



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024



MEETING DATE: **Wednesday 17th April**

TIME: **9.30am**

FIRST SPEAKER **KATE HEDGES**
**Experiences of a Paediatric
Physiotherapist**

TEA/COFFEE

GUEST SPEAKER: **TIMOTHY BRAKE**
How to deal with waste

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The main meeting in March focusing on Medical History was a real highlight. Professor John Collins' talk about the elevation of Barber Surgeons to Gentlemen was fascinating. Right now he is working on the book (following his PhD on the topic) and Oxford University Press has already shown an interest in publishing, so it will be a "must read".

Jackie Addis' mini-talk on the history of The Bassam Hospital was also well received, especially with her personal connection to the hospital only revealed at the very end.

Every year the U3A Auckland Network meets for the day to mix and mingle and listen to two speakers who are influential in the NZ scene. This year's meeting will be held on Sat 27th July and the speakers are Emeritus Professor Paul Spoonley, a leading social scientist, and Sir Ashley Bloomfield, who became such a familiar part of our Covid journey. I have been to many of these gatherings over the years and have always enjoyed them. The invitation is printed in this newsletter - please scroll down to read all about it. The Network does appreciate early registrations. Please come along and join me.

David Addis

OUR SPEAKERS



Timothy Brake

Timothy is a chemical engineer with Waste Management New Zealand. He has had a career which has exposed him to many aspects of material science.

He is closely involved with Redvale Energy Park and Landfill, which is engineered to recover energy from Auckland's waste. Timothy is the Commercial Manager and Gatekeeper to

Redvale, which he says has given him a somewhat unique view of what really happens to our waste.

The traditional ways of treating waste – by reducing the amount we send to the recycling facility, by reusing as much as we can, and by the recycling process itself - are not really effective.

Timothy will discuss how we can only achieve true sustainability by returning waste to its constituent elements. Not all solid waste needs to remain in a solid form, as significant proportions of some wastes become liquids and gases, which can be separated, reused and recycled and returned to their original molecules.

His presentation will show the “chemical dance” associated with organic waste molecules, returning them through something called the short carbon cycle, as they have been from the beginning of life on earth.

Kate Hedges

Kate is a long-standing member of Parnell U3A.



YOUR TEA TEAM

This month your tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided by members of the Music Group.

STUDY GROUP NEWS

POETRY



Sir John Betjeman

We were a small group of 5 that gathered at David and Jill's home on Wednesday 13th March, with apologies from two members who sent poems, but what we lacked in numbers we made up for in enthusiasm and enjoyment.

The theme of the month was 'Homeland' which was expanded to include poems from our ancestors' homelands - William Wordsworth's *Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge*; Gerard Manley Hopkins' *The Windhover*; John Masefield's *Sea-Fever*; and John Betjeman's *In Westminster Abbey*.

By coincidence, four members all submitted works by New Zealand's leading Maori poet, Hone Tuwhare: *To Safe Harbour & Estuary Come*; *Hotere*; *Friend*; *Flood*; *Haiku (I)*; *No Ordinary Sun*; and *Rain*. Lauris Edmond featured twice in our selections: *Waterfall*; and *In Position*. Glenn Colquhoun's poem, *The Art of Walking Upright* delighted us with its bi-cultural themes.

Always of interest are the South African poems that David and Jill sometimes present. This time we read Keith Beavon's *City of Trees*; Roy Campbell's *The Zulu Girl*; two offerings from Guy Butler: *Karoo Town, 1939*, and extracts from *Cradock Mountains*; and Louis MacNeice's *Carrickfergus*.

Next month we look back two centuries, so if you prefer the classical poems, do come and join us.

Jackie Addis

TRAVEL

Bee Hutchings arranged an informal get-together for the Travel group in March, which was our first meeting of the year. On April 24th, the plan is to bring to this meeting a short (5 minute) talk on places visited during the Christmas holidays, or since our November meeting. We will also look ahead and plan the next few months.

That's Wednesday, 15th April, 2.00 pm, 2/31 Benson Road, Remuera.

Cherie St John

INDIA

Val Muir gave the appreciative India Group a most interesting and well-researched illustrated talk on Indian art, ranging widely in time and form from miniatures, paintings, tiles, cave paintings and carvings and ending with some impressive statues.

The dominant theme was the scintillating natural colours used in the beautiful paintings and tiles and the intricacies found in the larger works. Many of the most beautiful tiles and mosaics were imported into India by the Mughals, who incorporated these into their palaces and gardens.

Finally, Val delighted us by wearing clothes that reflected the colourful theme. A very enjoyable afternoon. Next time we will be embarking on the wonderful topic of Indian cuisine.

Shelagh Coop

MUSIC



The April meeting concentrated on “SATB” as it is known in the trade (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). This is such a vast subject we will need to feature each of these separately in future.

It was Kiri’s 80th birthday last month so we celebrated with her singing Handel’s *Let the Bright Seraphim*. She and the piece were chosen by Charles at his wedding to Diana. Diana chose that dreadful outfit for Kiri to wear which made her look like a Neapolitan ice cream, remember?

But otherwise we featured Paul Robeson, Mina Foley (the Kiwi soprano with such a sad story), Dmitri Hvorostovsky (who died prematurely), Janet Baker, Jessye Norman, and a very young Patricia Janečková (with another unfortunate story to tell). Sadly all of them are dead now.

Among those still around we heard Kiri, Renee Fleming, Amanda Forsythe and Jonathan Lemalu, all hopefully with many years of performance left to them.

David Addis

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

The annual subscription fee of \$45 is now due.

If you haven’t yet paid please pay by direct credit to the U3A bank account:

12-3030-0615683-00

It is important to put your initials and surname in the Particulars box and U3A sub in the Reference box.

BOOK DISCUSSION

Stolen by Ann-Helen Laestadius (translated)

This is the story of Elsa, who at nine years old sees her pet reindeer stolen and murdered. She knows that the meat will be illegally sold and appeals to the local police for help.

Elsa is a Sami. Sami are an indigenous race who have inhabited the Arctic circle for centuries, living on catching fish and hunting reindeer. As fish stock declined they started to farm reindeer. In the last century, in Sweden, Norway, and Finland, Sami culture has been officially recognized as needing support. Elsa, in Sweden, knows she is entitled to support, but cannot get her overworked police to confront and punish the killer of her reindeer. The book is about her years of trying to get police support.

Her efforts and frustration are a compelling story, but drawn out and repetitive. Our group would have liked a glossary. Perhaps *Stolen* had the million readers (as the cover tells us) enjoyed reading about an indigenous society living so close to their own creature comforts.

Clare Sutton



u3a Auckland Network welcomes you to a day of celebration

Salvation Army Church, 18 Allright Place, Mt Wellington
Saturday 27 July 2024 - 9:30am (for 10:00am) to 2:30pm

Speakers:

Morning: [Distinguished Professor Emeritus Paul Spoonley MA MSc PhD FRSNZ](#)

"The supersizing and superdiversity of Auckland:
how Auckland will change over coming decades."

Afternoon: [Sir Ashley Bloomfield KNZM](#)

"Public trust in New Zealand: where we are at, and how do we
strengthen public trust to build social capital and social cohesion?"

Also included are four presentations by u3a Members and lunch - \$45.00

To register go to.....

<https://www.u3auckland.net/event>

ART



March 15th saw us back at Auckland Art Gallery to take a guided tour through the *Robertson Gift: Path Through Modernity* exhibition. Another stunning exhibition in a very different way to last month's Guo Pei exhibition.

New York

philanthropists Julian and Josie Robertson donated this monumental gift of 15 artworks from their personal collection,

permanently to Auckland Art Gallery. Valued at over \$268 million, we were privileged to not only see these valuable artworks up close, but also to receive a most interesting in-depth profile of each by our competent guide.

The modern European artists' paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures include works by Paul Cezanne, Salvador Dali, Henri Fantin-Latour, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. Exhibits from the Gallery's own collection complement these, to total 49 pieces on display.

In the 1860 - 1870's artists started rejecting the rigid academic notion of art, to begin the looser Impressionism style. Later in 1907-1914 Cubism abstract, flattened art emerged. The collected paintings reflect these periods and beyond.

The Robertson living area alone (New York apartment overlooking Central Park) was home to four *Matisse: The Spanish Woman* Picassos! The Salvador Dali painting on display was homed in their toilet as Josie did not approve of the Surrealism sexual connotations. Paintings and drawings covered all the available apartment wall space.

If you appreciate art in all its forms join us every third Friday morning on our next adventure.

Sandra Ferguson, Art Convenor



FAMOUS & INFAMOUS

Beverley Teague writes:

Connie Birchfield was the mother of a school friend, Maureen Birchfield. Connie was well-known as she was the leader of the Communist Party in New Zealand. I do remember when Hungary was overrun by Russia Connie immediately resigned from the Communist Party. It struck me that she was a woman of great principles.

Their home was always warm and welcoming and there were a number of occasions when my mother and I were invited for lunch. We never left empty-handed. There were always vegetables fresh from the garden piled in our arms.



Connie Birchfield

I have a copy of *She Dared to Speak* by her daughter, Maureen, which I relied on for my presentation.

From the foreword to the book:

“My mother was notorious rather than famous. For several decades she was a prominent member of the Communist Party of New Zealand, campaigning from a soapbox and contesting both local and general elections. When Mum and Dad married he was a committed Communist. Mum soon followed.

“Having such parents wasn’t easy for Maureen or her sister Frances. But there came a time when we liked to tell people that Mum met Dad the day he came out of jail after day after serving a sentence for sedition, that she was seven years older than he was and they’d had their wedding breakfast in a pie cart. It started to feel good to have parents who were different and who weren’t afraid to stand up for what they believed in.”

Beverley Teague

SCIENCE

Nukey Poo, McMurdo: Nuclear power in Antarctica



McMurdo is the largest community in Antarctica, capable of supporting up to 1,200 residents, and serves as one of three year-round United States Antarctic science facilities.

By the late 1950s nuclear power was viewed with optimism, as an exciting new solution to both the world’s energy and social problems, including in Antarctica. Despite its reputation of being “pristine”, “remote” and “untouched”, between 1961 and 1972 it was the site of Antarctica’s first and only portable nuclear reactor, known as PM-3A (aka Nukey Poo).

During its 10-year lifetime, it produced over 78 million kilowatt hours of electricity and produced 13 million gallons of fresh water using the excess steam in a desalination plant.

The 25-man team required to run the plant was expensive, while concerns emerged over hairline cracks in the reactor and water leaks. There were malfunctions during its operational lifetime, and after 10 years of operation the PM-3A was permanently shut down in 1972, achieving only half of the expected design life of 20 years.

PM-3A and generated radioactive waste could not remain at McMurdo due to the internationally agreed upon Antarctic Treaty, which prevents both nuclear weapons testing as well as nuclear waste dumping in the Antarctic. More than 9000 cubic meters of contaminated soil was relocated to the continental US and seven enriched uranium fuel cores were shipped to McMurdo, through “nuclear-free New Zealand”.

Due to multiple malfunctions of the PM-3A and its clean-up activities, there have been concerns that the health of personnel involved with the reactor may have been adversely affected.

As a memorial, a plaque now stands at the site of the nuclear power station in McMurdo commemorating the people and services of the PM-3A. Today, all that physically remains at the site is a missing hillside and a plaque.

Kelvin Walls

PLAY READING

Animal Farm: The introduction to George Orwell's novella declares that "Totalitarian governments, usually dominated by a single leader and an inner political elite, deprive individual citizens of their rights, permit no opposition and remain in power through the use of military force and propaganda".

The director Peter Hall adapted the story and the play that we read was first performed by the National Theatre in London on 25 April, 1984. Orwell's sympathy for the underdog manifests itself in this parody of a fairy story that became a nightmare. We ended with a lively discussion of today's tyrants and their means to stay in power.

Shelagh Coop

CURRENT AFFAIRS

We had the normal wide ranging conversation with all members fully participating. There was a general consensus that, given the country's financial situation, now is not the time for tax cuts. Taking an even more radical stance there also was agreement that there should be some sort of capital gains/wealth tax.

Moving from financial matters the group then discussed social affairs. Concern was voiced about both the pace of the introduction and the widespread use of Maori expressions in the media, government departments and road signs. Despite a spirited defence of the changes the consensus supported a more conservative view.

In a discussion of bad behaviour in schools there was a contribution that this behaviour was not only in schools, it occurred in other locations as well. A worthwhile, interesting discussion.

Nick Hamilton

NOTE:

A reminder that the time of meeting of the Current Affairs group has changed from 2pm to 10am.

Also note that our normal venue of Kinder House is not available in May so we are meeting in Christine Fernyhough's home at Highpoint, 8/119 St Stephens Ave, Parnell at 10.00 am on Tuesday 7th May.

HISTORY

No report received

Garv Larson The Far Side



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Viking campfires

U3A PARNELL INTEREST GROUPS – 2024

Subject	Convenor	Phone	Time/location
The Art Group	Sandra Ferguson	021 298 8001	3 rd Friday morning of the month, 10.30am
Book Discussion	Clare Sutton	308 9788	3 rd Wednesday at 2pm at 1 Logan Terrace, Parnell
Music	David Addis	302 4141	1 st and 3 rd Thursdays, 10am
Current Affairs	Nick Hamilton	02102269162	1 st Tuesday, Kinder House 2 Ayr street, 10am
Famous & Infamous	Beverley Teague	373 4832	2 nd Tuesday, 10am, various locations
History	Tim Carter	309 9647	Monthly, 4 th Friday at 2pm.
India	Gillian Mellsop Shelagh Coop	02108379349 02108382435	2 nd Tuesday of the month at 2pm, at various locations
Play Reading	Shelagh Coop	379 5128	Last Monday of the month, at 2pm. 2/38 Awatea Road, Parnell
Poetry	David Goldkorn	021 119 7875	10am on 2 nd Wednesday at 78b Rukutai Street, Orakei
Science	Kelvin Walls	524 0038 027 280 8691	10am on the third Friday of the month at various locations
Travel	Cherie St John	520 2282	4 th Wednesday, 2pm

Your Executive

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