



June 2019

## Browns Bay Newsletter

# Towards our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Browns Bay U3A



Rachel Irwin 2000 – 2003; Shona Cooper 2003 – 2005; Alf Fisher 2006 – 2007; Rachel Irwin 2007 – 2009; Maureen Whineray 2009 – 2011; Fay Weatherly 2011 – 2013; Geoff Haycock 2013 - 2014; Scott Whineray 2014 – 2015; Monette Ewen 2015 – 2017; Glen Plaistowe 2017 – 2019

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

While away, I missed our guest speaker Mr Rod Martin who is an authority on minerals, he is another Kiwi whose expertise has international recognition. I hope you enjoyed his presentation. Thanks to Margaret for following through and acting as Speaker Manager, to Gloria for standing in as President and to Garry for newsletter production. All three, along with the other committee did outstanding jobs.

### Our Celebration Meeting in June

Our June meeting is one of celebration and recognition as we journey to 20 years of operation in June 2020. Invitations were sent to our fifteen current founder members and to a further twenty current member who joined in 2002-2004 and have been members for over 15 years. It is a significant achievement to have so many members who have remained dedicated to U3A Browns Bay, we will recognise their contributions. There will be stories and images, a special morning tea and activities to challenge us. Come and join us.

### The Blessing of Tolerance

I have been fortunate to have just completed five intensive weeks travelling in UAE, Portugal, Morocco, Gibraltar and Spain; five ancient, yet interlinked countries, with complex histories where religion and state have not always had clear separation. Cultural and religious history weighs heavily but in each country their unique governance is harnessing technology to move forward economically, helping them to utilise their natural resources and develop their people through education and training.

Our Prime Minister's inclusive response to the sad events in Christchurch and the following weeks of the world's press recording our repeated message "*not in our country*" has raised New Zealand's profile positively. Wherever we went most people wanted to acknowledge New Zealand's leadership and people of Islamic faith wanted to reaffirm their dislike of radicalism and affirm that Islam is a religion of peace.

Glen Plaistowe PRESIDENT

## NOTICES



### **Auckland U3A Network Event "Celebrating U3A" August 30th 2019**

This year the celebration is being held at the Barfoot & Thompson Netball Centre - 44 Northcote Road, Northcote. The main speaker is Mike King an advocate on Mental Health and "The 2019 New Zealander of the Year". \$25 covers registration, morning tea and lunch. Places will fill-up quickly.

Register at [http://u3a.net.nz/2019\\_event.html](http://u3a.net.nz/2019_event.html)

## SIG REPORTS from previous month

### **Archaeology** <http://u3abb.net.nz/archaeology.html>

Gloria presented an alternative theory about where Homo sapiens first evolved. While the present theory supports migration from Africa, new fossil discoveries in China now suggest that our ancient ancestors may well have been living in Eurasia. This is long before the suggested date of the African migration. New discoveries and developing technologies appearing all the time keeps this subject totally fascinating.

### **Art History** <http://u3abb.net.nz/art.html>

Anne spoke about Diego Velazquez' 1656 painting "Las Meninas" or "Maids of Honour", his most acclaimed work held in the Prado Museum, Madrid. It is a snapshot-like painting of people in King Philip IV's Spanish court. The painting creates an uncertain relationship between the viewer and the figures depicted. Many interpretations have been attributed to it, and this continues even 350 years later. Pablo Picasso so admired Velazquez' work he worked on 44 canvases directly inspired by "Las Meninas". Salvador Dali created a modern surrealist re-interpretation of it.

### **Art Pot Pourri** [http://u3abb.net.nz/Art\\_Pot\\_Pourri.html](http://u3abb.net.nz/Art_Pot_Pourri.html)

At our last meeting a small group of us visited the Auckland Art Gallery to see the exhibition Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys. We were surprised at the number of paintings in the collection and enjoyed seeing how her work changed and developed over the years.

### **Book Group**

As usual we all talked about books we had read over the past two months. These included: GROOKS by Piet Hein [5]; Jackrabbit Smile by Joe R Lansdale [4]; Bad Chili by Joe R Lansdale [4]; Rumble Tumble by Joe R Lansdale [4]; Less Than a Treason by Dana Stabenow [4]; The Hunting Party by Lucy Foley [4]; King of the Weeds by Mickey Spillane and Max Allan Collins [4]; Kings of Midnight by Wallace Stroby [5]; Shoot the Woman First by Wallace Stroby [5]; The Devil's Share by Wallace Stroby [5]; Past Tense by Lee Child [4]; Reacher's Rules: life lessons from Jack Reacher compiled by Val Hudson [3]; Reacher Said Nothing: Lee Child and the making of Make Me by Andy Martin [4]; Inherit the Dead by Mark Billingham and about 20 others [4]; Jeeves and the King of Clubs by Ben Schott [4]; The Girl on the Page by John Purcell [5]; Runner by Patrick Lee [4.5]; Signal by Patrick Lee [4.5]; Marlborough Man by Alan Carter [5]; November Road by Lou Berney [5]; A Mistake by Carl Shuker [3]; Milkman by Anna Burns [0]; Red Joan by Jennie Rooney [4]; Nutshell by Ian McEwan [5]; Scrublands by Chris Hammer [5]; A Ladder to the Sky by John Boyne [5]; Love is Blind: the rapture of Brodie Moneur by William Boyd [4]; The Marriage of Opposites by Alice Hoffman [4.5]; The Woman in

the Window by A J Finn [4]; The Cause of Death by Dr Cynric Temple-Camp [5]; The Secrets of Primrose Square by Claudia Carroll [3]; At the End of the Century by Ruth Praver Jhabvala [5]; Cemetery Road by Greg Iles [5]; Normal People by Sally Rooney [5]; A Month of Sundays by Liz Byrski [5]; Lethal White by Robert Galbraith [5]; A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson [5]; Sally Ride: America's first woman in space by Lynn Sherr [5]; The Silence of the Girls by Pat Barker [5] and Identity Crisis by Ben Elton [5]

### **Books and Beyond**

Heather H talked about seven of C J Sansom's novels set in Tudor times. The hero, Matthew, a London lawyer, instructed initially by Thomas Cromwell on behalf of Henry VIII, gets into various scrapes alongside colleague Jack Barak. The novels, covering fifteen years and six Queens, describe the cruel treatment of those who break the law or deny the King's religion. Most are based on real events, and 'historical notes' are included. One learns about royal Progresses, the King's advisers, sanitation, and the green fields of Whitehall and Westminster. Our 'challenge' was to describe something read/learned about the Tudor era and we had book and film reviews, tales of living with Tudor history and an essay about portrait miniatures.

### **Classical Music**

This month we changed from listening to classical music to viewing a fascinating DVD called Pianomania. This was a record of unseen (though not unheard) devotion to excellence by Stefan Krupter, a Viennese piano tuner. He had a madness for perfection, as he tuned pianos, particularly Steinway pianos for pianists who required different sounds to perfect their playing. He tuned pianos for both homes and concert halls, often for recording classical music. It was a intriguing look at piano tuning which we had previously taken for granted.

### **Creative Audio Visual**

Lois explained the technique of masking using Proshow Producer. Masking allows more than one image to appear on one slide to give special effects. There are a number of different ways of masking and Lois was careful to take us through the process to achieve some really great images. Lois used Proshow instructional videos from YouTube as the basis of her talk and showed us how she followed the processes when applying them to the video she produced for us last month. Her presentation reminded us that there is a lot that can be learned from YouTube Proshow videos and by trying things out for yourself.

### **Current Affairs**

A good number of members attended the May meeting. After the usual quiz, topics discussed included the upcoming Australian elections; the future of the Ports of Auckland with the advantages and disadvantages of possibly moving part of the business to Marsden Point, Mt. Maunganui or to a new port in the Firth of Thames. The poor response to the 2018 Census was of interest. Can it be improved? After a terrible road accidents at the beginning of May, our very poor road safety status, compared with nations we wish to be compared with, was not good news.

### **Cycling**

In brilliant Autumn weather 10 Members of the cycle group headed out to Riverside Drive, Point Wells, to start a ride to Omaha beach. We visited the protected gated and fenced reserve for the nesting Dotterels at the northern end of Omaha beach, looked at one of the Rock features marking the middens and from the southern end of the beach cycled back on the foreshore pathway. The only hitch was a power outage, so no cafe open for the usual coffee restorative refreshments.

### **Film Appreciation**

At our May meeting John Reynolds showed a documentary that he had made about the filming of the full length NZ movie "Runaway" by John O'Shea in 1964. The clips that we were shown of the film interested us so much we have asked to be shown the full film next time. As John has completed a doctorate on John O'Shea we were able to get a really good insight into the man himself and the background of the shooting. Following on with our theme of Orry Kelly we

watched 30 mins of "American in Paris". Films we have enjoyed in the cinemas are "Red Joan", "Women at War", "The Aftermath".

### **Français pour rire**

Cecily spoke about Gustave Eiffel. Born to parents of German extraction in Dijon in 1842, he was not an enthusiastic student at school. He finally found his niche in engineering, constructing bridges and railway projects. The Budapest railway station was one of these. His best know project, the Eiffel tower, constructed by his company amid howls of protest from some Parisians was at the time [1889] the world's tallest structure. He was also involved with construction of the Statue of Liberty.

### **International Studies across Countries**

Gordon's talk was entitled the Decline of Great Britain. He described what he saw or read as evidence of this decline, using Trade Union increasing strength; mis-management by companies; crime and immigration as his evidence. Robust discussion took place and Gordon explained which sources he used, as well as his own anecdotal sights. Many of the group did not accept his conclusions from that, giving their own ideas and opinions, whilst acknowledging that he is entitled to his own.

### **Inventors and Inventions <http://u3abb.net.nz/inventions.html>**

We welcomed four new folk, two women and two men, to our May meeting, making an attendance of 17. Wayne Philip was the main presenter. He gave us an enlightened talk on the development of fire extinguishers and the different types for different fires. He also showed a video of his son's bow string release invention for disabled archers. Rob Voss and Roger Warner each gave mini-presentations on interesting new technical developments that will impact the lifestyles of our future generations.

### **Late Afternoon Walking**

We've enjoyed a gentle walk around Waiake, learning about the varieties in the beautiful gardens here. Because weather now is changeable, we will look at moving our meeting week by week, thus in June, on the 6th or 13th, depending on the weather, we hope to meet at Countdown at about 4.15 pm to walk inland round streams and reserves in Browns Bay. Another walk may be possible on the 27th. Please call Diana at 478 0345 for updates.

This group would like more members.

### **Local History**

"The Crossing of Cemetery Gully" was a photo essay, from a delve into the NZ website "Past Papers", to understand the 60 year saga, that finally resulted in the construction of 'Grafton Bridge'. A bridge that Aucklander's daily take for granted, but knows little of its origins. Letters to the newspapers, street committees and battles of bureaucracy, reveal a history of improvisation and vision to what became eventually recognised as the largest single span ferro-concrete bridge in the southern hemisphere.

### **Mahjong**

We are open for new members with the more "user friendly" start time of 10 am.

### **Maori / Te Reo**

At the third meeting of this newly formed group, we continued with Te Reo exercises practising the Maori words for God Defend New Zealand and formal and informal greetings when meeting people. The members present planned forward for the next sessions.

### **Medical Science and History**

Bev presented a discussion for people who may be undergoing a Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implementation (TAVI). In 2008 Professor John Ormiston and the Team at Mercy Angiography were the first to perform the TAVI procedure in the Asia-Pacific region. This has been a major breakthrough for Implanting the Aortic Valve. Access is gained by the femoral (groin) artery and the Aortic valve prosthesis is advanced to the narrowed valve. Mini Topics included micro-

needling – a procedure that is designed to generate collagen and skin tissue and medical concerns and vaccinations related to a Spice Island Cruise.

### Modern History

Warwick spoke on the military coups in Fiji. In the late 1800's, Colonial Government Indians were imported for work in cane plantations. Many stayed and eventually outnumbered Fijians. Fiji became independent in 1970. Although the constitution favoured Fijians, Indians were more successful. In 1987, Lt Col Rambuka staged a peaceful military coup, unseating the cross-ethnic Labour Government. Unsatisfied with reforms, he staged another – a disaster for the economy and law and order. 50, 000 Indians emigrated, and Fiji was politically isolated. A new constitution allowed an Indian PM in 1999 but in 2000, George Speight organised a violent coup. He was convicted of treason and a Fijian became PM. In 2006, Commodore Frank Bainimarama staged another coup and so yet another constitution. Now a civilian, he is PM, leading a more peaceful Fiji.

### Music Appreciation and History

The meeting was held at Marisa's house where we watched a documentary presented by Rick Stevens beginning in his birth city, Barstow, California. He presented many classical pieces performed by the Cascade Community Orchestra conducted by Michael Miropolsky. A pleasant and enjoyable time was had by all.

### Music - Mainly Classical

At our May meeting, Alf showed us a DVD exploring the music and lyrics of the carol "Silent Night" written in 1818. We were taken through an interesting journey to the villages where Franz Gruber, who wrote the music and Joseph Mohr, who wrote the text, lived. We then watched part of a DVD on the famous cellist Yo Yo Ma and a group he has formed called "The Silk Road Ensemble". This group consists of musicians from various countries on the Silk Road playing instrument peculiar to their place of birth.

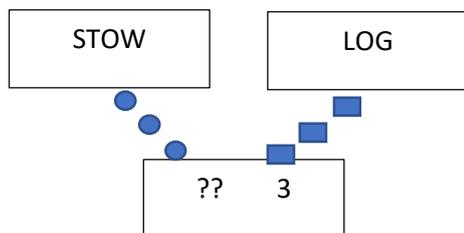
### Puzzles Patterns & Paradoxes

Heather introduced us to a word puzzle called **Zygolex**

This is the key to it.

Rhyme	● ● ● ● ● ●
Meaning	▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬
Letters	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

So the diagram below shows that we are looking for a word rhyming with STOW with the same number of letters as LOG. [only one letter can be changed]



You can play this game on line by googling "Zygolex"  
 John demonstrated two further games which can be played on your 'phone or on line.  
 "Wordament" and "Baba is you"

### Philosophy

At our recent meeting, Fay showed a short video giving an overview of the various schools of philosophy. This was followed by a short talk about Frederic Nietzsche. In his short life he wrote many books and articles about his philosophies. Some people maintain some of these were the basis of Nazi-ism without realizing that his sister, Elizabeth collected his unpublished material and published it under his name after 'massaging' it to support a Nazi (her) point of view. He in fact had strenuously repudiated [in writing] both antisemitism and nationalism.

## **Renaissance**

Monette spoke about Renaissance painter, sculptor and architect, El Greco, born in Greece in 1541, trained in Crete, Venice and Rome before spending the rest of his life in Toledo, Spain. El Greco's expressionistic style is characterised by slender elongated figures, unusual scale and perspective, dramatic lighting and vivid colours. He produced large canvases for church altarpieces, devotional paintings for religious institutions, high quality portraits and the first Spanish landscape paintings.

Jennifer talked about Villa Borghese with its famous collection in Rome - paintings by Raphael, Caravaggio, Titian, Bronzino and others, as well as a life-sized sculpture of David by Bernini. She also spoke about the Palazzo Barberini with paintings by Raphael, Caravaggio, Bronzino and El Greco among others.

## **Travel**

Last meeting we heard about Chris' visit to Poland where she participated in the Masters Indoor Athletics in the city of Torun and won 2 gold & 1 silver medal. She had very sobering photos of Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration camp. She also visited the salt mines near Krakow with photos of amazing huge underground caverns. There were statues etc carved out of salt plus a huge cathedral complete with chandelier. New Members welcome.

**Ukulele** [www.u3abb.net.nz/ukulele.html](http://www.u3abb.net.nz/ukulele.html) *Website has tutorials & contact form.*

Meeting held at a group member's home. Thanks Fay. This meeting we rehearsed popular songs, chosen by group. Our web page has Ukulele lessons for beginners to established players. Whether you are a beginner, with or without a Ukulele, or just a singer, you are welcome. Do come and join us if you are interested in singing, playing a Ukulele or Guitar.

## **Walking**

**Friday June** Albany Meet in car park at Hooton Reserve Lower carpark 9.45am. The walk is easy and will take about 1 hour 20 mins. At the end we can cross over to Columbus Cafe at Mitre 10 for a well-earned coffee.

## **What's on in**

(Mainly email. Meets every 2 months)