reservoir of knowledge, skills and experience which is to be found amongst older people and is often undervalued or overlooked.
5. Study group meetings are held during the day at a convenient place in the locality, often in private homes.

Origins of U3A

The University of the Third Age originated in France, where the first Université du Troisième Age (UTA) was formed by the University of Toulouse in 1972. The name refers to the concept of the First Age, childhood and education, followed by the Second Age, professional and family development and involvement, and then the Third Age, when the demands of the Second no longer define one's life and the person is enabled to pursue freely chosen interests. In the French model, committees of retired people negotiate with a university to provide facilities and expertise.

In 1982, Peter Laslett, recently retired as Reader in Social Structure at Cambridge University and one of the instigators of the Open University in the 1960s, turned his interests to practical means of bettering the life of the elderly. He considered the French UTA as a means of continued intellectual growth for the retired, but rejected its dependence on university staff and facilities. Retired people, he contended, have a wealth of abilities, knowledge, and experience and are quite capable of directing their own continued development. With Michael Young, a co-instigator of the Open University, and Eric Midwinter, Peter Laslett developed a model of a University of the Third Age based on eight Objects and nineteen Principles for U3A (for an abridged and modified version see the inside front cover). By the time of his death in 2001, U3A in Britain had 472 branches and more than 112,000 members.

The first U3A in New Zealand was formed in Remuera in 1989, inspired by returning travellers who had become acquainted with the movement in Britain and Australia. Dr John Stewart, the founding President of U3A Remuera, was instrumental in encouraging the formation of U3As in Takapuna and Epsom. An Auckland Network was formed in 1993, enabling U3As in the region to exchange ideas and encouraging the formation of additional U3As. At present there are 22 U3As in the Auckland region, and a total of 46 in the North Island. U3As in the Wellington area were initiated by Age Concern organisers and some follow a different model from most of the North Island U3As. U3As in Christchurch and Otago grew out of Continuing Education departments in universities and there are now 18 U3As in the South Island.

Dr David Cole of U3A Remuera has published two editions of *U3A in Auckland*, which give more details of the history and activities of U3A, including the results of surveys in 2003 and 2007 of the activities of Auckland region U3As.

U3A COMES TO TAKAPUNA

On an overseas trip in 1990, Sylvia (Roberts) Arcus, a member of a North Shore family of long standing, heard about U3A in a casual conversation, and was immediately intrigued by the idea of a group where older people could continue learning in a supportive group environment. On returning to New Zealand, Sylvia learned that a U3A had been formed in Remuera. Soon the Remuera group was contacted and representatives agreed to help with forming a group on the Shore.

John Stewart and several others came to a meeting in Takapuna on 5 June 1991 and explained the philosophy and operating principles of their U3A. The North Shore group agreed to adopt Peter Laslett's precept: "Those who teach also learn, and those who learn also teach." The learner-teachers would meet mostly in members' homes, studying mainly academic topics, but with considerable flexibility.

A steering committee was formed with Sylvia Arcus as President and June Castle, Secretary. In addition to Sylvia and June, the Committee, as listed in the March 1992 Newsletter, consisted of Ken Adams, Kyle Bamford, Peter Austwick, and the Convenors of the Study Groups. The inclusion of Study Group representatives was intended to facilitate communication between the groups and the committee, but numbers quickly became unwieldy. The committee took on the present structure, viz. President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and other members with defined responsibilities. At the July 1992 AGM, a Committee of four officers and seven other members was elected. Membership increased rapidly, rising to 92 in June 1992, less than a year after formation.

Foundation President Sylvia Arcus attributes the continuing success of U3A Takapuna to the autonomy of the groups, to the fact that from the earliest years both men and women have taken active roles, and to the practice of allowing anyone 'to have a go' at convening a group, rather than relying on finding people with formal qualifications.

STUDY GROUPS—THE LIFE AND SOUL OF U3A

From the beginning, study groups have been the foundation, the life and soul of U3A. At the first meeting with “missionaries from Remuera”, six to eight subjects were suggested, and six groups were formed, four of which are still active. In 1992 and 1993 the number of groups increased to nine; 1994 saw a further increase to 13. In 2011 there were 35 groups; in 2016, 34 groups. At one time there were over 40. Over the years there has been a total of 80 groups. Perhaps it is good to begin by tracing the convenors and the histories of the six foundation groups.



Original Ancient History Group. L-R Barbara Thesiger, Don Collin, Alan Gales, Eleanor Markwick, Jocelyn Dye, David Johnston, Matt Ramsden

Ancient History: Don Collin, the first convenor of this group moved to Christchurch in 2003. Don remembers “leading U3A personalities in the group”: David Johnston, Brian Clark, Frank Rickman, Robert Bann, and Peter Austwick. Frank Rickman led the group till 2010 and was succeeded by Stephen Warnes. In Nov 2014 the group disbanded following Frank’s death. Don Collin

attributed the interest in the group to “an appetite for knowledge about early civilisations [(not well served by schools); they laid the foundations for our civilisation].” It is hoped to resurrect this important group to complete the trilogy of Ancient, Medieval and Modern History.

Modern History: Colin Brightwell was the convenor for the first year, followed by Janet Wright, Colin Climie, June Castle, Graeme Leaming, Kyle Bamford, Roger Gill, Elaine Taylor, George Stevenson and John Willmott. This group became too large to meet in members’ homes and, to accommodate all, a room is now rented. For most years since 2000, the group has studied one topic for the first meeting in the month, and another for the second meeting, with a different leader for each. Graeme Leaming and June Castle, two Foundation members, are still active in this group.

English (Creative Writing and Poetry): Malcolm Sinclair led this group until he and Betty moved to Christchurch in 1996. He was succeeded by Holly Morton (1996-98). In 1998 she started a **Poetry** group which has continued to today with Val Overington. **Writers** started in 1996 led by John White (1996-2005). **English Literature** resumed in 2007 and became **Modern English Literature** led by Marjorie Warwick (2011-14) and is now led by Pearl Thomson and Carolyn Harvey. In 2016, we have also **Books to Read and Enjoy, Other People's Lives,** and **Shakespeare.**

Psychology: Jack Elmsley was the convenor for about two years, when the group went into recess. In 1994 Bernard Flowers, a psychology graduate, revived the group as **Psychology/Philosophy**, but it ceased to exist in 1997.

Languages: French was the first language group (1991) with Jim Moody as Convenor; Jim was followed in 2005 till today by Ann Andreassend. A **German** group soon formed, Cornelia Wadham (1992-98), then Ray Evins, and in 2009, Adrian Geers. In 2011 Peter Robinson became Convenor. Frank Rickman led a **Spanish** group from 2007 till 2014, when Pam Robinson took up the reins. It is now called **Spanish Culture.** **Italian Language and Culture** started in 1996 (Roger Brebner), recessed, and resumed with Alan Dabaliz from 2012-14.

Travel: David Johnston started this group in 1991, followed by Connie Courtney, Sandra Moody, Alex and Mary Wilkinson, and Jocelyn Spinley (1998 to the present). The group features talks and discussions about their intrepid journeys, as well as talks from people outside the group.

Judging by the number of different groups over the years, **History and Politics** has been the most popular topic area. Twenty-six groups have existed at one time or another. There are eight currently. Fraser Campbell has convened 15 study groups in medieval, renaissance, early modern European and NZ history over the period 1994-2016 (not all at the same time). For two years (1999-2001) he convened four groups simultaneously with unflagging energy and enthusiasm. Fraser's groups have differed from most others, in that a group usually completes a two-year syllabus and then disbands. Another topic and a new group starts, often with many members from the former one. Currently Fraser is in his 22nd consecutive year as a Convenor, with **Medieval to Renaissance Europe.**



History of Ideas, 2004. Mary McGreal, Annette Kibblewhite, Warwick Elley

The next largest category could be labelled **Arts and Literature**, which has included eighteen groups over the years. **Music** currently has four groups including **Classical Opera**, **Musical Appreciation** (1992-2016 is the longest running), **Musical Studies** and an instrumental group, **Musical Troubadours**. Patricia Campbell [**Musical Studies** (1998-16)] is the longest serving convenor in this category.

There have been (and still are) several **Interest Groups** from **Chess** through **Finance and Investment** to **Mah Jong**, **Petanque** and **Scrabble**. **Travel (foundation group)** and **Sunday Expeditions** have catered to an interest in visiting various places, as have Geology field trips, whether internationally or in New Zealand. **Current Affairs** luncheon groups have been very popular, and **Cabbages and Kings'** members speak of many things for five minutes each. Jim Hopkins led a photography group from 2000-07.

In the **Science** category we currently have **Astronomy**, **Geology**, (tutored by Tom Turnwald for 20years), **Globalisation**, and **Scientific Horizons**. Formerly we had **Anthropology (People of the Planet)**, **Computers**, **Natural History**, **Psychology** and **Technology**. A **History of Ideas** group, originated by Fraser Campbell and later led by Alick Kibblewhite, discussed ideas in a number of fields. Fraser convened a second **History of Ideas** group which morphed into **History of Political Theory**, then to **Political Themes and Scenes**.



Peter Kivell, Tom Turnwald, Geology Trip South Island 2010

U3A Takapuna has been fortunate to have a large number of people who have been willing and able to convene groups. Some have had university-level experience in the fields covered by their groups; many claim little or no expertise in the topic, but have put their energy and enthusiasm to good use to convene groups.

(For the most part, the following list was compiled by examining the first and midyear newsletters of each year. The Editor apologises for any errors.)

GROUP	CONVENOR(S)
Ancient History	Don Collin, 1991-2003; Frank Rickman, 2003-10; Stephen Warnes, 2011-14
Architecture	Gwen Bartley, 1999-2001; Ella and John Ikin, 2003-05; Judy Hanna, 2006-09; Diana Wallis, 2010-15; Judy Hanna 2015-
Asian Studies	David Johnston, 1996-2006; Georgie Maurice, 2007-09
Astronomy	John (JCB) White, 2014-
Auckland Heritage	Christine Ball, 2015-
Authors & Writers	John White, 2002-04; Maggie Brown, 2005-07; Nola McRae, 2008-09
Books to Read and Enjoy	Nan Keall, 1998-99; Leslie Christie, 2000-16
Cabbages & Kings	David Johnston, 2009—
Chess	Ian Sutherland, 2000-01; June Castle, 2002-03; Jan Jupp, 2004-12
Chinese Painting	Doreen Brown, 1998—
Classical Opera	Mary Skyring, 2009—
Classical Studies	Jocelyn Dye, 1995-97
Comparative Religion	Bernard Flower, 1992; Marcus Cohen, 1997; Jean Holm, 1998-2007; Stephen Warnes 2015-
Computers	Ken Adams, 1995
Creative Writing	Malcolm Sinclair, 1991-96; Holly Morton, 1996-97
Current Affairs: Stirrers	Fay Houlden, 1997-99; Vern Pribble, 2000-01; Edith Sharrock, 2002-, Jess Stanners 2011-14
Current Affairs: Opinionated People	Fay Houlden, 1997-99; Vern Pribble, 2000-01
Drama Appreciation	Rhys Johns, 1994-99; Marie Hay, 2000-03; Margaret Tranter, 2004-07
Early Modern Europe	Fraser Campbell. 1997-2001
Early Modern European Studies	Fraser Campbell, 1999-2001

Embroidery	Norah Turnwald, 1999—2014
English Literature, then Modern English Literature	Annette Kibblewhite, 2007-08; Jean Pugh 2007-08; Marjorie Warwick, 2009-14; Pearl Thomson & Carolyn Harvey 2014-
Famous & Infamous	Doreen Jones, 2001-2002; Alison Brown, 2004-2007, 2009; Helen Howley, 2008-12,Sue Charlton, 2013--
Film Appreciation	John Hall, 2005-2006; (No convenor identified for most of 2007); Mary Skyring, 2008-09; Muriel Leith, 2010-12; Sheila Young 2012-13; Naomi Grant & Diana Thompson 2013-
Finance & Investment	Ian Sutherland, 1998-2001; Murray Haslett, 2002-10; James Laird, 2011; Alec Waugh 2011--
Food History	Judy Hanna, 2012--
French	Jim Moody, 1991-2004; Ann Andreasson, 2005—
Gallery Visiting	Three groups in 1995-97, with several convenors
Geology	Tom Turnwald, 1992-2012; Boyd Miller 2013-
German	Cornelia Wadham, 1992-97; Ray Evins, 1998-2008; Adrian Geers, 2008-10; Peter Robinson, 2011--
Globalization	Roger Gill, 2004-14, Chris Ball, 2014-
Great Artists	Gwen Bartley, 1992-96; Diane Turner, 1997-2002; Val Kivell, 2003-07; Jennifer Knutsen, 2008-10, Lesley Smith, 2011-
Great Artists 2	Fay Bennett, 1995-2005; Gwen Bartley,1996-2001; Ann Outwin, 2002-03, 2008-09; Maryanne Dryfhout, 2004; Joy Gibson,2006-07
High Medieval Europe	Fraser Campbell, 2005-06
Historical Studies	June Allen, 2001-02; Andrew Pack, 2003—
History of Ideas	Fraser Campbell, 1999-01; Nelson Tolerton, 2002-03; Alick Kibblewhite, 2005—2015
History of Ideas Alpha	Fraser Campbell, 2002-03
History of Political Theory	Fraser Campbell, 2005-06
Horticulture/Garden	Dilys Gill, 2004-05; Heather McDonald, 2006-10
Human Behaviour	Patricia Milson, 1998-2000

Italian Language & Culture	Roger Brebner, 1996, Alan Dabaliz, 2012-14
Late Medieval & Early Renaissance Europe	Fraser Campbell, 2007-08
Local History	Val Shaw, 1993-95; Mac Williams, 1996; Max Farquharson, 1997-99, 2003; Val Rounthwaite, 2000-01; Brenda Knight, 2002
Mah Jong	David Johnston, 1997-
Making History	Georgie Maurice, 2010-
Medieval History	Fraser Campbell, 1994-2001, 2014-2016
Medieval History Alpha	Fraser Campbell, 1995-98
Medieval to Renaissance Europe	Fraser Campbell, 2016-
Medieval Life	Priscilla Lowry, 2009; Heather McDonald 2009-13
Modern History	Colin Brightwell, 1991; Janet Wright, 1992-93; Colin Climie, 1994-95; Roger Gill, 1995, 99; June Castle, 1996-97; Graeme Leaming, 1997-98; Kyle Bamford, 1999; Elaine Taylor, 2000; George Stevenson, 2001-03; John Willmott, 2004-
Music Appreciation	Phyl Wiltshire, 1992-93; Shirley Sadlier, 1994-95; Patricia Climie, 1996-97; Ross Famliton, 1998-2011, Jennifer Knutsen, 2011-
Musical Studies	Patricia Campbell, 1998-
Musical Troubadours	Betty Dance, 2001-15; John (JCB) White, 2016-
Natural History	Peter Austwick, 1997-2011
New Zealand History	Fraser Campbell, 2005-2006
NZ People & Places	Max Farquharson, 2004-2009
NZ Historical Geography	Fraser Campbell, 2007-2008
Other People's Lives	Betty Gilderdale, 2015-
People of the Planet	Fay Houlden, 2003-08; John Jarvis, 2009; Bob Baird, 2010-12
Petanque	Jim Moody-1995-2004; Helen Stoddart, 2005-06
Photography	Jim Hopkins, 2000-2007
Poetry	Holly Morton, 1998-2003

Poetry II	Shirley Sadlier,1999-01; Dilys Gill, 2001-05; Holly Morton, 2007-11,Pamela Warnes, 2012-14,Val Overington, 2014-
Political Themes and Scenes	Fraser Campbell, 2007-13
Psychology/Philosophy	Jack Elmsley,1991-92; Bernard Flower,1994-97
Renaissance Europe	Fraser Campbell, 2002-04
Saxons to Saxe-Coburg	Wally Cook, 2002-08
Scientific Horizons	Barton Evans, 2003-08; Graham Alcock,2009—15; John(JCB) White, 2016-
Scrabble	Sue Pearson, 2015-
Shakespeare	Andrew Pack, 2014-15; Graham Alcock, 2016-
Seventeenth Century Europe	Howard Pugh, 2005-06
Spanish	Frank Rickman,2007-14; Pam Robinson, 2015-
Stage Hands	Brian Clark, 1998-99; Frank Rickman, 2002-07; Sylvia Davies, 2008-09; Vern Pribble, 2009
Sunday Expeditions	John White & Doreen Brown, 1996-2000
Technology	Vic Hargis, 1996-98
Theatre Games	June Allen, 2003-04
Travel	David Johnston,1991; Connie Courtney,1992-93; Sandra Moody, 1994-96; Alec & Mary Wilkinson,1997; Jocelyn Spinley, 1999-
Tudor & Stuart Britain	Fraser Campbell, 2002-04
War & Warriors	June Castle, 2005-06
Writers Too	John White, 1996-2005
World War II	Ian Morris, 2015-

THE GENERAL MEETING

The monthly general meeting affords an opportunity to interact with members outside one's own group or groups and to be stimulated by speakers in a variety of fields. The General Meeting was held at the St George's Presbyterian Church Hall in Takapuna for the first year, moving to the Takapuna Methodist Church Hall in August 1992, then to the St John Ambulance Building on Shea Terrace in September 1993. By the beginning of 1994, the membership had increased to 126 and the lecture room in the St John Ambulance Building was no longer adequate. A working group led by David Johnston, Treasurer, recommended the Northcote Citizens' Hall, which has housed the General Meeting since that time. The membership eventually exceeded the 190 limit of that Hall, but, as the committee realised that it would be extremely unlikely that all the members would attend any one general meeting, the membership limit was raised to 320, and the hall has been adequate since that time. This venue has the advantage of having a stage, a piano, kitchen facilities, a lounge for morning tea, and ample parking, as well as a reasonable hire cost.

Morning tea is an important feature of any New Zealand gathering, and U3A Takapuna is no exception. Almost from the beginning, study groups have been rostered to organize morning tea. For several years Toni Coombes took overall responsibility for catering, but in recent years a member of the Committee has taken on that role.

From the beginning, the monthly meeting featured a main speaker, often a well-known person who was an authority in a particular field. The first recorded main speaker at a monthly meeting in September 1991 was Gordon Dryden, writer and broadcaster. Often speakers have been university staff members. Two who come quickly to mind are Professor Richard Faull, of Auckland University Medical School, an internationally respected researcher in neuroscience, who spoke on The Human Brain, and Dr Marilyn Waring, now of AUT, who spoke on New Zealand's aid programme in the Pacific. Other senior academics have informed us on areas as diverse as wireless power transfer, the management of chronic pain and Shakespeare's ideas of music

We have had a speaker who told us of his work with St John Ambulance, another who spoke about the planning and construction of the Orewa-Puhoi section of SH1,

former Governor-General Sir Anand Satyanand, Banking Ombudsman Nicola Sladden, former High Court Judge Dame Judith Potter, former Privacy Commissioner Bruce Slane, NZ's own playwright Roger Hall, the Director, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Admiral Roy Clare. Then, recently we had an expert on the migration paths of godwits between Alaska and NZ. Once or twice a year a member of our own U3A has been the main speaker. To mention only a few: Howard Pugh, Priscilla Lowry, Roger Gill, Norman Lodge, John Watt and Graham Alcock have given excellent talks; and Lionel Izod gave, on separate occasions, a fascinating presentation on the Bayeux Tapestry and a subtly witty account of his early life. For the February 2009 meeting, the programme featured three members as speakers: Alick Kibblewhite, Peter Jenkins and Charlene Cordes, who each spoke for about thirty minutes on aspects of Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln, both born on 12 February 1809.

Mini-speakers for the monthly meeting were introduced in 1992; Jack Elmsley was the first in September 1992, and the mini-speakers became a permanent feature of the meeting from March 1993 when Tom Turnwald, convenor of the Geology group, addressed the members. The tradition has been that the mini-speaker is a member of U3A Takapuna, who speaks for 20 to 30 minutes immediately before morning tea. Mini-speakers are often relatively new members, who thus become known to other members and more quickly become a part of the group. In addition, when long-time members speak, we may discover new facets of people whom we have known for some time.

Many talks benefit from visual aids and for years there was a struggle to make visuals available for the general meeting. An overhead projector was purchased and on several occasions there was talk of purchasing a slide projector, which did not occur. Instead, various members provided slide projectors of varying capabilities, but there were always problems with the projector, the screen, and the interaction between the two, not to mention the varying skills of the projector operators. As time passed and technology evolved, more and more speakers wanted to use PowerPoint presentations. Most were able to bring their own computers and projectors, but several could not. In 2006 President Howard Pugh successfully applied to the Lion Foundation for a grant to purchase a notebook computer and projector. Both were upgraded 2015/16. This equipment has added much to the talks at the general meeting. John C.B. White stores and usually operates these.

The first available committee minutes, for the 16 September 1991 meeting, record a complaint about the acoustics in St George's Presbyterian Church Hall, where meetings were held in the first year. The combination of poor acoustics in public venues and the acuity of elderly ears has been a persistent problem and a frequent topic of discussion at Committee meetings. Over the years audio equipment has been borrowed and purchased. For a number of years, Alan Gales operated the sound system, which evolved to include multiple microphones, including lapel microphones. After Alan retired from this responsibility Adrian Geers, Tom Turnwald, and Gary Dimmock continued with this work, with Barry Hartley as the current audio technician. When the sound system needed to be replaced, Norman Lodge as President in 2007 applied for another grant from the Lion Foundation, which allowed the purchase of a modern sound system.

Book sales were held before the General Meeting in June 1996, April 1997, April 2000, April 2001, and May 2003, organised by Maureen Thoms and her teams. Funds raised at the first two Book Sales were designated for the U3A Takapuna general fund, but the proceeds of the last three were donated to the North Shore Hospice, amounting to several hundred dollars each time. The 2003 sale raised over \$700 for the Hospice, helped greatly by a generous donation by Betty Coates of many of her books, plus a large number from the library of her late husband.

Although the book sale has not been held since 2003, the Bring-and-Take table at each of the General Meetings serves to recycle books and is always the centre of attraction as people gather prior to the meeting - sometimes to the displeasure of the President, who finds it hard to lure members back to their seats!

THE NEWSLETTER

The importance of a newsletter was realised early in the life of U3A Takapuna. The earliest newsletter in the files is dated September 1991. The August 1991 meeting was announced in a flyer aimed at prospective members, giving background information about U3A, listing the initial six study groups, announcing the subscription (\$35 single, \$60 double), and including a short membership application.

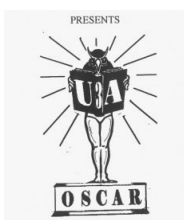
Early newsletters included a report on the previous meeting, speaker information for the upcoming meeting, news from the Committee, and news from the groups. The owl logo first appeared on the newsletter in April 1993. David Johnston had suggested a logo for our U3A; and Jocelyn Dye, who likes owls, designed one which was converted to a horned owl and became the official logo. The owl with its wise and intellectual connotations makes a fitting symbol for our group.

Apparently for the first few years the compilation of the newsletter was the work of the Secretary, although by 1995 June Mackley was listed as in charge for newsletter distribution, while Joan Austwick, Secretary, was collecting and compiling information. After Joan's time as Secretary, a separate role of Newsletter Editor was established. Joan developed a format for the newsletter which was followed by Robert Bann from June 1997 through 2002, with Malcolm Bailey filling in during July-December 1999 while Robert took a much-deserved break. The newsletter was published as A4 sheets until 1993, when David Johnston as Editor proposed a format of an A5 booklet to which the Committee gave its approval. David continued as Editor until May 2010, when Phyl McArtney assumed this role, handing over to Murray Pearson in 2014.

THE END OF YEAR FROLIC

Learning should always include times of fun and fantasy, and that need is certainly met in U3A Takapuna. A highlight of each year since the early 1990s has been the end-of-year frolic and lunch.

In December 1994, the Medieval History group (Fraser Campbell, convenor) presented a "Christmas Confection", featuring a pageant in appropriate costumes, with members of the Art, Music, Modern History, and Writers groups sharing Christmas reflections by the famous and yet-to-be famous. Food and light music added to U3A Takapuna's first Christmas celebration.



For 1995, there was an "Extravaganza", with a bring-a-plate lunch arranged by Group Leaders. This meeting was the first to be held on the 2nd Wednesday, to allow for the lunch, as another group had priority to the hall after noon on the first Wednesday.

For December 1996 Fraser and Frank Rickman organised “The Frankly-Fraser Show”, advertised as “a hodgepodge of shockingly under-rehearsed but zestfully spontaneous brilliance - a merry and unforgettable gallimaufry of five key ingredients (group items)”. This description bears evidence of Fraser’s inimitable exuberance! A shared luncheon followed. In 1997 the event was billed as a “Christmas Party”, with a catered lunch. In subsequent years the programme followed the same format. The December 2003 newsletter referred to the programme as the “Oscars” and featured a logo by Jocelyn Dye.



Maureen Pribble gives advice at 2002 Oscars

OSCARS is an acronym, for which various explanations have been offered. The one given in the 2004 December Newsletter is **O**utstandingly **S**electd Sketches, Sounds, Songs, **C**leverly Created/Compiled by **A**n Agile and Artistic Assembly and **R**umbustiously Rehearsed—**S**tar-Studded Seniors...Simply Superb. Whatever the derivation, the OSCARS were an admirable showcase for the talents and creativity of our witty and erudite members at their best.

The OSCARS were written, produced and performed entirely by members of U3A Takapuna. Imaginative costumes, attractive scenery, clever scripts, and lively songs gave pleasure both to those who produced them and those who provided what is essential for an excellent performance - an appreciative audience. Sixty-two people are listed as being involved in the 2006 OSCARS, some in multiple roles. This figure does not include those who

helped in serving food and wine for the lunch, setting up and decorating tables, and restoring order in the hall after the feasting was over.



David Johnston Pancake Day Long Bay 2016

Over the Years



Musical Troubadours 2015

John Willmott, piano; Mary Boyd & Jocelyn Spinley, Harps; Barbara Ellis, viola; Betty Dance, cello; John White, Flute; Dawn Manley & Helga Greenwell, recorders.



Geology Barbeque 2013

Back: Peter McArtney, Boyd Miller, Geoff Fry, Hilary Miller, Ross Miller, Tony Lewis;
Middle: Rachel Lewis, John Hanna, Pam Robinson, Phyl McArtney, Doreen Brown, Judy Hanna, Jenny Miller, Gillian Sutherland, Allan Sutherland, June Dixon, Ross Fry, Colin Dixon, Peter Robinson. *Seated:* Norah & Tom Turnwald.



Modern History 2010. *Back:* John Willmott, Bill Heppleston, Ken Pascoe, Garry Dimmock, James Laird, George Stevenson, Donald Cordes, Graeme Leaming, Arthur Minton, Max Farquharson. *Middle:* Hugh Coutts, Roger Gill, Frances Hansen, Judy Boros, John Watts, Chris Rimmer, Mary Bell, Annette Heppleston, Kyle Bamford. *Front:* Mary Mangan, Pamela Rengatch, Patricia Dare, Helen Ryburn, Betty Russell, June Mackley, Sheila Webb



Class of 1931 Lunch, 8 March 2011. *Standing L-R:* Muriel Leith, Diana Thompson, June Castle, Janet Beech, David Johnston, John Hanna, Peter McCartney, Jackie Hill, Val Elley, Merle Barnes, Warwick Elley, Betty Dance, Graeme Leaming, Jocelyn Dye, Ken Nathan, John Watts, George Stevenson. *Kneeling:* Val Kivell, *Sitting:* John White



New and prospective members at an Information Meeting April 2016



Astronomy 2014 Graham Adams, Czeslau Darczak, Shirley Howe, Peter McCartney, Dawn Manley, Graham Alcock, John White, Phil Silver, Pauline Silver, Stuart Kendon



Warwick Elley delivers a poem
Xmas 2015



Fraser reviews history, under the
watchful eye of St. Jerome



NOTSCARS 2010: Catastrophe by Chinese Painting Group.
Doreen Brown, Convener (Front Right)

In 1998 David Johnston recognised that groups organising skits could use help with scenery, props, lighting and sound. Accordingly, a group called the **Stagehands** was formed to assist study groups in producing a few minutes of entertaining devilment. As groups became less involved, more of the production of the OSCARs devolved on the Stagehands, who, as they became older and fewer, found they could not continue. Since 2010, a well-received simpler entertainment, the NOTSCARS, has been developed for the end-of-year function.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE FEAST

In February 1995 a barbecue at Long Bay coincided with Shrove Tuesday and members were advised that “In deference to the day, you may wish to bring a frying pan and make your own pancake.” In 1996 the “Shrove Tuesday Pancake Picnic” was held at the Vaughan Homestead at Long Bay, pancake mix and hot water supplied. In 1997, a barbecue was held on Wednesday 26th February, with no mention of pancakes. Perhaps because it wasn’t Tuesday! In February 1999, a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party was held at the home of David Johnston and Jocelyn Dye. This new venue was a great success and David and Jocelyn continued to host until 2014. 2015 was a gap year and on Shrove Tuesday, 9 February 2016, the Pancake Day tradition was revived at Long Bay Reserve.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER U3As

Although the autonomy of each U3A has been vigorously preserved, U3As often cooperate locally, nationally and internationally. An example previously mentioned is the role of U3A Remuera in the founding of U3A Takapuna, as well as several other U3As in the Auckland region. In turn, U3A Takapuna played a significant role in the founding of U3As in Orewa (Hibiscus Coast, 1995), Birkenhead (1997), Devonport (1997), and Browns Bay (2000). At least in the case of Hibiscus Coast, U3A Takapuna advanced some funding as a loan.

The Auckland Network Committee was established in 1993, with the aim of facilitating the exchange of ideas among the U3As in the greater Auckland area.

Representatives from each U3A in the region meet at least twice a year to exchange ideas and to discuss common problems.

In Takapuna, the network representative, usually being the President or another Committee member, has always worked closely with the local Committee. In 1999 the network organised a very successful international conference titled “Towards the 21st Century”, to celebrate the first decade of U3A in New Zealand. Additional international conferences have been held in New Zealand, one in Tauranga in 2002 and another in Christchurch in 2007. Individual members from Takapuna have attended all of these conferences, as well as most of the conferences held in Australia. In 2011 two members, Wensley Wilcox and Mary Skyring, attended a conference held in India, organised by the Asia Pacific U3A Conference.

In August 2001 U3A Takapuna, with encouragement and financial underwriting from the Network, held a one-day conference titled “A U3A Gathering”, at Netball North Harbour for U3As throughout the Auckland region. Donald Cordes, at that time Takapuna’s Network representative, organised the Conference, which was planned during the presidency of Patricia Campbell and ultimately chaired by John Willmott, the newly elected President of U3A Takapuna. A notable feature of the conference was a display of posters from many of the regional U3As. This was coordinated by Fraser Campbell with his usual enthusiasm and gift for organisation. These posters, highlighting the studies undertaken by the regional groups, were displayed in the

room where the opening morning tea was served. Viewing and discussing the posters provided a positive beginning to the day and encouraged people from different U3As to talk with one another. Another highlight was the award-winning Westlake Girls High School Choir, who performed at the catered luncheon. The keynote speaker was Dr Brian



Garden Group at Eden Garden, 2009

Findsen, at that time a staff member at AUT, who spoke on education and the older adult.

The result of this gathering was financially successful with U3A Takapuna donating part of the proceeds to the Network.

Another example of inter-U3A cooperation was the establishment of **inter-U3A study groups**. Especially in the early years of a U3A, small membership numbers can make it difficult to find enough members interested in a topic to form a viable group, while a neighbouring U3A has a group studying a similar topic with room for additional members. After a meeting of presidents of U3As in Birkenhead, Browns Bay, Devonport and Takapuna, President Fraser Campbell proposed a category of Inter-U3A Groups, which was approved by the Committee in September 2004. At present there are four such groups. For a U3A Takapuna group to be designated an Inter-U3A group there must be vacancies in the group and non-Takapuna members joining the group must be financial members of another U3A, for example, Browns Bay. The establishment of Inter-U3A groups among the North Shore U3As has enhanced the study opportunities for all U3A members.

OUR PEOPLE

Harry Truman, President of the United States in the 1940s and early 1950s, said of his office, "The buck stops here." That is true for the presidency of any organisation. When things go well, others often get the credit, but when things go badly, the President must shoulder the responsibility of putting matters right. In addition to the important behind the scenes role, the President has the responsibility for an interesting and smooth-running monthly meeting. U3A Takapuna has been fortunate in the quality of the men and women who have been willing to take on this role.



Sylvia Arcus, 1991-1993. Foundation President. Sylvia was born in Takapuna, a member of the well-known Roberts family, and trained as a school dental nurse. During the 1980s she enjoyed time overseas, working at casual jobs and expanding her knowledge of the world. After the death of her husband, Sylvia, ever creative and innovative, played a central role in the founding of U3A

Takapuna. In addition, Sylvia taught music, established a baby-sitting business with a neighbour, and helped set up the Stroke Club in Takapuna. Sylvia is known for her enthusiasm, kindness and individuality. The Takapuna community is indebted to Sylvia for her many contributions to its life.



Ken Adams, 1993-1995. Holly Morton said of him in the newsletter after his death in 1999: “He was an exceptionally gifted man, in professional life working at the leading edge of science and technology, including astronomy. He applied his expertise with similar enthusiasm in retirement to the benefit of many organisations, including U3A. While President of U3A Takapuna he

was largely responsible for the intellectual and organisational vision which we still draw upon today. He then initiated U3A Birkenhead, and was President there until his death.” Another foundation member spoke of a brilliant impromptu lecture on astronomy which he gave when the General Meeting speaker failed to appear.



Betty Sinclair, 1995-1996. Betty and her late husband Malcolm were both Foundation Members of U3A Takapuna. She says that being a foundation member of U3A Takapuna and part of its organic growth, gave strength and stimulation both to their marriage and to their senior years. Writing, poetry, art and music were studied with energy and with love; new companions stretched their horizons.

Malcolm convened the foundation Creative Writing group until the couple moved to Christchurch in 1996, where they remained active in U3A. A significant event of Betty’s presidency was her interview with Peter Laslett, who gave vision to the U3A concept in the UK.



Colin Climie, 1996-97. Colin was educated at Wellington College and Otago University Medical School. After a period in general practice from 1951, he says that he “decided people were more interesting when asleep so studied anaesthesia in London in 1956”. He was lured to Sydney in 1963 as Director of Anaesthesia, Royal Hospital for Women. Retiring to Auckland in 1984, he built a house overlooking the Gulf in Browns Bay and joined U3A Takapuna. In

1999 he and Patricia moved to Hobart to be closer to their family. He keeps busy helping out with grandchildren and protecting their garden plot from roaming wallabies.



Holly Morton, 1997-1999. After growing up in England through depression and war, Holly moved to New Zealand, armed with an M.A. in Geography. Becoming a teacher at Whangarei Girls' High School, she began with an assignment on the traditional Maori way of life, learning quite a bit from her class of mostly Maori girls. Later she came to Auckland and married, teaching at Westlake. In retirement she has done voluntary work, especially with U3A Takapuna. Holly's main interests have been Poetry and Anthropology. She says, "It is wonderful to see U3A Takapuna growing from strength to strength. We are so lucky".



Patricia Campbell, 1999-2001. Patricia began her teaching career as Head of Music at Papakura High School and concluded her professional career as Head of Music at Hamilton Girls' High School. Her encouragement of enthusiasm for (good) music among the young evolved to sharing that enthusiasm with the more mature in U3A through convening Musical Studies. A much-enjoyed feature of her Presidency was "short bursts" of musical studies in the General Meeting. Patricia was President during the 10th anniversary celebration and during the preparation for the U3A Gathering in 2001. She quotes Alan MacDiarmid, Nobel Prize winner, "While you are learning, you are living. Once you stop learning, you are dying".



John Willmott, 2001-2003. John was born, educated and spent nearly all his life in Auckland. His professional career was as a teacher and principal, mainly in intermediate schools around greater Auckland except for two years in the UK. His personal interests have focussed around music, especially choirs. John has sung and directed in many choirs, including his still continuing directorship of the North Shore Male Choir for the past 24 years. He has been a church organist for over 40 years. John says he has served U3A Takapuna as "Committee, President, Convenor Modern History, Oscar victim...also pianist for Troubadours Orchestral group".



Fraser Campbell, 2003-2005. Fraser's formal education in the South Island (Canterbury) was followed by a secondary teaching career which included 23 years of headmastering. He thoroughly enjoyed his teaching career which he continued in the less formal, but highly stimulating setting of U3A Takapuna. Fraser convened sixteen different study groups, which were always fully subscribed, over 16 years. A feature of his Presidency was the establishment of Inter-U3A groups, enabling nearby U3As to share resources. His emphasis as President was on ambience: cheerful learning, hearty involvement, with out-of-routine experiences providing splashes of colour. Fraser says, "KEEP LEARNING: KEEP LIVING!"



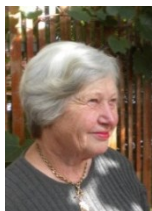
Howard Pugh, 2005-2007. Howard grew up in England through the depression and war years but having lived three-quarters of his life here sees himself as very much a New Zealander. After qualifying B.Com., A.C.A. Howard held various corporate financial and administrative roles including CEO of a supermarket chain and Managing Director of engineering companies in New Zealand and Fiji.

His accounts of his voluntary work in retirement as Field Treasurer of a Mission in Nigeria will be remembered by many, while his interests in architecture and travel have resulted in several talks to our General Meeting. Howard now serves as Treasurer of U3A Takapuna.



Norman Lodge, 2007-2009. Norman was born in Liverpool and has Masters' degrees in both Chemistry and in Food Science. For 20 years he was involved in international aid development, undertaking projects in the food sector in the South Pacific and throughout Asia. He was based in Singapore for 6 years. In 2000 he established his own consulting company and at present is a contract lecturer in Food

Science at the University of Auckland. For services to New Zealand he holds the 1990 Queen's Commemoration Medal. His term as President was influenced by the changing times and the use of computer aids for presentations, something that Norman actively encouraged.



Judy Hanna, 2010-2011. Judy was educated at Wellington Girls' College and then qualified as a pharmacist after an apprenticeship at Wellington Hospital. A career was fitted in around marriage to John (and 4 sons) and floral art. Part-time regular positions in community pharmacies and locum work, often in emergency situations, kept knowledge current. Contracts as Trainer of Junior Staff for Pharmacy

Guild Auckland and then area Liaison Pharmacist for Pharmaceutical Society of NZ added variety. As a member of Geology Group and Architecture Group, Judy enjoys the opportunity to expand her life-long interest in these diverse areas, which also increases the pleasures of travelling. May all U3A Takapuna members benefit similarly.



Ken Pascoe 2012 – 2013. Ken was born in Auckland, and has spent most of his life here. He was educated at Auckland Grammar School, and decided to follow a family tradition by entering the teaching profession, returning to Auckland Grammar as a teacher for ten years. This was followed by a shorter time at Dargaville High School and a move to the newly founded Orewa College, where he was Principal for sixteen years, thoroughly enjoying most aspects of the profession. During retirement, he spent some time

teaching English as a Second Language at several North Shore language schools. He has been involved with the Modern History Group and hopes to widen his interests. "U3A is a wonderful organisation filled with wonderful and interesting people. Let us all keep trying to make it even better."



Tony Lewis, 2013-15. Tony was born in Taumarunui, remote from the sea, but contrived to spend over 37 years in naval service (RNZN), retiring in 1992 in the rank of Commodore. He has a BCA degree from Victoria University. After naval service he spent five years as a member of the Residence (Immigration) Appeal Authority and six years as a member of the Takapuna Community Board, including two years as Chairman. "In my term emphasis

was given to membership renewal, the re-institution of *New members' introductory seminars* and *Convenor convocations*, on a regular basis. I believe it is noteworthy that, after 25 years, seven Foundation Members are still active. We are attracting a steady influx of new members. The future looks bright for our learning society of around 270 members and 34 study groups."



Graham Alcock 2015- Graham emigrated to New Zealand in 2005, with an Auckland-born wife; after life in the UK as an Physical Oceanographer, researching sea level changes (yes, it is rising and yes, it is due to global warming). Graham joined U3A Takapuna in 2007 and has been a member of the Astronomy and Modern History Groups and Convenor of the Scientific Horizons and Shakespeare Groups. Apart from the U3A, much of his time is spent tutoring Year 10 to Year 13 students in Maths and Sciences; thus continuing his part-time teaching career that started in 1979 with the UK's Open University. He enjoys supporting both England and New Zealand in sports, which usually gives him two chances of winning.

The success of U3A Takapuna has come from many people not specifically mentioned above. Many of their roles could be described as housekeeping, which, as every woman knows, is never noticed unless it is not done! Our “housekeepers” can attribute the fact that their work is not noticed to the faithfulness with which they do it. I think of those who are responsible for opening and setting up the hall every month, for making sure that the morning tea service goes smoothly, for managing the funds efficiently, for keeping records of Committee meetings, and many others. Although space does not permit mentioning them by name, much is owed to them!

Much also is owed to those who had the foresight and energy to build our U3A in the early years. In 2011 the men and women listed below were recognised as

Foundation Members:

Ken Adams	Jocelyn Dye	Sandra Moody
Sylvia Arcus	Alan Gales	Holly Morton
Joan Austwick	Faye Houlden	June Radcliffe Gales
Peter Austwick	David Johnston	Betty Sinclair
Kyle Bamford	Nan Keall	Malcolm Sinclair
Colin Brightwell	Peter Kivell	Dawn Thomas
June Castle	Helen Laird	Tom Turnwald
Don Collin	Graeme Leaming	Mac Williams
Toni Coombes	Sarah Metge	Janet Wright
Connie Courtney	Jim Moody	

A select few members have been recognised for their outstanding service to U3A Takapuna by being designated as **Life Members**:

Ken Adams	Alan Gales	Howard Pugh
Sylvia Arcus	Yvonne Hamilton	Holly Morton
Fraser Campbell	John Hanna	Betty Sinclair
Patricia Campbell	Judy Hanna	Maureen Thoms
June Castle	David Johnston	John Willmott
Colin Climie	Sarah Metge	

The Present President, Graham Alcock, writes:

I taught for the UK's The Open University for nearly 40 years and the fact that it and the UK's U3A had common founders (Michael Young and Peter Laslett) was a pleasant surprise! (Serendipity: luck that takes the form of finding pleasant things that are not looked for.)

In the 20th Anniversary Booklet, the then President Judy Hanna, reflected on our "Past, Present and Future"; outlining the origins of U3A Takapuna and its development from the original French Université du Troisième Age, founded in 1972. To quote John Stewart, Founder President of U3A Remuera (the first NZ Branch): "The idea of U3A was born in France, became respectable in Britain, was refined and tried out in Australia, and prospered in NZ".

The U3A in general and U3A Takapuna in particular have come a long way since then; but Peter Laslett's guiding precept that: "Those who teach also learn, and those who learn also teach" is still firmly at the heart of our organisation. Indeed, my Grand Tour of our Study and Interest Groups (started in September 2015 but not yet finished) has made me realise what great talents we have amongst us; whether it be as a talker or a listener/contributor.

I wonder what the next 25 years will bring? By 2041, most of us will be, as Jaques says in "As You Like It": "Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything"; but I'm sure that our present band of brothers and sisters will have bequeathed a vibrant organisation to the next generation of U3A Takapuna members.

ABOUT THE HISTORY

As the 20th Anniversary of U3A Takapuna approached, I felt very strongly that someone should write a history of this organisation which has meant so much in the lives of retired people living on the North Shore. Presumptuously perhaps, I volunteered to undertake this project and the Committee accepted my offer.

In compiling this history, I wanted to give an overall view of U3A Takapuna as an organisation, answering questions such as how and when was it formed, who were the prime movers in its formation, and how has its mode of operation evolved. I have relied heavily on the archives held by the Secretary, which are remarkably complete, containing nearly all the monthly newsletters, minutes of Committee meetings, and President's annual reports, as well as some correspondence and other documents. Graeme Leaming had written a short history which he delivered at the 10th Anniversary function, and I am grateful to him for sharing it with me and for his comments. Other long-time members have been very helpful in answering questions as they arose. Brian Clark has kept a photographic archive, which he kindly lent to me. Many of the photos used in this publication were scanned from his archive. Don Collin, a foundation member who now lives in Christchurch, was very helpful with information and some photos from the early days.

I am very grateful to Helen Sturm, a new member of U3A Takapuna, and Margaret McLaren, at present our Secretary, who read the complete manuscript. Both Helen and Margaret are experienced professional writers and editors, who made very helpful corrections and suggestions. Any remaining errors or omissions, of course, are my responsibility. Some of our members will take great pleasure in finding them!

With gratitude for what U3A has meant to Don and me,

Charlene Cordes,
May 2011

In 2016, Charlene accepted the task of compiling a new edition of our history to mark the Silver Jubilee. We are indebted to her for making the time for U3A Takapuna in the midst of selling her home and returning to Virginia, USA. We wish Charlene every happiness and will miss her talents. Our sincere thanks for the contributions Charlene and the late Don Cordes have made to U3A Takapuna.

ABOUT OUR NAME

Overseas, our organisation is usually known as the University of the Third Age. However, in New Zealand, the use of the term University is restricted by legislation to those institutions so designated by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Although U3As meet the original understanding of a University as a community of scholars and teachers, in deference to the law, New Zealand U3As do not use the term “University” in their materials or publicity.

OUR COMMITTEE 2015 – 2016

President: Graham Alcock

Immediate Past President: Tony Lewis

Secretary: Liz Milne

Treasurer: Hilary Miller

Committee:

Stuart Kendon

Frances Hansen

Ian Stephenson

Helen Ritson

Bob Baird

Michael Moynihan

Elizabeth Lind-Mitchell

SILVER JUBILEE SUB-COMMITTEE

Judy Hanna (Chair)

Tony Lewis

Norman Lodge

John Willmott



U3A Takapuna Committee 2016

From left to right: Frances Hansen, Helen Ritson, Elizabeth Lind-Mitchell, Bob Baird, Stuart Kendon, Graham Alcock, Ian Stephenson, Tony Lewis, Hilary Miller
Absent: Liz Milne, Michael Moynihan

The History of Takapuna U3A in verse follows, composed by our talented poet Warwick Elley in celebration of the Silver Jubilee.

In June of 1991

Our U3A branch was begun

We sprang to life in Takapuna

A pity it wasn't started sooner.

Today I'd like to eulogize

Those gallant enterprising guys

Who boldly launched our U3A.

Forgive my odd eccentric way.

It took a special woman to spark us

We give full praise to Sylvia Arcus.

While overseas she chanced to hear

Of Peter Laslett's great idea.

Those who were no longer earning

Could fill their days in useful learning

And all that knowledge they'd acquired

Could now be shared with the retired

Peter suggested ways to meet

And sit at one another's' feet.

They'd meet in groups and take their turn

So learners teach and teachers learn.

Then Sylvia brought the concept here

And very soon got into gear.

She called some fans to meet together.

To re-start North Shore's "Golden Weather"

To guide us in our brave new era

We had advice from Remuera

And Sylvia formed a Steering Committee

Consisting of the wise and witty.

These megastars are legendary

There's dear June Castle, secretary.

Ken Adams was a prominent name

And Peter Austwick of fungus fame.

There's David Johnson and Jocelyn Dye

We couldn't possibly pass them by.

With ten more in that first small band

Good folk who've helped our branch expand.

Now after 25 great years

We celebrate those pioneers

First President Sylvia, inaugural leader,

And other presidents who did succeed her

Some are immortal, and active too

Like Fraser Campbell, History guru

Ex-President Trish, still going strong

With Bach and Brahms and old-time song.

With entertainer John Willmott

This pair will never be forgotten.

Holly Morton was one of the best

She filled the role with grace and zest

AN ANNIVERSARY VERSIFICATION

Warwick Elley

*And multi-tasker David Johnston,
As Convenor, Editor, Actor, Stage Hand, Mah Jong expert, and then some...
He started those great "Pancake Days"
And "Class of 31" Birthdays.*

*Another name we honour too,
Is President/Treasurer Howard Pugh
He often went the extra mile
And Norman Lodge, we loved his style.*

*What contributions these heroes made!
And most now in their ninth decade.
They still are generous with their time
Performing just as in their prime.*

*In 1900, the average life span,
Was only 40. Was this God's plan?
The bible says three score and ten
Before we say our last Amen.*

*Back then, whoever made predictions
Would laugh, as crazy science fictions
A life expectancy of 80 years?
Not even in their wildest prayers.*

*Well, here we've shown how it is done,
A rich old age for anyone
That follows our great recipe
T'll boost your brain and energy.*

*When work stopped and they just discharged yuh
And promptly put you out to pasture,
"Your time has come, you've done your best
Relax, enjoy a well-earned rest."*

*But that advice could not be worse
Today we say it's quite perverse.
Neurologists are now agreed
To stop our brains from going to seed*

*We need some kind of stimulation
To guarantee new cell formation.
And that's what study groups provide
They keep those new cells occupied*

*In each small group we take our turn
We socialise, we teach and learn
We even think beyond the square
We get connected, stay aware*

*So we believe that U3A
Has hit upon the ideal way
To help you reach the hundred mark
And keep alive the needed spark.*

*To make your last years more fulfilling
And earn best wishes from King William,
Get out and join another class
And all of this will come to pass.*

