

**March 2021**



**Browns Bay Newsletter**



**Guest Speaker**

**Peter Kammler**

**Truly environmentally  
friendly or not?**

The truth is, an environmentally friendly car would be difficult to find. At best, there are various degrees of unfriendliness.

Peter Kammler has a diploma in engineering, and he has worked at the engine development division of Mercedes-Benz.

Peter will give a quick historic view of the automobile's propulsion systems. He will explain why the internal combustion engine (gasoline or diesel) has dominated our road transport for one hundred years, and why this dominance is now coming to an end.

Then, to help make decisions about the environmental footprint of a car, he will explain where exactly the energy goes. This includes both the fuel consumption and, not to forget, the energy needed to build the car.

Electric cars have merits but, unfortunately, even with our high proportion of electricity from renewable sources the electric car is not as environmentally harmless as one might assume.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello members,

We have been lucky enough in February to enjoy beautiful weather and in my case, a very plentiful crop of tomatoes. Have you seen the advertisement on TV where a man looks across the table to his partner and her head has become a tomato? I can identify with that. I am not complaining, next summer I might not have a good crop at all and I will be very sad.

I very much enjoyed last month's speaker on 'Living with Volcanoes', Dr Ian Smith, and went home and checked out my emergency kit. Luckily, because of Covid lockdowns, I am still maintaining food stocks (and toilet paper) to last more than a week – or month? John Reynolds' presentation on behalf of the Film Appreciation SIG was very entertaining and well-presented. Thanks to both. A great start I feel to activities for the year. I am looking forward to our next ones.

Val Lloyd President

## NOTICES

### **Autumn Twilight meetings**

We have a new initiative of offering an open series of evening presentations generally on the second and fourth Tuesdays in March, April and May. These will be held in the **Sherwood Room at the Heart of the Bays** (formerly the Browns Bay Community Centre). The presenters are members of various SIG groups and the topics vary widely.

## **Noticeboard**

The Committee will be trialling a noticeboard at our main meeting for health and welfare information sent to the club over the previous month that is of potential interest to club members. This month we received a brochure on macular degeneration that will be posted on the board. This will not include information of a purely commercial nature such as advertising material from retirement villages.

## **Potential new SIGs or PopUp SIGS**

Our Publicity Co-ordinator Lucy Casey has researched what other U3A's offer and has come up with a list of potential new SIGs or PopUp SIGs for our club as follows:

- Antiques
- Astronomy
- Classics – study of the Iliad and Odyssey
- Craft – wool, patchwork, embroidery
- Dancing – square, ballroom, jazz
- Early NZ history
- Famous and infamous people/ actions
- Foodies – tasting the food of different cultures, fads and cooking styles
- Genealogy/family history/ family tree – including how to access resources, best websites etc
- Green fingers/Gardening – could include a mix of visits to members gardens and public gardens as well as talks by local subject matter experts
- NZ geology, geography
- Poetry
- Prehistoric mysteries
- Remarkable women
- Shakespeare – his life and times

- Technology
- Theatre visits
- Wine studies
- Writing your memoirs/stories for your grandchildren

More information will be provided at our meeting in March as well as opportunities to show your interest.

### **U3A Auckland Network Meeting**

The Auckland U3A network advises their annual network luncheon will be held on

**Thursday 29 July 2021**, 10.00 am – 2.30pm.

### **Special Interest Groups**

All members should be part of at least one special interest group. If there is a talk on in one of the groups that you would like to attend phone the convener and see whether they are happy for you to attend.

### **Special Interest Groups at another U3A**

Members visiting a SIG at another U3A may be required to make a payment at the discretion of that SIG group.

### **New Inquiries to join U3A**

If you know anyone who is interested in joining our U3A, click the Contact page on the website.

## **SIG REPORTS**

### **Active Travellers**

Gay and Barry Brennan gave a presentation titled “Canals and Bulbs’ on their trip to the Netherlands during Springtime. While staying on a moored houseboat on a canal in the old university city of Leiden, they visited the lovely old nearby towns of Gouda, Delft, and Haarlem, as

well as the cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. A big focus of their trip was seeing the Spring bulbs and was timed for them to view the annual Flower Parade or Bloemencorso, first illuminated at night and then the next day, on its way for 42 km from Noordwijk to Haarlem. They visited the bulb fields in flower and the famous Keukenhof gardens which are planted annually with 7 million bulbs. They ended their trip by going to Floriade, the giant horticultural exposition which is held in the Netherlands just once a decade.

### **Archaeology**

The February meeting was held on Zoom, due to it being the first day of Level 3. Sylvia gave a presentation on the Early Bronze Age wooden circles and village that have recently been excavated at Pommelte in central Germany, and their cultural connections with the Sarsen stone circles at Stonehenge. She also talked about a recently published study of Viking-Age DNA. This study analysed DNA taken from the skeletons of hundreds of people who lived in Scandinavia during the Viking Age, 750-1050, or were buried as Viking raiders in other parts of Europe, in order to better understand the ethnic characteristics and travel patterns of the Vikings. The meeting was rounded out with a couple of short videos on (a) Stonehenge (latest insights) and (b) the discovery of the Sutton Hoo treasures, as depicted in the film *The Dig*.

### **Art History**

#### **Art History Field Trip to the Portage Ceramics Exhibition**

For the second year ladies from the Art History group made a field trip to Te Uru Gallery in Titirangi for the annual Portage Ceramics Exhibition. This year because of Covid the annual call to entries could not be done and instead of

displaying entries and the winner, the gallery exhibited the winners from the last 20 years of its operation.

It was a very interesting collection of widely diverse styles, sizes, techniques and themes and displayed both the twenty year evolution of ceramic works and the total mastery of the medium by very skilled ceramic artists. The gallery itself is a magnificent space and worth a visit in itself.

Deco restaurant in adjoining Lopdell House offers a very nice selection for lunch with Turkish influences which we all enjoyed and would thoroughly recommend.

A very enjoyable day's outing.

The Portage Ceramics Awards exhibition is on annually from November till February and with lunch at Deco, makes a very pleasant outing.

## **Art Potpourri**

No report this month

## **Book\_Group**

We had a Zoom meeting and the following books were discussed: *Addressed to Greta* by Fiona Sussman; *The Sentinel* by Lee Child with Andrew Child; *How to Walk a Dog* by Mike White; *Akin* by Emma Donoghue; *Tidelands* by Philippa Gregory; *The Dickens Boy* by Tom Keneally; *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins; *Mantel Pieces: Royal Bodies and other writing from the London Review of Books* by Hilary Mantel; *Wild* by Kristin Hannah; *Like Father, Like Son* by Michael Parkinson with Mike Parkinson; *Dear Murderer* by Ronda Bungay; *Conferences are Murder* by Val McDermid; *Island Song* by Madeleine Bunting; *The Second Sleep* by Robert Harris; *River of Destiny* by Barbara Erskine; *The Key to Everything* by Valerie Fraser Luesse; *The Boy from the Woods* by Harlan

Coben; *Between You and Me* by Susan Wiggs; *The Long Call* by Anne Cleaves; *Home Stretch* by Graham Norton; *High Noon* by Norah Roberts; *The Girl in the Mirror* by Rose Carlyle; *Rhythm of War* by Brandon Sanderson; *The Survivors* by Jane Harper; *Lioness: the extraordinary untold story of Sue Brierly, mother of Saroo, the boy known as Lion* by Sue Brierly; *Tell me Lies* by J P Pomare; *The Man in the Crooked Hat* by Harry Dolan; *Bad Things Happen* by Harry Dolan; *Love and Other Crimes* by Sara Paretsky and *Troubled Blood* by Robert Galbraith.

## **Books and Beyond**

No report this month.

## **Classical Music**

We had a “B” programme. First we listened to the Andante movement of Boccherini’s Flute concerto, followed by Beethoven’s second piano concerto, then Bruch’s Violin concerto No. 1 and finally a piece of Baroque music with Albinoni’s Adagio in G minor. Next meeting on 5th March is to be hosted by Bess Reynolds.

## **Creative audio visual**

No report this month.

## **Creative Writing**

A slow start to the year but we got there ! Ellen welcomed back the year with her version of all things bright. Truly all things bright A simple Hangi with friends and neighbours proves to teach many lessons to young and old. I was transported to that summer evening.

Kathy wrote of a heartfelt fondness for family, far and wide in this world and the hereafter; deep wishes for their health and happiness in this world of uncertainty

The future belongs to the young. Irene wrote of the search for freedom by the oppressed. A journey heading towards a future of hope and light.

## **Current Affairs**

The first Current Affairs meeting had two stimulating and interesting topics for discussion. The growing influence of China in New Zealand, and world-wide, provoked some thoughtful and wide-ranging discussion. The second talk was a very well researched item about Joe Biden, his background and road to the presidency.

The group has adopted a new format: each month a different member will be presenting a topic which should lead to a wide variety of topics of current interest. The presenter will also chair the meeting. The rest of the meeting will be for topics introduced by members that they would like discussed.

At the last meeting the members reached a consensus on running the meeting: Members should take turns in contributing their thoughts on each topic, and that will be strictly monitored by the chairman. It was found that this gave every member an opportunity to speak without interruption and was more satisfying for all.

## **Cycling**

Ten members of the Cycling Group met at the point Erin Pools car park to bike the Pink Path/Grafton Gully to Quay Street route on a warm sunny day. We discovered that the Westhaven Drive part of the route, which has been under



reconstruction for a couple of years, has now been finished, taking cyclists and walkers out of the car parking areas, along great board walks. The Quay Street areas are still under construction as far as the Viaduct Basin area, however this busy area is well-isolated off, and even had traffic wardens monitoring the paths. Bike-traffic lights are installed all along the route, although some short-phase making for quick crossings! The Pink Path is still a delight, made even more fun by the down-hill Grafton Gully section. A great day out.

### **Film Appreciation**

No report this month.

### **Français pour rire**

Due to Covid (again!), we were kindly hosted by Fay . Trish showed us a video of Edith Piaf and then Fay provided the words and videos of her two most famous songs - La Vie en Rose & Je ne Regrette Rien - and we read the words and sang along with "the Little Sparrow" on the videos. We then continued with our Parisian young lovers saga.

Next month Heather Howarth's subject will be General de Gaulle - the most famous Frenchman in recent history. And we will continue reading about Mareille & Robert in springtime Paris as well as brushing up our French reading and pronunciation.

Thanks to all who helped with the meeting whilst Gareth was in Napier at the non Art Deco Festival!

### **International Studies**

The group welcomed 2 new members to hear Bill complete his comprehensive study of Albania in 20th Century. To conclude Dorothy had a TV video clip of the country and one of our new members Alan had visited in 2015 .So

a suitable finale of this unusual and in many ways still frightening country.

Next month Gordon will introduce us to Patagonia and further discussion about International affairs will follow.

## **Inventors and Inventions**

No report this month

## **Local History**

No report this month

## **Mah Jong**

New members welcome at all levels.

## **Medical Science and History**

Fay's presentation was on "Dangers of the Elizabethan Home": Chimneys were invented in Tudor times. Although a blessing in allowing smoke to escape from the house, they were lethal in catching fire and even collapsing on the occupants. Other hazards were the use of sugar in England for the first time [seriously rotten teeth], drowning while bringing water from the nearby stream and Syphilis which had no known cure. The main problems were lack of understanding about heat, microbes and how to construct a chimney properly. Dorothy spoke on Ignaz Semmelweis who discovered that the incidence of Puerperal Fever could be drastically cut by hand washing. Ian played an audio discussing that Hydrogen Sulphide can be effective in slowing down the progression of Alzheimer's.

Our March meeting will take the usual format – a main presentation for the first hour and then Mini Topics presented for discussion after am Tea.

## **Modern History**

Foiled again! After the disruptions of last year we were all looking forward to a 'real meeting' only to have our hopes dashed once more by Alert level closures. We have a number of very interesting presentations already in the pipeline and welcome any new members interested in learning more of the backgrounds of events and situations in our 'relatively ' recent past I.e. last 100 - 150 years.

March presentation: Erebus

## **Music Appreciation and History**

No report this month

### **Music - Mainly Classical**

Our first meeting of 2021 was held at Terry's home where he presented the music of Dmitri Shostakovich the Russian composer and pianist. Via the TV YouTube we heard some of his popular works including, The Second Waltz, The Joke Waltz and Romance (from the Gadfly Suite). We then had his Concerto for Piano & Trumpet with Yuja Wang piano and Mireia Farres trumpet and then Yo-Yo Ma playing the Cello Concerto No.1. After a cuppa we watched a BBC "Perspective" documentary on the operatic life of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.

## **Puzzles Patterns & Paradoxes**

No report this month

## **Renaissance**

No report this month

## **The Maori World**

Diana repeated her November presentation about Māori Art, attempting to answer questions about how to view Māori “art history” and the Māori view of time. Her description of the three baskets of knowledge; te kete-tuatea, (basket of light), te kete-tuauri, (basket of darkness) and kete-aronui, (basket of pursuit) illuminated their significance. Although there are several interpretations of what each basket represents, the scholar Māori Marsden has suggested the basket of life is present knowledge, the basket of knowledge is things unknown and the basket of pursuit is the knowledge humans currently seek.

Diana created her talk as an introduction to the unmissable amazing exhibition, Toi Tū Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art at Auckland Art Gallery, which closes Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Travel**

No report this month

### **Ukulele**

No report this month