



July 2022, Newsletter Two

Despite COVID rampaging through the land like the Russian Army looking for Nazis, U3A in Golden Bay has stoutly resisted, armed only with vaccines and masks.

There were seven visiting speakers in 2021 and three so far this year. In case you've forgotten already, the speakers were Caroline Orchiston (the Alpine Fault), Tom Sturgess (Seaweed farming and methane), and – most recently - Tracey Osborne (predator-free Farewell Spit). Another 5-6 top speakers are scheduled for the remainder of the year. More on these later.

But U3A is far, far more than an organisation that arranges visiting speakers. There are well over 100 members in the Golden Bay branch, comprising 15 interest groups, and most of the activity occurs in people's homes. The groups won't all be described in detail here, but please visit the website <https://u3agoldenbaymohua.org.nz/> for more information.

The trouble with some of these "study" or "interest" groups, is that they are mostly full. In other words, there often isn't enough space in members' living rooms to accept more members. "TED talks" is an exception, because it is held in the St Johns Rooms, where space has not (so far) been a problem. But the sensitivity of St Johns personnel to Covid infection has somewhat precluded its use since August last year.

Are you a passive person that likes to have everything delivered to you on a plate? Do you meekly join a group that someone else has started? Or are you a rugged, self-motivated, go getter? If the latter, why don't you start your own group? It's not hard, we'll show you how. You'll find that your own group (in your house, or in someone else's) will quickly fill up with members.

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

Recent Visiting Speakers

Caroline Orchiston, 22nd April

At our well attended U3A meeting on 22 April Associate Professor Caroline Orchiston spoke about the *Alpine Fault: science and preparedness for the next magnitude 8 earthquake*. Caroline is Director of the University of Otago Centre for Sustainability and is Science Lead for the project AF8 (Alpine fault magnitude 8), which is designed to develop risk awareness and response capability in collaboration with Civil Defence Emergency Management and other agencies. She presented a detailed account of research on the 600 km long Alpine Fault which is identified as one of the world's major geological features. The fault is created by the Australian Plate moving under the Pacific Plate, and has ruptured four times in the past 900 years. A recent study indicated a 75% probability of an earthquake on the Alpine Fault in the next 46 years and an 80% chance that this will be at magnitude 8 or greater. Caroline presented a map on which different colours indicated the severity of such a quake. The most severe damage was across the West Coast and into Wellington. Golden Bay was shown with a lower danger rating but will still be affected. [*Keith Ballard*].

Tom Sturgess, 20th May

Tom spoke first about the way he helped establish the mussel industry in Golden Bay, so that leases for 135 hectares of water space are paid to the Golden Bay Community Trust for distribution to health and education and social projects in Golden Bay. It is expected that the amount available will soon build up to \$350,000 per annum.

Tom also talked about his Methane Mitigation Ventures Company which is investigating the use a red seaweed, *Asparagopsis*, as a food additive to decrease methane emission in cows. In addition, he is trialling the use of garlic to decrease emissions, and a combination of both garlic and *Asparagopsis*. He spoke about the difficulties with import certificates, patents, and real-life testing. Research continues to address the issues of the logistics of getting enough seaweed, getting it into the cows, food safety and animal health. It was an informative and entertaining session. [*Jocelyn Tracey*]

Tracey Osborne, (8th June)

Tracey has lived in the Bay for 20 years, and is a marine ecologist. She started her talk by giving the Big Picture: the ecological destruction caused by introduced pests in New Zealand, and the aspirational goal of becoming predator free across the whole country by 2050. She then focussed on Golden Bay's contribution to the start of this process – pest elimination in Farewell Spit. Possums and pigs would be removed quickly, but stoats and rats would take more effort. The anti-predator fence would not inhibit human movement, and in any case would not be completely secure (particularly on the mud-flats on the Eastern end). The gaps would be protected by remote sensors, a “minefield” of traps, and by a larger “suppression zone” stretching right back to Westhaven Inlet. This will all happen in the next few years, which is quite exciting.

Speakers yet to come:

- **Hilary Mitchell, 12 August**

Hilary will be discussing local treaty issues. She has written books on the history of Maori in Nelson and Marlborough.

- **Jeff Tombleson, 9 September**

Jeff will be talking on the use of trees to mitigate Climate change. Jeff has some forthright views on the approach that promotes natives against all the evidence and belittles the virtues of exotic trees.

- **Richard Bullen, 14 October**

Art made by Japanese Prisoners of War while held at Featherston. This was the place where 48 prisoners were shot in an attempted rebellion, probably caused by cultural misunderstandings.

- **Julie Catchpole, 11 November**

The Suter Art Gallery collections.

- **Geoff Bertram, 9 December**

Electricity and climate change: two intertwined policy problems

The Interest Groups

What are they? They are the essence of U3A. Now that you have retired, you need to exercise your mind as well as your body. Use it or lose it. While listening to others is good, it is still possible to vegetate with words and pictures just washing over you. There is nothing like presenting a subject to force you to think! When you join a group, you will normally be expected to volunteer as presenter for a session, perhaps once a year.

We are always seeking new ideas for interest groups. If you are prepared to start a group off, bravo! If you would like to start a group, but don't know how, consult the website and/or our president. If you have a good idea, but don't want to organise it yourself, tell us anyway.

Most of the 15 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).

How do you join a group?

You turn up for the AGM and write your name down on the list of groups. You will then be contacted by email. Alternatively, you can take the initiative yourself and phone or email a convenor directly.

You want to join a Group, but it's 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, there will be resignations from every Group for a variety of reasons, and – by declaring your interest – 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. That is because the first one was full but there was enough demand for another.

Existing Study Groups July 2022		
Subject	Convenor	Vacancies?
The Classics	Marian Vlaar 525 8167 marian.vlaar@gmail.com	Yes (2)
Films	John Pemberton. 525 9125 john.pemberton47@gmail.com	None
New Democracy	Mike Scott mikescott@xtra.co.nz	None
Prehistoric mysteries	Piers Maclaren. 525 7440 piersmaclaren@gmail.com	None
Art history: Early Indigenous Art & Italian Renaissance Painting	Jocelyn Tracey 525 9125 jocelyn.tracey@outlook.com and Margaret Maloney 524 8699 m.maloney@xtra.co.nz	None
Art history: 19 th C Art Movements	Rosamund Arthur and Don Mead. 524 8130 don.mead@gmail.com	Yes, 2
Book Discussion Group 1	Liz Lee. 525 8110 leejl@xtra.co.nz	None
Book Discussion Group 2	Peter Riley. peterrobinriley@gmail.com	None
Saints and Sinners	Robin Riley. 525 7033 or 027-244 7731 peterrobinriley@gmail.com	None
TED Talks	Richard English. 525 6179 rsenglish@xtra.co.nz	Unlimited
Astronomy	Paul Taylor 021-045 7545 ptaylor05@gmail.com	None
Early NZ History	Marian Vlaar. 525 8167 marian.vlaar@gmail.com	Yes, 2-3
Collecting in Western Culture	Diane Dacre. dianedacre@yahoo.co.nz	None
What Does the Science Say?	Jocelyn Tracey 424 9125 jocelyn.tracey@outlook.com and Paul Taylor 021 045 7545 ptaylor05@gmail.com	Yes
Poetry Appreciation	Lewis Martin lews22@yahoo.co.uk 021 775 359	Yes

Reports from the Interest Groups

A) Groups with vacancies

Classics

This year we are looking at Aeschylus's tragedies. At present we are reading and looking at the Oresteian Trilogy: Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers and Eumenides. As usual, YouTube is a great source of information and we are looking at a performance of the Agamemnon play. There is also a lot of discussion in the group.

We are currently only with 5 and can accommodate at least two more. [*Marian Vlaar*]

Early New Zealand Colonial History

Sadly, the person who started this group, Christine Pullar, suddenly passed away. It was because of Christine's interest in finding out about her family ancestors and how they fared on the West Coast after they came to NZ that she decided to start the group. We will miss her enthusiasm.

The different members present research they do around specific topics they are interested in. This year's presentations so far have been re the early conservation efforts in Dusky Sound – Tamatea and the work by Richard Henry. Also, the early French influence in New Zealand has been presented. Topics usually take up more time than anticipated, as many questions are asked and interesting discussions ensue.

On the agenda are continued research about early governance, early sheep farming and the NZ wars. We could accommodate up to two more members. [*Marian Vlaar*]

Films

The Film group started in March, meeting on the second Monday of the month. It is a large group but with variable attendance, dropping off in winter. There is room for a few more members. Screenings are either at Gordon and Anna's (Milnthorpe) or at our place in East Takaka

Films have been a mixture, as always, but we have leant toward "cult" films this year.

- *Learning to Drive*
- *Gloomy Sundays*
- *Babette's Feast*
- *Il Postino*
- *Everything is Illuminated*
- *Diva*
- *Man with a Movie Camera*
- *Breathless (A Boute de Souffle)*
- *Yi Yi*
- *Rocky Horror Picture Show*

We have already started our 2022 program with Run Lola Run. 7 masked viewers fitted easily into the Flop House. We will keep an eye on covid and continue meeting as long as is sensible and group members so wish! [*John Pemberton*]

U3A Poetry Group 2022

The poetry group started in 2021, and we are happy that we can meet more regularly in 2022. We each bring favourite poems to our monthly meetings, read them aloud to each other, and then discuss the poem (and other topics). In June we had poems by a Golden Bay poet, two more New Zealand poets, and Andrew Marvell. A highlight was the reading of the poem "The Erlking" by Johann Goethe in English and in German. At the moment we have 5 regular attendees, so we do have room for 2 or 3 more members. We meet on the second Thursday of the month. [*Lewis Martin*]

What Does the Science Say?

Because our group is large, we have been hit hard by Covid, but we are now meeting with masks and no refreshments, socially distanced in The Flophouse in East Takaka.

Our only meeting so far this year was a well-researched and very interesting presentation by Paul Taylor on The Spread of Conspiracy Theories and Other Misinformation. Paul's talk included the harm caused by conspiracy theories, information about Covid misinformation super spreaders, the characteristics of people are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories, and how to counter the spread of conspiracy theories. We have a number of subjects in the pipeline for the rest of the year: surprising insights on how to steer a bike, how rocks move themselves in Death Valley, A2 milk, keto diets, rehab to avoid hip replacement. [*Jocelyn Tracey and Paul Taylor*]

B) Groups with no vacancies

Art History 1

We meet monthly with some interruptions due to Covid.

During the last year our focus has been on Indigenous Art. We have had very interesting presentations supported by video/YouTube on the following:

Paleolithic European Cave Art; Australian Aboriginal Art; Maori Art featuring a film of the Te Maori exhibition; Prehistoric Chinese pottery & bronze casting featuring YouTube video "How Ancient Chinese Bronzes were created" – Harvard Art Museum Dr Robert Monry & "Banpo Yangshao Neolithic Site in focus"; Early Japanese pottery featuring YouTube "Jomon Archaeological site in Hokkaido & Northern Tohoku" & "Jomon Pots"; Early African Pottery featuring videos of the techniques still being used today and lastly Inuit Art & Culture.

Our focus for the rest of the year is Italian Renaissance Painting. We'll look at what led to its development and the main influences in Early, High & Late Renaissance. [*Margaret Maloney & Jocelyn Tracey*]

Astronomy

The Astronomy Group restarted its meetings last month. We learned about the dinosaur-killing “Chicxulub asteroid”, which collided with the earth at Chixculub, Mexico, 66 million years ago. Interestingly, we can probably thank Jupiter for us being here, since its gravitational pull is theorised to have dislodged the distant asteroid or a comet which not only brought about the demise of the non-avian dinosaurs, but led to the rapid development of mammals to fill the gap they left. Those interested in learning more can find the PBS NOVA documentary “The Rise of the Mammals” on YouTube. And a new BBC documentary, with David Attenborough, entitled “Dinosaurs - The Final Day”, should be coming soon in New Zealand.

Our group has a full roster of star gazing and astronomy topics for the remainder of the year, including the International Space Station, the James Webb Telescope, Neil de Grasse Tyson, Alternative Methods of Propulsion, and the Curiosity Helicopter on Mars. Our group is currently full, with 16 members, but anyone interested in joining should contact Paul to be put on the waiting list.
[Paul Taylor]

Book Discussion Group 1

Our book group which meets once a month on the first Tuesday of the month, has been reading a variety of books, chosen by our members, both fiction and non-fiction. We have continued to meet during most levels of lockdown, but are not at present enjoying coffee and cake together. The books are supplied by The Book Discussion Scheme www.bds.org.nz. [Liz Lee]

Book Discussion Group 2

During the 2021 year our group read, and discussed, 10 books, 7 novels and 3 non-fiction. There was normally a fairly wide range of views on the merits of members choices, but we were all certainly exposed to titles we would not normally choose. During the year we lost 2 members, but have filled these vacancies as they occurred. Our group is full, but quite happy to have a waiting list.
[Peter Riley]

Collecting in Western Culture

This is a small, but well-attended group and, while we observe protocols for social distancing, we have no vacancies for additional members.

This year we have begun to examine some wealthy private collectors from the twentieth century, including the Guggenheim family, J P Getty and the Sackler family. We have looked at some of the museums they have established, art works in their collections and some of the impacts of their art patronage. We have also been considering the source of their fortunes, their reasons for collecting art and artifacts, and some of the ethical questions presented by their involvement in the art world.

At our next meeting we will be watching a film that explores the relationships between history and art in the Hermitage Museum. [Diane Dacre]

New Democracy Group

Our group will continue into 2022. We have no vacancies. Our group activities for the year have been somewhat disrupted by Covid but have included the following subjects.

1. Dividing political power – Plato’s Republic, Diocletian Rome, The Swiss Federal System.
2. Political psychology and Confirmation Bias.
3. Political Publicity and methods of Persuasion.
4. The Death of Democracy.
5. The Swiss system of Democracy.
6. Democracy in NZ, with emphasis on the Treaty of Waitangi, its history and detailed analysis.

[Mike Scott]

Saints & Sinners Group

This year our focus has been on biographies, autobiographies and memoirs.

Group members have presented their research from books and other sources. Topics have been:

Charlotte Grimshaw, *'The Mirror Book'*.

Ann Patchett, *'These Precious Days'*.

Fiona Kidman, *'So far, for now'*.

[Pat Ballard]

Prehistoric Mysteries

Piers kicked off the year with a talk on “Ancient technology that couldn’t be reproduced today”. Since then, he has changed his mind and now thinks there are likely to be simple explanations! In June, he talked about “Advanced civilisations that preceded the Younger Dryas asteroid impact of 12,900 years ago”. Conclusion: there was no such civilisation, it’s all a myth. Meanwhile, Bob gave an insightful look at the ancient Picts of Scotland, and recently, Adrian showed us dozens of rock engravings in the dry heart of the Sahara that depicted water-loving creatures such as crocodiles and hippos. *[Piers Maclaren]*