

May 2021



Browns Bay Newsletter



GUEST SPEAKER:
Dr Richard Hursthouse

**Accelerating
Conservation
Outcomes**

Richard is a semi-retired GP after working at Browns Bay Medical Centre for 35 years. He is passionate about the environment and has been working as a volunteer in conservation for more than 30 years. Richard cut his conservation teeth on the Campbells Bay School Community Forest, moving on to become chair of Centennial Park Bush Society about 18 years ago.

He was chair of the Forest & Bird North Shore Branch for 8 years and is now on the national F&B board. Richard was one of the founders of Pest Free Kaipatiki and now chairs Restore Hibiscus & Bays.

He is also working with EcoNet to set up improved IT tools for conservation.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello members,

Our Guest Speaker for the April meeting, Alison Jones, provided a thought-provoking message to me about Maori-Pakeha relationships, in that as a dedicated National Radio listener, I have been struggling to understand the amount of Te Reo spoken on 'Morning Report'. A few weeks ago I downloaded a Maori language dictionary to my cell phone, and have been looking up some of the words, to hopefully gain more understanding and familiarity with them. This might take me some time, given my previous attempts to learn languages, but I feel it is worthwhile. When overseas, I have always been proud of the few Maori words I am familiar with but back home ... not so much. I am sad to say I turned my heat pump on again late April. It does seem earlier than usual, or perhaps my memory is faulty. Winter crops have been planted in the garden, all is well in the world. We hope – and trust, that Australian visitors will leave only footprints and nothing worse when they visit. For this reason we will continue to record all visitors and members to our May meeting. Val Lloyd President

The U3A AUCK Network 'Celebrating U3A in Action 2021

Registrations: <http://u3a.net.nz/>

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

Thursday 29 July 2021, 10.00 am – 2.30pm.

Venue: Westgate Baptist Church West Harbour

Guest Speaker: Steve Braunias, author, columnist, journalist and editor. In addition there will be 6 mini speakers

Potential new Special Interest Groups

Groups that we are considering starting.

- Astronomy
- Classics – study of the Iliad and Odyssey
- Craft – wool, patchwork, embroidery
- Dancing – square, ballroom, jazz
- Drama activities including play reading
- 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

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

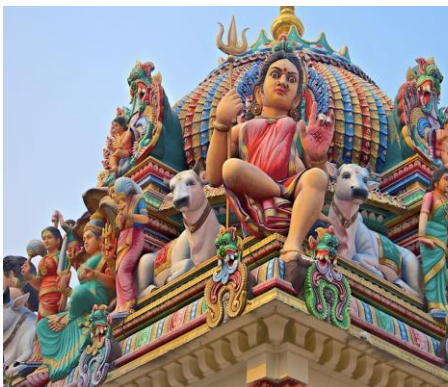
If you know anyone who is interested in joining our U3A, please pass their names onto our Membership Liaison Myfanwy Van Hoffen. Your committee has prepared a whole “interest pack” for any such inquiries. Myfanwy’s contact details are in the list of contacts above.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP REPORTS

Active Travellers

Lucy Casey took us on a colourful, photographic journey from Singapore through Malaysia to Bangkok! First, the beautiful, exciting, clean and safe city of Singapore with amazing sculptures, street food, gardens and so many temples and churches - Hindu, Chinese, Bhuddaist, Taoist, mosques, cathedrals (Catholic and Anglican) and a synagogue. Lucy visited Changi prison, a poignant reminder of the horrors of war where she found her uncle’s name recorded as a

prisoner for several years during WWII. Next a 7 hour train journey across Johor Strait to Kuala Lumpur where she saw the Petronas twin towers. Walking 272 steps up to the Batu limestone caves she saw hundreds of Batu or Long-tailed Macaques monkeys. Another train to Alor Satar and a ferry took her to Langkawi with its beautiful beaches. She took a cable car up to the amazing “longest free span and curved suspension bridge in the world hanging from a single pylon”. She flew to Penang the home of Georgetown, a UNESCO world heritage site, to follow the mural trail and experience more amazing food, influenced by the many ethnicities there - Hokkien, Hakka, Chinese, Indian, Tamils, Malays, and British. Lastly, a 24-hour overnight train from Butterworth to Bangkok where a highlight was a 5 hour trip down the small rivers where the guide bought food to be cooked for lunch in a floating market, while passing a postman, rubbish collectors, and boats selling vegetables, cooked food and other goods.



Temples



Mural art

Archaeology

Preserved for centuries on the high volcanic slopes of Argentina and Peru are the frozen bodies of young people who were sacrificed by the Incas as a gift or propitiation to the sun god. Selected as the most perfect of the children, they were specially chosen, fed and adorned before walking for many days to end their lives in the snow-capped mountains. Since 1996, a number of these people have been discovered and are now being tested for information which can reveal much of the mysterious lives and beliefs of what was the greatest empire in South America before it was destroyed by the Spanish invaders. As the Incas had no written language, science has enabled new understandings of this culture.

Art History - No report this month

Art Potpourri

Two contrasting NZ artists were discussed, Aucklanders James Ross and from Lyttleton, Bill Hammond who died in January. James Ross (husband of Gretchen Albrecht) works with often strongly coloured abstract architectural and sculptural elements. He paints on shaped wooden structural supports and has exhibited widely. Bill Hammond, conservationist, toy maker and musician, was strongly influenced by a 1989 DOC/NZ Navy month long stay he made at Enderby Island in the Subantarctic Auckland group with 3 other artists. He felt like a time traveller with huge numbers of birds staring out to sea and this was the theme of many of his unsettling and thought provoking works with half bird, half human

figures often in green and gold. James Ross describes his works in catalogues etc. but Hammond resisted doing this, preferring viewers to work out what his paintings mean themselves.

Next month's subject is the beautiful French Lalique glass. New members are very welcome.

Books and Beyond

Thelma spoke of Florian Huber's book "Promise me you'll shoot yourself". It tells of the largest mass suicide in history which swept across Germany in 1945. Vast numbers of people killed themselves and their children rather than face the terrifying consequences of the future defeat of the Third Reich. It was a very sobering presentation of an outcome of WW2 which has remained largely hidden and never spoken of. Our challenge of 'Conscience' raised much discussion and followed well from Thelma's harrowing presentation.

Our challenge for April is 'Mountains (or hills)'

Book_Group

Books discussed were:

Leonardo da Vinci by Walter Isaacson;

The Innovators by Walter Isaacson; *Astrophysics for*

People in a Hurry by Neil deGrasse Tyson;

Letters from an Astrophysicist by Neil deGrasse Tyson;

1st Case by James Patterson & Chris Tebbetts;

American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins;

Son of Escobar : first born by Roberto Sendoya Escobar;

The Berlin Girl by Mandy Robotham;

Killing in Your Name by Gary Donnelly;

Hidden Creed by Alex Kava;
This Light Between Us by Andrew Fukuda;
Proof of Life by R J Ellory;
Our Little Cruelties by Liz Nugent;
Killing for Company by Brian Masters;
Restless by William Boyd;
The Seven Sisters : Maia's story by Lucinda Riley;
The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd;
Pale Rider : the Spanish flu of 2018 and how it changed the world by Laura Spinney;
Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell;
Addressed to Greta by Fiona Sussman;
Heroes are my Weakness by Susan Elizabeth Phillips;
Trio by William Boyd;
The Other Half of Augusta Hope by Joanna Glen;
Memorial Drive by Natasha Trethewey;
Loss Adjustment by Linda Collins;
Girl A by Abigail Dean;
Can You Solve my Problems? by Alex Bellos
So You Think You've Got Problems? by Alex Bellos

Classical Music – No report this month

Creative audio visual - No report this month.

Creative Writing

This month's report covers two topics;" What makes you angry" and" inanimate objects" (how many times have I said "this thing makes me cross it never works properly!)

Ants invading the kitchen are the centre of Ellens anger at the moment. Kathy has little patience for those in the younger generation who seem to have forgotten

that "Thank you " should follow the receipt of a gift.I agree with both!

I agree wholeheartedly with Elizabeth's view that books are far from inanimate , arguing that they are "born " from thought and become "alive " to communicate "ideas and knowledge. Consider Encyclopedias . bibles and many novels that enlighten us to the thoughts and ideas of others.

On the subject of anger Irene wrote that top of her list came cruelty to children and animals. This was followed up with a debate as to levels of anger and how it is displayed; impatience, irritability, many emotions it seems can stem from one.

Our subject this month is "Fear " I have just completed mine so I need a cup of coffee to get over "reliving" that particular episode!

Current Affairs

Current Affairs welcomed three new members to our large group. The members are fairly adamant that they do not wish to split the group into two smaller groups as they enjoy the variety of opinions and discussion in a big group.

Stewart chaired the meeting and presented the main topic for discussion. He emailed the first two pages of a book 'Morality' by Johnathan Sachs to each member of the group for prior reading. His presentation was thought provoking and stimulated much in-depth discussion.

Cycling

A lovely Wednesday saw six keen cyclists set off to do one of our favourites rides, the Orewa Estuary

Ride; Te Ara Tahuna Shared Path. We beat Government by creating our own bubble with Australia, as we welcomed a new member to our group. After the first circuit, we relaxed with coffee and a chat, then five of us decided to do the ride again, this time in the opposite direction. This was also great fun, as most of the mums-with-buggies and walkers had gone home for lunch, and we were able to swoop along the paths without the fear of having to stop suddenly to avoid them. A great trip.

Film Appreciation

At our last meeting we enjoyed a clash of personalities as we watched Hollywood siren Marilyn Munroe matching Shakespearean actor Laurence Olivier in their 1957 movie *The Prince and the Showgirl*. Set prior to WW1, Olivier played a self-important potentate from an imaginary European nation and Munroe a wide-eyed femme fatale apparently bedazzled by his wealth and title but not above some conniving behaviour.

The sets and costuming were lush, in keeping with the period, but not as lush and the incomparable Marilyn, who played her part to perfection.

In his informative introduction Allan Dabaliz highlighted the problems that swirled around the making of the film. Olivier, with some justification, found Munroe difficult to deal with as she was often late on the set and couldn't always remember her lines. It was also suggested he disparaged her acting ability. However, that was not apparent in the finished product which provided our group with an entertaining and enjoyable morning's viewing.

Français pour rire

We started our meeting on ANZAC Monday morning - held thanks to Trisha at Settlers Village - with a photographic journey through Alsace in Eastern France taken by Gareth two years ago. Amongst the items of interest were a tour around Metz, a visit to a house filled with Art Deco furniture and glassware in Nancy, an American war memorial from the first World War dominating a hilltop above a leisure lake and photos from the train speeding at 320 km per hour heading towards Paris. Fay then led us through several news items, in French of course, with which we practised our speaking and understanding of French. Cecily left us with our homework "Who were the Maquisards?" Go look it up!

Next month we will be back in Glen Road (we hope) and Cecily will be leading the subject and discussion and we will continue with the story of our young friends Mireille and Robert in Paris in Spring. What will they have been getting up to??

International Studies

Gordon had done a great deal of research about Paraguay, a country none of us had visited. Its location surrounded by Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil made for early instability. The historical record of invasion, occupation by adjoining countries plus the Portuguese and Spanish have all left their mark. The country still has a huge imbalance between the illiterate/unemployed and the foreign investors who own much of the land. The wealth is created by the sale of beef

(6th largest producer in the world) , water and electricity to its neighbours.

Next month Val will look at and talk about Poland. All welcome.

Inventors and Inventions

On April 20, 14 members braved the motorway traffic to visit Ardmore Aerodrome. Our first stop was a tour by the CEO of Pioneer Aero Limited to see the restoration of vintage warplanes and in particular the final stages of a \$2M restoration of a WW2 P-40 Skyhawk fighter-bomber about to have its test flights in 3 weeks, and then shipped to its new owner in the USA. The RNZAF flew nearly 300 of the Kittyhawk version in WW2. After lunch at the Ardmore Café we had a tour of the adjacent NZ War Birds Museum by a retired RAF jet fighter pilot. The latter to be thoroughly recommended to young and old.

Local History

We were able to hold our first meeting of the year in April. We heard short talks by members, continuing our topic of heritage buildings. We learnt about the Ferry buildings and the ferry traffic ; 2 heritage churches, one which is still operating and one which has suffered fire, and is now for sale : and some Carnegie Free Library buildings.

We will have some more talks on this subject next month, May, before choosing a new subject.

Mah Jong - New members welcome at all levels.

Medical Science and History

Al presented: “Change Your Posture, Change Your Pain” which discussed the postural and structural causes of chronic musculoskeletal pain. The ways that we sit, stand, and work can have a profound effect on our chronic pain levels because they often cause muscles to remain in a chronically contracted state, which in turn results in chronic pain. The talk focused on removing the root cause of a patient’s chronic pain, which is very frequently found to be a shorter leg or smaller pelvis on one side. Correcting for such structural asymmetries, even when apparently insignificant, can often have a dramatic effect in resolving even life-long chronic pain problems. A Mini-Topic from John was on the Phases of Vaccine Development for COVID 19.

Modern History

Margaret’s presentation for our April meeting was ‘ North Korea and the establishment of the Kim Dynasty’ . She outlined briefly the history of old Korea, the brutal occupation by the Japanese from 1910 to 1945 and the bizarre (and seldom mentioned) role of the US in the partition of Korea and ensuing Korean War. All of these events helped explain how Kim Il Sung came to power , how he established the Kim dynasty and how he set North Korea on the path it is following today. Bernard then followed with a short presentation on Biden’s background and political history.

Music Appreciation and History

A DVD on the Australian singer Joan Sutherland 'The Reluctant Diva' was shown. An undistinguished singer for 7 years at Covent Gardens until she played the roles of Lucia de Lammermoor and Alcina which launched her international career and earned her reputation of LA Stupendo . Her husband Richard Bonyngge steered her into the Bel Canto repertoire which she dominated.

This Group will welcome new members.

Music - Mainly Classical - No report this month

Puzzles Patterns & Paradoxes

March meeting: Variety is the watchword for today's meeting. Heather started by having us decipher abbreviations.

John E. has an inexhaustible supply of word problems.e.g. Add a single letter to either the beginning or the end of the following sequence of letters to make an English word. You cannot change the order of the given letters: **LYLY**

Ian brought his 'marble run' - its construction was a good practical problem.

From John B:- 12 tennis balls look the same but one is either heavier or lighter [we don't know which]. We have a set of balance scales but are only allowed to use it 3 times. What are the steps to finding the different ball and telling whether it is lighter or heavier.

Fay produced an item donated to the Community Shop. No-one could tell what it is, even using the internet!

April meeting : We welcomed 2 visitors today, one a potential member and one a visitor from Whanganui.

Heather introduced the session with some "colour" puzzles: e.g. police van [black Maria], stamp issued on 1 May 1840, Glen Millar's favourite, a royal who lived from 1330 to 1376. All answers contain a colour.

John had some "Tasty Teasers". e.g. two identical children born on the same day to the same mother and father are not twins. How is this possible?

Ian showed us a tiny battery powered hover craft. The puzzle - how to launch it?

Fay introduced a book by Tim Harford, "How to make the world Add up" which deals with the use and misuse of statistics especially in these days of Big Data.

A great, stimulating morning.

Renaissance

Thelma's presentation was on portraits of Queen Elizabeth 1, showing from plain to richly adorned with many jewels. Her image, when older, still lavishly dressed but with symbols to impress her piety as the Virgin Queen.

Patricia talked to us about the portrait of "The Ambassadors", painted in 1533 by Hans Holbein. It is considered a 'quintessentially Renaissance' painting because it portrays many ideas, discoveries, attitudes

and achievements that took place in the Renaissance. We looked in detail at the layers of symbolism and illusion in the work, from the Ambassadors themselves and the clothes they are wearing, to the articles on display. These articles reflect worldly affairs (including books, musical and mathematical instruments, and a globe) ,and the study of the heavens (including sundials and navigational instruments.) The painting offers a wealth of insight into the culture of the age.

The Maori World

Pounamu, or Greenstone was valued by Māori for its strength, durability and beauty. Its link with chiefs and use in peace making gave it mana (status) and it was regarded as tapu (sacred) so it was highly treasured by all tribes throughout New Zealand, and it was extensively traded in the North Island. Ngāi Tahu have guardianship over claims dealing with pounamu. The two main mineral names are Nephrite Jade and Bowenite and the depth of green colour is determined by the amounts of iron and chromium in each rock.

Pre-European Māori used quartz rich mica schist, which is harder than pounamu to create a deep groove in the rock which would then be split off, similar to slate, to create smooth workable slices. A rock tipped stick spun rapidly using attached strings acted as a drill.

Earliest uses were adze, for carving and ceremony, weapons and jewellery.

Travel - No report this month

Ukulele



Last month eight members of the U3A Ukulele Group performed six songs to the main meeting with the audience joining in by singing to the screen projected lyrics.

The group performed "You are my Sunshine", "Mull of Kintyre", "Hallelujah", "Pub with no Beer", "Virus Free Land", "Rivers of Babylon". Many of the group stepped out of their comfort zone by singing verses solo in the "Pub with no Beer". Soloists, Sue, Garry, Fay, Roger and Ruth. Group photos and music are here :- <http://u3abb.net.nz/ukulele.html> . We welcome beginners, established players and just vocalists.