



August 2020

Browns Bay Newsletter

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr Judy Blakey MNZM

Title: "What's age got to do with it?"



Judy has a background in education, research and community organisations. As a member of the inaugural and subsequent Auckland Council Seniors Advisory, Judy was a vocal advocate for the potential community benefits associated with Auckland Council joining the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. In 2018 the elected councillors and mayor voted unanimously to create an Age-friendly Action Plan for the City, prior to applying formally to the WHO to join their network at the end of 2020. Judy is also a member of AUT's Centre for Active Ageing Seniors' Reference Group, which provides collaborative perspectives about ageing well. In 2018 Judy was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year Honours List for her services to seniors, and is a Life Member of the NZ Association of Gerontology.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Health and Safety at our main meeting

In line with the guidelines for contact tracing, Committee members will be keeping an "attendance register" of those who attend our main meetings. Sanitiser will be available for you to use. The Catering team will be wearing gloves for preparation of the morning tea.

SIG groups meeting at Browns Bay Community Centre

All affected SIG Conveners have been kept up to date with the requirements for the use of the rooms at the Community Centre. Contact Tracing Sheets are in each room for the Conveners to complete, or attendees can use the QR code.

Have you got something interesting to share?

Many of our members have led very interesting lives – some in New Zealand, but many from overseas. Also for some, the Covid lockdown has been a chance to try out new skills. If you would like to share this with our club as a speaker, see Glen Plaistowe (contact details below) or one of the committee.

U3A Online

As reported in the Network news, the Auckland U3A Network is an "organisation" member of U3A Online. This resource is operated by Australian U3As and provides short courses for Study Groups. Our membership enables U3As within the Auckland Network to obtain a licence for any course at a cost of AU\$20 per course. Have a look at the website, www.u3aonline.org.au to see what's available. Contact a member of the committee if you would like to take part in any of the study opportunities.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP - Reports

Report of the Month

International Studies across Countries

We have a problem in our small numbers and are in danger of closing unless more people decide to try us out by coming along to the next meeting. We have had some fascinating topics from Denmark to Argentina, the Yemen and Vietnam. If you have visited an interesting country, or are from another country, do come along and share your thoughts and impressions. We usually discuss international current affairs as well as having a focus on one country.

Next month Dorothy is planning to give us her impressions and ideas about Australia and you may have something to say about our nearest neighbour. Please contact Heather to find out more about this lively group

Active Travellers

No report this month

Archaeology

Nanette featured Israel in her talk this month describing up-to-the-minute discoveries. The first site is a series of underground rooms cut into the bedrock near Jerusalem's western wall thought to be 2000 years old. The second at En Esur is a very large [160 acre] ancient site possibly 9000 years old [Early Bronze Age] discovered when constructing a road in Northern Israel. This cosmopolitan and planned city was possibly occupied by 6000 inhabitants – a true Canaanite metropolis. At another site, a new discovery at Tel Lachish, in south-central Israel, includes an extremely rare inscription showcasing an early precursor of a Hebrew alphabet. It is thought that this is a 3,000-year-old Canaanite temple.

Art History

At our July meeting Sylvia gave a talk on landscape and environmental artists of the 1970s and 1980s. Artists of this movement fought against the commercialisation of fine art by making art works that couldn't be bought or sold. Rather than making paintings or sculptures, they began to modify landscapes in various ways - by creating earthworks or sculptural installations or simply by arranging materials found in nature. The artists discussed included Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson, Walter de Maria, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and Andy Goldsworthy. Some of these artists wanted to highlight human impacts on the environment while others aimed to make people see nature in new ways.

Art Potpourri

Linda based her fascinating presentation on the acclaimed book "Ten X Ten, Art at Te Papa" published in 2017. Ten curators chose 10 works each that appealed to them and there were no constraints on their selections. Of the hundred works in the book, Linda selected a black and white photograph of 3 children at the doorway of their home from Ans Westra's School Journal publication "Washday at the Pa". A museum dedicated to her work was opened in Wellington in 1986. One of her original photographs from the book sold for \$10,000. "Gorse Fire Out of Control", 1952, another black and white photograph taken by Gary Blackman showed a variety of expressions on the children's faces. Sarah Fenton's Kaka Beak watercolour was from an 1885 book, the first with coloured prints produced here. Sarah made 133 paintings of N Z flowers used in the book which was presented to Queen Victoria. A kawakawa beak necklace by Alan Preston, a founder of Fingers jewellery gallery and a naive work of the Messenger sister's pioneer homestead in Taranaki were also presented. The subjects all elicited lively discussion. Denise introduced the N Z born artist John Drawbridge. He designed 13 Stations of the Cross panels and also beautiful stained glass windows at The Home of Compassion chapel in Wellington. The French missionary Mother Aubert's crypt is sited there.

John Drawbridge and his wife, Tanya Ashken, sculptor and jeweller, will be themes for our August meeting.

Book Group

Once again we all talked about the books we had read over the past month. These were:

The Guardians by John Grisham; *Tell Tale* by Jeffrey Archer; *The Cemetery Man* by Bill Pronzini; *The Girl in the Glass Box* by James Grippando; *The Ghost Map* and *How We Got to Now* by Steven Johnson; *Whispers of Betrayal* by Michael Dobbs; *Remember Me* by Derek Hansen; *Memories in the Bone* and *Destinies Divided* by Mee-mee Phipps; *The Book of Dust* by Philip Pullman; *The Oath* by Klaus-Peter Wolf; *Bluebird, Bluebird* by Attica Locke; *Legion: the many lives of Stephen Leeds* by Brandon Sanderson; *Grief is the Thing With Feathers* by Max Porter; *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell; *The Wych Elm* by Tana French; *Little Darlings* by Melanie Golding; *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo; *Runaway and Extraordinary People* by Peter May; *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens; *Mophead: how your difference makes a difference* by Selina Tusitala Marsh; *Life as a Casketeer* by Francis and Kaiora Tipene and *Sylvia: the biography of Sylvia Ashton-Warner* by Lynley Hood

Books and Beyond

Non-fiction was the topic for the month. In her introduction Margaret briefly covered the development of non-fiction and its place in public libraries, the contribution in the late 1800's of Andrew Carnegie's free libraries, John Dewey's decimal classification system, and the ongoing impact of the digital revolution.

Each member then gave a brief presentation on a non-fiction title which had some special interest or significance for them. The titles presented covered a wide range of interests and themes from contemporary issues and personalities, travel, art and art history, biographies and war histories. Of particular poignancy were the war histories about NZ action in Italy, and British action in Nazi-occupied Norway, which two of our members' fathers had experienced during WWII.

A very unexpected outcome of this session was the realization for many of us that not only do we read far more non-fiction than we thought, but that the titles often have more significance in our lives than we have given them credit for.

Classical Music

No report this month.

Creative audio visual

No report this month

Creative Writing

No report this month

Current Affairs

No report this month.

Cycling



On a rare sunny day in July, 13 members of the Cycling Group met at a carpark in Millwater, and rode around the Orewa Estuary, taking a side trip around stormwater ponds, and back to Millwater, where we enjoyed good coffee. Because the ride wasn't very long, after refreshing our energy with coffee and cake, some of us decided to ride around the Estuary again!

The Estuary ride is a shared path, so walkers, skateboarders, and mums with buggies can be hazards to look out for. The loop is officially called Te Ara Tahuna and is an important heritage site, as for centuries it provided food for local people and safe anchorage for canoes. Ngati Whatua are the local iwi and there is a pa site not far from the cycleway. When we first began riding this loop, Millwater was just a plan on paper; now the route has changed a little and we are biking through suburbs all the way. It is still a beautiful area to ride around, and it changes according to the tide.

Film Appreciation

We viewed the first disc of *Gone with the Wind*, the epic film, released in 1939, that was one of the best known and most successful films of all time. It enjoyed a more-than-30-year reign as the all-time Hollywood box office champion, and it won eight Academy awards (in addition to two honorary awards). Based on the runaway best-selling 1936 novel *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell

The film, set against the backdrop of the American Civil War, chronicles the sunset of a civilisation now known as the Old South and the dire consequences of a conflict which laid to waste a land once so fertile and abundant. It is a poignant narrative of the racism which was at the root of the Civil War and the systemic subordination of African Americans at the hands of their oppressors. Over time, countless other films aimed to offer a more nuanced view on the civil war, racism and systemic oppression, but *Gone With The Wind* has always remained the definitive classic in this regard. The film stars Vivienne Leigh (*Scarlett O'Hara*), Clark Gable (*Rhett Butler*), Olivia de Havilland, Hattie McDaniel and Leslie Howard.

Français pour rire

Our July meeting started with answering Cecily's homework puzzle as to "Where in France did the Popes live" followed by discussions on the other sights in Avignon. Sheila told us about "La Belle Epoque" in France, basically from the end of the Franco-Prussian War to the start of WW1, and detailed items like the grand exposition of 1889 where the Hall of Lights and the Eiffel Tower were erected. She continued with the developments in Literature, Music, Science, Medicine and Engineering that occurred in this period. Gareth led us in French reading about a children's holiday in Brittany and with Fay we read about the possibility of people living on Mars.

Next month Penny will talk about boat-building in France and we will continue with our French readings and translations.

Inventors and Inventions

17 Members met in July to watch a Ted Talk video on nanomaterials and hear about the health, safety and environmental concerns these may pose in the future. We saw an interlude video from Ian Graham on the public's participation in an outdoor mythical French display in Salisbury and a non-sectarian bonfire celebration bordering Northern and Southern Ireland. Eugene Yoon gave us an interesting option for keeping car batteries charged during long periods of non-use.

Local History

The Local History Group will not be meeting in August. Our next meeting will be in September (14th.) when the topic to be studied will be Heritage Buildings throughout N.Z.

Mah Jong

No report this month.

Making History

No report this month.

Māori / Te Reo

This month our presentation was on Māori rock art. About 90% of currently recorded rock art is in the South Island, mainly where smooth surfaced outcrops of limestone occur, and the art was mainly painted or drawn. By comparison, North Island rock art was nearly all carved into the rock and not drawn on it. When the Europeans first arrived, little effort was made to record or preserve these works of art however in the 21st century, Maori rock art is regarded as a priceless relic of New Zealand's prehistory. At the meeting we welcomed Martin from U3A Takapuna who is the convenor of a Māori study group there. It was very interesting to hear about the Takapuna group and the topics they have researched.

Medical Science and History

Catherine presented on the topic of Immunology drugs being used for cancer. In the past we've had to rely on cut (surgery) burn (radiology) & poison (chemotherapy). But from 2010 we have seen the rise of immunotherapy drugs using our immune cells. We talked about B cells & T cells. Immunotherapy drugs can slow or halt the growth of cancer cells or help the immune system to destroy them. e.g. Keytruda. These are called Check Point Inhibitors. Even newer developments are the CAR-T drugs. (Chimeric antigen Receptors – T cells) These are individualized vaccines using the patient's own cancer cells & immune cells. So far these vaccines give long term protection. Not done in NZ yet but successful in the US.

Denise discussed The World Wildlife Fund scientific report "The Loss of Nature and Rise of Pandemics. Protecting Human and Planetary Health" outlines the impact human activities have significantly altered three-quarters of the land and two-thirds of the ocean so we are in the Anthropocene era. Humanity's impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity are linked with the spread of many zoonotic diseases. These are diseases which have spread from animals to humans. The World Health Organisation records over 200 such diseases and zoonoses of wildlife origin are one of the most significant threats to the health of the world's population. The current COVID-19 epidemic is causing untold human suffering, social upheaval and economic damage. It is one of a number of diseases described in this report. Many international organisations promote collaborative approaches to address the potential or active risks arising from the interface of human, animal and environmental health. Also "Can COVID-19 Induce Psychosis? How the Novel Coronavirus Could be Sparking a Neuropsychiatric Condition" is an article in the journal, Psychology Today. As with past pandemics such as the 1918 influenza, acute psychiatric symptoms may arise in some people. There are 3 possibilities that may induce these symptoms in 1 to 4% of people with the disease-the virus itself may cause the acute symptoms, the secondary effects of the virus symptoms or it may be the impact of social isolation on a person. As COVID-19 is a multi system disease, it affects blood coagulation and may penetrate parts of the brain. The writer considered that there were limited sample sizes and methodology but the information so far gives credence to the mind-body connection.

Modern History

Warwick gave a fascinating presentation on the history and his working time in Mongolia. Mongolia has a unique language, alphabet and culture. Its most famous son Genghis Khan is everywhere in statues, on coins. It became an independent country after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Warwick followed this with a quiz on New Zealand history which tested members' knowledge of their own country.

Music Appreciation and History

The July meeting was hosted by Shirley Jones where Graeme Jones gave a talk on the twentieth century American composers George Gershwin 1898-1937 and Leonard Bernstein 1918-1990, both of Russian-Jewish descent and both from middle class families with no musical background whatever. Gershwin a largely self taught pianist plugging music in what was Tin Pan Alley with a first big hit with Swanee sung by Al Jolson, then with Paul Whiteman who with his orchestra held a memorable concert in 1924, the theme to make a lady out of jazz, the result the Rhapsody in Blue. Then more show tunes, the opera Porgy and Bess before an early death from brain tumour. Bernstein, twenty years younger, had a classical education leading to famously conducting the world's great orchestras starting with the New York Philharmonic when he was just 25 and their first American born conductor. A great pianist too, able to play piano concertos and conduct the orchestra at the same time. But being multi talented he educated young people in music and wrote Broadway musicals including the great West Side Story. Two different composers who created some of the very best of modern American music.

Music - Mainly Classical

Our meeting this month was held at Alf and Greta's home where we were entertained by a documentary DVD of Franz Joseph Haydn, his music, and his life. Haydn spent much of his career as a court musician for the wealthy Esterházy family at their remote estate in Hungary. Until the later part of his life he was isolated from other composers and trends in music so that he was, as he put it, "forced to become original". Yet his music circulated widely, and for much of his career he was the most celebrated composer in Europe. He composed 183 compositions including symphonies, operas, quartets and was a friend and mentor of Mozart, and a tutor of Beethoven.

Puzzles Patterns & Paradoxes

We watched a recorded TV program about the Staffordshire Hoard from the 'Dark Ages', worth \$5 million, found by a metal detectorist in 2009 near Leicester in the Midlands of the U.K.. Since then many puzzles have been encountered: Why does its 5.1 kg of gold and 1.4 kg silver consist mainly of parts of weapons with a few Christian crosses, [no coins - no jewellery]? Where did the gold come from? Where did the beautiful red garnets come from? Who buried the treasure? Why this field? The Roman Road, Watling Street is a boundary of the field which is on a hill makes the site accessible and possibly easy to find to retrieve the items. Byzantine coins, for example, are believed to be a primary source for the gold found in the items, and the garnets were probably recycled from Roman objects, with some sourced in India, Sri Lanka and Bohemia. Many puzzles are still to be solved. Ian introduced us to mathsjam.com and to Eddie Woo and his Wootube maths lessons.

Renaissance

Bess Reynolds gave a talk on Henry VIII's six wives. She began with some general background on the young Henry and how he was groomed for the church and his elder brother Arthur for the throne. Thus when the heir died Henry, the spare, ascended the throne. We then watched a video that provided details of his six wives, two of whom he executed. At the end of the presentation of each wife we had a lively discussion on their lives and their fate.

Travel

No report this month

Ukulele

New online Meeting times Zoom on line 1st & 3rd Wednesday 1pm, Members home 2nd & 4th Wednesday 1pm

The new times mean we can meet once a week and the day and times don't clash with other groups.

With a catalogue of 3000 Ukulele charts and a growing list of play along backing tracks with lyrics, chording and original singers, there are enough resources for beginners and established players to easily fit in and progress.

The learning resources have been gathered and are on www.ukulele.u3a.nz The play alongs are not on the website, but on a list with web links and are updated to members after each session. This year from lockdown I have gathered titles starting with the letter "A". This month's songs played have had titles starting with the letter "D". eg Deliah, Dance the Night away, Do Rei Me, Dream Lover, Dream Baby, Down on the Corner <https://youtu.be/hMChWwuRkBk> This last one's link is an example. The purpose of the group is to have fun and enjoy the great music we relate to. New Members welcome even those who just want to lead in singing.

Walking

Hobsonville Point

Meet at 9.45am at the Catalina Cafe on Buckley Avenue, Hobsonville Point for a walk around the Coastal Walkway, about one and a half hours.

Browns Bay

Meet at 9.45 by the kindergarten in Woodlands Cr.
We will walk in the Sherwood Park area.