



## November 2020, Newsletter Three

For obvious reasons, we've had a disrupted year. The last newsletter was in July, and there's been only one speaker (Chris Bennett) since then. Some groups continued to meet during Lockdown Level 2 while others did not.

For information that is updated more regularly than the annual 2 or 3 newsletters, go to the website <https://u3agoldenbaymohua.org.nz/>. If you haven't yet figured out how to access the website, find a grandchild or borrow one from a friend.

### Visiting Speakers

- **Wendy Parr, was to be 28<sup>th</sup> August**

Being a highly qualified oenologist (look it up!), Wendy was going to talk about the ways in which our mind/brain is implicated in how we appreciate a wine. Her talk had to be postponed when we were moved back down to Level 2 from Level 1. We are trying to arrange her talk for some time in 2021.

- **Chris Bennett, 9<sup>th</sup> October**

As anticipated by those who know him, Chris Bennett (from Pohara) gave an excellent talk, summarising his amazing work with the World Bank in a wide number of countries, including the Pacific Islands, over 30 years. He is a Lead Transport Specialist, working in the area of highway engineering and asset management. We could all relate to his strong interest in the social and environmental aspects of projects, including the challenges of climate change, gender-based violence, and violence against children.

- **Oke Blaikie, 20<sup>th</sup> November**

We look forward to hearing the next speaker. His title is " Experiences in and away from the Court of a District Court Judge, now retired ". The presentation will cover Family Court issues arising at the time of separation including arrangements for children; domestic violence and misuse of drugs; Youth Court fundamentals: and mental health. There will be comment on some significant cases including some observations following 25 years on the Bench. The talk will include some humour!

From a newspaper cutting:

“Retired Judge Oke Blaikie presided over the Family Court in Dunedin for nearly 18 years and says he witnessed families battling through the most stressful of circumstances, barely able to share a civil word. But he says the court process was helped when lawyers, experts, and the judge worked together in the best interests of children, with parents represented by highly-trained, conciliatory lawyers.

Retired Family Court judge Oke Blaikie would end the first Family Court appearance for couples by asking them to remember, and use, four words: hello, goodbye, thank you, and sorry. He said the overriding consideration was always what was best for the children, and this was fundamental no matter what regulations or practices were in force at the time.”

You can read the whole newspaper article here:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/104638618/access-to-competent-lawyers-vital-retired-family-court-judge-says>

## The Interest Groups

Most of the 18 Interest Groups are full, meaning that the homes where the meetings are held cannot accommodate more people. (If you want to join a group that is full, see later).

Subject	Convenor	Vacancies
Art History: Dutch masters and early 20 <sup>th</sup> C architecture	(Margaret Maloney & Jocelyn Tracey)	None
Art History: Early Renaissance to Impressionists	(Rosamund Arthur & Don Mead)	None
Astronomy	(Paul Taylor)	None
Book Discussion Group 1	(Liz Lee)	None
Book Discussion Group 2	(Margaret Holloway)	None
Classics	(Marian Vlaar)	2
Collecting in Western Culture	(Diane Dacre)	2-3
Early NZ History	(Christine Pullar)	None
Films	(John Pemberton)	None
Life and Times of Shakespeare	(Adrian Maloney)	8
Music Appreciation	(Sheila Climpson & Charles Naylor)	None
Musicals & Operas	(Paul Taylor)	None
New Democracy	(Pat Ballard & Peter Riley)	None
Prehistoric Mysteries	(Piers Maclaren)	None
Saints & Sinners	(Pat Ballard and Robin Riley)	None
Sustainable development	(Chris Bennett) – starts Sept	4-6
TED Talk Discussion Group	(Richard English)	unlimited

## You want to join a Group, but they're FULL?

First, contact the Group convenor (their email addresses and phone numbers are provided on the WEBSITE, see earlier, or under each group's report). The chances are, there really is a vacancy on a particular date because someone can't be there. In the longer term, the odd person resigns from a Group for a variety of reasons and you will be the first on the waiting list to replace them.

Second, you can form your own Group. Daunting? Sure, it is. But it is achievable. Many have done it and the U3A committee will help you through the process. Note, for example, that there are two Book Discussion groups, and two Art History groups. That is because the first one was full but there was enough demand for another.

## What have the Interest Groups been up to?

As previously stated, the Interest Groups have had a disjointed time as a result of two lockdowns. But some of them have achieved great things since the last U3A Newsletter (July 2020). For those convenors who failed to provide any updates, their report from July has been repeated here, outdated though it may be.

- **Art History 1:** The theme since we came out of lockdown 2 has been early 20thC Architecture. Erhard set the scene with a fascinating presentation on the Bauhaus movement, followed by an exploration of Le Corbusier's life and works presented by Margaret. Next, we move on to Frank Lloyd Wright and Niemeyer. We were earlier in the year captivated by the Dutch Masters and now we are finding the change in time period and visual art form very stimulating, with almost maximum attendance at sessions. So apologies, we can't fit in any new group members at this point. Contact Jocelyn Tracey (Jocelyn.tracey@outlook.com) or Margaret Maloney (m.maloney@xtra.co.nz).
- **Art History Group 2:** This group has a maximum of 10 people, but we have room for one more person. Contact Rosamund Arthur or Don Mead (don.mead@gmail.com). This year we covered the Renaissance and Mannerism through to the Baroque in Europe. During lockdown when there were no meetings we looked at three woman artists of this period who were very successful and lived fascinating lives. Next year we will explore the Dutch Golden Age, the Rococo, Neo classicism and Romanticism. We use discussions and printed materials on artworks to further the course, as well as Youtube.
- **Astronomy Group:** Astronomy Group. Our group has continued to meet on a monthly basis, learning recently about science communicator Neil DeGrasse Tyson and rockets, and enjoying the use of a 6"-mirror telescope on long-term loan from Professor Euan Mason at the University of Canterbury. We're looking forward to more presentations from our group members and a night sky viewing "star party" soon in Golden Bay, to be organised in conjunction with the Astronomy Section of the Nelson Science Society, to which all of our U3A members will be invited – we'll let you all know more by email when we've got a date, good weather, etc. Our group is currently full, at 16 members, with 2 people on a waitlist. If any others are interested in being put on the waitlist, please contact Paul Taylor (ptaylor05@gmail.com).

- **Book Discussion Group 1:** Our group does not have space for new members. Coordinator Liz Lee (leejl@xtra.co.nz)
- **Book Discussion Group 2:** Our group of happy and interesting people continues to meet on the second Friday of each month, reading a range of titles, often leading us into great discussions. Peter Riley is just now taking over the convening of this group. Contact Peter Riley (peterrobinriley@gmail.com)
- **The Classics Group:** We have finished reading the Odyssey this year and we plan to read the Aeneid by Virgil next year. We have decided to change our meeting time then to the first Monday morning of the month. More members are welcome. Co-ordinator: Marian Vlaar (marian.vlaar@gmail.com)
- **Collecting:** The last meeting was on statues. Are statues historically just a recording of physical appearance, or are they a statement of power and prestige, or are they a work of art? Why are they a collection item in a variety of cultures? The last meeting of the year will take place on November 17th, where we look at the role of looting in building up museum collections. Contact Diane Dacre (dianedacre@yahoo.co.nz)
- **Early NZ History:** This group has had two sessions and is developing a new programme of content. There is a waiting list. Convener: Christine Pullar (christine.pullar@actrix.co.nz)
- **Films:** The film group has resumed post lockdown and meets on the second Monday of the month to watch a film selected by one of us. The group is currently full. Convenor: John Pemberton (john.pemberton47@gmail.com)
- **Life and Times of Shakespeare:** This group will now start next year (2021). There is room for more participants. Contact Adrian Maloney (am.maloney33@gmail.com) or (m.maloney@xtra.co.nz)
- **Musicals & Operas Group:** Musicals & Operas Group. We're happy to be back to Level 1 and able to view musicals and operas together. Recently we've viewed the Marriage of Figaro, South Pacific and a very strange, Italian production of Madam Butterfly in which characters were all dressed as various bugs! We're looking forward to wrapping up the year next month with West Side Story. We are currently closed, with 12 members, but anyone else interested is welcome to contact Paul (ptaylor05@gmail.com) to be put on a waitlist.
- **The Music Group:** With Charles's expert knowledge and guidance we have just finished studying symphonies ending with Shostakovich. We will now study chamber music (with the exception of string quartets) working forward from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. This group is full. Convenors: Sheila Climpson and Charles Naylor (chaspam30@gmail.com)
- **New Democracy:** Meets 3rd Friday of month 9.30/10.00am in each other's houses. It is full but a waiting-list for 2021 can open. The meeting planned for August to consider political manifestos was postponed because the date of the election was changed and we were still in Covid Level 2. On 16 October, Liz Thomas led the discussion about Election policy. Keith contributed some notes on democracy and policy. Our next meeting will now take place on Friday 27 November to discuss the first month of the new Labour Government.
- **Prehistoric Mysteries:** Since July, we've explored two mysteries. First, Don Mead discussed the first humans in the Americas and how they got there. A wealth of recent discoveries has

cast doubt of the theory of a “succession of invasions across the Bering Strait”. Second, Bob Kennedy examined how much of the world the Ming Dynasty Chinese explored in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Did they, for example, reach America and New Zealand? Convenor: Piers Maclaren (piersmaclaren@gmail.com). This group is full.

- **Saints and Sinners:** Meets 2nd Tuesday of month 10.00am to 11.30am, in each other’s houses and is full although a waiting list for 2021 can now open. In the second half of the year, 2020 the group has focused study on the text by Barbara Brookes “A History of NZ Women”. Sessions from August have followed the interest of participants. Some participants have focused on one chapter in the text with all in the group reading the chapter and participating in discussion. Other sessions have been shared and participants select an individual or topic of interest based on the era outlined in the text. The session planned for this month is for two participants to present information from two chapters moving into more contemporary history women of the 1960’s and onwards. Conveners: Robin Riley/Pat Ballard ([kdpballard@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kdpballard@xtra.co.nz))
- **Sustainable Development:** Chris Bennett is a very experienced engineer who has worked across the globe with the World Bank, among other agencies. The next topic will be on gender equality, and how that is dealt with in projects. Contact Christopher R. Bennett (htcltd@gmail.com)
- **TED talks:** Albie and Fill Burgers presented July’s meeting on the topic of “International Aid. – Is it failing? Are new approaches needed?” Both disturbing in parts and uplifting in others it was interesting to hear of the issues surrounding international aid projects and innovative solutions to some of the problems being encountered.

The, thankfully short, re-imposition of Covid Level 2 resulted in the postponement of August’s meeting to September. Piers Maclaren (literally) re-launched our gatherings with some fascinating videos on the topic of “New developments in space technology and how they will influence YOU in Golden Bay in the imminent future”. The enigmatic Elon Musk featured in two of the videos and whilst perhaps a flawed character he has certainly been responsible for some impressive space-oriented achievements.

October’s meeting was presented by Helen Kingston on the theme of “Humour and Creativity and their Purpose.” Helen’s presentation ranged from radio interviews and clips from block buster films through to two thought-provoking TED talks. Given the polyglot nature of some of the attendees it was interesting to hear their differing stances on the nature of humour and creativity as illustrated in Helen’s presentation.

All three meetings had attendances of about 30 participants, representing a wide range of views. The numbers help to spark often lively, but friendly and informative debate on the topic of the month. The meetings are open to all U3A members. If a topic ‘tickles your fancy’ please feel free to come along. Or if you have a topic you’d like to present please do not be shy in coming forward. This group is NOT full. De facto Convenor of the TED group is Richard English (rsenglish@xtra.co.nz).