

GUEST SPEAKER: Jan Gow

**Title: “Finding your Family History – on the Internet”
or “What is Genealogy? It’s an allergy and you can’t
stop scratching!”**



Jan Gow was born in Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia and grew up near Tamworth. Following the pattern of her small town, when she turned 21, she left for England for two years living in the ‘mother country’. It was the thing to do!! An early P&O cruise! Six weeks on the “*Strathaird*” with lots of stops for 2-3 days. Still in touch with friends from this experience, including one David Gow from New Zealand! They were married in London 57 years ago.

Jan started researching her family history by visiting the Family History Library in Salt Lake City! She had won the fare to the USA (an ITC Speech Contest) and this was one of her stopovers. She came away Hooked on Genealogy – which is the name of her Genealogy Tours – the 26th year this year. Three weeks in Salt Lake City and 3 weeks in the UK.

Jan has been Treasurer and then President of the NZ Society of Genealogists. She started a couple of NZSG branches and has been teaching in community education classes since 1985. She has spoken at local, national, international conferences and on cruise ships and in a prison!

Jan was awarded the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations Award for Meritorious Service to Family History in 2006. She was also made a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists in London in 2012 and received the QSM for her service to genealogy in NZ. Jan loves finding ways to pretend we are organised!! Or help us to think we are organised. And some of this does prove to be very helpful! And we do get organised! She will talk about some of the ideas in her “You need a cake tin” session.

David and Jan’s three children all live overseas. But the one grandchild is in Auckland, so that is special.

Jan delights in this wonderful hobby, where so much remains the same over the decades, but there is so much that is new and different. Always something new!!

2018/2019	SIG presentation	Hall Seating	Morning tea
Tuesday 4 th December 2018	Christmas lunch	Renaissance (and Inventors)	Active Travellers
Tuesday 5 th February 2019	Short presentation: Fay Weatherley & Glen Plaistowe	Local History (and Inventors)	Art Pot Pourri

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to our final meeting for 2018. The committee wish all members the best for your final Interest Group meetings and an enjoyable and safe Christmas and New Year celebrations with family and friends.

Last Month's Speaker: Sir Richard Faull enthralled us with his talk "The Magic of the Human Brain." Sir Richard is the Director of the Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland and is also a Co-Director of the Centre for Research Excellence "Brain Research New Zealand." Working alongside community organisations these teams of leading neuroscientists and clinicians have undertaken ground-breaking research on the ageing-brain and age-related neurological disorders such as stroke, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's disease and sensory loss. The team were the first to identify that the adult human brain has the ability to create new cells. This is a great New Zealand story.

Lifelong well-being: This is what U3A is all about!

"The UK Government' Foresight Programme offers these five points for lifelong well-being:

1. Connect with people around you.
2. Be active – do physical activity that suits you best.
3. Be curious – watch for the beautiful and unusual.
4. Keep learning – anything. It might be a musical instrument, or how to cook.
5. Give – to a friend or stranger, volunteer."

Quoted from the NZ Herald Saturday 24th November 2018

Shared Christmas Lunch: Please bring a plate to share for the Christmas lunch at our meeting on December 4th. A third of last month's attendees were nominated for something sweet, the rest savoury please. We cannot heat-up items.

New Special Interest Groups for 2019: Based on the suggestions given in the survey we are looking to set-up some new Special Interest Groups in 2019. Below is an interest form.

A sign-up sheet will also be available at the December meeting. We need 6-8 committed members to form a viable group. The members will decide the meeting times and venue that best suits them.

Glen Plaistowe

Proposed new Study Groups for 2019

Photography: digital photography on cameras, cell phones and tablets. Working with photos		Ukulele: form a group and learn together	
International Studies across Countries: Political, historical, economic and social impacts		Late afternoon Walking Group: Fitness and socialising, sharing thoughts	
Engineering: Exploring the great engineering projects, engineers, impact of technology, future trends		Te reo/Māori Studies: Introduction to basic language, culture, history	
What's on in Auckland? Attending current displays, shows, events etc., with others		Philosophy: Explore matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, the nature of human thought and the nature of the universe	
Increasing Computer Skills: Short courses to increase essential skills		China Present: A study of the dramatic development of China in recent times and its impact on world affairs.	

COMMITTEE REPORT

Treasurer Appointed: Thanks to Piers Hamid for stepping-up to take on the role as Treasurer. His experience is appreciated as is his male perspective.

Speaker Manager Urgently Required: We need a Speaker Manager to join the committee for 2019, ideally a male to support Pier's male voice on committee decisions. The speakers for the first four months are already organised. Please contact Glen 027 5412241

Old audio speakers: The old speakers were donated to Long Bay Primary School. The PTA was delighted to collect them and get them set-up in their newly built block.

Membership Numbers: Paid membership is currently 149 and 77 outstanding payments. Members who are not financial are not supposed to attend.

Bays Community Centre Bookings for 2019: a range of dates and times available for any new Special Interest groups that form in 2019 has been organised.

Bays Community Centre On-line Site: This is being finalised and U3A will place a link on this site.

The committee have changed their meeting time: the committee now meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month. This enables the latest decisions to be included in the newsletter before it is sent out.

Convenors' thank you luncheon: after our last meeting was a great success. Thanks to the attendees and the Committee members who contributed.

Newsletter: Sheryl did a great job in putting out the November newsletter in its new format, thank you. We would like the monthly calendar to become a constructive addition but we do need a brief note of either topic or even the venue if this changes monthly so it becomes relevant e.g. for December "no monthly meeting Christmas lunch on Tuesday 11th".

Reports attached to the newsletter: We will include SIG reports: Conditions for inclusion: sent to: u3abbnewsletter@gmail.com by the closing date, Maximum: 150 words and can be transferred directly without requiring re-writing.

Reminder: We have stopped mailing out newsletters. The newsletter is on the website.

Our Own Website: www.u3abb.net.nz is a great resource that is maintained by our webmaster Garry. Our current and immediate past newsletters are available. We will be encouraging all Interest Groups to write a 200-250 word descriptor and provide a couple photos to go onto the site

Visitors Attending Interest Group Meetings: Prospective members are allowed to attend one session so long as the convenor has been contacted. Some groups are full so will decline. A U3A member from another club may attend a group meeting as a guest but again must contact the convenor first. If a U3A member from another local U3A wishes to continue attending they will need to enrol with U3A Browns Bay and hold a dual membership.

Convenor Folders: Annually the procedure notes given to the convenors will be reviewed over January/February to ensure they are relevant and provide the necessary information before being handed out to the convenors in March.

Change of Time for Main Speaker: The first three speakers arranged for 2019 have all asked to start at 11.00am. Please, note the change.

SIG REPORTS

Active Travellers

Our presentation this month was given by Lucy Casey who spent three weeks travelling through Kruger National Park, South Africa, in August 2018. She presented maps of the park detailing the trip from north to south and photos of the rondavels (circular hut with thatched roof) that was their accommodation in most campsites.

There were lots of photos and videos of the 'big' five - Lions, Elephants, Rhinos, Buffalos and Leopards and other animals plus many beautiful birds. The two travellers booked everything themselves and self-drove around the park learning as they went what to do when faced with a herd of elephants! We also learned lots of facts about a variety of animals and birds. In particular we loved the photos of the baby elephants and giraffes. Several photos showed the reality of life amongst animals in the wild - spotted hyenas, black-backed jackals and vultures cleaning up an elephant carcass that died of natural causes. It was amazing to see the number of different animals at waterholes and gain an understanding of the animal pecking order there!

Ancient Civilizations

Geoff and Anne showed a powerpoint presentation of their recent trip along the Silk Road in China. While they climbed the Great Wall, visited all the main ancient silk road towns and oases the only evidence of the silk road was in the museums. There were the remains of many Buddhist centres of worship in caves and temples some in very good condition even though they were about 1600 years old. A highlight was the mummified people in a museum in Urumqi which were up to 4000 years old.

Archaeology

Archaeology enjoyed an informal BBQ get together at the home of Peter and Natalie Dawson, lots of great food and conversation with those who were in town at the time!

Art History

This month our speaker was Helen who spoke on Berthe Morisot, she was a painter and a member of the circle of Painters in Paris who became known as the impressionists. Critics of her were quite a few, some for her being part of bourgeois society and some for being a female. She married Eugene Manet (brother of the Artist Manet). Eugene who was also an Artist gave up his career to devote himself to handle Berthe's submissions to impressionists and other exhibitions. He was successful at this for those times. Lively discussion amongst the group ensued after talk and viewing her art online.

Book Group

Everyone talked about the books they have read recently and Monette produced an excellent cheesecake. Books discussed were: *Last Letter from Istanbul* by Lucy Foley; *The Hush* by John Hart; *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris; *The Last Hours* by Minette Walters; *Clock Dance* by Anne Tyler;

Transcription by Kate Atkinson; *City of Friends* by Joanna Trollope; *The Maid's Room* by Fiona Mitchell; *A Rising Man* by Abir Mukherjee; *A Necessary Evil* by Abir Mukherjee; *Dance of the Peacocks* by James McNeish; *The Punishment She Deserves* by Elizabeth George; *12 Rules for Life: an antidote to chaos* by Jordan Peterson; *Levi's War* by Julie Thomas; *The Other Wife* by Michael Robothem; *The Wife* by Meg Wolitzer; *The Sunday Girl* by Pip Drysdale; *The Ash Doll* by James Hazel; *Under the Harrow* by Flynn Berry; *A Double Life* by Flynn Berry and *A Simple Favour* by Darcy Bell.

Books and Beyond

Heather Howarth led the discussion on authors who were skilled in describing characters to bring them to life. She used examples from Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy, who were especially mentioned as collecting ideas for characters in notes. Many other authors' examples were read. Members of the group had also been identifying this aspect in their reading and made relevant contributions to the discussion.

Classical Music

We listened to DVD of *Il Viva* at the Colosseum in Croatia. Then DVD *Wild Life* Symphony of classical music to scenes of animals, birds and nature. Very enjoyable.

Current Affairs

Heather Howarth discussed the falling standards in the media where contributors appear to be ruder and more aggressive, and in social platforms where anything goes. The group discussed the lowering of standards in society and the need for parents and educators to take a lead. Jon considered the growing threat of Chinese influence in the China sea, the Pacific and in New Zealand including the provision of loan finance.

Cycling

Ambury Farm Park/Watercare Coastal Walk-Cycleway

14 keen cyclists explored this area on a perfect day, sun and no wind. We rode from Ambury Farm Park past the Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant across to Puketutu Island where we could see through to Manukau Heads. Fish were jumping and birds were singing. Extensive planting has been done to rehabilitate this area, with great paths and some boardwalks. Turning back, we cycled around Mangere Lagoon back to the carpark. No coffee stops available so the intrepid band bought their own.

Français pour rire

Our final meeting was in November. Rosemary described a family holiday in South East France with photos and a bit of history. They were based in La Ciotat, a coastal town, 30kms east of Marseilles, and drove to a different area each day appreciating their hosts' local knowledge. Places visited were Les Calanques (by boat from Cassis) show casing coastal inlets with steep limestone cliffs; the very high Gorges de Verdon with its turquoise water below; the mountain village of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, famous for its Faience pottery; Gordes built on a rocky outcrop; and the Luberon valley famous for its vineyards.

Medical Science and History

This month our topic was glaucoma, the eye disease that gives no symptoms until damage to sight has already occurred. It was therefore stressed how important it was to have regular eye checks every 5 years from the age of 40 and every 3 years (or more frequently) from the age of 60. Details of the disorder were presented along with current treatment and research. Other topics included a potential for a new antibiotic and a study that showed a link between changes in the retina and Alzheimer's disease.

Modern History

Dave initiated a discussion based on a Radio NZ interview between Kim Hill and Prof Anne-Marie Brady from Canterbury University who asserts that the Chinese Government has a strategy called “Magic Weapons” which it uses to influence public opinion in support of its “One Belt, One Road” philosophy. It is a long term, subtle and not so subtle programme. The talk generated lively discussion and a divergent range of opinions and prejudices.

Music -Mainly Classical

At our November meeting, Greta showed a movie of “The Greatest Showman”, a musical type life story of P. T. Barnham, who created the birth of Show Business. He also brought in the ‘forgotten’ people: dwarfs, bearded ladies, those with birth defects, and then created the first under-tent circus. He also created a “family” style that circus people still have. This was a little deviation from our usual Classic style.

Puzzles, Patterns & Paradoxes

This month 7 of our group visited the Escape Room in Takapuna as our Christmas treat. Working as a team we unlocked 9 different types of padlocks and solved many other problems to finally extricate ourselves from the room. Everyone had a great time and all contributions helped us to solve the puzzles and get out. A lunch at Aubergine, Takapuna, was a fitting reward for our achievements. See the photo on our U3A website: www.u3abb.net.nz

Renaissance

Patricia gave us a talk illustrated by a Powerpoint presentation using paintings viewed at an exhibition last year at the Art Gallery of NSW in Sydney called “Rembrandt and the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from the Rijksmuseum”. In the 1600s the Dutch Republic was a prosperous trading nation and a major colonial power and this new prosperity was reflected in an explosion in Dutch art aimed at showing off the wealth of the new elite.

Fay told us about The Holy Roman Empire which began in 800 AD with Charlemagne and ended in 1806 with Francis II. The Emperor was elected, eventually from 1356 by a college of 6 electors. Its history is complex and confusing, the territory it included was ever changing and its 'capital' varied depending on who was elected emperor. Originally the Emperor was crowned by the Pope, but this custom was abandoned. As Voltaire said: “Not Holy, Not Roman and Not an Empire”.