



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024



MEETING DATE: **Wednesday 20 March**

TIME: **9.30am**

FIRST SPEAKER **JACKIE ADDIS**
The Bassam: a small hospital in Wellington

TEA/COFFEE

GUEST SPEAKER: **PROFESSOR JOHN COLLINS**
From Monks and Barber-Surgeons to a Professional Medical Elite

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We had a good turnout for the AGM and first meeting of the year with some new members but also visitors from Foundation joining us. Some good news: Since the AGM, the Committee were thrilled when Winnie Wong put her hand up for the role of Treasurer following Warwick Osborne's resignation after many years' service. So, a big thank you Winnie!

I visited Warwick and Ngaire a week ago and found them very settled in their new apartment over in Howick, although they are already missing Parnell U3A.

The annual subscriptions are due so, to ease Winnie's entry into the role of Treasurer, may I ask you to pay these online promptly, filling in your details in the *Particulars* and *Reference* boxes. Last year a couple of members left these boxes blank which made life very difficult for the Treasurer.

David Addis

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

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

OUR SPEAKERS

JOHN COLLINS



After his medical education in Ireland, John completed his training as a general surgeon in England. He was subsequently appointed to the staff of Middlemore Hospital and the University of Auckland. He became head of one of the University's two clinical schools and head of General Surgery at Middlemore Hospital.

He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland and the Academy of Medical Educators UK. He has held a Hunterian Professorship at the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

He has recently completed a PhD in History at the University of Auckland. He is now working on transforming this thesis into a book for publication. John is currently Professorial Fellow in Surgery at the University of Melbourne and Honorary Professor at the University of Auckland.

About his talk, John says *"In this presentation, I will explore how surgery developed from a manual craft into a scientific medical discipline, and how its practitioners - the surgeons - transformed themselves from the manual workers of medicine into a professional medical elite. I will also describe the role played by socioeconomic, cultural, and religious factors in this far-reaching change, and the influence of nineteenth-century classical writers in the final acceptance of surgeons as professional gentlemen."*

JACKIE ADDIS has lived in the Parnell area since 1973 and is a valued member of Parnell U3A.



STUDY GROUP NEWS

INDIA

The India group reconvened on 13 February with a presentation on a Deccan Odyssey luxury train journey- the Maharashtra Splendour that Gillian undertook in November 2023 (delayed by Covid from 2020). Along with the delights of train travel through the highways and byways of Maharashtra state highlights included two UNESCO world heritage sites:

- The Ellora caves - a unique artistic creation with sanctuaries devoted to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, and;
- The Ajanta caves which display exquisite ancient murals and sculptures that depict the life of Buddha.



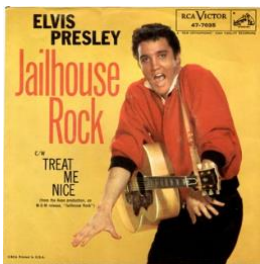
Ajanta Caves

It was an extraordinarily luxurious rail journey as there were only 4 passengers, 30 staff and 14 carriages due to a large group of Canadians not being granted visas, due to the current tensions between India and Canada. Definitely a once in a lifetime India travel experience !

Valerie Muir will kindly host the next India group on Tuesday 12 March at 2pm, when she'll talk about Indian Art and Music, at 3 Otahuri Crescent, Remuera, 09 520 1981.

Co-convenors Shelagh Coop and Gillian Mellsop

MUSIC



The year's meetings began with a musical potpourri. We each brought a piece of music that we had enjoyed over the Christmas break. This produced an eclectic range including Elvis Presley's *Jailhouse Rock*, Florence Desmond singing a wonderful song from the Blitz: *The Deepest Shelter in Town* (listen to it on YouTube), plus the Chalumeau (a musical instrument new to most of us), and Mozart, Bach, Handel and Khachaturian.

Late last year we planned to spend 2024 working our way through the 6 periods of "Classical" Music: for our second meeting of the month we addressed the Renaissance period (1450 to 1600). This was the period Polyphony was introduced, which featured especially in Church music. Palestrina and John Dowland were prolific during this time, together with lesser familiar names Jacob Obrecht, Thomas Morley, Antoine Busnoys, Adrian Willaert, Josquin des Pres and Orlando di Lasso. We enjoyed them all.

David Addis

POETRY

Our first meeting of the year was held on 14th February at David and Jill Goldkorn's home. We were a smaller than usual group, but we made up for that with our enthusiasm and lively discussions.

The topic for the month was 'Summer' and it proved to be a surprisingly challenging topic – there are many more poems about winter and spring than there are about summer. However, between us we managed a wide range of summer poems, from the 14th century Summer Song, a few from the 16th century renaissance, some gems from the Victorians, favourites from the 20th century romantic realists, and into the 21st century with poets Ruth Dallas, Hollie McNish, and our own Greg Judkins who joined our group at the end of last year.

There's plenty of room for new members, so if you feel like contributing your own favourite poems and listening to other members' choices, contact David Goldkorn (david@goldkorn.net) for details. Our topic for March is poetry from our homeland.

Jackie Addis

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The first meeting for 2024 took place on Tuesday at Kinder House. There was spirited discussion on a significant number of subjects with all participants able to make valuable contributions.

Local affairs topics included immigration, and the need for infrastructure to support it, measles jabs, bias in the media (some felt that it was biased to the right while others took the opposite view!) The majority of the group had taken public transport in the previous week, easy enough if you live in Parnell / Newmarket, and the need for it to be reliable. The group, by and large, supported school lunches and were dubious about banning gang patches.

Moving offshore there was general support for a 'two-state' solution in Israel / Palestine but a consensus that it would take at least a few decades if not centuries. All of us were worried that Trump could be re-elected President and some concern about China. It was a good, interesting meeting, with member's previous experiences and careers meaning that informed comments could be made to the discussion.

Nick Hamilton

PLAY READING



It's surprising how prescient George Orwell was with his 1945 play *Animal Farm*. The novella has frequently been accused by detractors as Communist propaganda and a seditious call to overthrow organised states. But rather it was misunderstood and seen as being critical of all forms of socialism rather than Stalinist communism.

Those of us who read the play found much in it is still relevant today. Orwell attempts to show how those in power pervert the democratic promise of revolution. An often-quoted line from the book: "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others."

Shelagh Coop

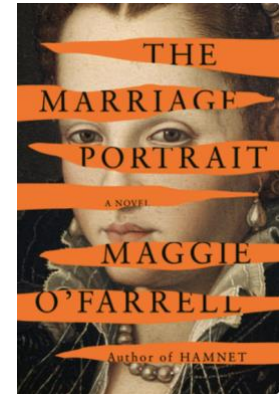
BOOK DISCUSSION

The Marriage Portrait by Maria O'Farrell

What a pleasure, after a string of ho-hum reads, to pick up a book I couldn't put down! I loved it. Reading it, I became immersed in the 16th century castles of Italy with their fortified walls and guarded entrances, their candle-lit interiors, secret exits, whispered intrigues, their glorious gardens.

What is the mark of a really good novel?

- ✓ For me, it means a convincing setting of both time and place.
- ✓ Enough characters to cast a plot but no so many as to confuse.
- ✓ Colourful characters including complex ones.
- ✓ A narrative drive that compels page turning leading to a climax.
- ✓ Quality writing.
- ✓ The reader-enriching experience of learning something new about a culture, about another aspect of the human condition.
- ✓ And an ending that leaves the reader putting the book down with a sigh only to go back to re-read the last pages.



So yes, for me *The Marriage Portrait* is a good novel.

Our group had previously read 'Hamlet' by the same author, and of the two novels I preferred this. However, I recognise it does have weaknesses. It is definitely melodramatic. Descriptions are at times excessively florid, over-the-top. There is little subtlety. The novel's time sequence moves back and forth, a device that could be disconcerting for some readers, requiring them to keep track at the start of each chapter. And of course, as in all highly imagined historical novels, readers are expected to suspend belief at times. And there are other quibbles but they are minor — for me, this novel was a rewarding read.

Jackie Walker

ART



To say the Guo Pei Exhibition is stunning, amazing or impressive is but a few of the superlatives we used to describe our visit. Guo Pei's 350 heritage skilled staff spend up to 10,000 hours creating a garment. Tiny beads and crystals are sewn onto specially woven fabrics; some fabrics included mother of pearl. The hand embroidery was rich and detailed. Garments weighing up to 25 kilograms! Inspired by porcelain from the era, the Ming Dynasty creation was one of our favourites. Guo Pei's garments are not designed to be worn but to be enjoyed and we certainly did that!

Sandra Ferguson



YOUR TEA TEAM

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

SCIENCE

New Zealand faces substantial challenges in developing a sustainable road network due to its unique geological characteristics, steep topography, and delicate soils. The country's young geology, marked by active tectonic processes, makes infrastructure development complex.



The steep and rugged topography adds to the difficulty, requiring intricate engineering solutions to navigate challenging terrains. New Zealand has traditionally formed roads through rugged topography by using cut and fill methods. This leads to having to make deep cuts leaving high embankments that need to be battered to a flatter slope or add stability protection measures.

In contrast, for instance, in Japan with more rugged topography between cities, they do not use much cut and fill, but instead engineering methods of numerous short (and sometimes, long) bridges and tunnels. This is an expensive approach which they can afford: they have about 125 million people compared with New Zealand's population of about 5 million on a similar size land area.

New Zealand's much smaller economy cannot afford the approach taken by Japan. Additionally, the fragile soil in certain areas in NZ poses a risk of erosion and instability, further complicating road construction and maintenance efforts. Solutions must consider the environmental impact, resilience to geological factors, and the overall long-term sustainability of the road infrastructure.

Kelvin Walls

HISTORY

We had a really interesting meeting recently. Members were asked to introduce an event which occurred in their lifetime which had had a significant impact. Everyone participated. This included the impact of apartheid in South Africa in 1948, the 1951 Waterfront Strike in Auckland, the Iran Iraq War, the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict, Hong Kong and China in 1989, and Chinese life experiences.

At the start of the meeting Justin spoke about the 18th century earthquake in Lisbon, Portugal. What was particularly interesting was the new scientific knowledge gained at this time.

Tim Carter

Beth O'Loughlin has an idea for a new group:

U3A Parnell Social Group

I would like to set up a U3A Social Group if the interest is there. The idea would be to meet monthly at 5.00 pm, say on a Friday or Sunday evening (this can be agreed) for drinks and nibbles and then let the conversation flow.

BYO refreshments and a food offering. No agenda – just friendship, camaraderie and lively conversation.

Happy to offer my home to host these meetings and for others to offer a turn if they wish. Couples and singles all welcome.

Please contact me if you are interested.

Beth O'Loughlin

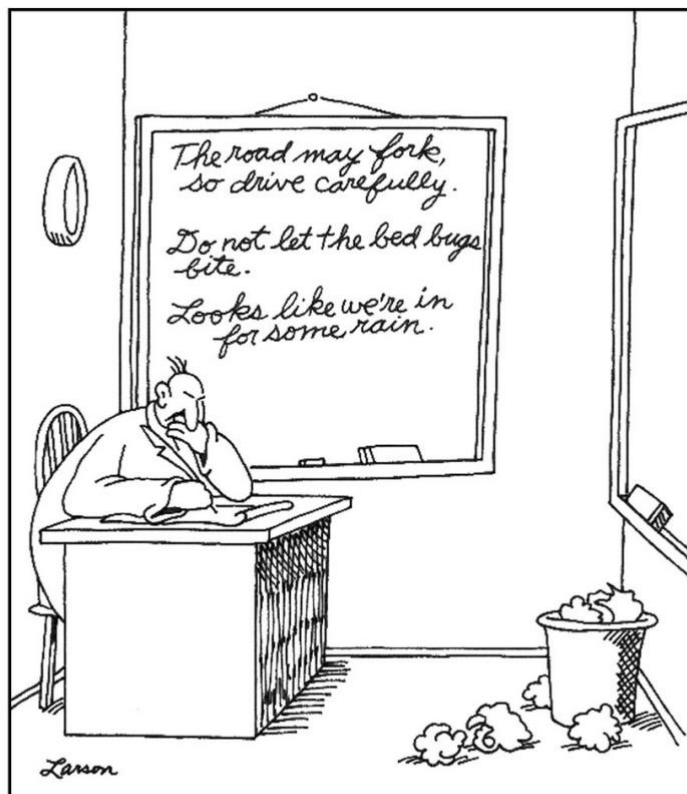
Harbour View Apartments

17/16 St Stephens Avenue

Parnell

Mobile 027 261 2695

Gary Larson, *The Far Side*



Confucius at the office

U3A PARNELL INTEREST GROUPS – 2024

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Convenor</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Time/location</i>
The Art Group	Sandra Ferguson	021 298 8001	Once monthly Fridays, 10.30am, various locations
Book Discussion	Clare Sutton	308 9788	3 rd Wednesday at 2pm at 1 Logan Terrace, Parnell
Music	David Addis	309 9647/ 302 4141	1 st and 3 rd Thursdays, 10am at various locations.
Current Affairs	Nick Hamilton	02102269162	1 st Tuesday at Kinder House 2 Ayr Street at 2pm
Famous & Infamous	Beverley Teague	373 4832	2 nd Tuesday, 10am, various locations
History	Tim Carter	309 9647/ 379 5128	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	Meets at 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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