



Supporting  
Lifelong Learning

**Howick Inc.**  
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Howick 2145  
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**FINAL EDITION**



#### **COMMITTEE 2018-2019**

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**BEVERLY JIN** *Ten-Minute Speakers*

#### **CHRISTMAS TEA MEETING**

**December 10, 9.30 am in the Howick Bowling Club basement**

**9.30: Study group reports**

**10.15 to 11: Morning tea**

**11 to 11.45: John Hartley the Laughing Policeman**

#### **HISTORY 1: A DAUGHTER REMEMBERS**

SHEILA RUSSELL, one of the two featured guest speakers last month, offered a poignant portrait of her mother as a weaver in a textile mill in England when factory conditions and workers' rights weren't that much advanced from the later stages of the Industrial Revolution. The year was 1916. Fighting was raging among the old empires of Europe, a conflict historians were later to record as the First World War. Under such inauspicious conditions did Sheila's mother present herself one cold morning, before sun-up, at one of those "dark, satanic mills" to learn a trade making cotton fabrics for export. She had just passed age 10; this was the morning of her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday. Not for her birthday cake and laughter; these were times of life lived in the raw. There was a law which forbade child workers, but who was checking?

The tough grind beginning at a young age was typical for many families in those times, as were the financial strains which made early working life necessary. In her mother's case, she had been denied an opportunity to continue schooling by her father despite having been given a shot at a scholarship. He thought girls needed only so much schooling. Besides, she as the first-born had to help out. Sheila's mother put her head down, mastered her craft, avoided machine injuries that could have put her out of work and even made time for excursions and community events to lighten the tedium. At one of these functions, a band concert, she met a young man, a base baritone described as having a "beautiful voice, ash bond hair and a moustache to match". They married eventually.

Ms Russell described her mother as a child of the twentieth century for having lived through the two world wars. This was at once a family history rich with detail of a bygone era, and a gritty account of factory life which bore echoes however faint of Dickens's England.

#### **HISTORY 2: NO VICTORS IN WAR**

JUDY LEE filled the 10-minute speaker slot with distinction, her subject the First World War in keeping with the centenary of the 1918 Armistice in Europe that brought an official end to hostilities, even if inconclusively. New Zealand bore its share of the fallen. Ms Lee's was a harrowing if humanising account of the casualties of war told from the vantage point of one whose ancestors had fought in the trenches but who spoke little of their experiences. She sought to fill the gaps with independent research.

What she learnt was a tale of young men, some in their teens, changed forever by the horrors of combat -- some maimed, some damaged psychologically, some sealed in an internalised silence even their families could not penetrate. After the last of the armistice agreements was signed, New Zealand troops had to endure long delays before being shipped home. Little mutinies erupted as a result. Some got back two years after the end of the fighting. Once home, the overwhelming sense they felt was one of relief mixed with trepidation about what being demobbed meant. Most just wanted to be left alone. They had no wish to be celebrated like tin gods, said one.

The most moving part of Ms Lee's talk was about the domestic tensions that arose when husbands, sons or brothers had trouble adjusting to the "re-entry". What we now know as post-traumatic stress disorder was a common debilitation the men encountered. Womenfolk had to juggle jobs and looking

after extended families, as it were, as their men could not or did not work. It was especially hard on children who were fearful when their father went to war and were now “frightened and confused by the changes in him, not knowing how to communicate with him... They didn’t always react well to the return of the man who had been portrayed as a ‘hero’.” Essentially, they became strangers in their own home.

But it was not all depression, alcoholism, rage and regret over what war had wrought. Ms Lee found in her research ample instances of returnees who resumed civilian life smoothly and productively. These men had found jobs, they had financial support and help from supportive families. It was revealing these happier tales were of men who had slight injuries and drank lightly.

Ms Lee closed appropriately with that well-known lamentation of war narrations – Lest We Forget. Indeed.

### ***HISTORY 3: A HITLER RELIC***

MURRAY CLENT, who shared the guest speaker slot with Sheila Russell, took his audience up the Bavarian Alps in southern Germany for a vicarious look at Hitler’s mountain retreat, one of the few Nazi-era structures still standing. He and his wife Barbara had been on a tour of Europe and this visit to the so-called Eagles Nest was a highlight.

This is a granite structure perched some 2,000m up on a ridge amidst the alpine splendours near the border with Austria. It was gifted to Hitler on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday on behalf of the Nazi Party. It was here that Hitler and his trusted lieutenants like Hermann Goering and Martin Bormann entertained like-minded guests, people bent on domination by force of arms. The Italian strongman Mussolini was an honoured visitor.

In the closing stages of the Second World War, Royal Air Force bombers damaged the Obersaltzberg township in the vicinity but spared the Eagles Nest. But when American troops captured the township later, they plundered the Eagles Nest and made off with its contents. Marble pieces were hacked off the enormous fireplace for souvenirs. Looters in war come in all uniforms.

Eight decades after the end of the Third Reich which Hitler had declared would last a thousand years, the Eagles Nest has become a popular tourist destination, if a grim reminder of Europe’s tumultuous past. Mr Clent recommends it thoroughly.



### **FUN TIME**

**JOHN HARTLEY (illustration) the Laughing Policeman will make a special appearance as speaker-entertainer. He will recount funny episodes in his time in the police force and use police props to act out skits. He served for many years in the force in Britain and in Pukekohe, south Auckland, as a rapid response driver attending to emergencies.**

### ***TO CONVENORS***

PRESIDENT Margaret Nicholls expresses thanks to group convenors for a good discussion she had with them last month. Progress was discussed and ideas shared on how to keep the groups vibrant. As concurrent Director of Studies, she has prepared material for convenors’ information which she will send out next year. The President wishes all a wonderful summer.

### ***NEW CONVENOR FOR OPERA 1***

OPERA 1 has a new convenor. Jean Denholm takes over from Hilary Patterson, who has resigned. Ms Denholm will be assisted by Moira Burns and Rosemary Ovens. Ms Patterson is thanked for her contributions.

### ***‘DO JOIN US’***

OPERA 2, Famous and Infamous 1 and Poetry have room for more entrants. Call the respective convenors -- Geraldine Rose (5371917), Peter Garrick (5354085) and Beth Voogd (5347468).

### ***NEWEST MEMBER***

WILLEM Van Rheen (sponsor Cora Young) is our newest member. He has varied interests and could be joining the Ancient Civilisations, French, Science, Earth-Universe and World of Art groups.

### ***NEW EMAIL***

JEAN Denholm has changed her email address to [denholmjean1@gmail.com](mailto:denholmjean1@gmail.com).

## **NEWSLETTER TAKES A BREAK**

THE newsletter will not appear in January. Happy holidays from the Editor.

## **BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS**

THE **Financial Times** pick of best books of 2018 is just out. This is a selection:

### *NON-FICTION*

**Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World** by Anand Giridharadas, who takes a swipe at the global elite.

**Bad Blood** by John Carreyrou. A hugely successful Silicon Valley medical start-up by a young woman that turned out to be a huge con.

**Dreamers: How Young Indians Are Changing the World** by Snigdha Poonam. Half of India's population -- that's 600 million people -- are under age 25. Implications for the world are enormous.

**Dictatorland: The Men Who Stole Africa** by Paul Kenyon. About how strongman rulers have stolen their countries blind.

**Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know: The Fathers of Wilde, Yeats and Joyce** by Colm Toibin. Delves into the complicated relationships between three Irish literary greats and their fathers.

### *FICTION*

**A Long Way From Home** by Peter Carey. The Australian novelist tackles his country's relationship with its indigenous past.

**Middle England** by Jonathan Coe. Echoes of Brexit in this tale.

**Normal People** by Sally Rooney. A popular lad and a reclusive girl are strangely attracted to each other.

THE **New York Times** 10 Best Books of 2018, just out:

### *NON-FICTION*

**Educated** by Tara Westover. Memoir of a girl in deepest backwoods America who knew no formal schooling until she started college, then went on to a PhD at Cambridge.

**Small Fry** by Lisa Brennan-Jobs. About life (or lack of) with her famous absentee father Steve Jobs.

**How To Change Your Mind** by Michael Pollan. The campaigner for ethical eating turns his attention to the history and science of psychedelic drugs.

**Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom** by David Blight. Portrait of a man who rose from slavery to become Abraham Lincoln's conscience.

**American Prison** by Shane Bauer. Horrors exposed by an undercover guard of the US multi-billion dollar business in commercially-operated prisons.

### *FICTION*

**Asymmetry** by Lisa Halliday. Two seemingly unrelated stories but what a connection.

**The Great Believers** by Rebecca Makkai. The Aids epidemic and a mother's search for her estranged daughter.

**The Perfect Nanny** by Leila Slimani. Twisted tale of a trusted nanny who murders the two children in her care.

**There There** by Tommy Orange. A group of Native Americans ponders and reflects on this and that.

**Washington Black** by Esi Edugyan. From slavery to endless possibilities, wondrous imaginings of exploration and discovery.

## **OUT AND ABOUT**

++ **OPERATUNITY** opens its 2019 season with **Luck of the Irish**. The publicity blurb says there will be "frenetic fiddling, poignant ballads, quirky ditties and of course some Irish jokes." Be prepared to wince at All Blacks jokes after that humblin' in Dublin. But nice if the singers can do Enya imitations. Feb 5, 11 am, at St Columba Church, Ti Rakau Drive. Single tickets \$35, group discounts available. For online bookings go to [bookings@operatunity.co.nz](mailto:bookings@operatunity.co.nz) or call 0508 266237.

++ **ALADDIN** the Broadway musical opens Jan 3 at The Civic. Season till March 3. Presented by Disney Theatrical Productions, what Aucklanders will see is largely an Australian effort. Tickets \$65 to \$190 from Ticketmaster ([ticketmaster.co.nz](http://ticketmaster.co.nz)) or call 0800 111999. The show runs 2½ hr with intermission. See [aladdinthemusical.co.nz](http://aladdinthemusical.co.nz) for show times.

++ **NINE Lessons and Carols**, an evening of carols and readings, at **All Saints Anglican Church**, Howick, on Dec 20, 7-8 pm.

<u>Groups (yellow denotes full)</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Convenor</u>
Ancient Civilisations 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon, 1 pm	Jan 21 ( <b>Dec no meeting</b> )	Cora Young's 55 Rodney St	TBA	Cora Young 534 8623
Anthropology H 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs 10 am	Feb 21 ( <b>Dec, Jan break</b> )	BM Theatre	Potpourri	Jennie Leyland 534 4034 Betty Reid 534 9895
Anthropology L 4 <sup>th</sup> Mon 10 am	Jan 28 ( <b>Dec no meeting</b> )		Lunch – venue TBA	Margaret Hieatt 534 9131
Architecture 1 <sup>st</sup> Fri 10 am	Feb 1 ( <b>Jan no meeting</b> )		TBA	Maurice Taylor 534 8538
Book Discussion 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs 2 pm	Jan 24 ( <b>Dec no meeting</b> )		Lunch at Palmers Cafe 1 pm	Margaret Smith 576 3206
Earth and the Universe 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues 10 am	Jan 22 ( <b>Dec no meeting</b> )	BM Theatre	TBA	Clive Bolt 534 2946
Famous & Infamous 1 1 <sup>st</sup> Tues 10 am	Feb 5 ( <b>Jan no meeting</b> )	Nancy Edwards's 17 Masefield St	<i>Cleopatra of Egypt</i> Peter Garrick	Peter Garrick 535 4085
Famous & Infamous 2 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs 2 pm	Feb 21 ( <b>Dec, Jan break</b> )	Dilys Booth's 3/47 Orangewood Dr	TBA	Richard/Moira Burns 533 8793
Famous & Infamous 3 1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs 10 am	Feb 7 ( <b>Jan no meeting</b> )		TBA	Jean Fitzgerald 577 5546
Forum 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fri 10 am	Feb 15 ( <b>Dec, Jan break</b> )	Beverley Luxton's 1 Village Dr, PPV		Beverley Luxton 576 9625
French 4 <sup>th</sup> Fri 1 pm	Jan 25 ( <b>Dec no meeting</b> )	David Dwerryhouse's 74A Aberfeldy Ave	Ideas for 2019	David Dwerryhouse 534 4829
History 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues 10 am	Jan 15 ( <b>Dec no meeting</b> )		TBA	Judy Lee 535 8547
History of New Zealand 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs 10 am	Dec 13 <b>Feb 14 next</b>	Maurice Taylor's 6 Stevenson Way	<i>Sir John Franklin</i> Garry Law, and potpourri	Alan La Roche 534 7366
Literature 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed 10 am	Feb 20 ( <b>Dec, Jan break</b> )	Judy Wilson's 32 Butley Drive	<i>The Odyssey</i> Peter Becroft	Judy Wilson 576 6340
Nature Walks and Talks 2nd Fri 9 am	Dec 14 <b>Feb 15 next</b>	Meet Mellons Bay carpark	<i>Walk up the valley and back</i>	Alan La Roche 534 7366
Opera 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues 9.30 am	Dec 11 <b>Feb 12 next</b>	BM Theatre	Rossini's <i>Barber of Seville</i> Conclusion, then lunch	Jean Denholm 534 6844
Opera 2 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues 1 pm	Feb 26 ( <b>Dec, Jan break</b> )	BM Theatre	Verdi's <i>Otello</i> (Placido Domingo, Renee Fleming)	Geraldine Rose 537 1917
Philosophy 1st Mon 10 am	Feb 4 ( <b>Jan no meeting</b> )	BM Theatre	Each to offer taster of a topic for 2019 planning	Christopher Nixon 535 5309
Poetry 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues 2 pm	Feb 12	Colleen Williams's 1/139 Clovelly Rd	Discuss plans for 2019	Beth Voogd 534 7468
Science 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed 10 am	Feb 27 ( <b>Dec, Jan break</b> )	BM Theatre	Potpourri	Jim Hine 534 4259
Sunday Discussion 2nd Sunday, noon	<b>Concluded</b>			Joan Clarkson 537 6397
Travel 1 <sup>st</sup> Wed 10 am	Feb 6 ( <b>Jan no meeting</b> )	David Dwerryhouse's 74A Aberfeldy Ave	<i>Travels in Europe</i> Alice and Warren Taylor	David Dwerryhouse 534 4829
World of Art 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon 10 am	Dec 17 ( <b>Jan no meeting</b> )	BM Theatre	<i>Loving Vincent</i> Animated film	Garry Law 271 6505
World of Art 2 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues 1.30 pm	Feb 19 ( <b>Dec, Jan break</b> )	The Booths' 3/47 Orangewood Dr	Potpourri	Heather Watson 274 4747
World of Music 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed 1.30 pm	Jan 23 ( <b>Dec no meeting</b> )	Ngaire Taylor's 6 Stevenson Way	Potpourri	Ngaire Taylor 534 8538
World War II 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs 2pm	Dec 13	Barry Nicholls's 12 Liston Crescent	<i>Arctic Convoy PQ17</i> Barry Nicholls	Allan Reid 534 9895
Writing 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues 1.30 pm	Dec 11 ( <b>Jan no meeting, Feb 12 next</b> )	Marian Heywood's 1/8 Aylmer Court, Eastern Bch	<i>'That'll See You Out'</i>	Marian Heywood 534 1159