



Supporting
Lifelong Learning

Howick Inc.

PO Box 39035
Howick 2145
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FINAL EDITION



**COMMITTEE
2019-2020**

DAVID DWERRYHOUSE

President/Membership

GERALDINE ROSE *Vice President*

MARGARET NICHOLLS

Immediate Past President/Director of Studies

CORA YOUNG *Secretary/Auckland*

U3A Network Liaison

JONI BURGESS *Treasurer*

CHUA HUCK CHENG *Newsletter Editor*

WARREN YARDLEY *Guest Speakers*

ROSEMARY OVENS *Almoner/Welcomer*

MARY KENNEDY *Minutes Secretary*

MEETING CANCELLED

THE April 13 general meeting is cancelled on account of the Covid-19 restrictions. Our meeting venue is also closed indefinitely. Interruptions could last a while as the virus situation is dynamic. Members will be notified in good time of the status of the AGM scheduled for May.

***ENJOY -- YOU EARNED
IT, BEVERLEY***

TWO-time president Beverley Luxton (picture), who has resigned from the Howick U3A, received a warm tribute last month at a members' appreciation. A founding member at Howick U3A's inauguration in 1993, she had been a member for 26 years and was its first almoner. Her close friend Jessica Pybus, who led the tribute, and Mrs Luxton, in her response, offered in concert a glimpse of the early eventful days when roll call was casual – that's putting it mildly - and organisation was loose. The take-charge person that she was, Mrs Luxton got onto the committee, whipped things into shape and was elected president in 1999-2000. She served a second term in 2012-2013, the only member so far to have been president twice. She had varied interests – art, history, architecture. And did you know she was a prize-winning potter? She once won a Fletcher competition. In her later years in the U3A she led animated discussions at her apartment as convenor of the Forum group. Mrs Pybus spoke also of the elaborate teas the host prepared -- a demonstration, she said, of another talent of hers. Her closing remarks: "We'll miss you Bev. We wish you a very happy and well-earned retirement." Hear, hear.



Picture Chua Huck Cheng

STUDY GROUP

MEETINGS SUSPENDED

ALL study group meetings are suspended until the government declares it is safe for gatherings to be permitted. Hence the absence of the study group calendar in this issue of the newsletter. The committee will communicate with convenors by email or phone during the lockdown period. President David Dwerryhouse advises convenors to keep in touch with their members and relay information to them, particularly those living alone and who do not use a computer. He says they should not feel isolated.

COVID-19 HEALTHLINE 0800 3585453

CALL your GP or the number above if you think you have Covid-19 symptoms. If you are severely unwell and have breathing difficulties call 111 if you can't get through to your doctor or the Healthline, the Ministry of Social Development advises.

NEWSLETTER

STAYS OPEN

THE newsletter will continue to appear during the suspension of Howick U3A activities, although in abbreviated form. It will carry committee decisions and latest information of relevance to members. The May newsletter will advise members on whether or how the AGM will proceed.

RESIGNATION

WARREN Taylor has resigned effective March. He participated fully in Howick U3A activities and was convenor of the Travel group.

NEW TRAVEL CONVENORS

DAVID and Adrienne Teape have been chosen as joint convenors of the Travel group by members in remote voting.

PASSING

WE record the passing of Lynley Spurdle on March 17 2020.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE subscription of \$20 may be paid from May. Members are asked not to send cheques but encouraged to pay online to ASB account **12 3040 0556154 00**. Be sure to include your name. Cash payments are acceptable when we resume monthly general meetings.

SORRY, CHORAL

SYMPOSIUM IS OFF

MEMBERS who responded to a call for volunteers to help out at the World Symposium on Choral Music scheduled for Auckland in July are advised the event has been cancelled. In thanking volunteer applicants, the New Zealand hosts expressed regret over the scrapping as this multinational event was to be a big deal for the country and for fans of massed voice.

REPORT ON LAST MONTH'S TALKS

HILARY ARROWSMITH:

LIBRARIES AS A MUST-HAVE

GUEST speaker Hilary Arrowsmith, Auckland Libraries' facilitator of e-services, likened public libraries to life's necessities like food, water and shelter. "You can't live without them," she declared confidently. Many seniors could agree. They are among the most avid of library users, to judge from the armload of books you commonly see seniors emerging with from libraries. Schoolchildren, too, to aid in project work and possibly to score one over their classmates.

But Ms Arrowsmith was here last month specifically to acquaint seniors with online access to the wealth of information, fiction and news media content that Auckland Libraries provides in its portals. There is also audio and video content. You could get overwhelmed by the volume and breadth of what is available.

As an example, news consumers can choose from 2,400 newspapers from 100 countries in some 600 languages. As for magazines, there are 3,700 titles from around the world, including New Zealand ones.

Readers of fiction who do not wish to be saddled with checking out physical books can read e-books and e-audiobooks by going through the website, if the use of mobile apps is not your thing. Books can be borrowed online: just have your library card and pin ready to enter the books catalogue. There are 180,000 titles in the catalogue, truly a world of plenty.

She said 20,000 people log on to the Auckland Libraries website (aucklandlibraries.govt.nz) daily. That's a modest number for a million-plus population. Perhaps, the available e-service is not widely known? Part of her mission in going on community rounds giving talks before such as the U3A and service clubs is to grow the numbers, letting people know that obtaining content is only a few mouse clicks away.

Can seniors be weaned away from making trips to the local library in favour of clicks? The indefinite closure of libraries throughout Auckland on account of the Covid-19 situation could fortuitously act as a spur. For those who are not computer-adept her message was to use the main Auckland Libraries portal as the entree, beyond which lies an infinite variety of words, sounds and images. She advised users to save a shortcut to the aucklandlibraries.govt.nz website and use that to gain quick access on mobile devices.

Of course, one must be a member of any of the 55 branches of the Auckland Libraries network. An e-membership application can be made on the network website.

JUDY WILSON:

ON THE TRAIL OF A DAIRYMAID'S DRESS

THE Howick Historical Village is much more than a curated microcosm of community life lived in 19th century Howick. It holds also a collection of artefacts covering the period from the mid-19th century to the early 1990s. Most of the 2,000 objects do not have their history of ownership and use recorded, just donors' names entered in a ledger.

One notable item is a 1840s dress pictured here, made of fine hand-sewn wool cloth and finished with porcelain buttons and velvet braid on the sleeves. As you can see, the dress wears its age well. It had no annotation. Our own Judy Wilson, a member of the Village Society, was so intrigued by it she sought to trace its provenance.

The detective work she narrated in her 10-minute talk was a piecing together of family papers, scraps of jottings and wartime letters belonging to the garment's putative owner, a Jimmy Grigg, who had seen service in WWI. Grigg's nephew also provided an account. The dress had been found in a trunk filled with old clothes belonging to Grigg's grandparents.

It turned out that the grandfather James, an ornamental stonemason who did work in stately homes in England, was the link to an old English world of peers – Lord Lyttelton, after whom the port near Christchurch was named – and a British prime minister through the Lytteltons' marriage, William Gladstone.

To cut a long story short: James had married Grigg's grandmother Ellen, who worked as a dairymaid and cook in the same Lyttelton household where, Mrs Wilson's research found, he had crafted "fireplaces and marble benches". The young marrieds then decided to start a new life in New Zealand, an uncommonly brave venture to undertake in those times. They set sail from Liverpool in 1859 for Auckland. Among the favourite things she brought with her was this dress.

Mrs Wilson surmises it was a parting present from Lady Lyttelton before she died, perhaps for Ellen's wedding. As she described it the dress was of a style and fabric superior to what a dairymaid might have worn. In other words, an item for keeps. Ellen must have thought so: it was believed she rarely wore it in her new home on this side of the world. It was kept in a trunk, which takes us back to the beginning of a quite fetching story. As for Grigg, who never married, he continued to live in his grandparents' turn-of-the-century cottage near Whitford until his death in 1978.

Postscript: Judy Wilson's project at the Village called *Forgotten Dresses* has been turned into a film. She has a DVD available for members' viewing.



Picture courtesy of Howick Historical Village

