



Jacaranda Journal

NEWSLETTER 1 2018

Email Address:

u3apretoria@gmail.com

Website:

http://www.u3a.org.za/U3A_PTA/PTA.htm

General meetings take place four times a year, 09:00 for 10:00, at NG Kerk Skuilkrans, cnr Cussonia Ave and Jan Alberts St, Val de Grace. GPS S25°44.580 E028°17.494.

The dates of the quarterly meetings for 2018 are 22 February (AGM), 31 May, 26 July and 25 October.

The Agenda for the AGM, and a committee nomination form, have been circulated.

The 2018 annual subscription is R100. Guests are welcome at a cost of R30 per event.

Payments can be made at quarterly meetings, or online (there is an application form on the website).

Banking Details:

Bank: NEDBANK

Branch: HATFIELD

Code: 160245

Acc. Name: U3A PRETORIA

Acc. No: 1602376972

A full list of courses and interest groups will be issued in February with an update in July.

One-day outings take place on a regular basis and longer excursions are also arranged.

You are encouraged to wear a name tag at every U3A event.

To contribute to the quarterly newsletter please email U3A, with subject Editorial Team.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2018 marks the start of a new era for U3A Pretoria. Not only are you reading our very first e-newsletter, but our AGM on 22 February will be held in a spacious new venue. Please make sure you read the last page of Jacaranda Journal which traces the journey of U3A Pretoria since its inception in February 2002.

U3A also represents new beginnings for many of our members who may have had to cope with difficult changed circumstances in their lives. The stimulation of the quarterly talks, courses, interest groups and excursions are an integral part of our organisation, but equally importantly, through these activities lasting and supportive friendships are formed. Informal chats during tea breaks and shared lunches after outings are as important as the intellectual challenges offered by the presenters!

I have been privileged to witness a rare generosity of spirit within a group of caring individuals during my 15 years as a member of U3A Pretoria, and would like to take this opportunity to thank *you*, the members, for enriching my life.

Gill Udal



UPCOMING TALK 22 FEBRUARY

Ecclesiastical Art and Architecture: England's Medieval Churches

Speaker: John Lambert

John Lambert, committee member and course leader of long standing in U3A Pretoria, will share with us his fascination with a subject he is also eminently well qualified to speak about.

REVIEW: OCTOBER 2017 YEAR-END EVENT

We were fortunate to hear the Pretoria-based **Serendipity Quartet** once again. The four elegant players, Carin Jansen van Vuuren, first violin, Tesmarie Jansen van Vuuren, second violin, Friederike Scholtz, viola and Mietze Dill, 'cello, treated us to a varied programme starting with baroque music (the Concerto Grosso Op.6 No 8, 'Christmas Concerto' in G minor by Corelli), a lively work from the classical repertoire (String Quartet in G minor Op.74 No.3, 'The Huntsman' by Haydn) and ending with the exquisitely crafted Italian Serenade in G major by Wolf, a composer from the romantic period.



Mietze lured us into listening mode by explaining that chamber music is truly a conversation between the performers, each commenting or elaborating on the musical content of the other conversation partners. As an audience we enjoyed her sharing that, and certainly the music that burst from this talented group.

Mia Rich

MESSAGE FROM THE COURSE & INTEREST GROUP CO-ORDINATOR

Last November the committee hosted a breakfast at the African Pride Café at the Botanical Gardens to say thank you to our course leaders and interest group co-ordinators. As well as giving many members much enjoyment, they have imparted new knowledge, the 'University' element of U3A. The breakfast was very well attended and all enjoyed the opportunity to socialise and get to know one another better.

Anyone can share interests and expertise with other U3A members, either by arranging a study/interest group (where all participants share in the preparation and presentation), by presenting a short course, or by offering a venue for one of these. If you are prepared to help in any way or can suggest topics for new study/interest groups please contact **Jenny Janisch** at davenjen@mweb.co.za, 012 460-8270 or 082 923-7982.



Jenny Janisch

A FEATURED COURSE IN 2017

The course: **How to listen to classical music more effectively** by **Gus de Villiers**

The course is for members who are enthusiastic about western classical music and would like to hone their musical palates. The theoretical component provides a brief overview of the different historical periods associated with classical music. Visual and auditory examples to illustrate these are presented. Different musical elements are integrated in a practical manner.

Three course groups attended in 2017 and at least one course will again be presented in 2018.

Ray Spencer attended one of the courses. Here are his comments: "It was, for me, an eye-opener (or should that be an ear- or mind-opener?) as Gus traced the development of music from Medieval times to the present, with interesting little asides into the complementary worlds of poetry and art, as well as the evolution of musical instruments and their influence. I'd never before considered music in terms of 'fashion', but I suspect that this is what Gus subtly led us to do: Some things endure; others play their role and pass on into obscurity!"



UPCOMING EXCURSIONS

The following excursions are possible options for the first half of 2018. (Some of these outings could possibly take place during the latter half of the year.) Please indicate your interest by sending a return email to u3apretoria@gmail.com with Excursions as the subject, listing your preferences by stating the index number of the excursion/s, for instance 1, 2, 6, 7. The most popular will be chosen and we will then send you further details.

1. JPO Concert/Rehearsal at 10.00 on Wednesday, 21 March. Programme: Mozart Don Giovanni Overture; Brahms Double Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor; Sibelius Symphony no 2 in D major
2. The Buddhist Temple at Bronkhorstspuit, with a talk and lunch
3. Freedom Park Museum (highly recommended)
4. A Johannesburg City Sightseeing Green/Red Bus tour via the Gautrain
5. The South African Lipizzaners, Kyalami (Sunday mornings only)
6. Renzo Vignali Artistic Sculpture Foundry
7. Parktown/Westcliff: A Heritage Trust tour of historic heritage sites in the area
8. Hartebeesthoek Satellite Station and Radio Astronomy Observatory, proposed date Saturday 19 May, **16.00–20.00**. The bus will pick up and return members in Centurion and Pretoria. The tour is limited to 50 people so RSVP ASAP!

Gill Udai

LOOKING BACK AT SOME EXCURSIONS IN 2017

BRONZE SCULPTURE FOUNDRY

On Thursday 17 August a coach full of U3A members made their way to the Renzo Vignali Artistic Foundry in Pretoria to spend the morning discovering the mysteries of casting with bronze.

The foundry is the oldest bronze foundry in South Africa and was founded in 1931 when Renzo Vignali arrived from Italy to start it. It is one of the few remaining foundries that continue to use traditional low-wax casting, a method that has been used since the Renaissance.

Arriving at the foundry we were greeted by Carlo Gamberini-Vignali, grandson of the original owner. He took us around the foundry and showed us how bronzes are cast, starting with the use of wax to create the form into which boiling-hot wax is poured. It was a freezing morning and standing watching the bronze being prepared and poured into forms was very welcome.



In the semi-darkness of the foundry watching the bronze bubbling and spitting and being poured took us back centuries, a marvellous experience. We then were able to watch the finer points of the foundry's work as the sculptures are filed and polished, creating the final beautiful works of art. All in all a most educational and enjoyable morning.

John Lambert

JPO CONCERT REHEARSAL AT THE LINDER

A group attended a concert rehearsal of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, part of their Spring Symphony Season, at the Linder Auditorium at Wits University on 15 November 2017. The programme was as follows –

Conductor: Justus Frantz (http://www.justus-frantz.de/about_justus_frantz_en_93.html)

Soloist: Gloria Campaner, piano (<https://www.operamusica.com/artist/gloria-campaner/#biography>)

Mendelssohn: The Hebrides Overture, Op.26

Schumann: Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.54

Brahms: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op.73

Ray Spencer



BRENTHURST GARDENS

In September I was part of the second of two groups of 21 to visit in 2017. Mrs Strilli Oppenheimer welcomed us in person and even took us on the first part of the tour. Thereafter we split into groups of seven for the rest of the walk through the extensive gardens (with many rugged stone steps!). Our group was led by the person responsible for all the pruning, with larger branches sometimes being later turned into amazing artworks. He and the rest of the 45 gardeners, with Strilli, start the day with an hour of Tai Chi in this tranquil setting. The admittance fee and all proceeds from the book and produce stall go to The Little Eden Society, which supports mentally handicapped people. See for instance <http://eoppenheimerproperties.com/galleries/explore-brenthurst-gallery.htm> for some images, and <https://showme.co.za/tourism/brenthurst-gardens-parktown-johannesburg/> for a general description.

Hilarie Riphagen

VREDEFORT DOME 4-DAY TOUR PLANNED FOR 2018

Participants will visit the central area of the 300-km-wide crater formed more than two billion years ago by meteorite impact, a World Heritage Site. The tour includes two full-day tours taking in the fascinating geological features in the area and historical Boer War sites on the Dome (details on <http://www.domeimpacttours.co.za/> and <http://www.otters.co.za/index.php/vredefort-dome/> respectively) both with well-qualified local guides.

The tour is based on the farm Deelfontein near Parys (see <http://www.deelfontein.co.za/>) and an evening will be spent stargazing far from city lights with the help of telescopes set up on the farm, the experience enhanced by a talk by an expert astronomer. Other activities will include visits to two Potchefstroom museums on the way down, a game drive and antique shopping in Parys, rounded off by lunch at beautiful O's restaurant on the banks of the Vaal (<http://www.osrestaurant.co.za/>).

This would be the fourth time the tour has taken place. Winter dates (around the New Moon) are chosen to suit the stargazing, and every effort will be made to keep costs as low as possible. The viability of the tour will depend on sufficient commitment by the end of March. For further details and to express your interest please contact Hilarie at hilarie@telkomsa.net.

GLIMPSES OF THE 2017 TOURS



VREDEFORT DOME 20-25 JUNE

Local tour guides, Jan Fourie (left) and Graeme Addison (right), have immense knowledge of the Dome area.



WEST COAST TOUR 20-28 AUGUST

Ann-Mari Marais (right) dwarfed by Calvinia's giant postbox.

MAGOEBAKLOOF 12-15 SEPTEMBER

Barbara Gilmour (far right) in Cheerio Gardens, truly spectacular in spite of the early heat.



WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

Those of our "Silver Surfers" who have perhaps Googled, or searched for U3A on Facebook, may have realised that U3A Pretoria faces quite a challenge to match the standards displayed by other U3As. A "Communications Sub-Committee" has been established to address this, looking at both our newsletter and our presence on social media. The original group of Gill, Hilarie, Philip and Ray has now been enhanced with the special talents of Arno Webb, Helga Nordhoff and Jean Richter.

So: **Watch this space!**

Ray Spencer

DVD LIBRARY

We lend out DVDs to members at every general meeting for a deposit of R50 per series, which is refundable only if the DVDs are returned no later than the next such meeting. You are welcome to make suggestions for new DVD series, or to donate/lend any of your own DVDs to our library.

Jacaranda Jottings...

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR HISTORY?

U3A Pretoria was launched on 26 February 2002 at the Pretoria Country Club under the chairmanship of Professor George McGillivray. More than one hundred people attended the inaugural meeting.



Of the original committee, Jeanette Serfontein and Mary Harrop-Allin are still honorary life members of U3A Pretoria, and Lesbury van Zyl is a member of Tygerberg U3A in the Cape. It is particularly appropriate that John Lambert will be our guest speaker at this year's AGM as he presented one of the first quarterly talks in 2002! Twelve courses were offered initially, and by the first AGM in February 2003 there were 23.



The move from Pretoria Country Club to Brooklyn Methodist Church took place during 2006. Apart from an increase in the cost of the venue, traffic was backing up into Sidney Avenue as members tried to gain entrance to the Club. Membership then numbered around 350, and has remained thereabouts to the present day. Excursions, to the Buddhist Temple and Maropeng, became part of the U3A programme for the first time in 2006.

George and his wife Rose moved to Knysna in 2013, where sadly he died a year later. The chairmanship then passed to Gill Udal.



Brooklyn Methodist Church has proved to be a central and sociable venue for our activities for the past 11 years, and we leave it with fond memories of many happy and informative meetings. However, the committee believes that you will all enjoy the safe parking, easy access and spacious facilities of the NG Kerk Skuilkrans. We look forward to seeing you there on 22 February!

Gill Udal

DID YOU KNOW?

There are U3As in Belfast, Belgrade and Brisbane; Costa da Sol, Delhi, Gugulethu and Ibadan; Kathmandu, Malta and Minsk; Montreal, Osaka, and Reykjavik; Singapore, Uppsala, Zelenogorsk and Zilina.

Countries include Albania, Cyprus, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Nigeria, Slovakia and Sweden.

The first U3A was established in France in 1973. Today AIUTA (International Association of Universities of the Third Age) has members throughout Europe and South America.

China has the largest number of U3As (UA: University of the Aged) with 60,000 branches and seven million members. The UK is the next most active with 1010 branches and 400,000 members. Australia has 300 U3As and 100,000 members.

South Africa currently has 28 branches, and has an official representative on the World U3A Committee, Kathrine Fenton-May, past-president of Durban U3A. More information can be found on the national website www.u3a.org.za.

The Asia Pacific Alliance of U3As communicates via teleconferences, while Russia has an online U3A at <http://U3A.niuitmo.ru/>. The world's first Virtual U3A (vU3A), established in 2009, delivers 60 on-line courses to 1100 members. Anyone can join (<http://u3aonline.org.au>)!

To learn more about U3As around the world, do read the monthly magazine, Signpost, on www.worldu3a.org.

OWN YOUR NEWSLETTER!

This newsletter is a work in progress. If you would like to propose a catchy alternative name for the letter, together with a matching title for the last page, we would like to hear from you. You might even win a prize!

Likewise, the logo displayed in this issue is not cast in stone. In fact, three more possibilities will appear in coming issues, to be voted on at the end of the year. If you have a creative idea for a new logo for U3A Pretoria that captures the spirit of U3A, and of our U3A in particular, do send it along. Who knows, it could be one of the four top contenders. Another logo will be added to this slot each quarter.

