

June 2021



Browns Bay Newsletter



GUEST SPEAKERS:

Simon Paton
Emma Cushnie

**Northern Corridor
Improvements
Project**

Simon Paton, Principal Project Manager and Emma Cushnie, Community Engagement Managers will present on the Northern Corridor Improvements project. Due for completion in late 2022, the project will provide better links for Northern Motorway (SH1) travellers in Auckland and improve transport options on the North Shore for public transport, freight, cars as well as those travelling on foot or by bike. In addition to 6km of state highway upgrades and 7km of shared user paths, the team were also involved in the relocation of three community facilities. Find out more about the project and see some of the latest aerial shots from site

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello members

Richard Hursthouse, our Guest Speaker for the May meeting, reminded me that protecting the environment is not just about my own footprint, but my whole local environment, so I have spent a little more time getting involved in this.

There is a fine line between environmental activists and political activists these days, and this was discussed at the last U3A Network meeting, where a U3A member asked Network representatives for their support in an environmental issue in their area. This support was turned down. We were reminded that the U3A movement is 'non political' which the committee at Browns Bay Branch attempts to adhere to, however there is also a fine line, in my mind, between offering members speakers that stimulate and challenge our thinking - and politics. Again, this is part of the philosophy of U3A's world-wide. But perhaps my thinking is faulty, as my undergraduate degree was in Political Science!

The Twilight meetings have finished for the winter. Reports are that these meetings were very well received, and I would like to thank Glen and her team for their efforts in arranging these meetings. It has been an opportunity for U3A members to hear some of the presentations by members of SIG groups that we do not belong to.

Val Lloyd

NOTICES

Autumn Twilight meetings

The average attendance for each meeting was about 13. Nine people attended all sessions and there were a further dozen who attended more than once.

The time of 6.30 - 8.30 fitted in well with access to the centre before it closed to arrange the chairs etc, and at that hour parking was easy for attendees.

It is understood that the sessions were enjoyed by the attendees. Choice of topic is always a challenge to know what people would enjoy. Glen Plaistowe drew on her known contacts to provide the presentations.

Whether the twilight sessions will go ahead again in 2022 is a question for the Committee to consider closer to the time. The Committee, on behalf of the Club wish to thank Glen for her arranging and running this new venture.

Noticeboard

The Committee are trialing a noticeboard at our main meeting for health, welfare and community information that is of potential interest to club members. The Noticeboard is updated as we receive relevant information. Have you checked it out yet?

Upcoming speakers

Our Speaker Co-ordinator Gloria Ward advises the following speakers have been scheduled for the next 3 months. (Note these may be subject to change)

- **July:** Dr Winifred Murray one of our members will talk about Restorative Justice
- **August:** Peter Kammler speaking on environmentally friendly cars and why the dominance of petrol fueled cars is coming to an end.

- **September:** Guy Slocum who was a Squadron Leader in the RAF will be talking about his experiences as a pilot in the Cold War.

Potential new SIGs or PopUp SIGS

At our next meeting in June the list of potential SIGs previously listed in the newsletter will be passed around for people to register their interest.

Heart of the Bays open day

U3A Browns Bay have been invited to take part in this open day on Friday 18 June 10.30 am – 1.30pm. Various SIG groups have prepared material for this – in the form of displays, active participation etc in one hour slots.

Those SIGs involved are: Art Pot Pourri, Music Mainly Classical, Ukulele, Medical Science & History, Inventors and Inventions, Mahjong, Local History, Cycling, Art History, International Studies and Active Travellers.

It would be great to see other Club members showing their support by visiting our stands. Anyone actively involved on the day having queries have been asked to contact any of the Committee members.

Car Pooling

With some of our members getting frailer or driving less, it might be time to consider the possibility of carpooling or offering a lift to others so they can more regularly attend meetings and SIG groups.

U3A Network Meeting

Still time to register your interest!

The Auckland U3A network advises their annual network luncheon will be held on

Thursday 29 July 2021, 10.00 am – 2.30pm.

Venue: Westgate Baptist Church West Harbour

Guest Speaker: Steve Braunias, author, columnist, journalist and editor. In addition there will be 6 mini speakers

Cost: \$30 per person Lunch will be provided. Tea, coffee and water will be provided on arrival and water will be available during the mid-morning break. Please bring your own snacks.

If you are interested in attending this event further details and a link to the Registration form are at the end of this newsletter. Peter Dawson from Browns Bay U3A has accepted to represent us with a talk entitles “How I met Elisa – a testing time” which he previewed at the Twilight Meeting on Tuesday May 11.

Special Interest Groups

All members should be part of at least one special interest group. If there is a talk on in one of the groups that you would like to attend phone the convener and see whether they are happy for you to attend.

Special Interest Groups at another U3A

Members visiting a SIG at another U3A may be required to make a payment at the discretion of that SIG group.

Change of Contact details

Please let the Membership Manager know if your contact details change so that our database can be kept up to date.

New Inquiries to join U3A

If you know anyone who is interested in joining our U3A, please pass their names onto our Membership Liaison Myfanwy Van Hoffen. Your committee has prepared a whole “interest pack” for any such inquiries. Myfanwy’s contact details are in the list of contacts above.

Scams

Scams seem to have become a routine part of our need to keep ourselves safe. You probably have already been contacted by phone or email over the last few years by various scam agents. Age Concern have contacted us to advise that they have been targeted by scammers requesting your credit card details for subscriptions now that cheques are no longer valid currency. This is a scam!

Your Editor has also received several emails already this year reminding her that her car registration is due. (its actually not due till July) As with most scams, the email looked genuine. I checked with the registration sticker on my car to validate this then binned the email! *(As an aside – at a meeting I attended a few years ago where we had a speaker on scams from one of the major banks, one poor club member who had been scammed told us “but he sounded so professional!” The bank’s employee replied “Yes – that is their profession – scamming people!”)*

Cheques

As cheques are no longer accepted by banks.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Active Travellers

Alan Thompson gave a talk about his journey to Tibet in 1983, back in a time where tourism was unknown and Westerners hardly ever travelled there. He told us of the difficulties accessing accommodation and even meals but how he and his companion had relished the opportunity to see the architecture and ways of a country mostly hidden from the world at that time. His old photos gave a fascinating glimpse of Tibet as it was then and opened our eyes to the challenges of a trip totally different from the modern travel we are all used to. In the second part of his talk, Alan shared his experiences visiting Ukraine and Belarus in the early 2000s, followed by a description of his visit to the ruins of the ancient Mayan city of Tikal in the Guatemala rainforest, and finally an overview of the contrast between the old colonial and the new high-rise architecture of Panama City.

Human remains, ancient buildings & a pottery kiln are some of the discoveries found near Grantham, & a Roman tandoori-style oven & corn-grinding stone were found near Spalding in Lincolnshire, UK. In Corsica, amphorae have been found containing bones of 40 people, including babies, dating back to 3rd & 6th C AD.

Art History

This month we looked at a number of paintings illustrating the biblical story ' *Susanna and the Elders*', presented by *Patricia*. We started with a painting in the Auckland Art Gallery that is a copy of Italian artist Guido Reni's 1622 painting, and compared it with a number of others with the same theme. We looked closely to decide whether, in each painting, Susanna was portrayed as a 'Mary' or a 'Venus' - an innocent victim or a temptress. Many artists over the years have used the same theme and it was an interesting exercise.

A number of us had been in a group to see the *Van Gogh Alive* exhibition at Spark Arena in lieu of our April meeting, and we had an interesting discussion on its spectacular cleverness.

Art Potpourri

Renowned French jeweller and glass artist, Rene Lalique (1860-1945) designed exquisite Art Nouveau and later Art Deco jewellery before creating diverse range of glass objects which are highly prized. Famed and valuable are perfume bottles, vases, chandeliers, clocks and car mascots made during his lifetime which are etched with the R. Lalique signature. The first glassworks was in Paris but moved to Alsace in 1920 where beautiful Lalique glassware is still manufactured. A Lalique company video was shown, showing the lost wax moulded glass technique for unique pieces, glass blowing, close team work and strict quality control so standards are maintained. Thanks, Claire for such an interesting presentation.

In June Suzanne will be presenting German artist Paula Modersohn-Becker, an important early Expressionist.

Book

As usual, a wide range of books:

The Mirror Book: a memoir by Charlotte Grimshaw; *The Quiet People* and *Blood Men* by Paul Cleave; *Why We Sleep: the new science of sleep and dreams* by Matthew Walker; *The XX Brain* by Dr Lisa Mosconi; *Judas Horse* by Lynda La Plante; *House of Correction* by Nicci French; *Mum and Dad* by Joanna Trollope; *The Night Gate* by Peter May; *Win* by Harlan Coben; *Ralph Hotere: The Dark is Light Enough* by Vincent O'Sullivan; *Consent: a Memoir* by Vanessa Springora; *This Light Between Us* by Andrew Fukuda; *A Song for the Dark Times* by Ian Rankin; *The Engineer's Wife* by Tracey Enerson Wood; *Kika and Me* by Dr Amit Patel; *Murder on Mustique* by Anne Glenconner; *The Other Woman* by Amanda Brookfield; *The Covid Chronicles* by Paul Little; *Never Tell* by Lisa Gardner; *If it Bleeds* by Stephen King; *This Tender Land* by William Kent Krueger; *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell; *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart; *Girl in the Walls* by A J Gnuse; *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins and *Coastliners* by Joanne Harris.

Books and Beyond

"To The Mountains " is a compilation of articles, poems, letters and memoirs written by NZ Alpinists and selected by acclaimed adventurers and authors Laurence Fearnley and Paul Hersey.

From the first European ascent in Fiordland, in 1773 by Cook's botanist Anders Sparrman. This book reveals the often understated significance and importance of the early Maori guides, who, assisted the European settlers with their initial explorations of alpine passes and traverses in both the Southern Alps and the Central North Island Plateau. More recent accounts of Alpine exploration include tributes and letters from Ed Hillary, Lydia Brady and many others who help to provide an insight into the psyche of the NZ mountaineer.

As usual our 'Mountain' challenge brought to light an amazing array of books featuring mountains in some way.

Classical Music

Our monthly meeting was hosted by John and Bess Reynolds where the works of two American composers, Aaron Copeland and George Gershwin were presented. These two men are famous for developing a unique style of American music that broke away from the traditional European styles prevalent in the early 20th Century.

After watching a short documentary on Copland's *Billy the Kid* we then watched an orchestral performance of this stimulating work. This was followed by his famous *Fanfare for the Common Man*. After a break George Gershwin's innovative composition *Rhapsody in Blue* was presented - this version featured Leonard Bernstein playing the piano and conducting the orchestra - a remarkable feat of musicianship. The

meeting concluded with a performance of *Summertime* from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*.

Creative audio visual

This month was our chance for members to bring a video they had created themselves. What a selection we had. Eric took us to the south island where we viewed some stunning scenery accompanied by music. Val decided she would look back on lockdown and what occupied herself and her cat. It was very amusing and a great reminder of how Covid was for us. Colin took us to Wenderholm and Cauldrey House using some interesting transitions. Terry talked about the new programme he is using and we watched a video for beginners. He also showed us a short video using techniques from the programme. Lucy took us on a culinary tour of eight eating places around inner London's Spitalfields market which she visited when last in London! After that we were all ready to tuck into afternoon tea.

Creative Writing - No report this month

Current Affairs

Alan Dabiliz gave such an interesting and well researched talk about morality that the group asked him to continue after tea. He was able to draw most of the group into taking part in the discussion.

Cycling

Ten keen cyclists enjoyed the May ride in beautiful autumn weather which was perfect for cycling. We biked along the Henderson Creek Cycle Path, through

the International Walkway of Trees and emerged in Henderson near the Corban Estate. From there we joined the Opanuku Stream Cycleway. En route we saw varied carvings from inanga / whitebait to Rongo, the god of horticulture with a short talk on Rongo's place in the Maori pantheon. The scenery along the streams was diverse, ranging from native bushland to vineyards to rural landscape. Our break was at the Coffee Studio at the Corban Estate on the return ride, completing 20kms overall.

Film Appreciation

Forgotten Silver, first screened on Montana Sunday Theatre in 1995. This film by Peter Jackson and Costa Botes caused a sensation. Peter had just completed his first internationally applauded film ***Heavenly Creatures*** the year before, so he had become a well respected figure worldwide. The documentary, telling of a long lost New Zealand film pioneer Colin McKenzie, created huge interest among the viewing public. An accompanying article by our most respected magazine, the ***Listener*** added to the interest. This excitement was tempered somewhat the following day, when Jackson revealed that the film was an elaborate hoax, what is now termed a mockumentary.

Two comments about the film from the time:

"I think its bloody disgusting that TVNZ could show this appalling deceptive programme. I want to come around and put a brick through your window." (outraged member of the public)

"The art of storytelling is the art of spinning a convincing lie. I'm not going to apologise for doing my

job well. If Forgotten Silver causes people never to take anything from the media at face value, so much the better.” (Costa Botes)

Français pour rire

In this month's meeting, Cecily talked to us about Brittany in North-West France, an area she first visited as a young woman. She described the history of the area and in particular the pre history with its dolmens and burial chambers, as well as the heritage dress, culture and language of the area.

We continued with our couple Mireille and Robert in Paris discussing professions and surnames derived from these. And we finished by discussing the famous French ballet dancer Zizi Jeanmaire who was celebrated in the song that begins "You talk like Marlene Dietrich, And you dance like Zizi Jeanmaire". "Where do you go to my lovely?", the famous 1969 song by Peter Sarstedt.

And Cecliy's quiz is "What are the four main rivers in France"

A bientôt a tous.

International Studies

International Studies met to discuss our presentation for the Have A Go day. Then Val took us to Poland ,a country which was overrun by adjoining nations in the last century

She talked about the monarchs of the past , the bad government which led to widespread starvation. She covered WW1 ,WW2 and how the Solidarity Movement led the nation to its current sovereignty. There are modern cities, some industry

and ports. Poland is part of the EU and NATO. There is free universal education, health care and several beautiful World Heritage sites . Next month Geoff will take us to Zanzibar and Tanzania

Inventors and Inventions

18 members met to hear from Al Krobisch about the little-known electrical properties of water. With an understanding of these it may be possible to use water on its own amongst other things, as a stand-alone battery or to desalinate sea water. After tea Roger Warner showed several short videos on the invention of electric propeller-driven, foiling surfboards that could be used for individual commuter transport across short bodies of water.

Local History - No report this month

Mah Jong (every Friday 10.00am)

Please note the change of start time.

Medical Science and History

Denise presented two topics: Blepharitis, chronic eyelid inflammation, is managed by damp hot packs on the closed eyes and eyelid massage with saline or dilute baby shampoo. Eyes can feel dry and irritated as tiny eyelid mybomium glands sometimes don't secrete oil evenly. The oil is an essential eye lubricant blending with tears. Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (FDIA) is a fortunately rare, recognised psychiatric disorder. Factitious means not natural or artificial. FDIA was formerly called Munchausen by Proxy. A

caregiver may directly induce symptoms in a dependent (usually a child) through poisoning or other mistreatment to gain sympathy or money. Protection of the child is paramount. Mini Talks – Ian presented Two TED Talks one a blood test for diagnosing Cancer and one on Targeting Therapy for treating Cancer.

Modern History

What a full programme we enjoyed at our April meeting!

Review of the 1960s The main presentation by Brian Moore included many of the tempestuous events of the 1960s.

Tragedies included - The killing of President Kennedy and his brother Bobby, The Sharpeville Massacre in S Africa of 6000 protesters, The Vietnam War. *Of course we all remember the famous movies of the 1960s* - Laurence of Arabia, Do No, Cleopatra ,Psycho, Dr Zhivago, Breakfast at Tiffany's. *Which musicians do we remember* - The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Beach Boys, Supremes.

Celebrations included - The first man in space, Yuri Gagarin, The first flight of Concorde

The presentation concluded with two short videos highlighting what both the USA and the UK regarded as the most news worthy events of The 1960s

Kamala Harris: Patricia gave a short presentation on this remarkable woman who has already 'made history' as the first female Vice president and the highest ranking female in U.S history as well as the first African American and first Asian American Vice President. Definitely someone to watch.

The Spanish Flu . A brilliant short video found by Brian highlighted the main features of the Spanish flu, what similarities it has with Covid 19, and what we should have learned from history.

Music Appreciation and History - SIG in recess

Music - Mainly Classical

Our group met at Alf and Greta's to watch a DVD on the life of Pavarotti which opened up a revealing picture of this most intriguing character with such a wonderful voice. We later watched a YouTube session of a performance by the Marcus Roberts jazz trio playing with an orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa. Marcus Roberts is a blind jazz pianist well worth listening to, see:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsvjLgaj3vE&list=RDjsvjLgaj3vE&start_radio=1

Puzzles Patterns & Paradoxes - No report this month

Renaissance

Greta's talk was about Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece painting The Last Supper which is on the refectory wall of Santa Maria della Gracie monastery in Milan. The painting depicts the emotions and actions of the 12 apostles after Jesus has told them he will be betrayed by 1 of them. Jesus is the central figure. Trish spoke about Mary Queen of Scots, the only child of James V of Scotland and Mary of Guise of France. Mary became Queen of Scots when only 6 days old so Scotland was ruled by Regents. Her

mother took her to France till she was old enough to reign. At 5 she was engaged to the Dauphin of France to form an alliance with France against England. At 16 she was married to the Dauphin who died a year later. Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland at 18 years old. 4 years later married Lord Darnley who was later murdered. Soon after she married James Bothwell . Later she was forced to abdicate, held captive and her 2 year old son was taken from her and appointed King by nobles who wanted power .She was Catholic and the nobles Protestant. Mary managed to escape to England where she trusted her cousin Queen Elizabeth 1st would help her but because she was Catholic she was imprisoned for 19 years. Fearing an uprising of the Catholics in England Queen Elizabeth reluctantly signed the documents and Mary Queen of Scots was executed. Her son succeeded Queen Elizabeth and was James VI of Scotland and James I of England.

The Maori World

We took advantage of the Auckland Writers' Festival happening on the date of our monthly meeting, for a group of us to spend the morning at the festival. With so many options available, our top choice was the panel discussion on Tino Rangatiratanga in Publishing, looking at how Maori writers are dealing with the literary barriers of mainstream publishing. The panel was made up of Patricia Grace, Anahera Gildea and essa may ranpiri and chaired with much insight by Emma Espiner. Patricia, who was first published in 1975, spoke of how writers back then would hold hui on marae to support each other, recognising the need

to have work published that told the Māori stories. Anahera and essa may spoke of their experience in the current situation and how writers and editors are investing in alternative methods of publishing in te ao Māori to provide historical and cultural context to current issues. This inspiration discussion ended with Patricia's advice to hopeful young writers, "just do it".

Travel - No report this month

Ukulele

Last month the group had tutorials from various experts on strumming technique. The last meeting of the month, we celebrated Bob Dylan's 80th birthday with running through some of his famous compositions. It was an interesting exercise without a Bob Dylan type voice to lead the songs.

The Ukulele groups resources can be found here:-

<http://u3abb.net.nz/ukulele.html> .

We welcome beginners, established players and just vocalists.