

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Distinguished Professor. Paul Spoonley.

**Title:** The “New” New Zealand: A Super Diverse Auckland



**Distinguished Professor Paul Spoonley** is the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Massey University. He has been involved in some major research projects on immigration and diversity in New Zealand, including Capturing the Diversity Dividend of Aotearoa New Zealand (2014-2020). He is the author or editor of 27 books ranging from political extremism to the nature of work, and he was Ranginui Walker’s biographer (Mata Toa, Penguin). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Auckland War Memorial Museum. He was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California Berkeley.

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Hello to all U3A members,

Stay calm; this is not a voice from another hemisphere! To keep the dialogue going I wrote this report before flying away; so carry on and enjoy your cuppa while reading the newsletter.

Marketing for new members was one of the main discussion points for the Working Party. New members mean growth, new energy and ideas, or as stated in the second aim last month, “the new horizons to be discovered” when they share their more recent experiences and viewpoints. Above all new members provide continuity and succession.

It is through the leadership, learning and sharing that takes place in our Special Interest Groups that the third aim “to celebrate the capabilities and potential of older people and their value to society” takes place. Our member’s life experience spans from mid-sixties through to congrats from HRH to “not out.” I would like to encourage every Interest Group to make time to consider whether they are missing out on either some of the stories our members could share or valuable learning opportunities because “we’ve done that before” or “this is the way we always do it”. All we have to do is open our hearts and curious minds to be true life-long learners.

Early this year I read an obituary of a founding member, Mary Steibel. Mary’s unique early life and recorded stories of the early colonisation in Rhodesia and South Africa had been shared in a general meeting and in various study groups. Sadly though, this story appears not to have been recorded at U3A Browns Bay. I know that there are many other unique stories and experiences in our past and present membership, some are being heard and shared while others are not. So please start talking. What are we missing out? In August and September we will start to involve all members in the discussion; to get your thoughts and ideas and to share ours.

Reminders:

If your emergency contact person is not listed you can go to the front desk at our meeting and let them know.

Speakers: If you have heard or know of a speaker who would be suitable send Sherryl an email.

On 31st August the Auckland U3A Network holds its annual event at St Chads Auditorium, Meadowbank. Brochures are available at the front desk if you are interested in attending you can register on-line.

Please talk to Roger, our editor, if you are prepared to join the committee and take on the duty of either Hall Manager or as the Newsletter Editor. Training and support will be given for both positions.

An Auditor is also needed for our End of year Accounts. Do you have a family member who is an accountant and is prepared to audit our professionally prepared accounts?

Glen Plaistowe

**U3A BROWNS BAY NEWS**

Gary Clark, (our webmaster), has assembled a feature about a trip taken by Wakatane U3A, which can be viewed at <https://www.u3a.nz/news.htm>  
 This is a sub page of : [www.u3a.nz](http://www.u3a.nz).

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWS**

**Active Travellers**

**Ancient Civilizations**

The subject of the June meeting was the ancient writers. Homer and Virgil. They both composed epic poems set around the time of, and following on from, the Trojan War. Homer is the name ascribed by the ancient Greeks to the legendary author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, central works of ancient Greek literature. It is believed the poems were composed around the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century BC but not written down until the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The ancient Roman poet, Virgil, wrote the epic poem, the *Aeneid*, between 29-19 BC. It is considered one of the most important poems in the history of western literature.

## **Archaeology**

Evelyn shared a Powerpoint presentation on the use of LIDAR in archaeology. This new technology builds on other advances in science and allows researchers to use lasers, GPS and computer technology to "see" things not visible to the naked eye. This allows us to find forgotten cities such as the huge city now discovered around the World Heritage site of Ankor Wat in Cambodia, the work by the volunteer verderers in the New Forest where they are able to establish new prehistoric sites and match these new discoveries with the ancient maps and documents in the historic records of Hampshire. We also looked at the huge Mayan city complex in Guatemala which has lain hidden under the jungle for almost 2000 years and which was, at the time, the largest city system in the Northern Hemisphere!

## **Art History**

Ever noticed the anchor stone sculpture in Queen Street or the one outside the Auckland Law Court? Well these are the work of Fred Graham as Fay told us in her presentation. Recently he was created a NZ icon of the Arts. Fred, born to a Maori Family at Horahora on the Waikato River 90years ago, he was a teacher of Art and since 1990 a full time sculptor and now living and working in Waiuku and still doing commissions. We have many diverse presentations in our Group e.g. Forgers of Art, Henry Moore, Spanish Galleries, Rodin, Raphael etc. come and join our lively discussions and learn of Artists you don't know about like I have.

## **Art Pot Pourri**

The great popularity of Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) & her outstanding position in American art are attributed to her painting & her remarkable personality - as a woman who established for herself an independent & legendary life in the wilds of New Mexico. Her artistic career spanned over 50 years, from American modernism to the abstract tendencies of the 50s & 60s. The fame of her pictures, which resonate with expressive force of colour & encoded sensuality, has travelled the world. Her subjects; above all magnified flowers and her New Mexico landscapes reflect her intimacy with nature.

## **Book Group**

Everyone talked about books they had read. These included: *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* (Mary Ann Schaffer and Annie Barrows); *The Wife Between Us* (Greer Hendricks and Sarah Pekkanen); *Harry Price: the psychic detective* (Richard Morris); *Secret Knowledge: rediscovering the lost techniques of old masters* (David Hockney); *The Necessary Angel* (C K Stead); *The Only Story* (Julian Barnes); *Educated* (Tara Westover); *After Alexander: the legacy of a son* (Jan Pryor); *Life, Loss, Love* (Lorraine Downes); *Bad Dreams and Other Stories* (Tessa Hadley); *Spanish Steps: one man and his ass on the Pilgrim Way to Santiago* (Tim Moore); *South of Broad* (Pat Conroy); *Panic Room* (Robert Goddard); *Brilliance and The Amateurs* (Marcus Sakey); *Hangman* (Jack Heath); *Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk* (Kathleen Rooney); *Blood and Lemonade* (Joe R Lansdale); *He Said / She Said* (Erin Kelly); *They Came to Baghdad* (Agatha Christie); *Don't Let Go* (Harlan Coben); *Two Kinds of Truth* (Michael Connelly) and *Hellbent* (Gregg Hurwitz).

## **Classical Music**

This week we viewed a DVD on Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). He was a neurotic and deeply sensitive man. His

life was often painful, but through the pain shone a genius that created some of the most beautiful of all Romantic melodies. Although widely known for ballet suites he also wrote 100 songs and 6 symphonies and religious music. We also listened to a piano concerto, movements from two symphonies, a short extract from the Nutcracker suite followed by the 1812 overture. An interesting morning devoted to Tchaikovsky. New members always welcome.

## **Creative Audio-Visual**

To help members improve their presentations and give them ideas for future shows we are putting together a critique process whereby we all have the opportunity to comment on each others' work in a structured way.. From these comments and ideas we can learn techniques that could improve our future shows. We looked at a show that Geoff had put together for the upcoming Browns Bay Community Project display in the Leisure Centre. Photographs of the activities of many of our Special Interest Groups will give viewers a good overview of the many and varied interests U3A offers.

## **Creative Writing**

### **Current Affairs**

Following a 10 question brain stimulator the group entered into a vigorous discussion about the effect of the recent meeting between Donald Trump and President Kim. General feeling was that positive results would take some time to appear. Further discussion followed on how to break the crime cycle in our society starting as it often does with young children and teenagers. Also discussed were pros and cons on the three strikes law and whether new prisons or new houses were more important. Local transport issues and the Takapuna car park development were discussed further.

### **Cycling**

The intrepid U3A BB cycle group, which has never cancelled an outing, gathered at the Devonport Naval Museum and set off on their planned circuit up the Narrow Neck/Takapuna Coast across to the excellent cycleways leading down to Devonport through green parks, mangrove swamps with beautiful views of the city. Unfortunately fierce, freezing precipitation coupled with tornado winds forced a hasty retreat to the warm embrace of the museum cafe with its life supporting hot chocolate, nibbles and an hour of vigorous wide ranging conversations. Led by Maureen Whineray, distance travelled 5 km! For July, we are looking at Northcote Point.

### **Exploring Art for Fun**

Exploring Art for Fun met at the home of Greta and Alf Fisher to explore the world of art and the garden - we watched a fascinating video of the effect of gardening on a number of famous expressionists with particular reference to Monet. Monet was an enthusiastic gardener and built his garden as a work of art which he interpreted in his paintings. His establishment of a water garden and importation of special water lilies resulted in his famous paintings of the beautiful plants. The session was also enjoyed by guests from the Potpourri group. Thank you Greta and Alf, for a fascinating morning.

### **Film Appreciation**

No report this issue

## **Français pour rire**

Jasmine spoke about the Chateau of Fontainebleau near Paris. The first reference to the Chateau dates back to the 12th century. Since then all the kings of France have lived there and have continuously enlarged and embellished it. It is a unique example of a royal residence, loved and cherished for over eight centuries. It is here that the Royal Court entertained the body of new ideas that became known as the Renaissance and where Napoleon I, on his abdication, descended the now famous horse-shoe staircase (Escalier en Fer- à-cheval) to say good-bye to his old guard who had been with him since his first campaign. During the 1820s and 1830s the Forest, which surrounds the palace, became the inspiration for painters to transform the local villages into artists' colonies and the forest into an open-air studio. In the 1860's Monet, Sisley, and Renoir discovered Fontainebleau, laying the foundations for the light-filled depictions that would bring them fame as the Impressionists.

**History of Europe** - No report this issue

## **Inventors & Inventions**

A step back in time reminded us how communication was accomplished not so long ago. Pigeons, Ponies and hand delivered messages were all that could be used before the Morse Code was developed. Samuel Morse invented it to allow the easy transmission of messages rapidly using his newly invented electric telegraph in the early to mid 1800's. In 1825 Morse, who was an accomplished artist, was on a commission in Washington 350 miles away, when he learned of his wife's illness and death well after she died. That was the impetus he needed to find a speedy form of contact. Terry then provided us with a fascinating video summarising and advising of China's astounding progress to become the second largest economy in the world and it is still advancing at an amazing rate.

## **Literature**

Heather H spoke about the craft of writing and the "pictures in the mind" that a well crafted book creates. She read from *The Shipping News* by E. Annie Proulx, using many examples of character development, and descriptions of settings. She played down the plot as characters and settings are so strong in this book. Examples include "a bitch in high heels" "he smelled submission in Quoye, guessed he was butter of fair spreading consistency" The setting of initially New York and later Newfoundland, provides many examples of illustrative description "the wind sharpening itself on the corner of the building" "The house was garlanded with wind" Discussion followed about author's crafting their writing to draw pictures in the mind. This seemed to encourage members to re-read the book or start it for the first time.

**Local History** \_ No report this issue

## **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. Great brain exercise.

## **Making History**

**CEMENT-** Around 300 AD the Romans developed cement and concrete using slaked lime and pozzolana (volcanic ash) similar to the kinds used today. The durability was such that some of their roads, buildings and bridges still

exist today. This art was lost with the fall of the Roman Empire in the AD 400's In 1756 John Smeeton, a British engineer, reinvented cement. Joseph Aspidin, a British bricklayer, invented Portland Cement in 1824, then Joseph Monier a French gardener developed reinforced concrete around 1850. The Portland Cement Association was formed in Chicago in 1916. In 1927, Eugene Freyssinet, a French engineer, developed prestressed concrete. Today China produces half the world total of cement.

## **Medical Science and History**

New Scientist headlines headed 'Frozen placentas could be the ticket to a long and healthy life' led Maureen to enquire into the various types of stem cells and methods of harvesting their potential in extending life, curing certain diseases such as Parkinson's, autoimmune diseases, inflammatory bowel disease and boosting the stem cells presently in our bodies etc to recharge the regenerative engine in your body. Unfortunately you will find many examples of companies, particularly in the USA, giving false hope in exchange for mega dollars. We finished with a YouTube clip of the 2 Scientists awarded the Nobel prize in this field.

## **Modern History**

Lynne's presentation on the British Raj revolved around the book by Shashi Tharoor. This resulted in the most lively discussion by members for some time. Shashi's argument was that that British rule had been disastrous for India .A number of members were of the view that his argument was too one sided and did not give credit to the British such as helping to create the largest democracy in the world whilst acknowledging the inequities of colonialism. This was followed by the Michael Wood dvd, *The Story of India* which gave brickbats and credit to the British rule of India.

## **Music Appreciation and History**

The theme this month was Rachmaninoff. We first enjoyed listening to the well-known Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini Op43. Then we watched the DVD 'Crossing Rachmaninoff' which is a very interesting and accessible description of the musical journey of the very talented Flavio Vilani - an Italian pianist who came to study technique and expression at Auckland University at the age of 26 years after his Italian teacher said he needed to make a choice about his musical path. We followed his practice and preparation for playing Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto with an Italian orchestra -working through his doubts about his ability and his questioning of his motivations as he built his courage and determination. This would be his first experience of playing with an orchestra .After only two days rehearsal with the orchestra he played the Concerto beautifully, enjoying the feeling of 'conversation' with the conductor and orchestra.

## **Music**

Our June meeting at John and Margaret's home featured the Baroque composer Antonia Vivaldi (1675-1741). Margaret presented a short biography of Vivaldi's life. He composed many compositions which were rediscovered in a Monastery in 1926. "The Four Seasons" was probably inspired by the countryside around Mantua near Verona. We then viewed a DVD called "The Four Seasons". This gave us a representation of Vivaldi's music in Japan at Springtime, the heat of Australia at Summertime, Autumn in New York and Winter in Lapland, and celebrated the different cultures and their seasons.

## **Puzzles, Patterns and Paradoxes**

No report this issue

### **Renaissance**

Thelma gave a history of Aphra Behn 1640-1689, from the Restoration period, later than Renaissance, but an important woman to learn about. She was the first English woman to earn her living by writing. She wrote and staged 19 plays, also wrote poetry and did translations. She exposed the value of women in her writing, known as the 1st feminist and is buried in Westminster Abbey. Jan spoke about Siena and its Piazza (town square), The Palazzo Pubblico (the Town Hall) and some of its wonderful frescoes. They are The Allegory of Good Government, The Effects of Good Government and The Effects of Bad Government, painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. These were remarkable works for the time, because they had a secular not religious theme. Then we watched a YouTube clip talking us through each painting.

### **Travel**

At the May meeting Bernard talked about his trip across the Tasman on the Queen Mary. This was a last minute cheaper booking as he is not fond of air travel so much now! The weather allowed the ship to visit the three sounds at the bottom of the West Coast. The second part of his journey took us to the Eastern part of Canada, where he spent time exploring Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec then cruising down the St Lawrence River to New York.

### **Walking**

**Friday** ~ Beach Haven. Meet at Beach Haven Community House carpark, 130 Beach Haven Road, at 9.45am. This later start time should make it easier to get there on time. The walk will be through parkland, bush tracks and on some pavement and will take about one and a half hours. Coffee nearby.

**Friday** ~ Hobsonville Point Coastal Walkway Meet at 9.45 am at the Catalina Café Information Centre on Hastings Street, Hobsonville Point, or carpool from near the Bowling Club, Woodlands Crescent, Browns Bay at 9am. The walk will take us round the completed parts of the coastal walkway, and past the Ferry Wharf. Mostly flat and paved or wooden walkway. About one and a half hours. Coffee afterwards at Catalina Café. Queries: