

**JUNE 2017**



**Browns Bay Newsletter**



## **GUEST SPEAKER: Jo Lloyd**

**TITLE:** My Journey with Autism

Jo has been working with Autism New Zealand for seven years as an Outreach Coordinator in Auckland, supporting and working together with families/whānau and individuals on their journey with autism.

As an Outreach Coordinator, Jo is also busy in the community presenting information and training to schools, community groups and other support agencies.

She is also an experienced educator with Autism New Zealand and currently facilitates the *FANZ* Programme.

As a mother of two boys, one of whom is on the Autism Spectrum, Jo provides a unique perspective from both a professional and, often humorous and 'real', personal perception.

### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Greetings :Our May general meeting certainly turned out somewhat differently to what we originally planned! It is wonderful to have such talented U3A members willing to contribute when needed. Many thanks to Alex Wilson, convenor of our Ancient Civilisations Special Interest Group, for stepping in so capably at the last minute when our guest speaker was unavailable. Thank you also to Roy Boston, convenor of the Creative Audio Visual Group, who quickly put together a varied and highly entertaining selection of audio visuals for the second half of the meeting. Members of this SIG clearly put such a lot of time and effort into creating their audio visuals and their work definitely deserves to reach a wider audience.

At the May meeting Fay Weatherly proposed starting a new Special Interest Group called "Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes". It is so impressive that, within the month, this new group have already held their first meeting! Well done, Fay. More members are welcome so please contact Fay if you would like to join this new group. If any other U3A Browns Bay members have ideas/suggestions for additional new groups, please contact Heather Howarth, our Convenor Coordinator. Monette Ewen

**Active Travellers -**

**April:** Helen gave a talk on her walking group tour to Tuscany and the Italian Lakes and then to Sardinia with friends. The photos of the journey gave a taste of the areas visited. The views of walking across the Tuscan landscape were just as you see in brochures but seeing the villages and the stories about them brings it to life. Sardinia is a land dedicated to 60% small holdings of livestock and 20% agriculture; the rest of the land especially the interior is forest. Orgosolo village was the highlight with murals on nearly every building in a mountain village which is said to be full of bandits.

**May:** Peter gave an interesting presentation on his trip to Italy. After taking in the sights of Rome we were taken to the gardens of Villa D'Este at Tivoli, on to the Trulli houses of Alberobello, and the hilltop town of Ostuni surrounded by olive groves of the Puglia Region. Then came Sorrento, the Amalfi Coast, the ruins of Pompeii and the cemetery at Monte Cassino, before heading up to the sights of Venice via Assisi and Verona. Travelling on through the Dolomites to Milan, the gardens on Iso Bello at Lake Maggiore, Cinque Terre, Pisa, Florence and finally Sienna, we got an insight into Italy.

**Ancient Civilisations –**

After the end of the last Ice Age about 10,000 years ago when the planet warmed enough for plants to grow and animals thrived, what is known as 'The Neolithic Revolution' began. With wheat, barley and animals in abundance agriculture development allowed early peoples to change from hunter gatherers to settlers. From scavenging they began to raise crops which allowed them to have a certainty of food supply, gradually form settlements and populate rich soil areas. We looked at this development in the Fertile Crescent which runs from Mesopotamia through to the Levant. We also looked at early agriculture in China and India. Next month we will look at Egypt and the Americas.

**Anthropology –**

We discussed that latest research on Flores Island where the ancient bones have been found for a unique group known as the "Hobbit" people. We also looked at the DNA tracking in the geno-project. Alan told us about the gypsies that originated in India and travelled through northern Africa before crossing into Spain. The Spanish gypsies have given the sound and vibrancy of Flamenco to Spain. We then started to learn about the Yi of Sichuan who were originally Europeans who sought refuge in the mountains of China and intermarried with the local Han people and have developed a unique culture. Next meeting we will continue the study on the Yi.

**Archaeology –**

Gill spoke about the ancient peoples of Central America especially the Maya and Olmec people. There is still a big unanswered question about why the peoples of this

area deserted their towns which then returned to the “jungle”. Drought or war are possible solutions. The Olmec people specialised in sculpting giant stone heads [portraits of their leaders?] out of basalt and bringing them 40 miles to their capital. Archaeologists have done re-enactments of this transportation to examine the daunting problems involved. Evelyn gave us useful information on how to access magazine articles using the Auckland Library website.

### **Art History -**

Penny Walton presented a talk on Honore Daumier (1805-1879), a French printmaker, caricaturist, sculptor and painter whose many works offer commentary on the social and political life in France in the 19th Century. After the revolution of 1830 he created art which expressed his political beliefs and a lifelong sympathy for the poor. Unfortunately, he sympathised so much with the poor that he died blind and in debt and was buried in a pauper’s grave. His creative expression of his political beliefs of the foibles of 19th Century France landed him in jail. Following Penny's presentation we watched a DVD on the Italian artist, Giotto.

### **Art Pot Pourri –**

No report this month.

### **Book Group -**

There was no main presenter this month. We discussed *All the Rivers* (Dorit Rabinyan); *Rotten Row* (Petina Gappah); *A Prison Diary* (Jeffrey Archer); *Gray Mountain* (John Grisham); *The Good Life on Te Muna Road* (Deborah Coddington); *Toute Allure: falling in love in rural France* (Karen Wheeler); *The Nowhere Man* (Greg Hurwitz); *The Guilty One* (Lisa Ballantyne); *Under Dark Waters* (Bernadette Calonego); *The Second Death* (Peter Tremayne); *Ragdoll* (Daniel Cole); *Amazing Fantastic Incredible: a marvellous memoir* (Stan Lee); *The Last Act of Hattie Hoffman* (Mindy Mejia); *The Girl With the Lower Back Tattoo* (Amy Schumer); Robert B Parker's *The Bridge* (Robert Knott); *The Redeemers* (Ace Atkins) and *The Annotated Alice* (Martin Gardner).

### **China: Past and Present –**

The historical ‘Silk Road’ was never one road but many trade routes connecting the East and West from China to the Mediterranean and silk was only one of many goods transported from both directions. The legacy was the exchange and interaction of cultures, languages, technology and religions. The routes were used constantly from about 1200BC to the 15th Century when sea transport took precedence. Our group also discussed the modern Silk Road known as ‘One Belt One Road’: the Chinese project is building road, rail and maritime links through Asia to Europe and Africa. A recent OBOR conference in Beijing was attended by representatives of 130 countries, including NZ, and advocated free trade and networks for cooperation.

### **Classical Music –**

The Dvorák Cycle DVD we watched on Friday had us listening to some compositions of Dvorák that we had not heard before. The Czech composer's five Biblical Songs came first, followed by the more familiar Violin Concerto in A minor Op 53. which is in three parts: Allegro ma non troppo, Adagio ma non troppo and Finale: Allegro giocoso ma non troppo. The Prague Symphony Orchestra and the Prague Philharmonic Choir helped to make this DVD enjoyable. Dvorák's lively Slavonic Dances Op 46 finished the morning on a cheerful note.

### **Creative Writing –**

This month Kathy took us back to the 1940's with her story about " land ballots". Doreen entertained us with the tale of a vege-growing competition, while Elaine took us deer-hunting ending with a trip before the Judge. Irene finished up with a four-legged midnight intruder. Our next meeting will be on 25th May at 1.30pm. We would welcome new members.

### **Creative Audio-Visual –**

The Creative Audio Visual Group met at the home of Fay Weatherly. The topic for the meeting was the challenge to produce an Audio Visual using the photographs taken on the photoshoot at Warkworth at the end of March. All members responded with their efforts which showed their creativity and, in some cases, their sense of humour! The group also decided to purchase a portable hard drive to maintain an archive of the group's activities. The next meeting will be a technical one at the Bostons' on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Current Affairs –**

As usual there was plenty of news to consider. The excellent organisation of the World Masters Games was commended by both a volunteer and a participant in our group. We discussed the Government's recent pay equity settlement; the proposed changes to the Immigration Policy; the Commerce Commission's *second* refusal to merge NZME and Fairfax; and queried the New Zealand system of *listed* vs *elected* parliamentarians. Heather B. reported on Gareth Morgan's meeting re The Opportunity Party. Re the larger world scene, we talked about the election of France and South Korea's new Presidents, North Korea's threats, and the US President's firing of the FBI Chief. We are confident there will be lots more news to engage us in the coming month!

### **Cycling –**

Margaret's May Bike Ride: Southdown - Mangere Bridge - Ambury Farm. On a lovely sunny morning seven cyclists met at the end of Hugo Johnson Drive, Southdown. We set off over the cycle bridge passing by the imposing container terminal, with its columns of colourful international containers. The cycleway opened up onto the upper

Manukau Harbour, hugging the coast. It was low tide and there were white birds congregating far out on the tide. In contrast, on our right there was the industrial area. We passed Waikaraka cemetery and on to the highlight of our ride, Old Mangere Bridge. There were good views of Onehunga Port and we passed by many serious fishermen. The ride connected on to the Kiwi Esplanade shared pathway, with views of the volcanic shoreline, birdlife and across the harbour to Hillsborough, an easy flat ride to Ambury Regional Park. Retracing our steps, we stopped at Onehunga Mall expecting to find a cafe nearby but there was no such thing; however, for those of us desperate for a coffee, a smart cafe was found along the road serving nice coffee and food to the local business community.

### **.Exploring Art for Fun –**

No report this month.

### **Film Appreciation –**

Our group enjoyed a DVD about the life of Joan Crawford, a star whose career covered four decades and included a variety of genres. The movie we most related to was “Whatever Happened to Baby Jane” with Bette Davis. Recommended viewing this month at your local theatre: “Viceroy’s House”, “Andre Rieu at Maastricht”, “Winter At Westbeth”, “Pecking Order” (a NZ doco), “The Sense Of An Ending”, “The Zookeeper’s Wife”, and “Hippopotamus” based on the book by Stephen Fry.

### **Français pour rire –**

**April:** We started the meeting with an animal crossword from Gareth, the answer being Brigitte Bardot as a well-known person who is now devoted to the defence of animals. Then Anna talked about Catherine Deneuve, born Catherine Fabienne Dorléac in 1943. Still working today, she acted in her first film at age thirteen and went on to perform in more than 120 films. Her real breakthrough came with her role in ‘Les Parapluies de Cherbourg’ (‘The Umbrellas of Cherbourg’) in 1964. Deneuve is one of France's most respected actresses known for her Gallic beauty and for her film roles such as ‘The Last Metro’ and ‘Indochine’, both of which won her a César Award. She has worked with famous directors such as Roman Polanski, Roger Vadim, Jacques Demy and Luis Buñuel. Catherine has two children - a son, actor Christian Vadim, from her relationship with Roger Vadim, and a daughter, actress Chiara Mastroianni, from her relationship with Marcello Mastroianni. She was married only once - to photographer David Bailey from 1965-1972.

**May:** Gareth introduced us to musical instruments using a crossword with composer Maurice Ravel (Boléro) as the major clue. Penny then took us through the French national anthem - La Marseillaise - and we were surprised to learn how brutal the language is (we declined requests to break into song!) Finally we watched a video of Timothy West and Prunella Scales travelling along the Canal du Midi which joins the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean Sea eliminating the need to pass by the pirate-

ridden Straits of Gibraltar. The canal designed by Pierre-Paul Riquet opened in 1681 predating most British canals and took 12,000 men and women workers 15 years to complete. Originally for commerce it is now used by pleasure boats idling along the canal.

### **History of Europe -**

No report this month.

### **Inventors & Inventions –**

David took us through the life and work of Luther Burbank who lived in America from 1849 to 1926 and was acclaimed as the plant wizard of his day. He bred, developed and "invented" over 800 new varieties of plants. His greatest success was the potato called the Burbank Russet which is, 130 years on, the most widely grown variety in the USA today. There followed some discussion as to whether or not new plants could be considered an invention. New plants can be patented and many have been. In 1986 Luther Burbank was inducted into The National Inventors Hall of Fame. John then showed us how some of PowerPoint's features can be used to improve presentations. Features such as Animations and Presenter's view can make a big difference to the appeal of a presentation.

### **Literature –**

'The Wish Child' by Catherine Chidgey, a NZ writer, is set in Germany during WW 2. It follows two families: one living in Berlin and the other on a farm. The stories of two of the children are told by a mysterious all-knowing narrator. Both live with parents committed to the Nazi cause and are indoctrinated at school and in society to firmly believe in Hitler's greatness. We follow their lives during and after the war. The novel is insightful of the period, with vivid descriptions. Members then discussed the upcoming Auckland Writers' Festival and the sessions they planned to attend.

### **Local History –**

As we didn't have a speaker this month, we had snippets from the group. There were many different topics including: Oratia Folk Museum in a building constructed in 1870 and which houses many local exhibits for the public to view; the history of Verrans Corner and Osborne Park; photos of the old Auckland Railway Station. Artefacts brought along were walking sticks and a case (could have been for cigarettes??) Many memories were exchanged.

### **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.

### **Making History –**

**FRIENDLY FLOATIES:** Departing from Hong Kong on the ship "Ever Laurel" in January 1992 were containers of these children's bath toys in the form of red beavers, green frogs, blue turtles and yellow ducks with no holes in them. When a collision occurred, the Floaties escaped. In Seattle, oceanographers Ebbesmeyer and Ingraham were studying ocean surface currents and they began to track the 28,000 objects' progress. Ten months after the incident, the Floaties began to wash up along the Alaskan coast, then the Baring Strait, Greenland and the United Kingdom. By 2007 the toys themselves had become collectors' items fetching up to \$1000 each.

### **Medical Science and History –**

Ian's presentation this month was on sleep apnoea highlighting the life-threatening nature of the condition. It can also increase blood pressure, affect oxygen saturation, have a cardiovascular impact and impair driving to a dangerous degree. He covered measurement scales for apnoea and the current medical treatments. Non-medical attempts to alleviate or cure it were also considered. Fay introduced us to the understanding of typhoid fever as it was in 1828 when it was thought that the disease related to the stink from sewerage. The true cause was identified but not believed in 1854 and the bacteria was finally isolated in 1880.

### **Modern History –**

**April:** Brian's presentation covered the 1920's and 1930's in New Zealand. The 1920's came to be known as "The Roaring Twenties" because of the sudden explosion of energy and release of emotions which followed the First World War. Troops returning from war to a "land fit for heroes" came home to record unemployment and a soaring cost of living. In the 1920's the Americanisation of the West began in earnest with new ideas and technologies. It was the era of "flaming youth" and "bright young things" and the new dance craze of the Charleston, Black Bottom, Tango and Fox Trot. In the 1930's the Wall Street Crash and the worldwide Depression followed. In 1931 there were over 100,000 unemployed in New Zealand out of a population of less than 1,500,000. Wages were cut by 10%, then a year later another 12%. In 1932 New Zealand experienced the worst street riots in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin that the country has ever experienced.

**May:** Peter gave an illuminating talk about the Japanese attacks on Sydney in May and June 1942. Three midget submarines entered the harbour; one became trapped in an anti-torpedo net which resulted in the crew destroying the submarine and themselves. The second was sunk, resulting in the crew committing suicide. The third fired two torpedoes at naval vessels in the harbour; one failed to explode whilst the other struck HMAS Kattabul, an ex-Sydney ferry being used to accommodate naval personnel, killing 21 sailors. The submarine escaped to sea but was unable to join its mother submarine, resulting in the crew committing suicide. Later in June a submarine lightly shelled the Eastern Suburbs causing little damage and no injuries. Kay spoke

about the WW2 female SOE agents with particular details about the role that the Anglo-French agent, Violette Szabo, played. Being fluent in French she was selected by the SOE to become an agent and was first parachuted into France in April 1944. She had married a French Foreign Legion officer who was later killed. On her second mission she was captured, tortured, and executed at Ravensbruck Concentration Camp in February 1945 along with other SOE female agents. She was posthumously awarded the George Medal. The film "Carve Her Name With Pride" starring Virginia McKenna records her wartime exploits.

### Music Appreciation and History –

The famed singing teacher, Devonport born Dame Sister Mary Leo and 3 of her students with glorious voices were discussed. Mary Leo trained as a teacher, became a nun at Ponsonby's St. Mary's in her 20s and, after training, became a vocal coach. An early recording of Mina Foley, Bellini's "Casta diva", one of Kiri Te Kanawa's favourite 20 recordings was played then "Panis Angelicus". The illustrious international careers of Dames Malvina Major and Kiri Te Kanawa were described as well as the support they now give to young singers. We listened to Malvina singing Lehar's "Vilja", a Mozart aria and then Kiri singing one of Cantaloupe's "Songs of the Auvergne".

### Music – Mainly Classical –

At our May meeting Sheryl played us a DVD featuring Stephen Fry entitled "Wagner & me". Stephen, a Jew, explored his passion for this controversial composer - a passion shared by Adolf Hitler who appropriated the music for his Nuremberg rallies. We shared Stephen's exhilaration to be present at rehearsals for the annual Wagner festival held at Bayreuth in southern Germany, and his excitement at seeing actual scores written by the composer and even having an opportunity to play on the composer's piano.

### Play Reading –

No report this month.

### Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes –

The meeting began with the story of Fermat's Last Theorem which took over 300 years to prove [finally done in about 1996] and followed up with various activities: folding puzzles, how to construct magic squares and various basic paradoxes e.g. "The sentence written on this page is false".

### Renaissance –

Thelma told of Ambroise Pare, 1510-1590, French barber/surgeon who was surgeon for Henry II, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III. He is one of the fathers of surgery and modern forensic pathology and a pioneer in surgical techniques and battlefield



medicine, especially in the treatment of wounds. Greta gave us the history of Houghton Hall, Norfolk, England. It was designed by William Kent for Sir Robert Walpole to house his extensive collection of paintings that included ones by Van Dyck, Poussin, Rubens, Rembrandt and Valazquez. Thank you, Greta..

### Travel –

**April:** Alex Wilson gave a wonderful account of his time in Mongolia, a land none of our group knew much about. The landscape is wide open spaces and there are extremes of temperature. The people in the countryside are herders living mainly on meat and lake fish with almost no vegetables in their diet, but very high in fat. Their garments have differing layers of silk according to the temperatures e.g. in summer seven layers and in winter up to fifteen layers. Their wealth lies in vast untapped fields of oil, coal and other minerals.

**May:** Bernard spoke of his cruise around South America, starting in Buenos Aires and finishing in Montevideo. Stops included Valparaiso (an excellent Navy Museum); the Amalie Glacier (magnificent); the Magellan Channel, Ushuaia, the Beagle Channel and Cape Horn which was quite calm. The Falkland Islands were bleak. At Montevideo he saw the remnants of the Graf Spay battleship and visited an original settlement called Sacramento. Brian went on a cruise around Spain but was not happy with this ship (his fifth with this company). He felt they were cutting back on the quality of food, entertainment, extra taxes and a heavy sales pitch for on board services. He visited Gibraltar, Cartagena, Majorca, Barcelona, Valencia, Malaga, Cadiz and Lisbon.

### Walking –

Friday - Meet at Narrow Neck Beach car park at 9.30 am. The walk will include parks and walkways - nothing too strenuous, about 1 1/2 hours. Refreshments at Narrow Neck Beach Café afterwards. **Friday** - Long Bay Regional Park  
Meet at the first car park on the right at Long Bay Regional Park at 9.30 am. We will walk along the beach and up the coastal track or along the nature walk depending on conditions. Morning tea at the Torbay Bakery café.



These photos were taken at the first meeting of the new Special Interest Group - "Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes".