

GUEST SPEAKER: Karen Blake, Bequest Officer, Starship

Title: How the Starship Foundation supports our Nation's Children's Hospital.



- What makes Starship Children's Hospital so special?
- What projects Starship Foundation supports
- Learn more about their Guardian Angels

Karen has worked at the Starship Foundation for the past three years. She returned to work when her daughter was almost 13, having heavily volunteered at her daughter's school for 7 years.

She is originally from New York, but has called New Zealand home for almost 23 years. Karen's work involves travelling all around New Zealand meeting Starship supporters and helping them feel more connected to the wonderful place they support. She also looks after the Starship's Guardian Angels.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Linda Vagana, whom many will have recognised as a former New Zealand representative netball player earning 61 caps, stepped in at the last minute to speak in her role as General Manager of Duffy Books in Homes. This inspirational programme gifts five books each year to 100,000 children in over 500 low decile schools and 290 early childhood centres throughout New Zealand. Using "Caught being Good" awards and Special Role Model Assemblies, the aim is to inspire a love of reading in children and make a link between reading and success by allowing them to choose and keep their own books.

Dave Cotty then gave us an entertaining personal talk on The History of the Mini from 1959-2000 and Frank Graveson completed an excellent morning with a superb illustrated explanation of early expeditions to Antarctica.

The General Election is now over...daylight saving has arrived... and I have just written my final "From the President". It has been a privilege to serve in this role for the last two years. Thank you to all those who have given suggestions, put out the hall chairs, helped with morning tea, given Special Interest Group Presentations, worked tirelessly on our Committee and contributed in so many ways to the successful running of U3A Browns Bay.

Monette Ewen

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Active Travellers

Ancient Civilisations

Alex outlined how the ancients developed the measurement of time and distance. Alex showed how anyone could determine the length of the megalithic yard anywhere on the surface of our planet. The method allowed for the different speeds i.e. 1,200 kph at the equator and much less at lower latitudes. Then Alex outlined the Bronze Age and key reasons behind its collapse. The social structure; control of trade in metals and

other products by the few i.e. kings; armed supporters; while initially successful also germinated their downfall as the oppressed rose up to support the invading Sea People using cheaper and available iron weapons.

Anthropology

We celebrated the start of spring by exploring the rites of spring that have been practised since the time of ancient civilisations and across most cultures and religions. The rites and festivals celebrate new life and the return of fertility to the land with flowers, eggs, special foods, colourful decorations, house cleaning and family celebrations as common activities and symbols. Ancient Celtic and Mayan cultures built circles and towers that would accurately show the vernal equinox as the sun crossed the equator.

Archaeology

After two short "raids" by Julius Caesar in 55 and 54 AD, Britain was "conquered" by Emperor Claudius when a Roman force of about 40,000 led by his general, Aulus Plautius landed in Kent. Britain was never easy to "conquer" or rule as it was a collection of areas ruled by separate local peoples who fought each other and Rome. Despite that, the Romans remained in the country until 410 AD leaving behind what became hundreds of archaeological sites. Meeting snippets included the unintentional desecration of Stowes Pound, a Neolithic site on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall and the discovery by a hiker of a 1100 year old Viking sword in Norway.

Art History

Art Pot Pourri

Velazquez, the great Spanish painter to the 17th century Spanish Habsburg court, painted realistic and psychologically penetrating portraits which have influenced 20th century artists like Picasso and Bacon. He visited Italy twice and painted Pope Innocent X. A DVD on his life and work was shown and attitudes to and the roles of court jesters were discussed. Denise saw a portrait of Juan Calabazas (Pumpkin head) in Dallas and was impressed by the compassion to this disabled man expressed in the painting. The Rokeby Venus, now in the National Gallery, was slashed by a suffragette in 1914. There are about 100 of his paintings in existence as

many were lost in a fire in 1734. The Corsini exhibition showing at Auckland Art Gallery was warmly recommended.

Book Group

Evelyn gave us an excellent PowerPoint presentation and read extracts from the writing of Witi Ihimaera that has been made into four films. 'The Whale Rider' filmed as 'Whale Rider'; 'Bulibasha: king of the gypsies' filmed as 'Mahana'; 'Nights in the Gardens of Spain' filmed as 'Kawa'; and 'Medicine Woman', a novella, filmed as 'White Lies'. We then discussed 'Begin Again' by Ursula Orange (written in 1936) and 'Burial Rites' by Australian writer, Hannah Kent.

China: Past and Present

"The Opium Wars" between Britain and China: In the early 1840's British mania for silk, porcelain and especially tea resulted in a huge depletion of British silver resources. In a 'master stroke' the British, with the cooperation of smugglers and corrupt Chinese, drew on their huge supplies of opium from India to pay their debts. The Chinese government was outraged and their desperate moves to stop the trade brought on fierce British and French retaliation which eventually led to the break up of the old China, the forced signing of The Treaty of Nanjing with its harsh conditions and later the sacking of the exquisite Summer Palace in Beijing. And so began the 'One hundred years of Humiliation' for the Chinese while Britannia continued to rule the waves perhaps not quite so gloriously as we have been led to believe.

Classical Music

Our September music morning was spent watching Thelma's DVD The Essential Pavarotti. First we heard Verdi's Overture La Forza del Destino played by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra then Pavarotti sang Recondita armonia from Puccini's Tosca, Ah la paterna mano from Verdi's Macbeth, La mia letizia infondere from I Lombardi by Verdi, Nessun Dorma from Puccini's Turandot and finally Una Furtiva Lagrima from L'elisir d'amore by Donizetti. After that we enjoyed listening to a Mozart CD. This gave us the Overture from the Magic Flute, Violin Concerto 3 in G Major and Sinfonia Concertanti for oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn in E Flat Major.

Creative Audio-Visual

September is the month of the Creative Audio Visual Group's Challenge "Abstract". Members had to produce an audio/visual entitled "Abstract" - nine of our members did so - all differently! It was great to see the high standard and creativity of the work which is improving by leaps and bounds - particularly that of our newer members. The meeting also welcomed David Thompson from Hobsonville U3A, who are thinking of setting up their own Creative Audio Visual Group - and we will, of course, assist if required. The next meeting will be a technical one at the Bostons'.

Creative Writing

Current Affairs

At our September meeting we were privileged to have Mrs Waveney Warth as a guest speaker. Waveney has been Auckland Council's Waste Solutions Senior Advisor and is soon to take up the role of Consultant on Environmental Behaviour Change. She was such an informative speaker and engaged us so much that we didn't have time for any pre-election discussion! We are now all aware of how we can help

make our environment more sustainable rather than abdicating our responsibility.

'Good news' items: the schoolboy from Manurewa, Uili Papalii, who gave his lunch every day for two weeks to a homeless man and how this gesture ended up with the man receiving an offer of work plus accommodation; out of 163 countries, New Zealand placed as the second most peaceful; Waiheke resident, Selina Tusitala Marsh chosen as NZ's Poet Laureate; the merchant navy being honoured for their participation in WWII.

Cycling

Despite inclement weather, four hardy souls turned up at Te Atatu peninsula on our 'alternate' Wednesday (2nd Wednesday of the month) for a short but very lovely ride around the cycle paths along the peninsula. There were superb views over the harbour to Auckland city and the harbour bridge. Thank you, Piers, for a most enjoyable cycle - followed by a great cup of coffee!

Exploring Art for Fun

Film Appreciation

Evelyn presented a programme featuring well known New Zealand author Witi Ihimaera with a focus on his works which have links to his own experience and have been translated into film. Some have had plot adaptations to work with the constraints of the film medium, or have had alterations to the original text. "Whale Rider" and "Bulibasha" are close to the original, while "Nights in the Gardens of Spain" (retitled as "Kawa") and "White Lies", from the original novella "Medicine Woman" have had additional editing and changes. Pick them up from the library now, a bargain at \$2.10 for a week! You can also borrow the books for free! At the movies, a quiet month for us, but we are all looking forward to "Victoria and Abdul", which will be interesting viewing, especially for those of us who have been watching "Victoria" (part 2) on TV at the same time!

Français pour rire

This time our talk was about Paris and some of its lesser known buildings and galleries. One such is the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, situated in a wing of the Palais de Tokyo. The Palais is so named because it is located in the Avenue de New-York, across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower, and this Avenue used to be called the Avenue de Tokio before 1948. The museum contains beautiful works by Matisse, Modigliani and Delaunay. In 2010, five paintings valued in total at \$123 million, including a Picasso, were stolen and have not been recovered. The theft was successful due to a broken alarm system. The museum was closed down and many euros were spent on security before re-opening in 2014. Another lesser-known landmark is the Arab World Institute building which is fairly near the Quartier Latin. The organisation was founded in 1980 by eighteen Arab countries along with France, to research and disseminate information about the Arab world and its cultural and spiritual values. It has a museum, shop, and cafe and it is interesting to go up in the lift to the roof-top where there is a panoramic view over Paris.

History of Europe

As soon as the Normans landed in England they built their first castle within the walls of an old Roman fort. They used prefabricated timber sections which they had brought with them across the channel. After the Battle of Hastings they spent eight days rebuilding a castle at Dover then, when they reached London, they began work on the White Tower at the Tower of London. By the time William died there were 86 castles in England. A typical Norman castle consisted of a "motte" (a high mound, where possible based on solid rock)

and a "bailey"; a large level area surrounded by a bank, a ditch and a timber palisade. This enclosed timber buildings for accommodation, food storage etc.

Inventors & Inventions

Tony gave us an in-depth look at New Zealander, William Hamilton, who invented the world famous 'Hamilton Jet' propulsion system for boats. Growing up on a farm he developed a liking for the outdoors and doing and making things but his passion was boats. The Canterbury rivers are not deep and so, to satisfy his curiosity to explore, he set out to develop a method of powering small boats along the shallows. John introduced us to puzzles that tested our ability to think outside the square and explained the famous Fibonacci spiral. Garry extolled the virtues and benefits of the electric car and offered to give interested members a ride in his new purchase.

Literature

The topic discussed was Women and Literature and we explored both the contribution to and portrayal of women in literature through the eras. It was noted that European women only started to contribute significantly to literature when the narrative style of the novel became popular from the eighteenth century. Since then literature has been used to reflect the changes in concerns and attitudes that affect women.

Local History

Our September meeting was held as usual, but this time we had a guest speaker. Tony McCracken, President of the Glenfield Historical Society, talked to us about 'Waterways' of the Auckland area. He used maps to show the many waterways which were extensively used by the Maori who relied very much on waka (canoe) for travel and transportation of goods. We began to realise just how extensive the network of streams and rivers was. Some didn't quite connect so 'portages' were used to carry the canoes across to the next waterway. Hence the 'Portage' Roads in the modern-day maps. It has given us a new aspect on looking at maps.

Mah Jong

New members, especially beginners, are welcome. We play at ECB Community Centre for fun, not money. We play with Chows using the Mah Jong Player's Companion book by Patricia Thompson and Betty Maloney. Great brain exercise. Contact Penny if you are interested.

Making History

ICELAND'S ALTHING (parliament): In 930 the settlers of Iceland established the Althing, the world's first parliament. Civil war broke out in the 1200s. To end the wars the Althing agreed to accept Norway's king as Iceland's ruler in 1262. In 1380 Norway and Denmark united and Iceland came under Danish rule. The Althing was abolished in 1800, but was re-established in 1843. Iceland officially gained independence on June 17 1944. In 2008 following the financial collapse, Johanna Sigurdardottir was appointed Iceland's first female Prime Minister.

Medical Science and History

This month Pauline introduced us to the leading cause of death in the USA.....medical error!!! Such errors occurred across a number of variables including medications and objects left behind in theatre. We also learnt that the Zika virus was now giving much hope as a successful treatment of brain cancer. Also, it is misfolded protein clusters that are the cause of many neurological diseases.

Modern History

Brian spoke about life in NZ in the 1940's and 50's. The two decades experienced many changes starting with NZ's heavy involvement in WW2 with the loss of 11,600 lives, the impact of American troops on NZ life, and NZ being the food larder for the UK. The 50's saw growing prosperity, staging of the Empire Games, and the 1951 waterfront strike. The group heard from June and David about "The Parkhurst Boys", a group of young offenders from Parkhurst Prison on Britain's Isle of Wight. These boys, aged between 13 and 17 were given a reprieve if they agreed to come to New Zealand to help to set up the new capital in Auckland. This caused a furore among the "free settlers" and representations were made to Queen Victoria to emphasise that the country was not to be a penal colony.

Music Appreciation and History

Music – Mainly Classical

At our September meeting in David's home he played us a few of the late Glenn Campbell's popular songs followed by the Welsh Morrision Orpheus Choir singing a selection of the rugby songs of Cardiff Arms Park. We then listened to a selection of David's favourite classics from a "Fields of Hope" CD. After refreshments we watched a DVD of the "LGT Young Soloists" playing Bottesini's Grand Duo for violin, double bass and string orchestra.

Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes

Renaissance

Monette's presentation was on Inigo Jones (1573-1621), a British painter, architect and designer. Greatly influenced by Italian architect, Palladio, Jones introduced the classical architecture of Rome and the Italian Renaissance in buildings such as the Queen's House in Greenwich, Banqueting House in Whitehall, Covent Garden and Wilton House. He is also famous for the innovative and lavish stage sets, decorations and costumes he produced for court masques over 35 years. Shona talked about and showed pictures of Renaissance jewellery. Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), a goldsmith, was prominent in Florence. Henry VIII had 234 rings and 324 brooches. We were shown pictures of the reconstructed lost crown of Henry VIII now on show at Hampton Court.

Travel

Walking

Friday - Oakley Walkway

Meet at 9.00am in Woodlands Crescent near the Bowling Club in Browns Bay if you wish to carpool. If you wish to go direct, go over the Harbour Bridge, take the Port/Helensville lanes, take the right lane and swing onto the North Western Motorway. Go past St Lukes exit but remain in left lane...

Take the Great North Road exit and as you swing left go to the middle of the road and there is a right turn into Oakley Road... (it is the first road just at the end of the construction works).

Find parking there and we will meet on the corner of Oakley Road and Great North Road at 10.00am. Queries: phone Jan 4431056 or 0273130082.

Friday - Gills Reserve

Meet at 9.30am in the middle car park at Houghton's Reserve in Oteha Valley Road opposite Mitre 10 for a bush walk through to Gills Reserve. Explore both sides of Gills Reserve exiting onto the Albany Highway. Walk back along road to gravel footpath taking us back to car park.