

**August 2021**



**Browns Bay Newsletter**



**GUEST SPEAKER**

**Peter Kammler**

**“Environmentally friendly cars  
and the future of transport”**

The truth is, an environmentally friendly car would be difficult to find. At best, there are various degrees of unfriendliness but, nevertheless, it is well worth investigating along these lines. Peter Kammler has a diploma in engineering, and he has worked at the engine development division of Mercedes-Benz. He immigrated to New Zealand in 1986. He is a founding member of the Sustainable Energy Forum, and a member of Engineers for Social Responsibility. He also was a member of the Board at Greenpeace New Zealand, and has conducted an energy efficiency program in Warkworth. Peter will give a quick historic view of the automobile’s propulsion systems. He will explain why the internal combustion engine (gasoline or diesel) has dominated our road transport for one hundred years, and why this dominance is now coming to an end. Then, to help make decisions about the environmental footprint of a car, he will explain where exactly the energy goes. This includes both the fuel consumption and, not to forget, the energy needed to build the car.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello members,

Dr Winifred Murray our Guest Speaker for the July meeting covered the topic of Restorative Justice in the Criminal Justice system in New Zealand, and we learned of the benefits to the perpetrator of involvement in this system, and also to the victim.

The Renaissance Special Interest Group gave us two vignettes about life in renaissance times, which were very interesting and evocative. Particularly for me, as I am currently reading a series of novels about travel back in time, the first book to the time of the dinosaurs and the one I am currently reading, to the time of the Victorians, and Jack the Ripper. Yes, pretty 'light-hearted' stuff, but the SIG group were able to provide pictorially a snapshot of the times.

I had my first Covid19 vaccination this month, and can report as have others, that the process is very well organised. Unfortunately, one of our committee members has missed out on visiting a son and family in Sydney because of the Covid situation there. I believe that this is a warning to us to keep scanning or signing in at places we visit, and hand-washing and that wearing masks where required here, is still essential, even if we have been vaccinated. Keep well.

Val Lloyd

# NOTICES

## 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)

- **September:** Guy Slocum who was a Squadron Leader in the RAF will be talking about his experiences as a pilot in the Cold War.
- **October:** Margaret Gane will speak on U3A in New Zealand and overseas. And very topically she will also tell us how the town of Eyam in Derbyshire England famously coped with the Great Plague that raged in the 1660s.
- **November:** Professor Stephen Hoadley will talk about life post Trump

## New SIGs

There are some new SIGs starting in July/August – Geaneology, Foodies, Famous/infamous people, Early NZ History and Dancing. Times/convenors details are included in the SIG calendar below (the SIGs have been highlighted in yellow for ease) and in the Special Interest Group report section.

## **Change of Contact details**

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

## **New Inquiries to join U3A**

Use the contact page on this website

## **Online network learning**

Your attention is drawn again to the online network learning courses available from [u3aonline.org.au](http://u3aonline.org.au). Members from U3A Browns Bay are able to join this resource as individual members. Courses and costs are detailed at this website.

## **U3A Browns Bay facebook page**

Did you know that we have our own facebook page? If you have a Facebook account please join our newly launched Facebook account: U3A Browns Bay, Auckland. You are invited to contribute any adventure you have had with your Special Interest Groups - Photos and some info about the photos. All content must be related to U3A Browns Bay or from other U3A's in New Zealand

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

**Active Travellers** - No report this month

### **Archaeology**

Exciting developments in this field are promised in the next 10 years. In his book, ["The World before Us"] Tom Higham, a professor of Kiwi birth working at Oxford University outlines three new methods of exploring the very distant past [beyond Carbon dating - older than 50,000 years]. These are ZoomMS (collagen peptide mass fingerprinting), getting DNA from sediments in ancient caves [used for classifying ancient bone fragments] and S\* a new statistical method which enables these materials to be more accurately dated. His team is responsible for recovering a great deal of information about the Denisovans [who lived at similar times to the Neanderthals]. They even found a tiny bone which came from a girl with a Denisovan father and a Neanderthal mother. Research into modern DNA has shown that the greatest concentration of Denisovan DNA in the modern world [living people] is found in New Guinea, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. Another exciting aspect is that research into the same topic, in a nearby area, is being done by Professor Murray Cox at Massey University, Albany.

## **Art History**

Giorgio Vasari was an Italian painter and architect born in 1511 in Arezzo. He undertook many major architectural projects and fresco decorating commissions but he is best known for his famous work “The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects”, a series of Renaissance artist biographies which form the basis for modern art history, first published in 1550 and again in 1568. The book is structured in three stages. The first marks the rebirth of great art after the demise of classical civilization. The second stage leads to more sophisticated techniques of design and perspective. The third stage ends in the perfection dominated by Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo. The selected works have remained those most popular with collectors, scholars and visitors to the major museums of the world. He is still one of the most influential art historians of all time.

## **Art Potpourri**

“Klimt & Schiele- Eros and Psyche”, an acclaimed 2018 Italian documentary was shown by Denise. The film’s focus is on Vienna at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and gives an absorbing overview of the developments in art, music, philosophy, psychoanalysis, writing, architecture and high quality home wares during this period. These subjects and the

evolving roles of women are discussed by eminent contributors. It describes the lives of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele and shows many examples of their creative genius in several famous galleries . Their works were scandalous then and are (still today) sometimes shocking. Both artists died in the 1918 flu pandemic.

Next month we plan a visit to the West Auckland glass artist, Jenny McLeod.

## **Book\_Group**

Books we discussed this month were: Conversation with My Country by Alan Duff, the Light Between Us by Andrew Fukuda, The Bohemians by Jasmin Darznik, Akin by Emma Donoghue, The Queen's Fortune by Alison Pataki, Munich by Robert Harris, The Wish Child by Catherine Chidgey, The Prodigal Son by Gregg Hurwitz, All Our Shimmering Skies by Trent Dalton, In the Dark by Andrea Pfluger and The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead.

## **Books and Beyond**

The topic for reading and discussion for July was 'Memoirs'. Patricia spoke about Alison Jones' memoir called, "This Pakeha Life: An Unsettled Memoir." As Alison explained when she was guest speaker at a recent U3A general meeting, it is about identity and belonging, and making sense of being a Pakeha. It is a

highly readable account of Alison's life and how she has learnt to traverse both Maori and Pakeha worlds. Last month's topic was 'memory' which tied in well with this topic and book. A spirited discussion followed about the unreliability of memories, and therefore how much we can actually rely on memoirs and autobiographies to be truthful.

### **Classical Music**

Gilbert and Sullivan was a Victorian theatrical partnership. WS Gilbert (1836-1911) was the dramatist and Arthur Sullivan (1842-1911) was the composer for the 14 comic operas they produced. The 3 most popular were HMS Pinafore, The Pirates of Penzance and the Mikado. We viewed their history and excerpts of G&S on Utube. We then celebrated with a mid year Xmas lunch at Greenwich Gardens cafe.

**Creative audio visual** No report this month

**Creative Writing** No report this month

### **Current Affairs**

A variety of topics were discussed at the July meeting, from the proposed 'hate speech' legislation to name changes for some National Parks. Everybody had views on the topics and it was encouraging that most members took part in the discussions.



## **Cycling**

Six keen members of the U3A Biking group gathered at the end of Francis St at 10 am in the hope that the weather radar was telling the truth, and set off along the coastal track heading south along the inner harbour towards Devonport.

We diverted to the Bayswater Marina for a quick look before resuming south to Ngataringa Park where we took time out to explore and admire the Labyrinth. We then skirted the Naval Sports Ground, rode along Calliope Rd and headed for the café at the Naval museum at Torpedo Bay and a welcome cuppa and chat.

Our return route was up the outer harbour roads past Narrow Neck before heading west along Williamson then Bayswater Avenues to retrace our route back to Francis Ave. We covered about 20kms all told.

## **Dance New SIG**

Our first meeting was held in the Rothesay Room [at Heart of the Bays] and a good time was had by all. We decided to meet once a month on the first Friday afternoon.

Sadly we could not see how to get the TV screen to switch on so we did our practical workshop under difficulties.

At our next meeting Pat will introduce us to Line Dancing and we will practice the dance we did today. Everyone has a link so that we can practice at home. There is still plenty of space for anyone wanting to join.

## **Early NZ History New SIG**

## **Famous (Infamous) People New SIG**

### **Film Appreciation**

The Film Appreciation group met at the Settlers Village cinema where we viewed the classic movie Death on the Nile, based on Agatha Christie's tale. The part of Hercule Poirot was played by the incomparable Peter Ustinov - a pleasure to watch. He was supported by the classy David Niven, together with Bette Davis, Mia Farrow, and Maggie Smith - a star-studded cast. At the conclusion we viewed a documentary on the making of the film which, among other intriguing aspects, showed the reconstruction of the Nile paddle steamer in the Pinewood Studios, to enable the cast and filmmakers to shoot the various scenes without being handicapped by the vagaries of the Egyptian weather. These studio shots were intercut with scenes of the steamer going down the Nile River past local people and pyramids. All in all, an absorbing movie.

## **Foodies New SIG**

### **Français pour rire**

This month Fay took us to Sainte-Chapelle, the Royal church in Paris consecrated in 1248. Entering through the lower level, which is somewhat dull - and intended for the commoners, we were taken up the narrow spiral staircase to the upper church - for the royals and nobility - with its sublime stained glass windows. A not-to-miss in Paris. We then continued with our two friends in Paris and learned about the French education system before reading about French news. Next month Rosemary will talk about the derivation of the French language and we will carry on with our French readings and translations.

## **Genealogy New SIG**

The new Genealogy group met for the first time on 7<sup>th</sup> July. In future, the group will meet at 1.30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Members talked about their hopes for the group and shared details of their genealogy interests and experience. Several topics for future meetings were raised and discussed with much enthusiasm. The next meeting will include a discussion on DNA testing for genealogical purposes.

## **International Studies**

An excellent meeting with Dorothy explaining the political history, Monarchy, economy of Tonga as well as the health and educational and employment opportunities present there today..176 islands in a North/South line in the Polynesian section of the Pacific ocean make up the country. After British Protectorate status and much unrest for decades it has been a constitutional monarchy since 2010. Unrest was mainly from the Pro-Democracy Party who wanted better representation in Parliament and the King to have less power This is now a more settled country but with the King's family still holding much power. Val then explored our first study of a city Napier which everyone had visited and could contribute to the talk.

Next month Gareth will talk about Wales and Heather's city is to be Manchester UK

## **Inventors and Inventions**

11 members met at Wellington Drive Technologies Ltd, Albany, on Tuesday 20 July to hear a most interesting talk from David Howell, their Chief Technical officer, about their products and markets. They supply about 33% of the world market for drink dispenser refrigeration fan motors (around 2 million a year to Coke and Pepsi) as well as locally designed electronic controller boxes that monitor the fridges. The electronic

boxes display in real time for every fan motor supplied around the world how many times the fridge door has opened, a history of the internal temperatures and when each requires maintenance. We could even see from Google Maps where every fridge is, and even a photo of a small dairy in Quito, Ecuador when one is located. On returning to the Sherwood Room for a cuppa John Shears concluded with an interesting talk on mining mica in NZ for the insulation in your toaster elements.

## **Local History**

We have continued with short talks and discussions on the theme of 'Heritage Buildings'. Topics have included gas works including gasometers (city and North Shore), City buildings 1960's. and many Church buildings. We will continue with this topic for future meetings.

**Mah Jong** No report this month

## **Medical Science and History**

Gabrielle and Ian presented an overview of the issue of "gluten intolerance" and what it means, because it has received an increasing profile in the media and society. Gluten Intolerance can include non-celiac gluten intolerance, Celiac Disease and Wheat Intolerance. Many people now look for gluten free products and

assert that they are experiencing a range of different effects, such as bloating, lethargy, headaches, etc. It is important for people to try to gain an understanding of the various impacts of the “gluten syndrome” in trying to deal with its effects. The presentation was intended to be informative rather than asserting any particular approach, although one TED Talk presented (in Tauranga by a NZ doctor) contended that we should all be considering gluten-free diets. Fay talked about Polio - Why after 20 years of freedom from Polio were there outbreaks in 2018 in New Guinea, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia? It was found that the vaccine [Sabin] used in these countries contained a weakened live virus. Although this vaccine is easy to administer [orally], it had still not been possible to reach and vaccinate more than 65% of the population due to remoteness, hostilities, access, etc. Unbeknown to anyone the weakened virus was mutating in these remote areas and took advantage of poor hygiene to strike. [Covid vaccines do NOT contain live virus]

## **Modern History**

The United Nations Organisation evolved with the progress of WW2. New Zealand played an important role in its planning and establishment. “The Declaration of St James Palace” in June 1941 was signed by the 14 nations then at war with Germany. The invasion of Russia and Pearl Harbour

brought USSR, USA, and China into membership. The first of many conferences took place in Washington, leading to the "The Declaration of The United Nations" - drafted by Churchill and Roosevelt in January 1942. FDR suggested the name. There were 26 signatories but not France. Declaring war on the Axis powers was a prerequisite. Although dominated by the Big Four, Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek, New Zealand contributed by protecting the interests of smaller nations. The Charter was signed by 50 nations at the San Francisco Conference on 25 June 1945. PM Peter Fraser signed for NZ.

January 1946, the first General Assembly met in London. The famous New York building was completed in 1952.

## **Music - Mainly Classical**

Our July meeting was at Alma's home, where we watched a video giving the history of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. This orchestra was founded in 1879, and is the oldest Chinese symphony orchestra. Originally, it was known as the Shanghai Public Band, expanding in 1907 to an orchestra. In 1922, it was renamed as the Shanghai Municipal Council Symphony Orchestra. Finally in April 2004 the name of the orchestra was officially changed to the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra. We then watched a

wonderful recording of Beethoven's Triple Concerto with Daniel Barenboim, piano, Yo Yo Ma, cello and Sophie Anne Mutter, violin.

## **Puzzles Patterns & Paradoxes**

This month we met at Ian's place at Settlers. As usual there were puzzles and mind-teasers aplenty!

Here are a few:

1. Fill in the gaps to get a 19th Century UK Prime minister: R--B--R--P--E--

2. Which capital city is on each river?

- Tiber
- Molonglo

3. Decode this: AALLLL (Answers at the end of the newsletter)

We also considered the puzzle of Easter Island, its moai and its untranslated language.

John explained the puzzle of the 12 tennis balls.

## **Renaissance**

Monette gave a presentation on the scholar and poet, Francesco Petrarca [1304-74]. His enquiring mind and love of classical writers led him to travel extensively throughout Europe visiting men of learning and searching monastic libraries for Ancient Greek manuscripts. His rediscovery of Cicero's letters is



credited with initiating the 14<sup>th</sup> century Italian Renaissance and the founding of Renaissance Humanism. Petrarch published many books written in Latin and volumes of his letters but is most famous for the “Canzoniere”, his collection of 366 lyric poems written in Italian dedicated to Laura. 317 of the poems are sonnets. He did not invent the sonnet format but polished and perfected it so the Petrarchan sonnet is named after him.

## **The Maori World**

In July, Shirley gave a presentation on Kingitanga, the Māori King Movement. Back in 1840 there were approximately 70,000 Māori and approximately 2,000 Europeans living in New Zealand. By 1858 these numbers were reversed. Māori tribes in the central North Island were concerned about the alienation of Maori land at a time of rapid population growth by European colonists. The answer for some of these tribes was to establish a role similar to that of the British Monarch and hence the formation of the Māori King Movement. Several North Island candidates who were asked to put themselves forward declined, however in 1858 Pōtatau Te Wherowhero was crowned as the first Māori King in Ngāruawhia.

Following the reign of five kings, Te Atairangikaahu was elected as the first Māori Queen in 1966. Her 40 year reign was the longest of any Māori monarch and

she was recognised for her outstanding services to Māori people. Kingitanga has faced many challenges and the current King, Tūheitia Paki's role is seen as a mainly ceremonial role within the Waikato Tainui tribe with limited powers.

**Travel** No report this month

**Ukulele** No report this month

Answers to the puzzles in the Puzzles, Patterns & Paradoxes report:

1. Robert Peel.
2. Rome. Canberra.
3. All in all.