



U3A WHANGAREI NEWSLETTER



August/September – 2017

U3A Whangarei is registered with the Charities Commission

**Meetings: Fourth Tuesday each month, February to November at
10 am, St John's Church, Kamo Road, Kensington.**

Secretary: Rita Shelley 430 0885 rshelley9@gmail.com

August meeting – Tuesday 22nd

First speaker – Kaye Waring Silk.

I have worked with fabrics from a young age, but not with silk. I have been fascinated with texture all my life. My first experience with silk was my shantung silk wedding gown made by my aunt, as a wedding present.

In 2003 a workshop using silk fibre to make a scarf and workshops, at the 'Summer Do' at the quarry a few summers later, using fabric, wool fibre and silk sparked my interest. The gleam of silk when used as an embellishment in so many different ways has led me to experiment with felt, fabrics and silk.

I now make scarves, wall hangings and pictures as a hobby.

The U3A group Ancient Civilisations has furthered my interest in Silk and the Silk Road.

Second speaker – Fleming Alison, The Silk Road.

Fleming and Edna are intrepid travellers. In 1996, in their late 50s, they set off from Hong Kong, travelling by bus and train along the silk road. They had some harrowing adventures. Edna was a curiosity with her white hair and they had many living history lessons.

"Travelling as we did allowed us to make closer contact with the diverse cultures in the area, to try and understand the impact of their religions and the impact of the terrain in which they live."

September meeting – Tuesday 26th

The September meeting is our Annual General Meeting, and will follow the normal format for this. We will begin with the Annual General Meeting, which will be followed by a long morning tea, giving members a chance to look at Interest Group displays. After this we will have oral presentations from some of our interest groups. Information about elections and Interest Group presentations is elsewhere in this newsletter, and members will receive an AGM newsletter in early September.

Report on the June meeting.

Our first speaker was **Don Goodall**. Don is a natural storyteller, and he shared the remarkable history of the Puhipuhi Plateau north of Hikurangi with us; from 8 million years ago up until the 20th century!

His story, full of human interest, was a stirring tale of derring-do, as individuals and government agencies vied for the resources of this area - timber, kauri gum, silver, gold and mercury. Don had met people with memories of Americans in the area to secure mercury. This was used in percussion caps by the military and was sent all over the western world; perhaps saving us all. Did you know that mercury fumes were used for stiffening top hats? During manufacture, these fumes had an unfortunate effect, hence the saying "mad as a hatter".

Don spoke with the relaxed informality of someone who really knows his local history. He insists that history is about real people. There is a great divide between social history and official history. He recommended Jane Mander's "The Passionate Puritans", which describes the lives of people in our area.

As our second speaker had unfortunately mistaken the date of the meeting, Don agreed to continue his talk. As an encore he talked about the 'True Tales of...' series of books, collections of short pieces written by locals about their own communities. These are important stories to record, as we are the last generation with collective memories back to the 1900s and our knowledge will die with us. Our family stories are important, as they add to a greater story.

The 'True Tales of...' books can be bought at Paper Plus, and Yvonne at Book Inn has copies of them all. There are more books coming in the series and all profits go back to the local community. Read, and contribute to these books if you possibly can.

Thanks Don for your enthusiasm. It was as if we were sitting by the fireside listening to our grandfather regale us with tales of times long gone.

Brent Mawson then volunteered to give us a brief summary of his research into collaborative play in early childhood. His observations on gender differences in leadership roles were illuminating.

When working on a collective project, the males followed the lead of the alpha male. There was little discussion as they concentrated on the task at hand. The female leader, however, took on a mother role. There was much discussion and the social aspect took precedence over the task. During group play the girls wanted to

be cats; the boys, dogs. When 'riding' in a 'car', the girls clicked their belts - the boys didn't.

On a trip away from the school environment, the leadership roles changed as others were more confident in different surroundings. It was interesting to note that relationships between gender, and between staff and pupils, altered.

Thanks for sharing this with us Brent. I wonder where you stand on the nature/nurture debate?

Report on the July meeting.

Our first speaker, **Robyn Lieffering**, spoke to us about the work being done by the Bream Head Conservation Trust. For nine years, Robyn was a Whangarei district councillor, with a strong interest in the environment. In 2002 she helped to form the trust in partnership with the Department of Conservation. The trust, which manages 800 hectares, was formed to protect the history, flora and fauna of "The Heads."

A predator proof fence was not viable, so pests are controlled by traps and poisoning. Friends of the trust have planted between forty and fifty thousand trees and maintain the many tracks. Kakas have returned to the area, and in 2016 North Island robins were released.

The trust has been engaged in the Gateways programme and students have gained level three credits leading to tertiary education and jobs. Education resources have been set up and can be downloaded for all schools to use.

This is a very well managed trust that works in partnership with the community, the Department of Conservation, the Northland Regional Council, Whangarei District Council, Refining NZ and Foundation North. As ever, funding is a problem; at present the headquarters are two containers, still waiting for a roof to join them. You can help by giving a donation or by becoming a Friend of the Trust and donating your time.

Natalie Robinson, our second speaker, is a N.I.W.A. oceanographer based in Wellington, but with family ties to Whangarei. Her job is to study the interaction between ice and water in Antarctica; her topic was 'Frozen land, frozen ocean.'

She astounded us with some impressive figures - even the size of the continent compared to New Zealand was a revelation for some. The ice on the land can be up to 4 km deep, and 3 metres to 800 metres on the surrounding ice shelf. The continent doubles in size in winter, as the ice is too cold to break off. Natalie described the water movements as the 'heartbeat of the oceans' as water moves back to the tropics - each 'heartbeat' being a 1000 years! The super cooled water is below freezing point, but it doesn't form ice as the ice crystals have nothing to cling to. The flow of cold water gets warmer and forms ice. The ice contains latent heat, so the new ice makes the water warmer, and this warm water flows north. It is a lot more complicated than this, but this is basically what happens.

Natalie illustrated her talk with fascinating videos - Mount Erebus was often in the background; on the screen, and in our minds. The sight of divers under the ice, with stalactites hanging down made another world under the sea.

The equipment and living conditions of modern day explorers are in marked contrast with the hazards of earlier pioneers in this area. Natalie was adamant that even in temperatures of -25°, it was possible to work in a tee shirt if there was sunshine and no wind; the dry air makes it seem less cold. Even when on a field trip the camp has quite comfortable living conditions; electricity, warm showers, a bread maker - and even toasted sandwiches whilst on the move. A nice touch was the shots of Natalie's children at home, and the staff relaxing on the ice in their spare time. Natalie and her team are working on why oceans are warming and more ice is forming, in spite of global warming. "Something different is happening in the Ross Sea and we need to know what it is, to better understand our climate and predict future scenarios," she said.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings, everyone. Isn't it incredible how swiftly the year seems to go? The first daffodils are already out in my garden, suggesting that Spring is just round the corner.

As well as being a lovely time of year, Spring is also time for our Annual General Meeting in September. Do take time to think about the elections. Rita Shelley has served her two years as secretary, so will be resigning from that post, as our constitution requires. Other commitments mean that Rita will be resigning from the committee as well, so we need a new committee member as well as a new secretary. Carol Faithfull, our Interest Groups liaison, is also resigning, so we shall need a replacement there. I would like to thank Rita and Carol most sincerely for the excellent service they have given us.

The AGM is also the time for Interest Groups to show us what they have been doing in the past year. Please remember to let Carol Faithfull know your group's requirements - details are elsewhere in this newsletter, and Carol has also contacted group leaders. It is always interesting to see how groups choose to portray themselves.

We are very lucky in our organisation to have members who are willing to stand up and talk to the group "off the cuff," and this was very well demonstrated in June, when our main speaker mistook the date of the meeting and did not turn up. Grateful thanks are due to the three members who filled in the gap very ably. We hope that we do not have to call on members again like this in the near future, but it is good to be prepared. If you would be willing to speak to members at a general meeting for 10-15 minutes in a situation like this, please get in touch with one of our speaker coordinators.

And while we are talking about participation, the end of year meeting is not too far away. If any of you have any ideas for that, or if your interest group would like to put on an item, please let us know.

Gillian Collins

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our monthly speakers are of such a high calibre that members invariably take the opportunity to ask a few questions at the end of their addresses.

In order that we can all hear the questions, would it be possible for those asking the questions to stand up to address the speaker, and to ask the question loudly and clearly, so that everyone can be aware of the enquiry or comment?

Being able to hear members' questions has been a long-standing (pardon the pun) problem, and I am sure we would all appreciate such a gesture.

Frances Allan

INTEREST GROUPS

These include:

Adventures in food, Art and Society, Book Groups (3), Current Affairs, Deaf Poets Society, Drawing for Pleasure, Early Civilisations, Famous and Infamous, Geology, Local Interest, Mah Jong, News Forum, NZ History, Pen Pushers, Petanque, Philosophy, Playreading (2), Outline of Literature, Shows Exhibitions and Explorations, Travel

CALLING ALL INTEREST GROUPS

Get your thinking hats on, Interest Groups – it is your chance to show members something of what you have been doing in the past year. We hope all groups will participate in the "Show and Tell" section of our AGM.

You may choose either to prepare a visual display or give an oral presentation lasting 2-5 minutes, or you may have some other ideas for a novel way to let us know what you have been doing. We would love to see a group come up with something different – a power point presentation? a puzzle? an original piece of drama? I know there are many of you out there with plenty of skill and imagination.

Would group leaders PLEASE let Carol Faithfull know by 21st August what form your presentation will take, and what you require in the way of power points, tables or display boards.

The hall will be open from 8.45am on the day of the AGM if members want to come in early to set up displays.

September Meeting Tuesday 26th

The September meeting, in addition to having a stimulating programme, will also be the **Annual General Meeting**. An AGM newsletter will be sent out in early September.

Interest Group Report. We are again asking Interest Groups to present their Annual Report in any form they wish at the AGM. Please let Carol Faithfull know by 21st August the form your report will take. She needs to know what equipment you need, such as boards, tables, PowerPoint and whether you need time at the meeting (maximum five minutes) to make your presentation. We are now seeking nominations for committee members for the year from October 2017 to September 2018. There is always a place on the committee for fresh faces, new ideas and enthusiasm.

We need a new secretary and an interest group coordinator.

If you would like to be nominated for a position, or to nominate someone else, please fill in the form below. If you have any queries, phone any member of the committee. Nomination forms can be accepted only from financial members.

Forms should be handed to the secretary, Rita Shelley, or posted to her by Tuesday, 12 September.

Nominations can also be made at the Annual General Meeting.

2017 Nomination Form for U3A Officers and Committee

I nominate _____

For the position of: _____

Signed: Proposer _____ Date: _____

Signed: Seconder _____ Date: _____

I agree to my nomination being put forward-

_____ Date: _____

**Life is not a journey
to the grave
with the intention
of arriving safely
in a handsome
well preserved body
But rather
to skid sideways
thoroughly used
totally worn out
and loudly proclaiming
“Gosh! – What a Ride!!”**