

JULY 2017



GUEST SPEAKER: Celia Caughey

Title: Enlightening Experiences from Vietnam



Celia Caughey, born and raised in Auckland, attended Diocesan School for Girls then Auckland University where she completed a BA/LLB (Hons). She went to Saarbrücken University in Germany to study comparative law, Oxford University for postgraduate study and worked as a lawyer in Auckland and Wellington on her return from Europe, specializing in litigation. She retired as a partner of Russell McVeagh to marry Dr Long Ngo, a former Colombo Plan student, and went to live in Vietnam for 7 years. There she learnt Vietnamese, introduced NZ apples and kiwifruit into Vietnam and became the NZ Trade Commissioner to Vietnam and Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City. Celia also helped to set up a home for street girls, the Ba Chieu Home, for which she has been the fundraising coordinator for 20 years. The family returned to New Zealand in 2001 to have their third child.

In the last few years Celia has been involved in running the ASEAN NZ Business Council. She has written a book called *Taste Vietnam*, introducing Vietnamese cuisine to Kiwi kitchens; *There's Lots of Love*, short poems for children combining the common principles of Buddhism and Christianity; and produced a board game called *Venture Vietnam*, all proceeds going to her street girls' home. Celia is a director of the Caughey Preston Rest Homes Trust, the Auckland City Mission and Safer Homes in New Zealand Everyday. Celia's experiences in Vietnam have given her some insights into Vietnamese culture which she will share with us today.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

What an inspiring guest speaker we enjoyed listening to at our June meeting! Without relying on any notes or PowerPoint, Jo Lloyd drew us all in with her passionate, personal account of her experiences as the mother of an autistic son and as a professional working for Autism New Zealand.

The end of U3A Browns Bay's financial year is fast approaching and it will soon be time to pay our 2017-2018 subscriptions and elect some new committee members. Taking a role on the committee is not overly demanding and can be very rewarding. You do not need to have belonged to U3A for years and years; you may have joined only recently. Don't worry if you plan to travel overseas for several months; other committee members will be willing to cover your role while you are enjoying your holiday. A nomination form will be emailed to all members on the newsletter email list and printed nomination forms will be available at the next general meetings. If you are interested in joining our committee or can think of another Browns Bay member who would be suitable, discuss it with them and please fill in a nomination form.
Monette Ewen

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Active Travellers - No report this month.

Ancient Civilisations – No report this month.

Archaeology – Nanette spoke about excavations on Great Mercury Island [Ahu Ahu] by third year students at Auckland University. Maori settlement for 600 years on this island was quite intensive [23 pa sites]. These provide ample material for the twice a year dig. Post holes, implements of obsidian and other volcanic rocks and a cooking oven containing moa bones are some of the finds. Snippets gave information about beer in ancient China, a reconstructed cave with Maori rock art in Timaru, Cuneiform, finds in the Thames mud [UK] and www.earthwatch.org as an interesting site.

Art History - Fay gave a presentation on Rodin, most famous for his sculpture, "The Thinker". Rodin became accepted at age 35 when his unconventional ideas at last brought commissions. His "Burgers of Calais" commissioned by that city is one example. Another was "The Gates of Hell" ordered by the French government for a museum which was never built. Rodin worked on this for many years but it was cast in bronze only after his death. It is a monumental work, six metres high, inspired by Dante's Inferno and depicting hell and the punishment of the damned. Fay's talk led to a group discussion about bronze casting which was interesting. After Rodin we had a DVD on Rubens.

Art Pot Pourri – After a quick review of our presentation at the general meeting, Linda Atkinson spoke about a book by Jill Trevelyan 'Peter McLeavey – the life and times of a New Zealand Art Dealer', described by Kim Hill as 'a fascinating insight into the last half-century of New Zealand art'. Extracts from the book showed how our understanding and appreciation of art have changed over the years.

Anthropology – No report this month.

Book Group - Books discussed this month were: *Hokitika Town* (Charlotte Randall); *Can You Tolerate This?* (Ashleigh Young); *Into the Water* (Paula Hawkins); *Under Dark Waters* (Bernadette Calonego); *Under A Pole Star* (Stef Penney); *Nineteen Minutes* (Jodi Picoult); *I am not Esther* (Fleur Beale); *Bigfoot, Yeti and the last Neanderthal: a geneticist's search for modern apemen* (Bryan Sykes); *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* (Kate Atkinson); *The Golden Legend* (Nadeem Aslam); *The Colour of Law*, *The Abduction* and *The Perk* (Mark Gimenez); *Magpie Murders* (Anthony Horowitz) and *The Cruise of the Janet Nichol among the South Sea Islands* (Mrs Robert Louis Stevenson).

China: Past and Present – No report this month.

Classical Music – Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10 in E Minor Op 93, was new to most of us in the group, and prompted discussion of this composition's reflection of the Stalinist years. The second CD we listened to, Orchestral Spectacular, gave us España by Chabrier, Night on The Bare Mountain by Mussorgsky and the well-known Bolero by Ravel.

Creative Writing – We had a lively meeting this month with the key word being "Doctor." There was an informative monologue from Patricia as to how we viewed the family GP "back in the day", a story from Judy with mishaps on the playing field, and a true story about travel woes from Doreen. Our next meeting is on 22nd June.

Creative Audio-Visual – The Creative Audio-Visual Group met at the Bostons' for its bi-monthly technical meeting. The main topic was a presentation by Geoff Haycock on his method of producing a title which featured the letters making up the title flying in from the periphery to form the caption. This produced much discussion on the various ways in which this could be done and resulted in much learning about ProShow Producer! The session ended with a requested peer review of Sheryl Coyle's A/V of Puhoi. The next technical session will be devoted to the use of Audacity in improving voice-over qualities in slide shows.

Current Affairs – This month our discussions related to more local issues. We were encouraged to know that Auckland have a traffic problem – i.e. compared with Mumbai! We noted the Devonport/Takapuna Local Board's cost of auditing public playgrounds; the excellent Sherwood Reserve playground, fully equipped except for toilet facilities; the upcoming June meetings for Hibiscus and Bays Local Board. An article in the latest Auckland University Alumni magazine referred to the "fake news" industry and suggested some options for our country to help combat it. Climate Change/Pollution and our individual response to the problem was discussed along with responsible shopping according to 'The Ethical Fashion Guide Aotearoa New Zealand.'

Cycling – We six had a picture-perfect day to enjoy a ride from the northern end of Point Wells to Omaha beach, a journey of 17 kms. The ride took us along Point Wells Road to Broadlands Drive. At the William Fraser Reserve we travelled south along the roller coaster concrete pathway bordering the beach and sand dunes where we viewed how the "other half" holiday. At the Rahui Te Kiri Reserve we followed the gravel path through a portion of the bird sanctuary and then back along the wide empty streets to our pre-ordered lunch at the cafe. Two notable people with strong associations with Omaha were: Rahui Te Kiri (1830-1930), a chief's daughter and woman of great mana who was an instigator in creating a bird sanctuary on Little Barrier Island; and William Fraser (1878-1960) who was instrumental in developing Whangarei as a deep water port, prepared the way for fertiliser works

and envisaged the construction of the oil refinery. A foundation member of NZ Native Bird Protection Society, he negotiated large areas of native bush to be set aside as reserves, leading to Whangarei Harbour being designated as a bird sanctuary in the 1940s.

Exploring Art for Fun – A small group gathered at Marion Bennie's to hear her presentation on the use of fabrics in making art quilts which depicted landscapes rather than traditional patterns. Her presentation showed us the Art Competition of Grand Rapids USA, where the supreme winner of \$US200,00 was a several metres long art quilt which was a combination of quilting and photography.

Film Appreciation – Once again Beryl opened her home for our June meeting, providing morning tea while our group brought a shared lunch. We screened the movie "Belle", based on the true story of Dido Elizabeth Belle, the illegitimate mixed-race daughter of an enslaved African woman and Royal Navy Admiral John Lindsay. Raised by her great uncle Lord Mansfield in Kenwood House, London, Belle's lineage affords her certain privileges, yet the colour of her skin prevents her from fully participating in the traditions of her social standing. However, with the idealistic help of a young vicar's son bent on change they help shape Lord Mansfield's role as Lord Chief Justice to end slavery in England. Movies coming – 'My Cousin Rachel' (Rachel Weisz), 'This Beautiful Fantastic' (Tim Wilkinson), starting 22nd June and 'Monsieur Chocolat', 29th June.

Français pour rire – No report this month.

History of Europe - No report this month.

Inventors & Inventions – John gave a presentation on the writer Randall Munroe, creator of the xkcd webcomic and author of *What if? - serious scientific answers to absurd hypothetical questions* - and *Thing Explainer - complicated stuff in simple words*. Munroe, amongst other things, is the inventor of a method for creating passwords that are extremely simple to remember but very hard to break. Roy told of the progress and the potential of flow batteries. Will the oil companies allow this technology to get to the stage where it can replace oil as propulsion for cars? Gareth told the story of the humble ballpoint and how it went from a \$36 instrument to the 30c pen it is today.

Literature – In the 1960s Paul Titchener, a local historian, presented a column in the North Shore Times called "Beginnings". These articles are now part of eight condensed volumes of stories. Many Shore residents considered that, being a young country, we did not really have a history. Due to Titchener's endeavours, this view has changed. We are grateful for his contribution. After Heather's presentation, a number of members reported on the sessions they had attended as part of the recent Writers' Festival. While the sessions remain as interesting ever, the steadily increasing popularity of the event has diminished the relaxed

atmosphere of previous years with lengthy queues becoming the norm for many sessions.

Local History – June and Dave Thorpe gave an illustrated presentation on the changing face of the North Shore and showed examples of how urbanisation of the area had resulted in the destruction of three large green areas of the Shore. We looked at the history of Vaughan's Farm (now Long Bay), Dacre Cottage (part of the Weiti Station development) and Seaview Farm (now Millwater). We saw how the pioneers of the 1800s had carved a living out of the rough, uncultivated land north of the Waitemata Harbour. The group showed their appreciation of the dedication of many volunteers who have worked so hard over the years to preserve some of the original buildings on these properties.

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. Phone or email penny.walton@xtra.co.nz if you are interested.

Making History – FUGGEREI VILLAGE: Founded in 1516 by Jacob Fugger for the needy Roman Catholic craftsmen and labourers of Augsburg, Bavaria. Conditions of residency were proof of faith, to have become poor or needy without any outstanding debt, and to have lived in Augsburg for a minimum of two years prior. The annual rent then and now was 1 guilder (NZ\$2) and three prayers – the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary and Nicene Creed to be said each day. Fuggerei is the world's oldest social housing complex still in use today. This gated community of 150 residents has also become a major tourist attraction administered by Fuggerei descendants and financed through the foundation as set up in 1521.

Medical Science and History – Roy has been following the research that is going into the dilemma that the weakening effect of antibiotics is causing. It is reported in the National Academy of Sciences Journal that researchers have supercharged a commonly used antibiotic (vancomycin), making it incredibly difficult for bacteria to develop a resistance to it. He also spoke on a new study which found that the promising revolutionary CRISPR gene editing technique may have unintended genetic side effects as a result of unexpected mutations. The mutations have not had any deleterious effects but it is currently unknown what the longer term effects might be. Heather told us of her personal experience with vertigo and various aspect of the disease.

Modern History – Mary gave a presentation on the impact of the Australian Gold Rush on the population and how the mythology surrounding the "diggers" has entered and endured in the story of Australia. She discussed the mateship built up in the gold diggings, the

fight for equal rights with the Eureka Stockade, but not overlooking the darker side of racism resulting in the White Only policy.

The history of the original Mini was given by Dave C. The plan for a small car came about due to the grim economic situation in the 1950s and the travails of the British motor car industry. He covered the genius of the Mini's designer, Alec Issigonis who produced an iconic vehicle, the significant role New Zealand played in its production, and the early involvement of Bruce McLaren.

Music Appreciation and History – No report this month.

Music – Mainly Classical – At our June meeting Alf showed us a DVD on 20th Century composers. This was a BBC documentary series covering the whole spectrum of European and American composers born in the 20th Century, and included recordings from the BBC Archives. It gave a very interesting insight into how the crisis of writing music during the war and post-war periods was met in very different ways. Our meeting continued with a lively discussion on how we felt on the development of electronic music.

Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes – We are amazed at the range of activities which come into our 'orbit'. Word puzzles, number puzzles, logic puzzles, puzzles which are solved after centuries and puzzles which, as yet, have no solutions. This month John talked to us about "The Game of Life", devised by John Horton Conway in 1970. Look it up on line as it is too tricky to explain here. Other puzzles of logic and brain teasers were contributed by members.

Renaissance – Anne spoke of High Renaissance artist Raphael's fresco "The School of Athens" in the "Raphael Rooms" at the Vatican. It shows all the greatest mathematicians, philosophers and scientists from classical antiquity gathered together sharing their ideas and learning from each other. They lived at different times, but here they are gathered under one roof. The two thinkers in the centre, Aristotle and Plato, have been important to Western thinking and their philosophies were incorporated into Christianity. The fresco ranks alongside Da Vinci's Last Supper and Michelangelo's Vatican frescos as expression of Renaissance ideals of the early 16th century. We then watched a DVD on The Medici and Brunelleschi's dome for the Cathedral of Florence.

Travel – Brian spoke on his Mediterranean cruise which he took last September. The cruise started and finished from Southampton on board Royal Caribbean "Navigator of the Seas". Having travelled with Royal Caribbean before, he was very disappointed at the decline in the quality of food and the continual pressure to buy additional services. The temperatures in September were usually high being around 35 degrees most days. This did not make sight-seeing very pleasant. Ports visited were Gibraltar, Cartagena, Palma de Mallorca, Barcelona, Valencia,

Malaga and Cadiz. The last port of call was Lisbon. Be warned: Royal Caribbean now add an 18% surcharge on all beverages and when you are in Spanish waters you are also subject to a 10% VAT on all purchases.

Walking – Friday July - Manutewhau Tracks, Westgate

Meet at the Westgate car park in front of Countdown at 9.30 am. This walk will take us through a number of interconnected parks with a return through bush along the Manutewhau stream and will take up to 1.5 hours. Coffee will be at Robert Harris. Drive along the Upper Harbour motorway and turn off at exit 11 signposted to Hobsonville Road. Turn right over the North Western motorway and take the first turning LEFT into Westgate. Drive down past the roundabout and park in the Countdown car park at the Robert Harris end.

Friday - Millennium Walk, Orewa

Meet at 9.30 am outside the Art Centre in Orewa, Hibiscus Coast Highway. First car park on the left coming north, just over the estuary bridge. Walk through reserves, residential streets, bush and beach. Mostly flat, allow approximately 1.5 hours. Morning tea at the Art Centre café.