

# U3A Golden Bay Mohua

## May 2019 Newsletter

Message from the incoming chair, Paul Taylor:

I am pleased to be serving as the new chairperson of our local U3A Committee. With its 100 or so members, Golden Bay Mohua's chapter of U3A is particularly strong. (Nearby Nelson, for example, with a population approximately 10 times that of Golden Bay, maintains a U3A membership of approximately 300.)

I have already met many of you in the past two years that my wife, Hazel, and I have lived in Golden Bay, and I look forward to meeting those of you who I don't already know.

Finally, on behalf of our U3A Committee, I would like to thank Keith Ballard for all he has done for our local U3A while he has served as Chairperson these past three years. Keith's gentle and competent leadership has ensured a smooth operation of study groups and speakers, and his initiative to do whatever has been needed has been appreciated. (I, in particular, appreciate the detailed "How We Do Things" document that Keith has put together for the Committee.) Even though he has decided to step down as Chairperson, Keith is continuing serving as a member of the Committee.



The committee has already had its first meeting and is busy planning General Meetings and supporting study groups.

### General Meetings

Our first talk this year (on 26<sup>th</sup> April) by Film Director Charlie Haskell was very well received by the people who were able to attend. Charlie enlightened us to the opportunities, risks and satisfactions of being a New Zealand film director – well illustrated with movie clips and other material, and an engaging presentation. He also provided an insight into how the film and television industry works in this country.

He talked about his 30 years involvement in the NZ film industry, from starting out as a Production Runner, right through to becoming a Director. He spoke about the structure of the freelance industry, the types of people it attracts, and how fast collective decision making is achieved. The unique nature of the NZ film industry was covered, that sets us apart from rest of the world.

He spoke in detail about some of the projects he has worked on, and told a few stories about situations and events that happened on set, giving some insight in to an industry that not many people know much about.

We have an exciting programme of speakers planned for the year.

On 28<sup>th</sup> June we have Max Rashbrooke coming to speak. His topic is: **Deepening Democracy: How to Fix Government and Restore Trust**. In New Zealand and around the world, dissatisfaction with government is rife. And indeed, many governments, including our own, still operate in an old-fashioned, top-down, twentieth-century manner. To restore trust, upgrade government and ward off the threat of authoritarianism, we need to deepen democracy, creating exciting new forums in which citizens can come together, discuss issues intelligently, and directly shape policy. Max Rashbrooke, author of the much-lauded book *Government for the Public Good*, will explain how this can be done.



To find out more about Max please check out: [www.maxrashbrooke.org.nz/](http://www.maxrashbrooke.org.nz/) A recent comment by Max in the National media can be heard on: <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/on-the-inside/388468/at-last-welfare-emphasis-will-move-from-punishment-to-support>

In August (exact date to be decided) Dr Alastair McDonald, a renal physician and ethicist will come to talk. His topic will be: **The ethics of aged care**. Below is a summary of what Alastair currently is involved in:



Our 80-year-old publicly funded healthcare system has been a remarkable success story for New Zealand. However, its survival even for the next 20 years presents a major challenge for all New Zealanders. Sometimes our health system is perceived as being limited to health care. Healthcare itself plays a relatively small determinant of the health of New Zealanders. The main determinants of good health are much more closely related to a range of factors such as housing, loneliness, smoking, obesity, education, unemployment and mental health. These issues compound the added load placed upon our healthcare system by an ageing society and increasing numbers of frail individuals. These collective realities pose major economic, ethical, social and healthcare challenges that need to be comprehensively addressed both now and in the future.

For October 18th we have been able to get Peter Stupples to speak to us. Peter Stupples is a retired Senior Lecturer in Art History and Theory at the Dunedin School of Art at the Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand. He was formerly Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Art History and Theory at the University of Otago. He has written about Russian visual culture and, more generally, about the social history of art. His published work includes *Pavel Kuznetsov: His Life and Art* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), *The Social Life of Art* (2014) and *Art and Food* (2014), both with Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Peter's subject with us will be: **Malevich and New Zealand Art**—the influence of Malevich on New Zealand artists from the 1960s, including McCahon, John Drawbridge and others.



## TED Talks

The TED talks group met as usual in April on the last Tuesday of the month, at 10 am. The group is open to all comers and this time we had eighteen people. We watched two very funny talks that were also quite thought provoking:

**The surprising science of happiness.** [https://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_gilbert\\_asks\\_why\\_are\\_we\\_happy](https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy) This one was about natural versus synthetic happiness - we are, as humans, surprising good at becoming content with what we have.

**The happy secret to better work.** [https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn\\_achor\\_the\\_happy\\_secret\\_to\\_better\\_work](https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work) If you want to know the advantages of telling your sister she is a baby unicorn watch this talk! Shawn also gave us five daily activities for developing more positive lives: be grateful for three things, journal one positive experience, exercise, meditate, be unexpectedly kind to someone.

Next meeting is May 28, 10 am, St John Rooms at the Takaka Showgrounds.

## CRISPR: Opportunities and risks of a new and revolutionary gene editing tool

Presenter: Paul Taylor.

We now live in what is being called "the age of the genome". Advances are being made every day in our knowledge of, and our ability to alter, the genetic structures of living things. One of the more recent and revolutionary developments in the field of genetic research has been the discovery and application of "CRISPR" gene editing. This technique represents a substantial advancement in genetic engineering, as it is able to more accurately target and modify specific genes than has previously been possible.

Labs around the world are currently using CRISPR to develop genetic treatments for a wide variety of diseases, and scientists hope that CRISPR will also provide a means of controlling pests – some have even suggested that CRISPR could provide the means for New Zealand to achieve its goal of becoming pest-free. The power of CRISPR as a gene editing tool also comes with substantial risks, including ethical concerns about the development of "designer babies"; concerns about possible unintended consequences of mutating genes; and fears that, in the wrong hands, the technique could be used to develop a terrorist weapon.

Our first video will be a YouTube educational video introduction to CRISPR entitled "**Genetic Engineering Will Change Everything Forever**" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAhjPd4uNFY>). (You'll get a kick out of the opening line - "Imagine you were alive back in the 1980's...") This video focuses primarily on applications of CRISPR to treat or prevent human diseases, perhaps leading eventually to "designer babies".

Our second video will be a TED Talk entitled "Gene Editing Can Now Change an Entire Species – Forever", presented by science journalist, Jennifer Kahn ([https://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer\\_kahn\\_gene\\_editing\\_can\\_now\\_change\\_an\\_entire\\_species\\_forever/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer_kahn_gene_editing_can_now_change_an_entire_species_forever/transcript)). This video introduces "gene drive" technology, an extension to CRISPR which could be used to spread genetic mutations through an entire population of insects or animals, such as to eliminate the transmission of pest-born, deadly diseases, or to eradicate introduced predators. To date, discussion of a possible genetic solution to New Zealand's predator problem has focused primarily on the idea of using CRISPR, along with a gene drive, to render offspring either all male or sterile.

## Active study groups:

*Note that some study groups have wait-lists. Please contact the convenor.*

Classics (Iliad & Odyssey) - room for 2 or 3                      Marian Vlaar, 525 8167  
 Prehistoric Mysteries – full    Piers McLaren, 525 7440  
 Music Appreciation – full    Sheila Climpson, 525 9385  
 Democracy – full    Peter Riley and Pat Ballard. Peter 525 7033, Pat 524 8220  
 Book Groups - 2, both full    Liz Lee 525 8110. Margaret Holloway 525 7411  
 Saints & Sinners – full    Robin Riley, 525 7033  
 Art History: Medieval to early Renaissance, full                      Jocelyn Tracy 525 9125, and Margaret Maloney 524 8699  
 Art History: Early Renaissance to Impressionism, full              Rosamund Arthur and Don Mead, 524 8130  
 Films - full (though possibility of another group if enough interested)      John Pemberton, 525 9125  
 Astronomy – full    Paul Taylor, 021 045 7545  
 TED talks - no limit to membership                                      Richard English, 525 6179  
 Later in the year: Euthanasia (early June?) and Dementia (starting mid-August).

## Study Group monthly schedule

Week of Month	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
First week	10am Prehistory Mysteries	10am Classics: Iliad and Odyssey	9.30 Book Group 1		
Second	7.30pm Film Group	10am Saints and Sinners			am. Book Group 2
Third	am Prosperity	1.30 Art History (both groups)		10am Music.	am. Democracy
Fourth		10am TED Talks			
Variable	Music Appreciation				

## U3A Golden Bay Mohua Committee

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Our page on the U3A New Zealand website can be accessed from <https://www.u3a.nz/directory.htm>

U3A Golden Bay Mohua is not a registered society.