

**GUEST SPEAKER: Colin McColl ONZM**

**Title: Directing – The Invisible Art**



After working as an actor in England, Colin returned to his homeland New Zealand to become Associate Director of Downstage Theatre in Wellington forming a long association with the Theatre. After free-lancing in theatre, opera and television locally and internationally, Colin became the Artistic Director of Auckland Theatre Company in 2003. In his career as a theatre director he has produced and directed more than 50 plays. He is the first and only New Zealand director invited to showcase a production at the official Edinburgh Festival. His distinctly New Zealand version of Hedda Gabler played there to great acclaim in 1990. Performances followed at the Ibsen Festival, Oslo, the Covent Garden Festival, London and the 1991 Festival of Sydney. He has also directed Ibsen productions for the Norwegian and Dutch National Theatre companies. Colin has won three Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards for Best Director. In addition to theatre, Colin has a passion for opera. Credits include directing Wellington City Opera's 1988 production of "La Boheme", the NBR New Zealand Opera's 2002 production of "The Marriage of Figaro", chamber opera's "The Prodigal Son" and in 2009 he directed Rossini's "The Italian Girl in Algiers" for Scottish Opera and the New Zealand Opera Company. Colin received an Arts Foundation Laureate Award in 2007 and he was made an Officer of the Order of New Zealand (ONZM) in 2010 for services to theatre, film and television. His latest achievement is the fulfilment of a dream and the fruition of the ATC's own theatre – The Waterfront Theatre in Auckland's Wynyard Quarter.

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dr. Stephen Hoadley, Auckland University Associate Professor, used his extensive experience studying NZ-US Relations to give a lucid and informed analysis of the positive and negative impacts that President Trump's Presidency may have on New Zealand's international commitments and economic future. On the positive side, the US economy is continuing to grow and the political professionals are keeping things stable. Trump's call to pull the US out of TTP negotiations has not halted discussions between the other countries and Dr Hoadley believes New Zealand will survive Trump!

After our November meeting the Committee had the pleasure of hosting the SIG convenors to lunch. Our Special Interest Groups are the heart of U3A activity. We need all members to have a turn as a convenor so we are appreciative of the convenors and their leadership.

The Committee has created two new positions, "Membership Welfare" held by Robyn Lindsay and Publicity Promoter held by Gloria Ward. We will be looking at health and safety issues for our members and will try and find solutions to some of the challenges, such as the heavy lifting involved with chairs at our monthly. In February we will also start an active promotions campaign to attract new members.

At our December Christmas meeting on the 7th we will, in true U3A spirit share lunch and friendship. Please bring a plate as indicated at our last meeting so savoury plates are the majority. Add a festive touch to your dress and join us in celebrating another successful U3A year.

The 6<sup>th</sup> February is our first monthly meeting for 2018 and falls on Waitangi Day. We will continue with our monthly meeting. There will be a range of short SIG presentations each one celebrating New Zealand followed by a shared lunch.

We look forward to you joining at our final meeting and lunch. The Committee thank all of our members for your participation and wish you the best for the holiday season and summer.

Glen Plaistowe

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWS**

**Active Travellers**

Lucy Casey presented an eclectic mix from Ireland and France of old Cains and Passage tombs in County Meath, the Burren country in County Clare, the "Titanic" building in Belfast, the bogs of Abbeyleix, County Leix and the canals of Burgundy, France.

**Ancient Civilizations**

**Anthropology**

As part of understanding All Hallows ceremonies we looked at the Szeptuchy, or healers in the Orthodox Christian area of Podlachia in Poland. Like their Muslim Tartar neighbours in the same region, the ancient healing ways are maintained alongside their religions and modern medicine. The first Friday in December is our Christmas lunch and there is no meeting beforehand.

**Archaeology**

Graeme presented a programme sourced in Denmark, and to our understanding, has not been shown in New Zealand. The programme built on the legendary stories of the existence of a fair skinned red headed people who were already living in New Zealand when the Polynesians arrived. Interviews included one with a Maori woman who had the colouring described and who claimed descent from the Middle East. Other segments described archaeological discoveries in New Zealand which have not been publicly described and also drew links with the people now living on Rapa Nui (Easter Island.) Lots of discussion followed and we look forward to seeing the second programme in the series in our first meeting for 2018!

## **Art History**

Pamela's talk was about the sculptor Henry Moore (1898 – 1986), chiefly known for his abstractions of the human figure, in marble and later bronze, typically depicting mother-and-child or reclining figures. Moore's works are usually suggestive of the female body, apart from a phase in the 1950s when he sculpted family groups. His forms are generally pierced or contain hollow spaces. He also made many drawings, including a collection showing Londoners during the Blitz. His ability in later life to fulfil large-scale commissions made him exceptionally wealthy. We also revisited the Venice Biennale including the "Digital Venice Biennale".

## **Art Pot Pourri**

### **Book Group**

Dorothy gave us a presentation on Linda Grant and discussed six of her books - *When I Lived in Modern Times*, *Still Here*, *The Clothes on Their Backs*, *We Had it So Good*, *Upstairs at the Party* and *The Dark Circle*. Then we discussed *Daughter of Glorivale* (Lilia Tarawa); *A Street Cat Named Bob* (James Bowan); *Almost French* (Sarah Turnbull); *Waiting for Walter* (A S Balfour); *Where My Heart Used to Beat* (Sebastian Faulks); *A Writer's World* (Jan Morris); *George Orwell* (Gordon Bowker); *The Comedians* (Graham Greene); *Waking Lions* (Ayelet Gundar-Goshen); *Daughter of York* (Anne Easter Smith); *The Survival of the Princes in the Tower* (Matthew Lewis); *Margaret of York* (Christine Weightman); *No Middle Name* (Lee Child); *Since We Fell* (Dennis Lehane); *24 Hours, Natchez Burning, The Bone Tree and Mississippi Blood* (Greg Iles); *The Music Shop* (Rachel Joyce); *Death of an Artist* (Kate Wilhelm); *Double Feature* (Owen King); *Death of a Ghost* (M C Beaton); *The Windfall* (Diksha Basu); *The Wood Beyond and Deadheads* (Reginald Hill); *The Ice Shroud* (Gordon Ell); *Just One Evil Act* (Elizabeth George); *Days are Like Grass* (Sue Younger); *Skinny Dip* (Carl Hiaasen); *Gwendy's Button Box* (Stephen King and Richard Chizmar) and the biographies and autobiographies of Isaac Asimov.

## **China: Past and Present**

A Yum Cha lunch at a local restaurant was the enjoyable conclusion to the 2017 programme. Looking ahead to 2018 our first meeting 26 January will feature a presentation on Chinese scrolls and calligraphy, as well as a discussion on topics of interest for the coming year. We are looking forward to discovering more of China's past as well as China's ever growing influence worldwide (especially in Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific at the moment) and the challenges this provides for everyone, including ourselves.

## **Classical Music**

Our Friday music morning was spent enjoying a DVD from the Discovering Masterpieces Series which featured Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor. The first part of the DVD was in documentary form giving us good background information regarding the composer and this concerto. The second part of the DVD was the complete performance of the work played by violinist Frank-Michael Erben with the Leipzig Gewandhausorchester conducted by Kurt Masur. This was followed by some of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, sung by Coro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino accompanied by Symphonica Toscanini, which finished our morning's listening.

## **Creative Audio-Visual**

A small Creative Audio Visual group (five members could not attend) met at Fay Weatherly's home. First on the agenda was a very valuable and creative discussion about critiquing A/Vs - something that we need to do on a regular basis. Fay presented her ideas with a Power Point presentation which the members then expanded after considerable discussion. During the discussion, Sue Dobson contributed the idea of having a critique by two people, rather than just one - a role

being assigned to each person, of "good cop" and "bad cop". This helped to overcome the tendency to make only positive comments and made it easier to be a little critical. The group then tried the system out with a critique of Fay Weatherly's A/V followed by a similar critique of an A/V by Val Lloyd. A very successful and productive meeting! The next meeting will be the Christmas meeting to be held at Lois Painton's house on the 15th December.

## **Creative Writing**

From a "child's perspective" was this month's objective. Happy times for Frances on holiday in New Plymouth. Patricia thought her grandma was old, till she taught her grandchildren "How to climb a tree!" Doreen told of escapades on holiday by the lake and being plagued by nicknames from her brothers. Crunching snails with bike wheels was one of Irene's memories. Kathy's memory of climbing a fence and leaving her knickers behind obviously left a lasting impression. Christmas approaches so that will be the theme for our next meeting which is on 23rd November.

## **Current Affairs**

Our 'Good News' story this meeting was a bouquet for the police with two officers supporting a recently-widowed woman; discussions centred around the sale of the carpark in Browns Bay; plans for the Auckland Harbour; the process of MMP especially relating to the last election. We expressed opinions about some of the new government's plans for the first 100 days – free tertiary fees starting 2018, increasing minimum wage, introducing legislation to make medicinal cannabis available, proposed changes in education. It was generally agreed that the Land Wars should be part of teaching NZ history. We also looked at some of the issues around immigration both good and not-so-good. Our last meeting of the year will be a week earlier (7<sup>th</sup> December) followed by a lunch.

## **Cycling**

Cycle Group ride..1st November. With the opening of the second stage of the Waterview cycleway in October seven of us gave the new combined path a test run this month. Starting at the junction with the North Western cycleway at Carrington Road... we enjoyed a lovely peaceful ride through Oakley Park, and Phyllis street reserve, across the new Railway bridge, and through to Alan Wood Reserve. We passed over the head of the south tunnel entrance and on to Hendon Park. We doubled back via the spectacular sweeping suspension footbridge over the new motorway and returned for a well-earned coffee at Point Chev.

## **Exploring Art for Fun**

Exploring Art for Fun met at the Boston's to see a presentation which compared currently practicing New Zealand artists. The artists were John Crump, working in oils, Jacky Pearson, working with watercolours, Jill Perrot, working with spray paint and Ruth Reid, working with acrylics. The work of each artist was shown using videos presented by Graham Stevenson via his programme "Put Some Colour In Your Life" and proved to be a very interesting comparison of the various media.

## **Film Appreciation**

### **Français pour rire**

Bill's talk this time centred on Napoleon III. A critic of Napoleon III denounced him as "an authoritarian but ineffectual leader who brought France into dubious and ultimately disastrous foreign adventures". Certainly Napoleon's declaration of war against Prussia led to a quick and ignominious defeat. This unfortunately blighted what had otherwise been a very successful reign.

Napoleon gave France benefits in the form of railroads, telegraph lines, steamships, broad boulevards and public buildings. He modernised the economy, and took a very active

role in building the infrastructure for economic growth. He opened up French markets to foreign goods, forcing French industry to become more efficient and competitive. Very narrow medieval streets and alleys in the heart of Paris were demolished and replaced by squares and boulevards. A new aqueduct brought clean water into Paris. He worked to give girls and women greater access to public education while workers were given the right to strike and to organise trade unions. After 1869 he liberalised his reign and established a genuine parliamentary democracy.

## **History of Europe**

### **Inventors & Inventions**

Diana gave us an insight into the challenges the NZ wool suppliers face with a decline in the use of wool worldwide and how NZ is responding positively. She then gave an insight into her life with her remarkable father. He was a man who could turn his hand to almost anything including inventing, watercolour painting, farming and sculpture. The photos showed a real talent. He was also responsible for setting up a network of workshops to encourage and enable young people to obtain work and skills. Roy Boston then gave a presentation which started with an explanation of why modern jet engines had such big fans and then went on to tell the tale of one of New Zealand's lesser known inventors - Peter Lynn. Peter Lynn is one of world's foremost designers of kites - from fun kites in the form of animals to kites designed to move container ships and kites that power racing buggies which are popular in the USA. Peter also invented the world's most used portable saw mill and with fellow Ashburton resident, formed a company (Wizmax) that has great success with the highly efficient Stirling engine.

### **Literature**

The works of Jane Austen was the topic for the month. Greta gave an in-depth report on 'Emma' followed by a similar report on 'Northanger Abbey' by Lorna. This was followed by an open and lively discussion on many aspects of Austen's writing. It was an enjoyable ending to our year's programme. Friday February 9 will be our first meeting for 2018 when we will be reviewing holiday reading and selecting topics for the rest of the year.

### **Local History**

Our final meeting of the year was held at the Vaughan Homestead, Long Bay. We had a guest speaker, Lesley Wilson, who spoke to us in depth about the Albany Memorial Library. The Library was built in 1922. Now marooned between two much used highways the library is part of the area occupied by the Coronation Hall and the tennis courts. Lesley has done a lot of research into the local histories of Albany and East Coast Bays including the area's World War One soldiers, both those killed and those who returned. She had a great deal of photographs to show us and stories to tell. We hope to visit the Library in the future. The meeting was concluded with a Christmas morning tea.

### **Mah Jong**

New members, especially beginners, are welcome. We play at Room 3 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. Mah Jong is great brain exercise.

### **Making History**

Felicitations to everyone! Our yummy Christmas lunch was held at Knightsbridge Village where we presented our loyal and wonderful lecturer David Johnson with a small token of appreciation. Our next meeting will be in February when we will continue to explore Canada. New members most welcome.

### **Medical Science and History**

DNA shows evidence of pre-Maori settlers in NZ. The TV programme "Redhead" (2014) revealed the existence of a people in NZ with fair skin, red to blond hair, green eyes and of short stature. They lived in caves on a mountain in the vicinity of Fairy Springs, Lake Putapairarehe. Early Maori arrivals to NZ reported hearing these people laughing and making fishnets at night. They would disappear underground when they sensed others in the surrounding bush. There is evidence that they had created amphitheaters and bought their own tools and flutes. The descendants of the original group are now known as the Ngati Hotu tribe. DNA identifies these people as originally stemming from Persia, Peru and the scattered islands of the Pacific. This history hasn't reached the school curriculum as further evidence is still being confirmed.

### **Modern History**

Peter spoke about Marie Curie and the establishment of a radiation facility in New Zealand. Marie Curie won a Nobel Prize for Physics jointly with her husband Pierre in 1903 and by herself for Chemistry in 1911. She was the first woman to win and the only person to win two Nobel science prizes. Her daughter won a Nobel Prize for Chemistry 37 years later. A cobalt 60 Gamma radiation facility was commissioned in Upper Hutt in 1968. It was the 3rd such facility erected in the world. It provided radiation sterilisation services to all New Zealand hospitals for a wide range of medical products and components. It was a major financial investment which still operates today though under different ownership and processes.

### **Music Appreciation and History**

We've just enjoyed lunch together at a restaurant and will hold no more meetings this year. Start again in February.

This month Terry gave a presentation on the Chinese pianist Yuja Wang. She was born 1987 in Beijing. At age 7 she began studying at Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music and then at 15 went to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, USA. In March 2007 her breakthrough came when she replaced Martha Argerich who had cancelled an appearance with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at four subscription concerts. Yuja has now become a world famous soloist and has just been awarded the title of 2017 Musical American Artist of the Year. We then watched videos of her playing Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, then her interview with Alexis Bloom and this was followed by Yuja playing Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" at the 2016 Saltsburg Festival and then part of Prokofiev's Sonata No.7.

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

Our November speaker was Roy who left us flummoxed and gob smacked! First the tricky intelligence test, then the archaeological puzzles from N.Z.'s past. Followed by how did the Maori get to this country if it were not in double hulled canoes?

Where is the evidence that Maori, at any stage, had such craft? Magic and illusions followed, making us realize that trust in our own eyes and/or logic is not well placed. Just as well we had a yummy BYO lunch to conclude the meeting. Thank you, Roy. A most stimulating meeting.

### **Renaissance**

Trish's subject was "The Role of Women in Renaissance." She covered all the layers of society which showed that higher breed women generally had no rights or access to power. These society women were often forced into marriage with a stranger for financial benefit as dowries were of great importance. Women in the lower classes did have some freedom. Ruth spoke of Christine de Pizan, who was a scholar and the 1<sup>st</sup> Renaissance woman to make her living by writing through patronage. She wrote 41 long works including

allegorical prose, treaties and biographies as well as many poems. She is sometimes named as the 1<sup>st</sup> feminist because she criticised traditional perceptions of women and advocated for their place in society.

### **Travel**

**Oct** - Shirley Jones knows Christchurch well and has followed the progress of the city. Her talk focused on the art in the city. Special mention was made of the Margaret Mahy children's playground, the Isaac Theatre Royal restoration, the new music centre called The Piano, the new bus station, the development in the New Regent Street area, and her long conversation with the Wizard! Please visit Christchurch as it is amazing!

**Nov.** For our last meeting of the year we all contributed a talk about an incident that happened during the years of our travels. Some were really hilarious and had us in stitches while others were more reflective. We then enjoyed a delicious

Christmas lunch at Knightsbridge. Our thanks to Shirley Brown for her leadership over the past two years.

### **Walking Westmere Coastal Walkway**

Meet at 9am in Woodlands Crescent near the Bowling Club in Browns Bay if you wish to carpool. If you wish to go direct, go over the Harbour Bridge in the far left lane to exit in Shelly Beach Road. Proceed along Shelly Beach Road to the traffic lights and turn right into Jervois Road. Carry on until you reach the roundabout and turn left into West End Road, then at the end turn left into Garnet Road, then third right into Meola Road. Meet at 9.45am at the Auckland Sword and Shield hut (there is a sign for the Walkway) on Meola Road on the right, just past the last house after turning off Garnet Road. Park in Meola Road and look out for Jan! We will walk for about an hour along a bush and coastal walkway. Coffee will follow at the Sea Breeze Café on the corner of Garnet Road and Leamington Road. This is the last walk until February.