

**AUGUST 2017**



**GUEST SPEAKER: David Boyle**

Group Manager Investor Education for the Commission of Financial Capability (formerly the Retirement Commission)



**Title:** You can't always get what you want - but we keep trying

David helps everyone, from the age of 5 to 105, to think about the future and get themselves in the best possible position to enjoy it. He leads the Commission's work in schools on the National Strategy, is the Commission's expert on KiwiSaver and other investments, and helps retirees understand how to make their money last as long as they do. Last year he organised national forums on KiwiSaver, NZ's ageing workforce, and decumulation which is all about turning your savings and investments into income when you retire. He had more than 32 years of experience in the financial services industry before joining the Commission. When he's not at work, you'll find him elbowing his way to the front of mosh pits at gigs up and down the country. This passion for music saw him join the board of Play It Strange, a charity that showcases song writing in NZ schools. He is also on the board of Stand Children's Services, previously known as Children's Health Camps.

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

We had another inspiring guest speaker in July. Celia Caughey gave us a memorable talk about the seven years she spent living and bringing up two of her three children in Vietnam with her husband, Dr Long Ngo. Illustrated with maps and photos, Celia gave us an overview of Vietnamese history, politics, religious beliefs and cultural practices and we learned about the Ba Chieu Home which she helped set up in 1996 which gives a safe home and education for girls formerly living on the streets and her role as NZ Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City and Trade Commissioner to Vietnam. Celia's personal insight into the differences and similarities between the cultures of Vietnam and New Zealand was fascinating.

Monette Ewen

## **SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWS**

### **Active Travellers -**

Sherryl took us on a tour of Peru and Ecuador. They adapted to the high altitudes of the fantastic Machu Picchu site, even higher in the beautiful city of Cusco and then travelled on the Andean Explorer to Puno and Lake Titicaca. Visiting Pre-Inca sites along the way in the Sacred Valley was amazing. Highlights included a fantastic three day cruise on the Amazon River with jungle walks to see anaconda and sloth up close and fantastic flowers and fauna. Fishing for piranha and seeing small and large caiman were other experiences. They saw the evidence in the trees of the Amazon River water level rising up to 20 metres in the rainy season so many villagers' homes are routinely destroyed. In fact, in the rainy season where birds and butterflies usually fly, the fish and sea animals swim! They flew 1,000km (2 hours) from Guayaquil in Ecuador out to the Galapagos Islands where they cruised for four days exploring the landscapes and animal and bird life on different islands, even seeing a sea lion feeding her four day old cub; such a privilege to walk on the same sands that Charles Darwin did in 1835 making his famous discoveries. They visited a number of places where the famous giant tortoises still inhabit and are monitored. One leaf enables a tortoise to live for a year. This was a trip of a lifetime and comes highly recommended!

### **Ancient Civilisations**

Naturally occurring glass, especially the volcanic glass obsidian, has been used by many Stone Age societies across the globe for the production of sharp cutting tools and, due to its limited source areas, was extensively traded. The history of glassmaking can be traced back for 5,000 years to either Mesopotamia, Egypt or coastal Syria. The earliest known glass objects of the mid third millennium BC were beads. The earliest vessels were 'core-formed', produced by winding a molten rope of glass around a shaped core of sand and clay over a metal rod. Glass was at this stage a luxury. Glass blowing was discovered about 50 BC and the Romans discovered that they could produce glass vessels for drinking easily and cheaply by blowing into a mould, though beautiful and luxury items were also produced by this method.

### **Anthropology –**

#### **Archaeology –**

Evelyn spoke about the Maritime Archaic Indians who settled along the coast of Newfoundland and to the south, beginning in approximately 7000 BC. This was a hunter gatherer society with archaeological sites as far south as Maine and as far north as Labrador. Their settlements included longhouses. They engaged in long-distance trade, as shown by white chert from northern Labrador being found as far south as Maine. DNA has shown that these people came from the Western side of the

American continent rather than from Europe. This period is best known for a mortuary site in Newfoundland at Port au Choix. The site revealed over 100 graves embellished with red ochre. The graves contained many elaborate artifacts including knapped chert arrow tips and spears.

### **Art History -**

Patricia introduced us to Louise de Keroualle, the French mistress of Charles II of England, via her portrait by Henri Gastard, held in the Auckland Art Gallery. Louise, an intelligent and strong-willed young beauty, replaced other mistresses including Nell Gwynn, to become the most influential woman at court. We looked at the portrait, which shows Louise dressed in resplendent court attire, wearing pearls (symbolising purity) and holding a King Charles spaniel (symbolising fidelity). The descendants of her son, Charles, include Diana Princess of Wales and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. We then watched a D.V.D on Velazquez. Another interesting meeting -- come and join us.

### **Art Pot Pourri –**

On 11<sup>th</sup> July we visited the Lakehouse, Takapuna, to view the exhibition of 5 Lacquer Artists from China. Lacquer art is a practice that is often considered culturally and aesthetically engaging. The tactile quality of lacquer and the sensorial experience in the making process are equally important as the aesthetic appeal. It traditionally requires a high level of craftsmanship. We had a tasty lunch there in the café and then visited North Art gallery in Northcote to view drawings by a variety of artists and very interesting textural paintings in another part of the gallery.

### **Book Group -**

Evelyn gave an excellent presentation on the relatively unknown English author Christopher Fowler who wrote *Paperboy*, *Film Freak*, *How to Impersonate Famous People* and the series of Bryant and May detective novels. We then heard about *Descent* (Tim Johnston); *The Absence of Guilt* (Mark Gimenez); *Insane Clown President* (Matt Taibbi); *The Lying Game* (Ruth Ware); *Split Image* (Robert B Parker); *No Middle Name* (Lee Child); *Boar Island* (Nevada Barr); *Downfall* (J A Jance); *Songs of a War Boy* (Deng Thiak Adut); *The Heart* (Maylis de Kerangal); *Hippy Days, Arabian Nights* (Katherine Boland); *A Woman's Work* (Harriet Harman); *Everyone Brave is Forgiven* (Chris Cleave); *The Dark Circle* (Linda Grant); *The Girl Before* (J P Delaney); *Summary Justice* (John Fairfax); *Working Class Boy* (Jimmy Barnes); *American Pain* (John Temple); *Magpie Murders* (Anthony Horowitz) and *The Lace Reader* (Brunonia Barry).

### **China: Past and Present –**

### **Classical Music –**

Although it was a cold winter's morning, our day was brightened up by watching a DVD of four exceptional violinists who played Vivaldi's Four Seasons composition. As each musician took us through their own country we viewed spring blossoms in Tokyo, the heat and thunderstorms of summer in Australia and the relishing of good food in autumn in New York. The final season, winter in Finland, showed us what a really cold winter can look like and how the people, despite the temperature and snow, took pleasure in getting together to play music.

### **Creative Audio-Visual –**

The Creative Audio-Visual Group met at the home of Geoff Haycock and welcomed prospective new member, Lucy Casey. The session was devoted to looking at A/Vs that members were working on and also looked at some earlier A/Vs produced by a group in Folkestone, UK and Adelaide, Australia. We also had a discussion on future activities for the "general" meetings with Roy proposing a greater emphasis on the creative and artistic aspects of A/Vs. Our next session is a technical one devoted to using Audacity to improve voice overs in A/Vs.

### **Creative Writing –**

### **Current Affairs –**

### **Cycling –**

### **Exploring Art for Fun –**

Lois's presentation this month was on the work of the Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch. Munch was a gifted artist who was constantly troubled all of his life by problems that started in his traumatic childhood. Throughout his life he expressed his tormented inner world through his artistic creations. When he died at the age of 80, a collection of 1,008 paintings, plus thousands of drawings and prints, plus other works of art, were found in his home. In spite of this great volume of work which is revered in Norway and other countries, it is strange that Munch is famous today as the creator of a single image, "The Scream".

### **Film Appreciation –**

Linda gave a presentation on the life of Marilyn Monroe at our July meeting. Marilyn was born on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1926. At 12 days old, she was left with friends and spent most of her early life in foster homes. She married her first husband just three days after turning 16 but it did not last. Marilyn's ambition was to become a movie star and after her first movie in 1947 went on to star in 30 more films the last of which was 'Something's Got To Give' in 1962. Marilyn married twice more, to Joe DiMaggio and Arthur Miller, but both marriages did not last. Her life was plagued with drugs and depression and she died in August 1962. It is still a mystery as to whether she died of an overdose or was murdered but her legacy lingers on.

### **Français pour rire –**

Fay's interesting talk was about Catherine de Medici who became queen consort of France from 1547 to 1559. After her husband, Henri II, was killed in a joust she 'supported' her three sons as they became kings of France in succession. She was the 'power behind the throne' for 30 years. During this time, despite her best efforts, the animosity between Catholics and Protestants in France culminated in the Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572 in which thousands of Protestants lost their lives or hurriedly emigrated.

### **History of Europe -**

Pauline gave us an interesting excerpt from Winston Churchill's 'History of England' concerning happenings, kings etc. round the 10th and 11th centuries. Jan told of the disputes between the popes and the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire which by 1100 AD stretched from the North Sea and the Baltic nearly to the Mediterranean and was ruled from Germany. The Pope was the most important ruler in Western Europe and there were often disagreements between him and the kings. We then looked at a map of Europe as it was in 1100 and a table of the French and English kings descending from William the Conqueror and heard the story of the Angevin dynasty.

### **Inventors & Inventions –**

In 'Chain Reactions' Scott W focussed on nuclear weapons, mixing science and history as we looked at the products of the Los Alamos Lab, 'Little Boy' and 'Fat Man', the technical issues involved and the people in the mix. He started with the lamp post in Bloomsbury, London, where Leo Szilard realised a chain reaction was possible using Uranium or Plutonium. In autobiographic mood, Canada, Denmark, Moscow and Canberra appeared plus an acknowledgement of Maureen's strength of spirit whether dealing with Russian spies or Copenhagen midwives. Australia's narrow escape from bombology and Scott's narrow escape from MI5, were noted and approved. Communication between the various divisions of the Ports of Auckland was comprehensively outlined by Wayne who was instrumental in the implementation of the Motorola system which is still in operation after 19 years! The workings of the latest canal lock, the unique Falkirk Bridge, the Millau Bridge and an innovative lifting bridge were introduced by Ian.

### **Literature –**

This month's topic 'Humour in Literature' proved to be more challenging and elusive than anyone expected. Trish opened the session with a comprehensive overview of the spectrum of humour from farce through to satire. She included some of the techniques used to achieve this with some good jokes to illustrate the points. Margaret then discussed some authors with quite serious themes but who include aspects of humour: Andrea Levy, Barbara Kingsolver (wry comment and 'affection' for

characters), Marina Lewycka (exaggerated language and heightened pace), Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy (parody, role reversal, sarcasm), Jay Rayner (satire and Black Comedy). All agreed that truly funny writing is a rarity - the notable exception being Thelma's contribution of the works of Caryl Brahms and S J Simon.

### **Local History –**

There were stories of early transport in the East Coast Bays provided on the backs of trucks, primarily to provision local stores. From personal interviews were accounts of family life at the Kahurangi lighthouse at the time of the Murchison earthquake, followed by a video showing historical footage of the construction of the original Kohu road bridge and its later successor.

On a sadder note, our group has lost our great contributor to North Shore History topics - Phyllis Petchell who passed away on Sunday 16th. July. Phyllis attended most of our meetings and entered into many of our discussions. She had an extensive collection of photos, newspaper cuttings and maps along with stories of her life on the North Shore. We will miss her cheerfulness and interest in all of us.

### **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 –**

Mary Musgrove (1700-1763) also known as Coosaponakeesa was the daughter of an English trader, Edward Griffin, and a Greek Indian mother. In this matrilineal society, children took the clan identities of their mothers. In 1717 Mary married the English trader, John Musgrove, and together they set up a Savannah River trading post. She became James Oglethorpe's interpreter (in 1734 he had been granted a Royal Charter by King George II to start a colony in Savannah, Georgia). Mary received financial compensation for this prestigious position. In 1735 her husband died and in 1737 Mary married Jacob Matthews, a major commercial and deerskin trader who died in 1742. Her third and final husband was the Reverend Thomas Bosomworth whose position raised her to the upper echelon of Savannah society. In 1749 Mary pursued a controversial land claim of the Sea Islands which had been given to her by Chief Tomochichi. The Georgia courts in 1760 finally agreed to a compromise of St. Catherine's Island and 2100 Sterling. In 1993 Mary Musgrove was inducted into Georgia Women of Achievement.

### **Medical Science and History –**

Maureen showed the interesting and inspiring lecture -*Childhood Leukaemias - Why do treatments fail?* - by Dr Andrew Wood of Auckland University. After an overview of the traditional treatments, he outlined his research as follows: *"In my work, I try to*

*answer this question by creating new models of leukaemia. We hope these models will allow us to watch how mutations cooperate to cause cancer and defeat chemotherapy, like studying a slow-motion replay to see exactly why the other side scored a try, and understand why we lost. We hope this information will allow us to ultimately develop gentler and more effective therapies”.*

Research discovered a novel mechanism to explain how children can inherit subtle genetic variations from their parents that predispose these children to cancer.

### **Modern History –**

Warwick summarised the rivalry between Margaret Thatcher and the Queen. As a self-described "purposeful workaholic", Margaret grew up in a working-class home as a grocer's daughter and rose by dint of hard work to become Britain's first female PM. By contrast, the Queen was born into privilege, spent her childhood surrounded by servants, and had very little formal education. Like her father, she resisted the kinds of reforms that Margaret was seeking - to undermine the aristocracy and reform the economy. They frequently clashed over national policies. A video called the "The Sewer King" followed the story of Joseph Bazalgette, the builder of the London sewer system. He overcame many problems and completed the first phase of the sewers in 1865.

### **Music Appreciation and History –**

#### **Music – Mainly Classical –**

The Musical Mainly Classical Group (considerably reduced in size as a result of winter ills!) met at the Bostons' to hear and see a presentation by Roy which extended an earlier presentation by Terry on the recording of Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto and Bartok's 2nd Piano Concerto by conductor Sir Simon Rattle and pianist Lang Lang with the Berlin Philharmonic. Roy showed a DVD about the recording sessions and then played both of the concertos from the CD which resulted from the recording sessions shown on the DVD. Both concertos showed the technical brilliance of the pianist Lang Lang, the Prokofiev being preferred by most and the artistic interpretation by Lang Lang questioned by some.

### **Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes –**

#### **Renaissance –**

Jan took us into the Cathedral in Siena and its Piccolomini Library with its walls of frescos depicting 10 events in the life of Pope Pius II . The entire floor of the Cathedral is a mosaic work of 56 panels of different shapes and stories - an incredible work of art only exposed twice a year. Fay showed us pictures of the changes in dress worn by male and female in high society and the poor during the years 1450-1540. Thank you, Jan and Fay, for a very interesting morning.

## **Travel – Shirley Brown**

**' 479 4688 (4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 10am)**

Janet gave a very interesting talk about her travels in Sikkim and Bhutan. Starting in Kolkata she went by train to Darjeeling where tea plantations were the main economy, then by small bus over very rugged terrain to Sikkim high in the mountains. The short distances travelled each day took a long time. It was very colourful in spring with fruit trees in blossom and pot plants everywhere! It seemed to be a relaxed country when compared to Bhutan, her next country over the border. It was very clean and seemingly quite controlled. Tourists paid a Happiness Tax which was to fund Education. Archery is the national sport. There are no traffic lights. Religion is very important with monasteries and monks part of everyday life.

## **Walking –**

### **August - Westhaven and St Mary's Bay**

Park at the Auckland Harbour Bridge end of Westhaven Drive, St Mary's Bay by the Buoy Café for a 9.30 am start. To get there, drive on the far left lane of the Harbour Bridge to exit at Shelley Beach Road. Turn right almost immediately into Sarsfield Street and then right into Curran Street. Follow the road along under the motorway into Westhaven Drive. Parking and toilets available. We will walk alongside the Marina and cross the motorway at the pedestrian overbridge, go up Jacobs Ladder (steep steps) to St Mary's Bay and return via Curran Street to the Buoy Café for coffee.

### **Friday - Le Roy's Bush**

Park in Le Roy Terrace, Birkenhead and meet at 9.30 am at the junction of Le Roy Terrace and Hinemoa Street. We will walk up Hinemoa Street and then downhill on the track through the bush to Little Shoal Bay. The bush track has good footing in all weather conditions. Many steps. Then a long hill on pavement back to Hinemoa Street and coffee. The walk will take 1 1/2 hours plus.