

Guest Speaker: **Distinguished Professor Sir Richard Faull**

Title: **“The Magic of the Human Brain”**



Sir Richard Faull is Director of the Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland, and Co-Director of the Centre for Research Excellence “Brain Research New Zealand”. Sir Richard Faull fell in love with the human brain as a third year medical student and subsequently pursued exciting research unravelling the marvels and secrets of the human brain. He has established an international reputation for his research studies on the human neurodegenerative diseases – Alzheimer’s, Epilepsy, Huntington’s, Parkinson’s and Motor Neuron diseases – which was made possible through the establishment of a human brain bank in partnership with the community. He is passionately committed to helping and giving hope through research to families and people who are touched by brain disorders.

His research achievements have been recognised with several awards.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to our new newsletter format. We are trialling formats so we can see what works best. We are aware that the newsletter is opened on different devices – phone, tablet, laptop etc. so we look forward to your feedback on how effective it is for you. The use of the full line format enables a larger font. Two new features are the monthly calendar where the next meeting topic is listed and the Committee Report. Any SIG reports that are sent in on time, to the correct site, with a word length maximum of 150 words will be included.

Our guest speaker last month was Assoc. Professor Susan Morton who is the Director of the contemporary longitudinal study of NZ children and families at the University of Auckland. Started in 2005 the study follows 6853 children born in 2009-2010 and their families. This comprehensive study titled “Growing up in New Zealand”, links with sixteen government agencies to provide evidence to improve population wellbeing and solutions to reduce inequities. Larger than the Dunedin study, started in 1972/73, this study follows a new multicultural generation of children and their families coping in a vastly different New Zealand society.

Next year we celebrate twenty years since the first U3A meeting in Browns Bay in June 2000. The June 2019 meeting is reserved to celebrate, reflect and have some fun and laughter. Between June 2019 and the full 20th Anniversary in June 2020 “The Past Twenty Years” will be a theme. We need our longer term members to form a working group to dig through the archives, photos and their memories so a 20th Celebration booklet will be ready by June 2020. Browns Bay is blessed to have many of the founding members still with us.

Results of the Survey Questionnaire: Thank you to the members who participated. Your responses have given good guidance to the committee. Several key themes emerged: a desire for more time for social interaction, a desire for more discussion in groups, confirmation that the most popular main speakers came from a variety of organisations and what they talked about informed and educated our members e.g. Dr Paul Spoonley, The Auckland City Missioner, Sistema Aotearoa, Prof.. S Hoadley, Celia Caughey, Prof. Faull, The Memory Foundation, the Auckland Volcanic Field, Rocket Lab

Some concerns were also expressed: parking and bus access, more help in joining and being welcomed into groups, more opportunities for discussion and sharing of ideas, more cross Special Interest Group socialising opportunities, help with technology, opportunities to hear more talks from SIGs, widening the passageways between the chairs in the hall

Responding and adapting to change: Over the next 20 years U3A’s and other similar groups and clubs have to evolve to be attractive to a new generational cohort. Without continued strong enrolments all of our members are affected. Our aim is for a supportive, sustainable and vibrant association that accommodates a diversity of ages. Most prospective members will have worked full-time to 70+ many will still have young grand-children, most are tech savvy and have powerful smartphones that allow them to immediately research anything of interest and many will keep their gym and sports club memberships and other affiliations. Most are finishing work healthier and more active and will have a “carpe diem” attitude toward fulfilling their bucket list. They will be time poor so will volunteer only if they perceive a value trade-off for the benefits they receive. Informed choice will also be important, so they will expect to be marketed to.

Will U3A Browns Bay be a relevant choice at 70+ or at 80+? U3A has an advantage over single activity clubs and groups - Special Interest Groups. Special Interest Groups allow U3A to provide a diverse range of activities spanning the intellectual, social, cultural, physical, flexibility in timing, opportunities for discussion and participation for members of all ages. U3A has activity diversity and this advantage needs to be expanded and promoted.

The Network has produced a new 4 colour brochure and we will expand our website so more SIGs have a presence; we will also get links onto other relevant sites. Our newsletter, like all of our promotions, needs to create interest and sell forward with

what is coming. We have all encouraged our children and grand-children “to do the reading so you are prepared to learn”. To contribute to a robust and collaborative learning people like to think about a topic before they attend. The new monthly calendar lists sequentially. Send your forward topics to Sheryl our newsletter editor.

New Special Interest Groups for 2019: In the survey members gave a wide range of options for new interest groups including: Photography, an Events Group for group attendance, International Studies, Te Reo and Maori Studies, Engineering, Ukulele, a late afternoon Walking Group, Philosophy, a Dining Group Interested?

A sign-up sheet will be passed around during the November meeting. Convenors will have details to share at the next group meeting and if interested email Elizabeth. We need 6-8 committed members to form a viable group who will decide meeting times and venue.

Glen Plaistowe

COMMITTEE REPORT

New audio speakers: The speakers have been purchased. Being smaller and lighter they are safer to install but give the same amplification and sound quality. Thanks to Garry.

Bays Community Centre Bookings for 2019: have been block booked. Subsequently though, the Inverness Room has had a commercial booking so most of the groups in this room have been reassigned to the Sherwood Room. The convenors of affected SIG's have been contacted.

The committee have changed their meeting time: the committee now meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month.

Convenors' thank you luncheon: an invitation has been sent out to all 2018 convenors for a thank you luncheon, immediately after the November meeting, in the Sherwood Room.

Congratulations: we wish to congratulate Sherryl Wilson who has stood down as Speaker Manager to take over the prestigious role as President of the Auckland Justice of the Peace Association. I cannot commend Sherryl enough for her professionalism and commitment to the role as Speaker Manager. Our loss is the JP's gain.

New Committee Members Urgently Required: We need two members to step-up to act as Treasurer and Speaker Manager. Ideally, two males so we have a male voice on committee decisions. Please contact Glen.

Newsletter: Sheryl Coyle has done a great job in putting out this newsletter in its new format, thank you. Our thanks also go to Roger for giving the support to our new editor.

Hall set-up: each month several members from the Inventor's group are arriving early to help our duty SIG. Instructions and a hall plan give guidance. Thank you.

New U3A brochure: an order has been placed for the new U3A brochures produced by the Network. They will have our contact details on.

Art for Fun

Our meeting was held at the Boston's and was principally a presentation by Roy on the American painter Andrew Wyeth. Roy's presentation showed us the artistic genius of the Wyeth family that has produced four generations of painters, all of whom have had a major impact on American art. He then went into some detail on the life of the most famous, Andrew Wyeth, showing a video of Michael Palin on Andrew Wyeth's life of ninety one years.

Art History

Finding ourselves without a speaker this month, Patricia filled in with two short and unrelated presentations. First we heard the story of 'Three Men and a Painting,' about the 16th century boy-king, Edward VI, the Flemish artist William Scrots, and the modern day football chairman who now owns Scrot's portrait of Edward. The second talk was entitled 'Red Heels,' about royal court dress, and the wearing of red-heeled shoes to signify nobility and power. Begun by Louis XIV, this tradition spread to all the courts of Europe.

Book Group

Group members each discussed the books they read over the previous month. These included: The boy who harnessed the wind by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer; Transcription by Kate Atkinson; The widow waltz by Sally Koslow; Chaos by Patricia Cornwell; The choice: embrace the possible by Dr Edith Eva Eger; Colours of a life: the life and times of Douglas MacDiarmid by Anna Cahill; Two sisters: a father, his daughters and their journey into the Syrian jihad by Asne Seierstad; Flames by Robbie Arnott; Warlight by Michael Ondaatje; The plotters by Un-su Kim; Scrublands by Chris Hammer; To the bright edge of the world by Eowyn Ivey; 13 dates by Matt Dunn; The Mayfly by James Hazel; Force of nature by Jane Harper; Our house by Louise Candlish; The prehistory of the Far Side by Gary Larson; Leave no trace by Mindy Mejia; My abandonment by Peter Rock.

Current Affairs

This month our discussion started with a contribution from Kay Spence who discussed the Brett Kavanaugh appointment to the US Supreme Court and the evidence against him given by Dr Ford. A wide ranging discussion followed including considering men's attitude towards women in the workplace. Pat Taylor raised the issue of the inability of young police personal to communicate effectively owing to the overuse of Facebook and other social media platforms. Other issues considered were the increased use of technology by China to influence others and US citizens' embarrassment over Donald Trump.

Cycling

We had a successful days ride in October, lead very capably by Sue and including 3 new people. The ride started along the Pakuranga Rotary shared path which runs

North along the right bank of the Tamaki Estuary up to Half Moon Bay Marina, and right up to Musick Point – then back. In parts, the path was quite narrow and windy, but being coastal was all flat...at least to Half-moon Bay. Many pictures were taken, some of which are on the BBU3A website

Inventors and Inventions

Ian entertained our group by sharing his passion for marble tracks, demonstrating this by showing a couple of his marble tracks. He then segued to an absorbing selection of videos highlighting the fascinating world of “Kinetic Sculptures”. This sample of moving sculptures traversed mechanical, wooden, wind-driven and computerised suspended objects in mesmerising patterns. He concluded with a video glimpse of the amazing Dutch artist, Theo Jansen, who over nearly 20 years has built numerous “Beach Creatures” made of polythene piping and cable ties which walk upon sandy beaches driven only by the wind. Tony speculated on what China holds for the world in the form of future inventions, pointing out they were prolific inventors in ancient times but tribal and civil wars together with the early communism era seemed to direct the Chinese to a culture of copying rather than inventing.

Modern History

Kay gave a very interesting talk about the history of the Ngati Whatua settlement at Okahu Bay and the NZ government’s reprehensible action in evicting the residents which led to the 506 day occupation of Bastion Point in 1977-78. It was led by Joe Hawke and was subject to much controversy at the time but led eventually to a peaceful settlement and the return of much of the land to Maori ownership. Everyone appreciated the efforts Kay made to show a unique DVD

Music Appreciation

Our programme this month was a Musical Celebration of the Poetry of W.B. Yeats put to music and sung by various Irish musicians, followed by the flautist James Galway playing pieces by Handel, Field, Schubert and Mozart. This will be the last formal programme for 2018.

Renaissance

Monette gave a PowerPoint presentation on a Northern Italian Renaissance painter and engraver, Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506). He is known for his mastery of perspective and spatial illusion and his archaeologically correct details of Roman architecture. His finest work is considered to be the Triumphs of Caesar, nine huge tempera paintings sold in 1628 to Charles I and displayed at Hampton Court Palace for almost 400 years.