



U3A MEADOWBANK
2000-2010

U3A

Meadowbank

2000 - 2010

History of the U3A movement as a whole/internationally.

The U3A (University of the Third Age) movement began in France in the mid-nineteen seventies. In 1968, legislation requiring universities to provide more community education had been passed, and a gerontology summer school exclusively for retired people was run by the Toulouse University of Social Sciences. (In French "personne de troisième âge" is translated to mean "senior citizen") This led to the formation of the first U3A [Swindell 2007]. By 1975 the idea had spread to many other countries and such was the take-up of the idea that an international body known as the International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AIUTA) was established as early as 1980.

U3A is a response to the idea that human life is divided into several periods: firstly, childhood and schooling, secondly, child rearing and work, and thirdly 'retirement' covering many healthy active years prior to the fourth age of dependency.

The third age then is seen as an important opportunity for listening, learning and understanding. It is during this time that people can put into practice the idea of a university as "a community of those who come together to seek knowledge and to gain a greater understanding of life". [Auckland U3A Network, 2002]

The word 'university' is used in the sense of the medieval university in which groups of students gathered together in order to learn more about their chosen topic of study (Pamphlet promoting Meadowbank-Orakei U3A)

Even within France, different approaches began to develop by the late 1970s, and a substantial change occurred when the movement reached Cambridge in England in 1981. As the development of U3A in New Zealand has been heavily influenced by developments in the UK, it is worthwhile looking briefly at the UK history.

The French model was centred on universities. A committee of retired people negotiated a contract with its university for the use of its facilities and tuition. The UK founder members, Peter Laslett, Eric Midwinter and Michael Young, although greatly impressed by the achievements in France and stimulated by the magnificence of the concept, felt there were drawbacks to this version. In effect a U3A could only operate if there was a conveniently situated university. Moreover what was offered was traditional academic fare and too much power could rest with the professional body.

It was felt by the UK founder members that it should be possible to form a local U3A anywhere there was a sufficient number of like-minded people. They also believed that the curriculum should be as broad as possible and should be managed by the people themselves.

In 1981 Peter Laslett (Co-founder of the U3A movement in the UK) hosted a meeting in Cambridge, attended by educationalists and scientists. This group discussed and lent support to the notion of bringing the U3A ideal to Britain.

This meeting was quickly followed by a workshop organised by Eric Midwinter to which anybody who had shown an interest in the idea was invited. These meetings led to an application to the Nuffield Foundation for financial aid and the decision to hold a public meeting in Cambridge.

The meeting was judged a success, a view reinforced by the request from BBC Radio 4 the next day for an interview about the events of the previous evening. The effect of the first 'U3A' broadcast was amazing – over 400 letters arrived in a few days. The grant application was also successful and it was determined to hold an experimental Easter school in Cambridge in March 1982. Seventy-five people enrolled, the classes were mainly in traditional subjects but with considerable scope for discussion and participation. By the finish, a Cambridge U3A was a certainty and a decision was taken to form a national committee.

Gradually U3A groups were formed in different parts of the country.

The self-help model that has consequently been so successful in Britain, Australia and New Zealand began. In UK, Australia, and NZ there are U3As who follow the French U3A concept of more formal study. Other U3As follow the UK original charter, which ensured that there were no formal studies to avoid the stress of examinations, and that there should be social interactivity associated with the study groups

The first principle, listed by Peter Laslett in 1981, in relation to the U3A organisation is

"The university shall consist of a body of persons who undertake to learn and help others to learn. Those who teach shall also learn and those who learn shall also teach."

The U3A approach to learning is – learning is for pleasure and also the satisfaction of accomplishment. There is no accreditation or validation and there are no assessments or qualifications to be gained.

U3A now has hundreds of thousands of members throughout the world. In 2002 China was said to have 19,300 U3As and 1.81 million members [Thompson, J. 2002] and in 2005 the UK had 550 U3As with a membership in excess of 155,000 members [Harrow U3A on line]

Developments in NZ/ Auckland /the Auckland U3A Network.

(Much of this material is from David Cole's 2003 record of U3As in Auckland)

In NZ the U3A movement began in 1987 as a result of travellers returning from the UK and Australia, enthusiastic about the concept [Cole,D.2003]. Two Auckland women Nan Lovell-Smith and Rosemary Faull attended the first international conference of U3As in Cambridge and linked up with St Luke's Presbyterian Church in Remuera. The St Luke's Parish Council had also been alerted to the merits of U3A by Dr John Hinchcliff (then the Director of the Auckland Institute of Technology - now known as the Auckland University of Technology).

By June 1989 the scene was set for the first U3A meeting in NZ which was held in St Luke's Hall in Remuera. The Remuera U3A was formed with John Stewart (a retired Radiologist) as the first 'Chairman' (nowadays known as the 'President'). Several members of U3As in Auckland mention the significant role John Stewart made by encouraging the formation of new U3As which soon developed, in Auckland and throughout the country.

U3A organisations in New Zealand began with different triggers. For example in Christchurch U3A began within the University continuing education department, in Wellington the stimulus came from 'Age Concern', while in Otago U3A replaced the closing down of its Continuing Education facility.

Structures vary with some U3As continuing with monthly meetings and home study groups while others have courses run by a central secretariat, or weekly lectures in a central venue.

From the outset an attraction of the U3A model is the self-governing autonomy of each group offered within each U3A. Each U3A maintains its autonomy and independence without undue direction or interference from any parent body. Most U3As have a constitution or rules governing their aims and objectives, management, rotation of office bearers etc and incorporation for tax and charitable reasons.

In Auckland by 2003 there were 22 U3As and demand was spread by word of mouth. At this time all Auckland U3As had a monthly meeting offering an opportunity for members to meet and socialise, often with a visiting speaker.

By 2007, a total of 53 NZ groups, mainly in the North Island, had a collective membership of nearly 9000. [Swindell 2007].

In 2010 there are 20 active U3A organisations in the wider Auckland region (refer Appendix one).

Auckland U3A Network.

The Auckland U3A network (hereafter referred to as 'The Network') was a loose association of autonomous U3As in the region. From 1993 a Network committee met initially 3–4 times a year. It offered representation to each U3A in wider Auckland.

The Network was not a directing or executive body but was primarily a means of sharing information, problems and proliferating ideas. It also encouraged the formation of new U3As nurturing them through their formative period.

The Network offered a 'start-up' information kit for new U3As prepared in 1999 and updated in 2002 by the **Auckland Network Trust**. This includes a history of the U3A movement; a condensed version of Laslett's 19 principles that have applied to U3As in NZ; and how to get started. The information includes guidelines for study groups, publicity, roles of office holders and legal considerations.

In 2009 the Network in its current form was seen by some as requiring change. Several representatives felt that the original concept of keeping in touch had been lost. There were varying opinions regarding the future of the Network, and ideas for how to proceed, including email contact between Auckland U3As using an 'email co-ordinator'. A meeting of Auckland U3A representatives was held in November 2009 and those present agreed to continue with the Network and consider issues such as the purpose and policies of the Network. Member U3As are currently discussing a proposed document to be discussed later in 2010. The Network is also considering the formation of new U3As in the wider Auckland area. The role of an 'e-mail co-ordinator' is working well.

NB. It is important not to confuse the **Auckland U3A Network** with the **Auckland Network Trust**. The Trust was established to manage the residual funds following an Anniversary conference in Auckland in 1999 celebrating ten years of U3A in New Zealand. The Network Trust organised conferences and competitions as well as supporting new U3As. The Network Trust wound up in 2008 and the monies were distributed to the various U3As, each receiving \$106 [Marris, G. 2009]

U3A Meadowbank – Beginnings/ Getting started.

The formation of a new Eastern Bays U3A in 2000 arose out of the frustrations of many prospective U3A members. There was little prospect for people wishing to join a U3A in the area due to the long waiting lists at the St Heliers and Remuera U3As. The name 'Meadowbank' ('Orakei /Meadowbank' at the inaugural meeting) was chosen for the new U3A as Meadowbank was in the geographical centre for people living in the Meadowbank, St John's and Orakei areas.

An exploratory meeting to discuss the formation of a new U3A in the Eastern Bays was held on the 28th June 2000 at St Thomas' hall, Kohimarama. At least 100 people were present, many on the waiting lists for the St Heliers and Remuera U3As. An interim committee was formed from volunteers who met on the 6th of July at the home of Stan Rose. Stan agreed to act as president with Aaron Benjamin as secretary, Theo Roland as treasurer, Arthur Easterbrook as membership secretary, and Wendy Easterbrook as Newsletter editor. [Other members of the interim group included Estelle Rose, Beulah Heaven, Margaret Frith (Collie), with Lucy Coombs and Mary Hills as Almoners]

Members from the U3A Auckland Network, U3A St Heliers, and U3A Remuera provided assistance and advice to this newly formed U3A. The U3A information kit, written in 1999, was provided by the U3A Network primarily to assist in the formation and operation of U3As in the wider Auckland region.

The inaugural meeting of the newly proposed U3A was held on July 26th, 2000, again at St Thomas' church. The hall was packed, with around 120 or so present, and queues of people waiting to join the new organisation. Russell Comber (from U3A St Heliers) was the first speaker at the new U3A Meadowbank. Several study groups were proposed and the first meeting for the convenors of these groups was held on Wednesday 2nd of August. The second formal meeting at St Thomas' was held on the 23rd August when Donald Trott ONZM from NZ Opera was the guest speaker.

The potential size of the membership, and insurance cover at St Thomas' available only for up to 100 members, meant that an alternative venue was necessary. Several committee members met to look at possible alternatives, including Mission Bay Men's Bowling Club and Auckland University Tamaki campus. This brought about a permanent move at the end of 2000 to our current location at the Men's Bowling Club in Nihill Crescent, Mission Bay. The committee decided that the monthly meeting for the whole group would meet on the 3rd Monday of each month – a day when the Bowling Club hall was free. The first monthly meeting in this hall was held on Monday September 18th 2000. About 100 people attended this meeting with Jan Wilson, a youth counsellor, as the first speaker.

The Constitution and Rules from Remuera U3A, like other Auckland U3As, were adopted by U3A Meadowbank. Our Constitution and Rules were ratified at the first Annual General meeting on 20th November 2000.

A new committee was elected, with Stan Rose as President, and continued in office until November 2001. The President's report and the financial report were received, with the annual subscription being set at \$25.00.

At this time it was decided that legal incorporation was desirable to limit the organisation's liabilities. Arthur Easterbrook and Freddie Hackshaw helped to achieve incorporation with minimal cost to the organisation.

Since its incorporation on the 5th March 2001, with a membership of 160, U3A Meadowbank has grown to be a mature organisation with 260 members (and a long waiting list), making it one of the largest in New Zealand. With more than 40 study/interest groups, covering a wide range of interests and activities, U3A Meadowbank offers people aged 55 and over a great opportunity to continue learning and at the same time remain active mentally, socially and physically. (Refer appendix two for a list of current study/interest groups – now called U3A Meadowbank groups).

Who were some of the 'movers and shakers'? Key people who made it happen?

There is no doubt that there were many people who made U3A Meadowbank happen. These include:

- Those on the U3A waiting lists of Remuera and St Heliers U3As impatient to join the U3A movement.
- The initial informal group of people who worked to get the meetings started, to find a suitable venue for the rapidly growing membership, to assist with the establishment of a U3A Meadowbank Constitution and Rules, and incorporation of the new organisation.
- The initial convenors that made the proposed study/interest groups happen.

Discussions with members who joined in 2000, the Presidents over the years, and perusal of the records of U3A Meadowbank have been the source of 'movers and shakers'. The writer takes full responsibility for any possible omissions.

Of those waiting to join a U3A in the Eastern Bay area mention must be made of Arthur and Wendy Easterbrook.

Arthur and Wendy had wanted to join a U3A group close to where they lived but long waiting lists lead them to join U3A Pakuranga where Arthur was the first President. His assistance in the establishment of our new U3A and his hard work as our first membership secretary over a period of phenomenal growth needs to be acknowledged. Wendy was the newsletter editor for the first two formative years. Both Arthur and Wendy are still active members of U3A Meadowbank and deserve our heartfelt thanks for their contribution.

Stan Rose our inaugural President worked very hard liaising with the U3A Auckland Network along with leaders in other Auckland U3As. This ensured that we not only got off to a good start, but also that our U3A was to become highly regarded.

The initial informal group who met on that exciting day in June 2000 must have had a very busy year.

They were:

Stan Rose, president, July 2000 – Nov 2001
Aaron Benjamin, secretary, July 2000 – Nov 2003
Theo Roland, treasurer, July - Nov 2000
Beulah Heaven, study group co-ordinator, July - Nov 2000
Arthur Easterbrook, member secretary, July 2000 – Nov 2001
Margaret Frith (Collie), speaker co-ordinator, July 2000 – Nov 2001
Wendy Easterbrook, newsletter editor, July 2000 – Nov 2001
Estelle Rose, catering & hall July, 2000 – Nov 2001
Lucy Coombs and Mary Hills, Almoner, July – Nov 2000

Freddie Hackshaw took over from Beulah Heaven in 2001 as study group co-ordinator. The first enthusiastic study groups established in **JULY 2000** were:

Art history & Art appreciation – Convenor Jean Draffin
Books and Authors – Convenor Jill Dansted
Current events – Convenor Lou Holder
Earth Sciences - Convenor Shirley Woodhead
Gallivanterers – Convenor Beulah Heaven
History – Convenor Norma Davis
Literature – Convenor Rachel Grandison
Local history – Convenor Dinah Parr
Music – Convenor - Johanna Ten Hove
Travel – Convenor - Digby Spittal

By the end of the year the following groups had been added to our U3A providing a wonderful choice for our members.

Comparative religions – Convenor Rose Benjamin
French – Convenor Freddie Hackshaw
German – Convenor Russell Comber – from U3A St Heliers
Italian – Convenor - Deirdre Anselmi
Jazz – Convenor – Ken Johnson
Music makers – Convenor Noel Bierre – from U3A St Heliers

Our first ten years.

Management of U3A Meadowbank

The management of our U3A has been guided since its inception by an elected President and a committee of between eight and twelve members. Specific roles that have been taken on by the committee members over the years include:

- Vice president (usually President –elect)
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership secretary
- Study/interest group co-ordinator
- Speaker co-ordinator
- Entertainment co-ordinator
- Hall sound system/maintenance
- Newsletter editor

A new position to co-ordinate special events was created in 2001 and an archivist (not on the committee) was appointed in 2006. U3A had an almoner to assist members in need from 2000 – 2005, after which it was agreed that group convenors should keep in touch with the needs of their members and let the management committee know if there were any particular needs associated with an individual member. A folio of job descriptions for the committee and for convenors was prepared in 2005 and updated in 2006.

Presidents and their role (Plus committee members).

We at U3A Meadowbank have been so fortunate in the calibre of our ten first presidents. Each has brought to their role different skills, different priorities, and different visions for the future of U3A Meadowbank.

Many presidents were asked by other members to accept the role because of their leadership abilities, and/or willingness to contribute; others because of their feeling of obligation to participate, or by an offer to serve. The president serves a one-year term and then joins the committee ex-officio.

The first ten Presidents were:

2000	Stan Rose (interim/first elected president)
2001	Stan Rose
2002	Meg Bayley
2003	Fredericka (Freddie) Hackshaw
2004	Robert (Bob) O'Hara
2005	Cherry Hankin
2006	Barry Thorn
2007	Wally Hirsh
2008	Robert (Rob) Elliott
2009	Graham Shearer
2010	Sabine Fenton.

Stan Rose 2000 – 2001



Stan was born in England and immigrated to NZ in 1945. His background was in business associated with Ladies Fashion stores. His other interests included politics, sport, community and religious activities.

Committee 2001

Aaron Benjamin, Beatrice Jaffe, Freddie Hackshaw, Arthur Easterbrook, Margaret Frith (Collie), Wendy Easterbrook, Estelle Rose, Lucy Coombs (then Lou Holder) Meg Bayley, Jill Dansted and Una Gordon as Almoner

Stan Rose (2000 and 2001) came from a business background and his initial objective for his term of the presidency was to establish a strong committee and to understand the structure of U3A. He went to a committee meeting of U3A Takapuna to bounce ideas and learn about U3A and sees this meeting as an 'epiphany'. He speaks of BT and AT (Before and after Takapuna!) assisting him to help establish the successful foundation of U3A Meadowbank the key being the autonomy of each U3A especially the study groups. The highlights of Stan's term included understanding the principles and charter of U3A, Mentoring new members, encouraging members to 'meet life full on' and the success of that first year.

Meg Bayley 2002



Meg was born in New Zealand and after obtaining a BSc from the University of NZ (Now known as Otago University) Meg worked in a pathology lab. After teaching in Hong Kong, she came back to NZ and taught Junior science and Senior biology at Diocesan High School for Girls for 29 years. Meg is the author of many biology texts, and workbooks Her other interests include new science activities, current events, human behaviour, reading, gardening and dogs.

Committee 2002

Freddie Hackshaw, Beatrice Jaffe, Aaron Benjamin, Ian Alexander, Margaret Frith (Collie), Fay Hercock, Lou Holder, Elaine O'Hara, Robert O'Hara, Estelle Rose, Una Gordon

Meg Bayley (2002) came from a science teaching background and was on the first elected committee in 2001. She was very enthusiastic about the U3A concept. Meg sought to run the meetings in an informal manner aiming to maintain the tone set by Stan, and to establish the position of a Vice President willing to take up the position of President the following year.

The highlights of her term included the 'famous' U3A meeting in Tauranga, meeting with Presidents of U3A St Heliers and U3A Remuera to consider the establishment of a new U3A in the Eastern Bays (Tamaki). This was a way to cope with the increasing waiting lists of the established Auckland U3As. The committee in 2002 established many processes that continue to this day. These include organising the caretaker of the Bowling Club to arrange tables and chairs in the hall before/after the meetings; the purchase of plastic mug

holders to avoid handwashing cups/saucers from morning tea; establishing a roster to help with morning tea; greeting members on arrival; the purchase of a screen, power board, switches and an urn; organising helpers to send out the newsletter; and starting many new groups.

Frederika (Freddie) Hackshaw 2003



Freddie was born in Holland and came to NZ in 1952. She qualified as a lawyer in 1983 and was in full time practice from then until recently.

Her other interests include walking, history, politics, classic music and literature.

Committee 2003

Robert O'Hara, Ian Alexander (later Shirley Officer) Aaron Benjamin, Margaret Frith (Collie), Fay Hercocock, Elaine O'Hara, Beverley Wareing, Gerald Wareing, Estelle Rose, and Almoner Una Gordon

Freddie Hackshaw (2003) was present at the inaugural meeting at St Thomas's church in 2000 and she joined U3A then and there. With her legal background Freddie assisted U3A Meadowbank to become incorporated in 2001. As co-ordinator of the study groups that year Freddie learned a lot about the association and was also asked to be Vice President. (She did not realise that she would be asked to be President the following year!) Like Meg, Freddie wanted the monthly meetings to be fun, and often told a joke before morning tea and was amazed at how this lightened the whole atmosphere of the group. The highlights of her term included working with a strong enthusiastic committee, and the willing convenors of over 30 study groups.

Robert (Bob) O'Hara 2004



Bob was born in Nelson and with qualifications in personnel management had a thirty year career in the police force. His other interests include music (he has sung principal roles in 20 Operas) painting, reading, writing, history, tennis, golf, and travel.

Committee 2004

Cherry Hankin, Shirley Officer, Beverley Wareing, Gerald Wareing, Jo Ligoff, Wally Hirsh, Judith Officer, Elaine O'Hara, Wilma Willis, and Una Gordon

Bob O'Hara (2004) came from a background in policing. Having been President of Mission Bay Probus, and on our U3A committee as speaker co-ordinator in 2002, he felt able to take on the role of president. Bob hoped to encourage every member to actively participate, and to balance formal learning and socialising opportunities for members. The financial management of the organisation still in its formative years and obligations of being an incorporated society were challenges for the committee. Highlights of his term included the visit from the Czech U3A from Prague who were hosted by many Meadowbank committee members, establishing a President's

letter to new members, and participating in the maturing process of U3A Meadowbank and its valued reputation.

Cherry Hankin 2005



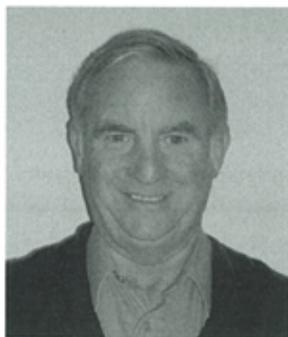
Cherry Hankin was born in New Zealand but gained her Ph.D. in English literature from the University of California at Berkeley. As Associate Professor of English at the University of Canterbury, she published widely on New Zealand literature and Katherine Mansfield. Her interests include art appreciation, Reading, gardening and travelling.

Committee 2005

Barry Thorn, Pam Batten, Thelma Cane, Ev. McGowan, Maria Collins, Judith Officer, Margaret Lyndsay, Carsten Dansted, Wilma Willis

Cherry Hankin came on to the committee in 2004 as vice-president and Auckland network representative. Since 2001 she has convened study groups on Poetry, Irish Literature and currently American Literature. As president, her goal was to broaden and add to the range of study groups available to members. The highlight of her term was helping to get five new study groups off the ground. With the committee, she coordinated the writing of job descriptions to assist new committee members as they took up their roles. For the last two years she has shared the responsibility of organising speakers at the monthly meetings.

Richard Barry (Barry) Thorn 2006



Barry was born in Chester England and immigrated to NZ in 2003. With qualifications in human resources, he has worked as a conference host and organiser. His other interests include yatching, tramping, film, travel, music, cooking and eating out, reading and writing short stories.

Committee 2006

Wally Hirsh, Pam Batten, Thelma Cane, Ev McGowan, Maria Collins, Sylvia Wilkins, Margaret Lyndsay, Carsten Dansted, Shirley Bailey

Barry Thorn (2006) came from a human resources management background. He was a committee member in 2005 and had found U3A a great help in integrating him into NZ culture after his arrival in 2003. He wanted to repay that friendship by making a contribution to U3A Meadowbank. He also wanted to offer skills from his administrative background and gathered together information into a 'Presidents pack'. The highlights of his term as president included attendance at a regional U3A conference, participating in the Auckland Network of all 21 U3As in the Auckland region. He also set up meetings with other presidents from St Heliers, Remuera and Tamaki U3As.

Wally Hirsh 2007



Wally was born in Germany and immigrated to NZ with his family as a two year old. Wally comes from a background of education, Race relations, Human rights and ethnic affairs, and more recently Tourism. His other interests include ceramics and pottery, travel, tramping, writing several books, reading, cinema and community service. Wally introduced the printed timetable and programme of studies to our U3A which has become a feature of our U3A.

Committee 2007

Rob Elliott, Gillian Kidd, Adele Hirsh, Naomi Cohen, Maria Collins, Sylvia Wilkins, Margaret Lyndsay, David Colmore-Williams, Shirley Bailey

Wally Hirsh (2007) came from a background in education and in tourism. He had been on the committee and enjoyed a leadership role. He felt an obligation to participate. During his term Wally sought to encourage an increasing ethnic diversity (reflecting Auckland) in both membership and speakers. He sought to make the meetings interesting and a pleasure to attend with quality speakers. The highlights of his term included the enjoyment he got from the increasing attendance at meetings, the companionship of the committee, and the acknowledgement of the contribution of convenors as they encouraged member participation in the study/interest groups.

Robert (Rob) Elliott - 2008



Rob was born in Auckland

His professional interests are associated with Business management in the motor industry –CEO of Motor Holdings Ltd. and VW Motors (NZ)

His other interests include writing (two books published) and travel (Over 100 visits to Japan)

Committee 2008

Shirley Bailey, Rex Brown, Naomi Cohen, David Colmore-Williams, Sabine Fenton, Christine Fleming, Yvonne Kennedy, Gillian Kidd, Digby Spittal

Robert (Rob) Elliott (2008), coming from a management background in the motor industry, joined the committee in 2007 as Vice President, and as President sought to maintain the momentum and progress from the year before. He also worked towards meeting more groups, and supporting convenors. He fostered the responsibility of each member to serve – part of our group culture. Highlights of his term included the ongoing success of the organisation, with members enjoying their participation, in study/interest groups, and at the monthly meetings. The quality of the speakers and the sense of fellowship for many make the experience so enjoyable

Graham Shearer - 2009



Graham was born in NZ, qualified and worked as a professional engineer, and after his retirement was interested in designing, developing and building residential property.

His other interests include health and fitness, walking, building and property maintenance, the philosophy of life, who we are, what we can do, and how we can do it.

Committee 2009

Carole Brown, Rex Brown, David Colmore-Williams, Sabine Fenton, Cherry Hankin, Annette Charlton, Margaret Jeans, Yvonne Kennedy, Gillian Kidd, Elaine O'Hara

Graham Shearer (2009) came from an engineering background. He filled the position as president when the Vice President in 2008 was unable to continue in the role. He likes the U3A concept of life-long learning continually exploring what life is all about!

The highlights of his presidency included a growing awareness of the history of U3A, and the importance of using the talents of the committee. He strongly believes each of us as members need to clearly understand the concept of U3A and to be able to transcend our limited ideas of our own capabilities. He believes that it is only by losing ourselves in all our endeavours that we can truly find ourselves.

Sabine Fenton- 2010



Sabine lived and worked in eight countries as an academic and translator and conference interpreter before coming to New Zealand in 1987. She was the foundation Director of the Centre for Translation and Interpreting Studies at the University of Auckland and directed the Centre until her recent retirement. Her other interest include refugee and community matters, multiculturalism, literature, and travel.

Committee

Carole Brown, Rex Brown, David Colmore-Williams, Cherry Hankin, Lou Holder, Annette Charlton, Margaret Jeans, Yvonne Kennedy, Don McGowan, Elaine O'Hara

Monthly meetings and Speakers.

While the committee meets monthly to conduct the business of the organisation, U3A Meadowbank members are invited to attend a two hourly monthly meeting together on the third Monday of each month. This enables the members to socialise, and share experiences. Announcements of future events, information from group members, or other U3As, and issues of importance to the group are raised at these meetings. Most importantly these meetings enhance members' self-learning by listening to visiting speakers from a wide variety of interests and with considerable expertise. As stated in the constitution and rules it is important to ensure that speakers may not specifically promote Religion, Politics, Commerce or Race.

Members are informed, challenged, and excited by visiting speakers. Speaker payments have ranged from \$20.00 petrol vouchers, to \$50.00 in 2002 , to \$100.00 in 2004. The organisation also arranged for U3A members to be 'mini speakers' and share with others their special interests, activities or skills. Regular reports from the study/interest groups also keep members informed and interested in the wider activities of our U3A. Further information related to U3A Meadowbank speakers may be obtained from the main speaker co-ordinator.

The speaker co-ordinator each year is challenged to find speakers covering a variety of issues important to members of U3A. Over the ten years of U3A Meadowbank's existence the calibre of speakers has been outstanding and ensured a nearly full hall each month.

The committee has purchased a data projector for the use of the group and the sound system has been upgraded so the large audience in the hall can both see and hear the presentations. The Mission Bay Bowling Club is paid a monthly fee for the use of the hall and the facilities.

Key developments and issues over time.

- **Membership**
- **Subscriptions**
- **Newsletters**

Membership.

U3A Meadowbank began in July 2000 with a paid up membership of just over 40 growing to a spectacular paid up membership of 108 at the time of the first meeting on July 28th 2000. Those U3As already established had debated the most suitable size for one U3A suggesting between 150–200.

U3A Meadowbank had very quickly needed to find a larger venue as membership had already reached 180 in March 2001. In April 2001 the committee decided to cap membership numbers at 200 and review the number later. A review was necessary in May of the same year as our U3A had 206 members. In July 2001 the number was lifted to 250 members with a waiting list and this continued until 2007 when the number was lifted to 260 17

where it currently stands. The waiting list was closed at the end of 2009 and when it opens again it was decided to limit membership to those living in a clearly defined area of the following eight suburbs Glendowie, Glen Innes, Kohimaramara, Meadowbank, Mission Bay, Orakei, Remuera, St Heliers.

In the interim enquirers are being referred to other U3As in the region. Further information regarding membership of U3A Meadowbank may be obtained from the membership secretary.

Subscriptions.

One of the guiding principles of U3A was to keep costs to a minimum and within the reach of everybody [U3A Meadowbank pamphlet 2005]. The initial annual subscription levy set in 2000 was \$25.00, which was raised in \$30 in 2004, to meet increases in postage and speaker fees.

As at 2010 the fee is still \$30.00 for an individual and \$55.00 for a couple (introduced in 2008). Members in particular groups may have additional costs associated with travel, photocopying etc.

Newsletters.

Newsletter No 1 was published in July 2000 and a newsletter has been published at least eleven times a year ever since. This publication which has been produced 'in house' has kept members informed of key issues effecting the organisation, and more detailed news from the study/interest groups. Along with wonderful photos have been some most amusing poems, cartoons and stories.

The Newsletter editors have been

Wendy Easterbrook (2000 – 2001)

Elaine O'Hara (2002 –2004)

Margaret Lyndsay (2005 –2006)

Margaret Lyndsay/Elaine O'Hara (2007)

Christine Fleming (2008)

Elaine O'Hara (2009 - 2010)

An effort was made in 2006/7 to encourage members to receive the newsletter by email. There was not a great enthusiasm for this, and logistically this was not easy to manage and was discontinued at the end of 2007.

Issues over time

- The U3A name
- Ageing membership
- Size of each U3A

The 'U3A' Name.

It is interesting to reflect for a moment on the word 'university'. In NZ, the NZ Education Act [1990] specifically protects the word 'university' [s. 292 {4} a] and organisations need specific approval to use the term.

U3A organisations do not meet the criteria outlined in the Act, so the acronym U3A is used avoiding the use of the term 'university' in formal statements. As Dr David Cole stated "U3A has like Y2K, an eye/ear catching punch which

Several writers mention the need to avoid using the word 'club' in referring to U3A. It is a 'group' – referring to various collections of members studying topics [Cole, D. personal correspondence, O'Hara, R. speech to U3A Whangarei in 2005]

Ageing membership.

The success of the U3A movement often means that there are few resignations, and attrition is more likely to occur for health reasons than any dissatisfaction. The need for 'new and younger blood' is a phenomenon familiar to many other organisations such as Probus, Zonta, Rotary etc. The question is how?

Size of each U3A.

There are several issues raised relating to the size of each U3A. Some include:

- availability of a monthly meeting space,
- ability to offer 'home study groups',
- the importance of collegiality,
- ongoing expenses of postage and technology and
- waiting lists.

The U3A Meadowbank has limited the size of membership to 260 - the number that can safely be accommodated in the monthly meeting venue.

This also ensures that members can socialise together regularly. As previously stated, this number has been revisited many times and raised from 200 in April 2001 to 250 in July 2001 and to 260 in 2007 which is the current size in 2010.

U3A Meadowbank Groups.

It is the participation in small groups that differentiates U3A from many other organisations. These groups are at the heart of the U3A concept offering a range of topics depending on the interests of the specific U3A members. This is certainly the case with our U3A. Each group is autonomous and arranges its affairs through consensus, guided by a member who acts as convenor.

Topics range from formal intellectual studies such as German and Philosophy, to physical outdoor interests such as Walking, and Gallivanter; and social interests such as luncheon groups. The question has been asked "Are we trying to be all things to all retired people?" [Cole, D. 2003]. The question of whether our range of study/interest groups should be as broad as it is has been raised by members of U3A Meadowbank many times. Some members have very firm views about the issue - indeed several members have resigned as they do not think U3A Meadowbank has sufficient 'intellectual study groups'.

Several different decisions have been reached over the ten years of U3A Meadowbank's existence. Such decisions have ranged from anything goes, to excluding some groups from counting as 'study groups'. In 2007 the timetable of our U3A group activities changed from a 'Study group' meeting timetable to a 'Study/Interest group' meeting timetable. In 2010 it was agreed that all study/interest/activity groups have equal status within U3A Meadowbank, and that each shall be referred to by their name plus the word 'group'. For example: The History of Art Group, The Literature Group, The Ramblers Group.

Sometimes it is worth going back to the Peter Laslett's basic principles of the purpose of U3A. He is rather liberal in his interpretation. Principle 9 *'The curriculum of the university should be as wide as resources permit.... Nevertheless, the preference of members will be the only criterion of what is done...'*

In 2005 when Bob O'Hara was President he gave a speech to the U3A Whangarei. In the speech he outlined a brief history of U3A, and wrote of the issue of what constitutes a U3A 'group' as follows

"There has been considerable discussion over the short time our U3A group has been in existence....about the 'academic' topics of study versus the 'recreational' or 'social' emphasis of other groups like walking, gallivanter, Mah Jong' and Petanque which are really more 'leisure activities'. After considerable discussion we reached a consensus that the 'socialisation' activities of these essentially 'non-academic' groups has a valuable therapeutic effect.....Flexibility is the key, and one of the real strengths of U3A. The 'purists' who downgrade these recreational activities and maintain that more emphasis should be placed on the 'academic' content of members activities perhaps fail to appreciate that the needs of retired people are continually changing and evolving. We should not underestimate the very real value of the emergence of 'friendship' groups (which is what many of these recreational groups have become) within the U3A umbrella".

This 'friendship factor' is indeed an important attraction to many members of U3A Meadowbank.

Such is the popularity of most small groups that new members are often unable to join a group covering the topic of their first choice. Most groups have already reached the optimum size (usually 12–16) that can meet in members' homes. The committee in Nov 2008 decided that the size of a group should be up to the convenor. Where there is considerable interest in a topic it may mean that a new group of the same name needs to be created. (examples in our U3A have been Classic films (3 groups); Jazz (two groups); French (2 groups) and a variety of Walking/rambling groups.

Most groups meet in the homes of members but where the group is too large the use of a hall or community facility has been necessary. (e.g. Current events, Money matters). Other groups explore facilities in the Auckland region (e.g. 'Auckland into the future' and 'Art Appreciation'.

Of the ten initial study groups established in 2000 eight still exist in the same or similar form. These include

Current events, Books and Authors, Literature, Music, Travel, History, Earth Sciences (In recess in 2003), Art Appreciation and Art History, Gallivanter, Local History (In recess in 2003).

In 2010 U3A Meadowbank has over 40 active groups, with all members required to actively participate by attendance in at least one group. Such is the attraction of the offerings that many members attend 3-4 groups each month.

A list of our U3A groups is detailed in appendix two

Stories from a selection of groups available in our U3A.

- **Botanica/Our natural world**
- **Classic Film**
- **Current Events**
- **Eco-walking**
- **French**
- **History**
- **Jazz**
- **Literature**
- **Music**
- **Wine Studies**

U3A Meadowbank Botanica / Our Natural World Group



In 2002 we started U3A Meadowbank 'Botanica', a group of keen gardeners devoted to all things botanical. We meet in members' houses, so have kept the number to about 17. We have discussed Native plants, weeds, herbs, medicinal plants, trees, our favourite plants etc. We have visited many wonderful gardens Ayrlies, Wright's Watergardens, Eden Garden, Auckland Botanic garden, the nursery at Cornwall park. We have had talks from the 21

Auckland City Council on weeds, from companies such as 'Bunnings' and 'Palmers' on products and a lesson on making hanging baskets. From experts on Bromeliads, a garden designer on good garden design plus floral decorations for Christmas etc. Then after about 7 years we almost ran out of plants and topics – so we renamed ourselves 'Our Natural World'. This gave us the opportunity to keep on with the plants but add animals and physical things like volcanoes and tectonic plates. Under the new regime we have discussed the aforementioned plus vitamins and minerals, dogs, endangered animals, fungi, weather patterns, islands around NZ, migrating birds etc, even recipes using what we have grown in our gardens, plus a wonderful talk on living in Papua New Guinea. Val Penman is the present convenor of "Our natural world" and we are a very keen and friendly group of nature lovers.

Meg Bayley

First Convenor U3A Meadowbank Botanica Group.

U3A Meadowbank Classic Film Group (1)



When I first thought of forming a Classic Film Study Group, I little expected its popularity to spawn two additional groups. My own interest in film started at an early age. Like most of us in U3A, there was no TV in the house when I was a child, the cinema was a major source of entertainment, along with the radio, comics, books and playing in the street or local park our entertainment.

I cannot recall for certain the very first film that I saw, but I do remember that one of the first, in the company of my father, was Vittoria De Sica's, *The Bicycle Thieves*. This left a lasting impression on me and it is one of the many films our group has viewed and then discussed. For me film is one of my favourite mediums for relating a yarn, stirring the emotions or getting across a message.

Our group broke some new ground when we established ourselves. Firstly we meet in the evening rather than in the daytime, and our meeting revolves not only around the film we view, but also around a Pot Luck supper, with everybody taking a share in preparing/providing the meal.

We had considerable discussion as to what made a film a CLASSIC. Views ranged widely but we eventually agreed on a set of criteria that we use to select films, with everybody being given the chance to nominate a film, present it to the group and for us then to discuss it. This includes discussing the merits of the film, the story line, technical aspects, the characters portrayed, the actors, as well as considering other films by the same director or other roles performed by the artists.

On several occasions we have, as a group, attended the special showing at the annual Auckland Film Festival of a chosen silent movie classic. This is shown at the Civic Theatre with the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra providing the musical score. Everyone who has attended such a performance has been blown away with the experience. The Civic being such a wonderful venue, the film, always a true classic and the full orchestra adding so much to the action on screen.

Each year we have a special festive meal for our last film of the year where we sometimes attend in fancy dress and/or have a film quiz with prizes, as well as watching a movie.

Whilst no longer the convenor of this group (Gay Williams is the current convenor) I am pleased to say that it goes from strength to strength, as does the contribution made by everyone into what is a both an extremely enjoyable and informative study group. The two other Classic Film groups also continue to function and expand.

Lights, camera, action!

Barry Thorn

First convenor of U3A Meadowbank Classic Film Group (1)

U3A Meadowbank Current Events Group.



This was one of the initial study groups formed after U3A Meadowbank started in 2000. Once we decided that Current 'events' was a more appropriate name than Current 'affairs' a format was devised allowing the widest range of local, national and international issues.

Meetings were divided into sections where members suggested current topics from the floor, followed by an in depth presentation of an issue previously nominated or chosen by a member. On other occasions we held workshops, where members were divided into groups, given a topic to discuss and then reported conclusions to the general meeting. Guest speakers were frequently asked to give expert or additional opinions on many topics.

Over the years most of the important current events have been discussed. Some contentious issues naturally lead to members expressing strongly held views but always there was acceptance that differing viewpoints could be expressed without rancour.

Sometimes the topic led to bemusement or embarrassment. Examples included a presentation from a senior member of the NZ broadcasting corporation on TV programmes and viewing habits who told us that 'our age group' viewpoint on these issues was largely irrelevant – we are not considered a 'significant demographic'! At another meeting a representative from the US Consul General's office was invited to address the questions of trade, defence, foreign affairs raised by a retiring Ambassador. Instead we got a speech on USA foreign aid, interesting but not the expected!

Popular from the start the group rapidly grew in numbers approaching 60 and outgrowing the St Heliers Bay Rd venue. For a while the group divided in two before being reunited in the present Orakei Community Centre venue.

For several years Meg Bayley has convened and organised this stimulating activity. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance from co-convenors, meeting, hall and kitchen helpers for their continued support.

Lou Holder

First Convenor U3A Meadowbank Current events group.

U3A Meadowbank – Eco-walking Group



Since starting with 5 walkers on a trip to Muriwai in January 2001 this group has grown to 65 divided into three divisions providing approximately 3, 2, or 1 hour walking options. Twice monthly we meet offering a variety of urban and rural venues. In nine years we have walked in 21 of our loved Regional parks and most local city beaches, bush and parks.

Our founding proposal stated "We hope this activity will provide fun, fitness and fellowship for all who enjoy walking for pleasure and enjoying the natural environment. By using local and regional parks, beach and bush areas of outstanding ecological interest and beauty, we hope to expand our knowledge of flora, fauna, geology and local history".

Our first 'away' trip to National Parks and special places was to Waikaremoana in 2003. Since then we have enjoyed usually 4/5 day visits to Arthur's Pass and Hanmer Springs, Tongariro, Great Barrier Island, Mt Taranaki, Rotorua, Coromandel peninsular, Whangarei, Leigh, Taupo,

Hokianga, Waiheke, Kawau, the Kaimai Ranges and an overnighter to Tiritiri-Matangi.

Consideration is given to keeping the activities as affordable as possible by sharing costs, using members' transport, and budget accommodation and self-catering. With sharing great walks has come wonderful memories, lasting friendships and legendary social hours!

After Lou Holder and deputy Margaret Browne, Ev McGowan took on convenor and longer walk organiser roles with Val Hutchinson, Mary Littlewood and Pam Drysdale each organising annual shorter walks. Arthur Easterbrook set up the Rambler section which he continues to lead. In 2010 the baton was passed on to Rex Brown and Randall Kebbel as long/short convenors.

This group requires input beyond the normal U3A activities and members recognise and salute those who collect and manage finances, offer their vehicles, plan and organise away trips and catering, suggest and collate annual programmes, reconnoitre/lead walks etc. Without them we would not be such an energised and functional hapu.

ALL U3A Meadowbank Presidents to date have been members of walking groups!

Lou Holder

Founding convenor of U3A Meadowbank Eco-walking Group.

U3A Meadowbank - French Group



The French group was born in U3A Meadowbank's first year. The formation of a French study group was first suggested by President Stan Rose at one of the early Monday general meetings, when he asked who would be interested. About 10 people stood up and because yours

truly happened to be sitting nearest the front Stan said "right Freddie, you can be the convenor". So that was that. Those interested met on the stage after the meeting and we arranged a meeting at my house soon after, where we discussed the necessary details, e.g.

numbers, textbook, and where to meet. As far as I recall, we started with 10 members and as we agreed to meet at each other's houses we fixed on that as an appropriate number of members.

We also agreed to meet twice per month as a minimum for a language group. The first textbook, as far as I can recall, was one used at the night classes at Selwyn College, "*French for Beginners*", or something like that. We also used a book called "*Easy French reader*".

All of us had some french knowledge, usually dating back to our school days, and the texts we used and our valiant attempts to speak french at the meetings very soon consolidated those foundations. The membership was fairly steady in the early days but as time went on there was some attrition as some members moved away, or had other commitments. Early in the days of the group members from U3A Epsom joined as there was no French group in that U3A. There was no shortage of others wanting to join us, so the numbers remained stable. Eventually we agreed on an outer limit of 12 members and that is a realistic maximum enabling us to meet in members homes

The text we now use is "*Hugo, French in 3 months*". I must confess we have been using this text for a lot longer than 3 months! In addition to extending our french knowledge we also enjoy some very pleasant social events, especially our Christmas lunch which we usually have at my house. We have been incredibly lucky to have Viviane Hill as a member of the group. Viviane is French and her knowledge of the language and pronunciation has been a tremendous help! The current convenor is Gay Williams. We have had a waiting-list for members wanting to join the group sometime, but thanks to Graham Shearer a "French for Beginners" group has recently been set up.

Freddie Hackshaw
First Convenor U3A French Group.



The History study group as it was known when first formed ten years ago, was among the first few groups to be started when U3A Meadowbank was formed in 2000. The first convenor was Norma Davis and several of us who were in the original group of twelve are still members of the group.

The first topic to be studied was "*The Spread of Islam*" which led to such topics as "*Suleyman the Magnificent*" "El Cid" , "*The Establishment of the Persian Empire*" and many more over the next three years.

At the commencement of each year , as a group, we discuss topics for study with members taking a turn to present them.

In 2005/6 we studied ,albeit briefly at times, the history of different countries within a given time period for example the years 1100 – 1400 included *The rise of the Shoguns and Samurai in Japan; The arrival of the Seljuk Turks in Jerusalem; The crusades*. In the period of 1461 – 1600 the group studied *The Aztecs and Incas; The Moguls in India; Tudor England*; to mention but a few.

In 2007 the main topic was "*Understanding America's past to understand America today*" covering such area as foreign and internal politics and the roles played by the President.

In 2008 we studied the *Growth of Nationalism in Europe, the causes of World War I; the Treaty of Versailles* and concluded the year with studying the *social, economic, and political changes in Europe, America and Asia leading to World War II*.

In 2009 we covered topics such as the *Establishment of the United Nations* and other international organisations such as the *International Monetary*

Fund; the Break up of the British Empire and an overview of Australian history.

This year in 2010 we will be studying in detail the *History of the Scandinavian and Baltic countries.*

Yvonne Kennedy

Convenor U3A Meadowbank History Group. 2004 - 2010.

U3A Meadowbank Jazz Group.



Jazz was one of the first groups formed in our first year. We had only four members initially and fortunately one member knew something about the history of Jazz.

We started by studying the roots of Jazz and how in the late 19th century it originated from the rhythms of West Africa and American Gospel singing. Then it further developed in the Southern States of America at the time of the First World War. Our numbers grew slowly, then after a couple of years, St Heliers U3A approached us and suggested we have a combined group. This was a huge success but after our numbers grew to about 20 it was decided to go back to our separate groups.

In about 2004 when our numbers reached 18 we had to introduce a waiting list. This was the case until mid 2007 when President Wally Hirsch being conscious of the waiting list approached me to investigate the possibility of forming the second group. A notice was placed in the newsletter to canvass members and in July 2007 a second Jazz group commenced with eight very

enthusiastic members. We managed to twist John Cooper's arm enough for him to agree to be convenor and so Jazz (2) was born.

During the last 10 years many people from other U3As have expressed surprise that we have a Jazz group. This is because of our founder President Stan Rose's practice of "looking outside the square". At our inaugural meeting in 2000 Stan decided to add 'Jazz' to the 10 groups which St Heliers (our sponsoring U3A) had proposed.

I would suggest that the fact that in January 2010 Meadowbank U3A has two Jazz groups – both full and unable to accept new members proved his hunch was right.

Ken Johnson

First convenor of U3A Meadowbank Jazz Group.

U3A Meadowbank Literature Group.



Ten Years of the Literature Group.

Literature – how do you begin a study of this rich and vast field? This was the question that faced the group of nine keen readers and their convenor, Rachel Grandison as they sat around Rachel's dining room table at the first meeting of the Literature Group on 9 August 2000.

The group decided on a theme-based approach with a different theme for each month. At each meeting members spoke about their personal choice of material within the theme. This led to a discussion of poems, plays and novels by authors as diverse as *Shakespeare*, *Simone de Beauvoir* and *James K. Baxter*.

A year or two later we changed direction slightly. For each session we chose a specific genre such as, biography, crime fiction and travel writing with members discussing their individual choices.

Some five or six years ago we changed back to a theme-based approach, one that we still follow. Unlike earlier the theme now continues for the whole year and we all read the same novel, short story or selection of poems for each session. Members volunteer to lead a session and facilitate the discussion. Discussions are lively – everyone has an opinion.

The themes have included NZ Poetry, Novels from Around the World, Indian Literature and Fiction and Film. The theme for this tenth anniversary year is Award-winning Literature.

From the beginning the group has enjoyed variety. We have had some wonderful guest speakers on topics ranging from Katherine Mansfield to Literary Translation. From time to time we watch a film either on DVD or at the cinema.

Our tradition of hospitality and sociability also began in the group's early days. We meet in each other's homes beginning with coffee and chat. Our year always finishes with a celebratory luncheon. In the two years we studied Indian Literature; this took the form of an Indian banquet with members providing a delicious array of Indian food.

We're a group with a vibrant membership. Over the years our numbers have ranged from nine to sixteen. Currently there are eleven of us, four of whom have belonged for over five years. Rachel Grandison, our original convenor is still a member and also deputy convenor. I became convenor at the end of 2002. Our enjoyment and knowledge of literature has widened and deepened and our study has taken us on a journey to many countries and cultures.

Jeanette de Heer,
Convenor, U3A Meadowbank Literature Group.
2003 –2010

U3A Meadowbank Music Group.



We started with 10 members in August 2000. We met at Joanne de Hove's home to sort out a programme and elect a convenor, Paddy Holder. The group continues with 14 members including 3 of the originals.

We study all genres of music but mostly classical. It is the member's choice to choose their own topic and type of presentation, which has included music, composers, instruments, and artists. Discussions include current Auckland productions and what members have seen and enjoyed elsewhere.

We have also visited Waiheke Music Museum, Auckland University School of Music and live performances by the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra.

The group is friendly and enthusiastic who attempt to meet Plato's moral law "Music gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and charm and gaiety to life and everything!"

Paddy Holder
Convenor U3A Music group
2000 – 2010.

U3A Meadowbank Wine Group.



This group was initiated and convened by Bob O'Hara towards the end of 2000 with twelve members. The first meeting was held at 27 Kempthorne Cres. where the group watched a 30 minute video of Jancis Robinson (Master of Wine) presenting a wine course. The group then tasted five Chardonnay wines, one each from Australia, California, France and two from New Zealand. XL5 tasting glasses have been used throughout and each member has their own set of six glasses which they use at each meeting.

Members of the group were introduced to the basics of the 20 point judging system and used a standard judging sheet to assess each of the wines on:

Appearance (3 points)

Aroma & Bouquet (7 points) and

General Impression, which covered taste, balance, and finish (10 points).

The same place mats and judging sheets have been used at successive tastings, which generally include six wines from various countries.

In the first year our group tasted examples of the following wine varieties:- Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz (Syrah), Merlot, Pinot Gris, and North Italian Reds. We also enjoyed a field trip visit to the Westbrook winery in West Auckland. Tasting notes were prepared and given to each member about the variety being sampled and assessed at each tasting. A summary of the previous tasting was prepared showing the total cost, and also the points awarded to each wine from the group.

At the year's end the group members were each challenged to prepare and present a flight of wines for group study. They were reminded of U3A guidelines viz: "The success of a group depends more on the willingness of the members to undertake study and present material than having a facilitator who is an expert in the topic."

Members now have a good knowledge of most of the wine styles commonly available in New Zealand plus some exposure to lesser known varieties like:- Arneis, Albarino, Carmenere, Chambourcin, Dolcetto, Malbec, Marsanne, Primitivo, Sangiovese, Tannat, Verdelho, and Viognier .

After convening the group for the first three years, Bob O'Hara stood down and John Wright took over. John Fleming the current convenor succeeded him. While there have been some changes in membership of the study group it remains vibrant with an average attendance of 9-10 at each meeting. We meet on the last Tuesday of each month at 2pm and there are vacancies for new members.

Bob O'Hara
First convenor U3A Meadowbank Wine Studies Group.

Individual stories.

Over the ten years of U3A Meadowbank's existence, members have participated in incidents that reflect our changing world, our changing views, our changing lives and the humour that can help us lighten our day.

Our changing world

How's this for political correctness!

U3A Meadowbank applied for incorporation in 2001.

A letter was received from the Registrar of Incorporated societies dated February 20 2001 which includes the following

"Section 64(1)(a) of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act prohibits the use of the word "BANK" in a name or as part of a word in a name without written approval.

Your early attention to the above matters would be appreciated.."

As a result of a letter from Freddie Hackshaw (Barrister) on behalf of U3A Meadowbank a follow-up from the Reserve bank was received as below

In terms of section 65(5)(a) of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 1989, an entity may use the word "bank" in its name or title if that word signifies a geographic place name. As the word "Meadowbank" is a reference to the Meadowbank area I confirm that the proposed name of U3A Meadowbank may be used"

We must value our 'precious' name!

Our changing views

Part of a speech Arthur Easterbrook gave at the 10th year celebrations of Pakuranga U3A where he had been the first 'active' President.

"What have I learned

- To keep an open mind and be receptive to new ideas.
- All contribute (even just by being at meetings).
- Use of common-sense and tolerance is necessary.
- At the U3A Anniversary conference in Auckland in 1999 (marking 10 years of U3A in NZ) the visiting President from UK referred to an activity enjoyed by some UK groups – **"Belly dancing"** – at least it made one think!
- If any activity involves learning, mental stimulation and some physical activity – this surely cannot be considered against the ideology behind U3A.
- George Bernard Shaw wrote "Activity is the only road to knowledge!"
- There must be enjoyment in what you each do, **if not, do not do it..**
- It is what members want within U3A, which is important, always with learning, enjoyment and companionship.
- Getting older I am no longer the purist I was concerning serious studies in isolation from other activities".

Makes you think!

Our changing lives

Rosemary Howell – the influence of U3A Meadowbank.

I came from the UK to live permanently in New Zealand in 1999.

A good neighbour (Margaret Tant) - knowing that I was new to the suburb of Meadowbank, told me that an inaugural meeting of U3A was to be held at a church hall in St.Heliers. I had never heard of U3A and I wondered what it was all about! Did it involve homework or even exams!

Stan Rose presided over the meeting and after he had told us of the plans for the new branch at Mission Bay - I signed up straight away.

Over the past ten years I have participated in several groups and have been spoilt for choice in the variety of subjects. At times it has been challenging, but I thought of the adage "use it or lose it", and I have never looked back.

Congratulations to everyone at U3A Meadowbank on your first decade, I look forward to the next ten years!

Some humorous contributions

From Newsletter No.6 [Reprinted and adapted in Newsletter no 65]

I'm a senior citizen

I'm the life of the party, even if it lasts until 8pm

I'm very good at opening childproof caps, with a hammer

I'm awake many hours before my body allows me to get up

I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear a word you are saying

I'm very good at telling stories ..over and over and over and over

I'm aware that other people's grandchildren are not as bright as mine are

I'm not grouchy, I just don't like traffic, waiting, crowds and politicians. I'm sure everything I can't find is in a secure place

I'm realising that ageing is not for sissies

I'm a walking storeroom of facts. I've just misplaced the storeroom key

I'm wrinkled, sagging and lumpy – and that's just my left leg

I'm a senior citizen and I think I'm having the time of my life! But I'm not sure.

Newsletter No 15 [extract only]

Profile of a Prime-Timer

Life before sixty is nothing but a warm up.....

We were there before computers. A mouse pad was where mice hung out. To log on was to add wood to the fire. A chip was a piece of wood. Hardware meant hardware, and software wasn't even a word. A hard drive was a long gruelling journey. Windows were for looking out of. A virus was a flu bug that people caught. Backing up was what you hoped never happened to your toilet, especially when you had visitors.....

Newsletter No 16

The four stages of life

1. You believe in Santa Claus
2. You don't believe in Santa Claus
3. You are Santa Claus
4. You look like Santa Claus

She joined U3A on Monday
She thought the speaker fine
She forgot to thaw the dinner
So we went out to dine...

She was out all day on Tuesday
She said it was a must
She went to both French & Bridge
But then forgot to dust....

On Wednesday it was Literature
She thought it was really fun
She had to read a book or two
But the laundry wasn't done!

Her walk took place on Thursday
She tried to be ahead

And to finish!

I guess she was really engrossed
She forgot to make the bed

It was Jazz and Art on Friday
Two things that she adores
It never bothered her at all
The crumbs upon the floor

I gave up work on Saturday
My time is now my own
But she put me on the waiting list
So I'm standing by the phone

Well. It's now already Sunday
My name has reached the top
It's U3A on Monday
I really must be off!

Newsletter No 9

So far today, I've done alright
I haven't gossiped, lost my temper
Been greedy or grumpy, been nasty
Selfish or over indulgent
I'm very thankful for that

But, in a few minutes, God
I'm going to get out of bed
And from then on, I'm probably
Going to need a lot more help

AMEN

Plans for the 10 year celebrations

U3A Meadowbank is delighted to be celebrating ten years existence in July 2010. We plan to have two formal events and several projects along the way! July 13th 2010 will see us celebrating with a dinner together where we will launch a record of our first ten years, and share throughout the evening many stories of our activities along the way. The creativity of our members will ensure a wonderful evening.

At the end of the year we will share a lunch together and further reminiscences of our years together.

There will be wonderful opportunities to thank those who have made our U3A so successful.

The future – where to now?

Many issues were raised during interviews with key people for this record of our history. It is important that we do not stand still or take the success of our first ten years for granted. The following topics were considered to be important and worthy of consideration during our second ten years!

Continuing to value the autonomy of the U3A structure.

One of the key issues is that from time to time moves have been made to prescribe activities of both groups and the committee members. Too many lists and rules can undermine this autonomy. Several interviewees thought there should be minimal bureaucracy. An understanding of the basics of the U3A principles and objects should ensure that the self-governing aspect of U3A, especially of the U3A small groups, continues to be valued.

Extending collaboration of study groups between U3As in the region.

Sometimes there are not sufficient members in one U3A with interest in a particular topic to enable a group to get off the ground. On occasion this has meant collaboration between several U3As to form a group e.g. The U3A choir in the early 2000s. Jazz, Money matters and French currently offered by U3A Meadowbank have had members from other U3As in Auckland for some time. Participation by members from other U3As can add to the learning experience.

Ensuring that new members are always made welcome and feel they can join groups of their choice.

This is a real issue with our large membership and with many members so enjoying their small groups that they do not wish to change. This limits opportunities for new members. Another problem is that our membership is increasingly ageing. How do we encourage younger members to join U3A Meadowbank?

Ensuring that U3A remains financially viable and at the same time within the financial reach of all members.

While speaker 'fees' have increased over time the membership subscription has increased only once in the ten years. Each group is responsible for expenditure of their members' activities e.g. stationery, travel costs, entrance fees and payment for docents on gallery visits etc. This gives each member the choice as to whether to participate in a particular group.

Quality of the speakers.

Several interviewees mentioned the value of quality speakers in maintaining members' attendance and interest. It is important that presentations are not a platform for self promotion, and that overt commercial and political issues are avoided. This can sometimes be difficult for speakers - "everything is political". As our city changes its ethnic makeup, we could perhaps obtain more speakers from differing ethnic groups

Participation of members.

Again a topic of considerable debate – mentioned several times a year in the committee records and by the presidents in interviews with them. What does 'active participation' consist of: is it regular attendance only, is it hosting a meeting, is it making a presentation to the group or being a 'mini speaker'?

In 2009 the U3A Meadowbank committee resolved that for the purpose of reviewing a member's participation:

1. All current groups shall be regarded as qualifying groups, and
2. A member shall be regarded as not actively participating if they fail to attend three consecutive meetings of the group without the consent of the co-ordinator of the group.

U3A Meadowbank Groups

As mentioned earlier in this booklet, the academic, social and physical topics of our study groups are seen by most as all contributing equally to our third age. As mentioned in the above paragraph all current groups within U3A Meadowbank are now accepted as legitimate groups catering to the interests of the membership. Remember Peter Laslett's Principle 9 '*The curriculum of the university should be as wide as resources permit.... Nevertheless, the preference of members will be the only criterion of what is done...*'

Meetings informality/formality balance

The opportunities for the monthly meetings and the variety of the groups to contribute to social friendships is valued by all. Jokes and funny stories shared can add to the value of humour in our lives. At the same time the meetings need to be professionally organised, run to time and provide quality speakers with a different perspective. The value of each of the groups is also appreciated when regular reports can be shared with the membership at meetings, and several stories of successful follow-up resulting from what was learned from the group . We must not lose our dynamism!

Know your history – or you're bound to relive it!

It is important to ensure that each committee member is aware of the Constitution and Rules of U3A Meadowbank, has read the 19 principles of Peter Laslett, and is familiar with the history of our U3A including issues that have been re-examined several times over the ten years of our existence.

The Last word

Lou Holder is President-elect for the 2011 year. He has kindly accepted the offer of the last word as we look forward to our next ten years

When ten years ago we climbed on U3A Meadowbank wagon few of us would have guessed what a star it would turn out to be!

In the decade we have shared there have been many world-wide events, from the feared collapse of computer technology in 2000, influenza pandemics, wars on terrorism, a swinging pendulum of democracy in Europe, Asia and the Pacific, a global financial crisis, earthquakes, tsunamis and global warming, unimaginable changes to modes of communication, information and entertainment – but not only has U3A Meadowbank survived - it has thrived.

We have been privileged to share fellowship, fun and the many learning opportunities our 40 plus groups offer us. Following the inspirational example of our founding President, Stan Rose, the nine succeeding Presidents and committees have offered their unique contribution to supporting U3A Meadowbank's aims and objects. The extent to which they and the group convenors, members and helpers have succeeded, is writ large in the affection, respect, and saliency the our U3A commands- well done everyone.

The decade to come will also bring its share of trials and triumphs. Issues such as our increasing age demographic, size of the branch, meeting venues, technology, modes of study, branch finances, multicultural role, interbranch resource sharing, taking part in regional/national seminars etc will face the next and future committees. What hopefully will not change is the opportunity to continue learning and enjoy the social activities in the friendly and inclusive environment which prevails.

Best wished to all who share and shape our exciting future

Lou Holder
Vice President 2010.

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Other sources of interest

- www.u3aonline.org.au

Appendices:

Appendix one: U3As in the wider Auckland region

Appendix two: U3A Meadowbank Groups

Appendix three: Principles suggested by Peter Laslett

Appendix One:

U3As in the wider Auckland region and their dates of commencement

1989	Remuera
1991	Takapuna Epsom
1992	St Heliers The Auckland Network began
1993	Howick
1994	Ponsonby Manurewa (Originally Manurewa-Papakura)
1995	Hibiscus Coast Auckland - North-west
1996	Warkworth [No longer part of the Auckland region U3As] Papatoetoe Papakura
1997	Devonport Birkenhead Franklin Pakuranga
1998	Parnell
2000	Browns Bay Meadowbank
2001	Mt Albert
2002	Tamaki – Eastern Bays

Appendix two

U3A Meadowbank groups - Dates of commencement, recess, or renaming. (This information is taken from U3A Meadowbank correspondence, newsletters and Study group timetables. Where there was uncertainty re dates/name of the group, efforts have been made to contact convenors and ensure the list is as correct as possible – Ed.)

American literature	Commenced in 2007 2010 Convenor – Cherry Hankin
Antiques and collectibles	Commenced Feb 2002 Into recess 2009
Art history/appreciation	One of the original groups in 2000 along with Art History Became two groups Art Appreciation and Art History in 2003.
Art appreciation	Commenced in 2003 2010 Convenor - Jocelyn Crawshaw
Architecture	Commenced May 2001 –combined with Remuera U3A under Meadowbank auspices - Into recess by 2002 Recommenced in 2010 2010 Convenor – Graeme Rea.
Auckland into the future	Commenced May 2005 2010 Convenor – Stan Rose
Awakening humanity	New name in 2010 for 'religious studies' 2010 Convenor Graham Shearer
Books and authors	One of the original groups in 2000 2010 Convenor – Sylvia Wilkins
Botanica	Commenced April 2001 Renamed 'Our natural world' early 2008
Bridge	Commenced June 2002 2010 Convenor - Joanne Fowler
Cinema and theatre	Commenced April 2001 Into recess end of 2008
Classical studies	Proposed in 2002 Commenced in 2006 2010 Convenor – Duncan Ingram

Classic films (1)	Commenced April 2005 2010 Convenor – Gay Williams
Classic films (2)	Commenced in March 2006 2010 Convenor – Carsten Dansted
Classic films (3)	Commenced in Feb 2008. 2010 Convenor – Estelle Rose
Current events A Current events B	One of the original groups in 2000 Began in 2002 because of the size of the group. Merged again into one group in 2003 – meeting in a hall 2010 Convenor – Meg Bayley
Earth sciences	One of the original groups in 2000 Recess 2003
Embroidery	Commenced Feb 2005 Renamed 'Textiles and crafts' in 2008
Famous and infamous	Commenced January 2003 2010 Convenor – Kay Spencer
Finance and investment	Commenced Jan 2002 (Became 'Money Matters' that year)
French	Commenced Sept. 2000 2010 Convenor – Gay Williams
French for beginners	Commenced Jan 2010. 2010 Convenor – Graham Shearer
Gallivanterers	One of the early groups in 2000 Recess 2010
Geography	Commenced in Feb 2003 2010 Convenor Marjorie Blakeley
German	Commenced Nov 2000 – (Combined with St Heliers U3A). Recess 2004, recommenced in 2006 as "German language and culture"
German Language and culture	Commenced 2006 2010 Convenor- Sabine Fenton

Great scientific discoveries	Commenced March 2005 and was renamed "Science and technology" in October that year.
History	One of the original groups in 2000 2010 Convenor Yvonne Kennedy
History of art	One of the original groups in 2000 as part of art appreciation Became a separate group in Aug 2003 2010 Convenor Brenda Fenwick
Irish literature 20 th century	Commenced March 2002 Replaced by American literature in 2007
Italian	Commenced in Sept 2000 2010 Convenor - Christine Fleming
Jazz 1	Commenced in Oct 2000 2010 Convenor – Ernestine Crew
Jazz 2	Commenced in May 2007 2010 Convenor – John Cooper
Local history	One of the original groups in 2000 Recess in 2003
Literature	One of the original groups in 2000 2010 Convenor - Jeanette de Heer
Luncheon group	Commenced in Sept 2003. Sometimes included as an 'official' group and in other years left off the timetable 2010 Convenor – Margaret Collie
Mah Jong	Commenced July 2002 2010 Convenor – Margaret Collie
Maori	Commenced May 2002 into recess 2003
Maths	Commenced February 2003 into recess November 2004
Military history	Commenced in 2009. 2010 Convenor – Jim Jewell
Money matters	Commenced in Jan 2002 (Originally called "Finances" on Feb 2002 study group list) 2010 Convenor – Stan Rose

Music	One of the original groups in 2000 2010 Convenor – Paddy Holder
Music makers	Commenced in Oct 2000 (With other U3As in the area). Into recess in 2003.
Opera studies	Commenced in February 2005 2010 Convenor – Robin Flynn
Our natural world	Commenced early 2008 as a development from “Botanica” 2010 Convenor – Valerie Penman
Painting and drawing	Commenced June 2002 into recess 2003 Watercolour group began in 2007 – recess in 2008
Past for the Future	Commenced in 2001 as “Preserving the past for the future” 2010 Convenor – Trish Janes
Petanque	Commenced in February 2003 - recess in 2008.
Philosophy	Commenced in 2001 into recess in 2003 and recommenced in 2005 2010 Convenor - John Wright
Photography	Commenced Feb 2005 into recess later that year
Play reading	Commenced in February 2007 2010 Convenor – Gordon Thompson
Poetry	Commenced in 2001 into recess 2005
Preserving the past/future	Commenced in 2001 – Renamed “Past for the future.”
Psychology	Commenced Feb 2005 2010 Convenor – Digby Spittal
Religious studies	There has been a religious group meeting almost continuously from 2000 but under a variety of names. Comparative religions 2000 - 2005 World cultures & religions. 2006-2007 The Bible, hidden codes and prophecy 2008. A course in miracles 2009

Religious studies (Cont'd)	Awakening humanity 2010. 2010 Convenor – Graham Shearer
Science and technology	The new name for “Great scientific discoveries” Commenced in October 2005 2010 Convenor – Peter Fenwick
Textiles and crafts	Commenced Feb 2005 as “Embroidery” and renamed “Textiles and crafts” in 2008 2010 Convenor – June Halsted
Travel	One of the original groups in 2000 2010 Convenor – Trish Janes
Walkers	Commenced January 2002 Now includes ‘long walkers’, ‘short Walkers’ and ‘Ramblers’. 2010 Convenor – Long walkers Rex Brown 2010 Convenor – short walkers Pam Drysdale 2010 Convenor Ramblers Arthur Easterbrook
Wine appreciation/studies	Commenced in 2000 2010 Convenor – John Fleming
World explorers & discoverers	Commenced in 2008 2010 Convenor – Adrienne Petri

A total of 43 active groups as at January 2010.

Appendix three

Principles suggested by Peter Laslett

The Principles, written by Peter Laslett, were originally published in September 1981 and slightly amended in 1984. They were generally accepted by the Founding Committee of the University of the Third Age but have never been taken as hard and fast rules.

Original Principles

(1) The university shall consist of a body of persons who undertake to learn and to help others learn. Those who teach shall also learn and those who learn shall also teach.

(2) Joining the university shall be a question of personal choice. No qualifications shall be required, and no judgement made by the university between applicants.

(3) Everyone joining the university shall pay for its upkeep and for instruction received. These payments shall be the sustaining revenue of the institution apart from the gifts by foundations. No support from the funds of local or central governments shall be expected or sought.

(4) No salary, fee or financial reward shall be paid to any member of the university for teaching other members, counselling them, or helping them in any way.

(5) All members of the university shall be expected to offer voluntary service to it and to its activities in relation to society at large, especially to the elderly.

(6) Members shall be prepared to help organise assistance in the way of voluntary manpower for educational and cultural and other institutions which may be able to use such manpower, and which under present conditions are prevented from fulfilling their functions as they would like. Examples are art galleries, museums and libraries.

(7) The undertaking of all members to teach as well as to learn may be fulfilled in the following ways other than instruction: counselling other members, taking the university's offerings into the homes of the housebound, the bedridden, those in retirement institutions or in hospitals. Helping the effort to provide intellectual stimulus for the mass of the elderly in Britain. Taking part in any other offer of manpower made by the university and educational or cultural institutions which stand in need of it.

(8) The university itself shall not engage in the activity of judging between its members. There shall be no examination system, neither degrees, diplomas or certificates shall be awarded. Nevertheless, classes within the university engaged in any particular intellectual or

other exercise may decide on ways of recording an individual success in the exercise in question.

(9) The curriculum of the university shall be as wide as resources permit, ranging from mathematics and natural sciences, by way of philosophy, literature and history, to aesthetic, practical and physical training. Nevertheless the preference of members will be the only criterion of what is done, and it is recognised that humane subjects are likely to dominate.

(10) The standards of the university shall be those set by its individual classes, and ways shall be devised to permit each member to find his own level. There shall be no attempt to set a university-wide standard, or any assimilation with university standards elsewhere.

(11) Studies related to the specific institution of the elderly - social, psychological, physiological - shall be included as a matter of course. They will be given no particular prominence in teaching but high priority in research.

(12) In pursuance of the aesthetic, art historical and topographical interests known to be popular with the type of student likely to be a member of the university, special arrangements shall be sought with national bodies such as the Arts Council, the National Trust, the Department of the Environment, the Nature Conservancy and the Forestry Commission, so as to obtain the facilities required to develop instruction and research in these fields. Voluntary assistance where appropriate (see above - Principle 6) shall be offered in return.

(13) Strong emphasis will be laid on research in all the university's activities. Every member will be encouraged to join in the widespread accumulation of scattered data required for advancement in knowledge of certain kinds (for example, archaeology, natural history, the history of the population and social structure, the history of climate and geological events). Every member will be expected, where possible, to have a research project of his or her own, and to write up its results. Engaging in research, however, shall not count as fulfilling the obligation to teach.

(14) Insistence on learning as an end in itself shall go along with an emphasis on the value of making things and acquiring and improving skills of all kinds. The curriculum shall therefore include, if there is a demand, and if facilities can be found, such subjects as computer programming, accountancy, business and managerial studies, spoken languages and handicrafts in textiles, metal work, wood work, bookbinding, printing and so on. Painting, sculpture and music shall be given high priority.

