



U3A BROWNS BAY NEWSLETTER December 2009



Fundamental to U3A is the active participation in interest groups

General Meeting for Members: Tuesday 1st December, 2009, 10-12 am

Browns Bay Presbyterian Family Centre (St. Cuthbert's), 45 Anzac Road, Browns Bay – Name tags required.



Main Speaker Geoff Chapple is the Chief Executive Officer of Te Araroa Trust. A well-known journalist and writer, Geoff became interested in the vision of creating a walkway right through New Zealand and in 1998 and 2002 walked the route, describing his travels in his book, 'Te Araroa: the New Zealand Trail'. The aim of the Te Araroa Trust is to join up existing north south trails from Cape Reinga to the Bluff to create a 3,000km walkway the length New Zealand. The Trust is supported by eight regional trusts countrywide.

The music groups will lead Christmas singing.

Morning Tea: Art History and Appreciation

Hall seating: Ancient Civilizations (*People not in groups please give a hand - 9.10am*)

Next Meeting 2nd February, 2010

Speaker: Dr Dan Cohen, Food Research.

Mini Speaker. Art History and Appreciation. **Hall seating** – Archaeology.

Morning tea: Music – Mainly Classical

President's report

Last month Dr Richard Fisher of Fertility Associates gave us much to think about and be thankful for in his very interesting talk about birthing technology. His sincerity and ethics were to the forefront, both of which are vital when dealing sensitively with infertility. Many couples have been made very happy by the success of the detailed technology involved. His pleasant manner injected with humour was enjoyed by all. Richard's talk was followed by Robin Brown of the Travel Interest Group. With infectious humour, Robin alerted us to travel 'hazards' - particularly pick-pockets - with words of warning born of front-line experience.

December meeting: After Geoff Chapple's talk it will be **Party Time** with Christmas singing, a Pot Luck lunch and lots of fun and laughter. Please bring food to share and a Santa hat to wear – or reindeer horns or whatever!

I will take this opportunity to wish you all a happy Christmas and a restful holiday. We've had a great year with many more friendships forged and brain cells activated. Maybe you will have time over the holidays to reflect on personal goals for the New Year, like joining other Interest Groups or forming another Group with a topic not yet

offered? Is there interest in Philosophy out there? A different type of Family Memoirs, maybe Genealogy with computer programme assistance, i.e. combine the two? Help is available to get started. Remember you are 'allowed' to move between groups when you have had your needs met with the present ones! Friendships remain intact & you make more! True! Here's to an even more successful year in 2010 – our 10th anniversary!

Maureen Whineray, President

OUR WEBSITE

Please note the following two groups now have links there:

MUSIC APPRECIATION AND HISTORY

http://www.u3abb.net.nz/music_appreciation_and_history.html

GEOLOGY

<http://www.u3abb.net.nz/geology.html>

Other groups with links are: **ARCHAEOLOGY, COMPUTERS, CREATIVE WRITING, EXPLORING ART FOR FUN, FAMILY MEMOIRS and MODERN HISTORY.**

If you would like your group to have a link, send digital photos and text to Garry on u3abb@vodafone.co.nz

Newsletter February Deadline: 25th Jan 2010

(130 words maximum)

Email to u3abb@vodafone.co.nz

WELCOME

A big welcome to our new members:
Alma and Joan.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Ancient Civilisations:

To complete the Assyrian - Egyptian picture, the archaeological evidence of Assyrian expansion and conquest was examined. This included the 19th century people who were involved with both investigations, and the deciphering of cuneiform script. The grandest port in the world during the last three centuries before Christ was Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great and destined to become the crossroad for trade and knowledge in the Mediterranean. It was famous for one of the wonders of the ancient world - the Pharos lighthouse, whose beacon could be seen thirty miles away.

Anthropology:

We opened with the questions: 1. Why did NASA continue the Apollo Moon Capsule testing programme in 1962 with an obsolete Saturn rocket and conduct experiments which caused so many problems. 2. Did the Medical profession not accept the work of the Doctor who maintained that various problems e.g. Lupus Vulgaris, could progress to cancer through eating pickled and smoked food?.

3. What are the crop circles all about? Joyce spoke about the Phoenicians – traders and sailors in the Mediterranean area 1200 – 300 BC. They invented an alphabet of twenty two letters, no vowels, but all their literature seems to be lost. They ROWED all around the coast of Africa.

Patricia told of Coxwell and Glashier and their adventures in 1862, rising to 1100 metres in a mammoth balloon, to check the accuracy of the Aneroid barometer.

Archaeology:

After our end of year lunch, Barbara spoke to us about the excavation of the ancient city of Troy. From its first settlement in about 3000 BC, the site was built on, [built over] 9 times. It is hard to know how much of the information about this city is fact and how much is legend. Was Troy besieged by the Greeks? Was there really a Trojan horse? Thank you Barbara for a stimulating talk. Next meeting, 7-30 pm Monday November 30th to view the latest discoveries about Oetzi, the iceman.

Art History & Appreciation:

Our last meeting for 2009 took the form of a celebratory meal at "The Wine Box Cafe" which was enjoyed by all. There were several large abstract paintings on the walls to interest to entertain us.

We look forward to a summer of sun and fun as well as catching up with more interesting exhibitions.

Asian studies:

We celebrated our final meeting with a really fun lunch at "Chang Thai". Next February we will meet under our new title "Making History" and look forward to welcoming new members. BHUTAN: is

a small Tantric Buddhist Kingdom in the Eastern Himalayas, bordered by Tibet in the North, India in the south and east and Sikkim in the west. This entirely mountainous country with its small population, abundant land and rich natural resources boasts an economic self-reliance nicknamed "gross national happiness". Emphasis is on the modernisation of education, health services, rural development and communications. Environmental conservation gives precedence to ecological considerations over commercial interests. Bhutan's main concern is "One Nation, One People"

Computers:

This month we had a very different sort of meeting. Most of us have a number of computer-related items at home that we never use, either because we don't want them anymore, or because we don't know how to use them. We brought them along, and Garry very kindly came to look through them and tell us about their functions (if they were not obsolete!). We were then able to browse among them, and help ourselves from the still-unwanted pile. We had time for some general discussion after the break. Topics included scanning slides to the computer and the difficulties of upgrading to Windows 7. Next time bring suggestions for next year's convenor and topics to include in next year's programme.

Creative writing:

We will hold our final meeting for the year on 10th December so that the whole group can attend.

Creative Audio-Visual

Next DVD showing Thursday 3rd December, 1pm, with a potluck.

Exploring Art for Fun:

Our last exploration was that of the Stoneleigh Sculpture Trail through the Auckland Botanic Gardens at Manurewa. Sadly three couples were unable to come but the remainder of our group enjoyed both the sculpture and the beautiful flowers (particularly roses) that bloomed throughout the gardens. Three of our group extended their exploration (while they still can!) to that of several buses and a train ride from the North Shore to Manurewa - what fun!!

Family Memoirs – Writing group:

The topic this month was Fashion. We had a lot of laughs when we recalled such trends as mini, maxi, midi, platform shoes, winkle pickers, wide shoulder pads, fair isle and hand knitted jerseys, wartime restrictions of materials for wedding dresses and ball gowns, playing dress-ups with our Mother's clothes, cocktail hats, and many more. Finally the agony of a fifth form school dance, the anticipation rather than the event itself.

Film appreciation:

Our group ended our year with a visit to the Film Archives K.Road to view "The Mighty Civic". The video by Peter Wells lovingly reconstructs the history of the Civic Theatre celebrating its history in order to encourage public concern about its uncertain existence after 31 December 1993 when its lease reverted to the citizens of Auckland. Some of the archival footage dating back to 1929 depicted the Civic block as a city dump before construction began - a dangerous job for all who worked on her. We also saw the Wintergarden's entertainment during the war and interviews with some of the dancing girls and Freda Stark. The Civic re-opened, magnificently refurbished, on 20th December 1999, the 70th Anniversary of its first performance.

Français pour rire:

We started with expressions about our health which we covered last time. Heidi gave a talk about someone who was important in England and France in the 12th century. Richard Coeur-de-Lion lived from 1157 to 1199. He was King of England and Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine. He went on the third Crusade to the Holy Land. Last week's question was *Où Jeanne d'Arc fut-elle brûlée?* Answer: Rouen. This month's question is *Qui est l'auteur de 'l'Avare'?* We read an extract in pairs in French from the textbook. Look at Dialogue 5 for the next group in January at Cecily's place. Also check out *Leçon 7* for the following meeting. Vincent gave a talk about his yachting experiences from France to Iceland and the Pacific Ocean, including Tonga and the Seychelles.

Geology:

At recent meetings, the Geology group has discussed types of coal (lignite, sub-bituminous, bituminous and anthracite) and where these are found in New Zealand (if at all). Most coals were formed in swamps.

Another topic was the movement of the Pacific and Australian Plate boundaries along the Southern Alps of New Zealand.

Plans are afoot for a field trip in February (combining with Takapuna U3A) to study the unique Geology of the area

Literature group:

Many varied books were discussed at the November meeting. Elaine reviewed 'The man in the Shed', Lloyd Jones' collection of short stories, but did not recommend it as an enjoyable read. Mary's choice 'Petticoat Whalers' by Joan Druett, consisted of stories from diaries of wives who went to sea with their husbands. Margaret enjoyed 'Awesome Aotearoa' by Margaret Mahy, a New Zealand history for children and adults. Patricia reviewed 'Vanished Smile' by R.A. Scotti, the historian and novelist. This historical novel is the true story of the stealing of the Mona Lisa from the Louvre in 1911. Thelma recommended the travel writer Tim Moore's books especially 'Continental Drifter', the book he wrote after following the trail of the 17C travellers on The

Grand Tour, staying in the same places where possible. Our Christmas lunch is at Tropicana Browns Bay on 11th Dec. at midday.

Local History:

Our next meeting will be in February.

Modern History:

Shirley gave a thoroughly researched PowerPoint talk on Romania with special reference to the Ceaușescu. Among the revelations: this poor, rural country was accepted into the EU – which then forbade the use of horse and cart! The Queen gave C a 'Knighthood' – later cancelled, a day before his execution. C wanted a larger population – forbade contraception, hence many orphans. Not to mention C's vast 'Palace' in Bucharest. The van de Baans, Dutch visitors, then gave a graphic presentation of their Antarctic cruise which ended, traumatically, off the Western peninsular, when their 4000 ton ship (120 passengers) was holed by sea ice. "Abandon Ship" at midnight and into open lifeboats (air temp +4C, water -2C); all rescued at 7am. Just one of the four lifeboats engines worked! Weather calm – fortunately! Ship sank at 3pm.

Music Appreciation and History:

No report received.

Music – Mainly Classical:

Margaret introduced her topic with a comprehensive overview of the DVD 'Big Bang' by Howard Goodall which focussed on what was regarded as the first of the so-called five big bangs of musical development, that of the invention of an accurate form of notation. It was an Italian monk Guido Monaco [992-1003] who recognised the need for accurate written recording. Until that time neumatic notation, a method that did not register exact intervals, was used to record plainsong. Thus began the system of staff notation that is used today. Interestingly, Guido also developed the teaching method solfege which was the ancestor of the 'do-re-mi' scale, hence Margaret aptly naming her presentation "Doh-ray-me and all that Jazz". The afternoon appropriately concluded with a selection of Medieval songs.

Play reading:

Our end of year function was held on Tuesday 24th November at the RSA in Browns Bay and enjoyed by all.

The Story of Art:

Susan spoke about the various art galleries and art museums she visited on her recent trip to London, Dublin and Vienna. It was interesting to hear about the Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot landscapes at the 'Corot to Monet' exhibition in the Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery in London. She also visited the Gustav Klimt paintings at the Leopold Museum and the Austrian Gallery at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna which were of particular interest as we have previously studied these artists. Our next meeting will be a pot luck lunch held at Bev's home on Friday 27th November at 12 midday.

Travel:

Bernard gave us a moving account of his time in the battlefields on the Belgian/French border. He found the grave of his Great Uncle, at Messines, and visited

other sites at Ypres, Tyne Cot, Passchendaele and Ieper. He was amazed to see that local farmers were still digging up spent shells in their fields. He also spoke about a long cruise he took starting in Australia, through the Pacific Islands, Hawaii, the West Coast of USA, Mexico, the Panama Canal, up the East Coast of USA, over to Ireland, across to France and finally to the UK. A most informative talk.

Walking:

23 October. From the top of Mt Victoria we watched the start of a yacht race. Our walk took us through Ngataranga Reserve and ended with a circuit of Cambria Reserve. Tea at 'Ice It' cafe.

13 November. We walked from Akoranga Drive through streets and walkways to Woodside Rd. A pleasant bush walk took us to Lake Rd. From Rotary Reserve we skirted Onepoto Stream, then crossed Onepoto Domain to enter bush again. After crossing Exmouth Rd we joined the path around Tuff Crater and returned to Fox Outlet for refreshments and to make plans for future walks.

World Religions:

Jocelyn Dye spoke on one of the most startling developments of the late twentieth century, the emergence of a militant piety popularly known as 'fundamentalism'. It is only a small minority of them who commit acts of terror, but even the most peaceful and law-abiding of them are perplexing to understand.

This religious resurgence has taken many observers by surprise. In the middle years of the twentieth century, it was generally taken for granted that 'secularism' was an irreversible trend and that faith would never again play a major part in world events. Jocelyn explained the two ways of thinking, speaking, and acquiring knowledge, which scholars have called *mythos* and *logos*. They were regarded as complementary ways of arriving at truth, and each had its special area of competence.

We traced the impact of modernity upon the Christians of Europe and America, upon the Jewish people, and upon the Muslims of Egypt and Iran. These faiths felt that they were battling against forces that threaten their most sacred values.

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