



General Meeting for Members: May 5th 2026

10:00 - 12:00am: OUTRAM HALL,

478 Beach Road Murrays Bay

SPEAKER FOR MAY 2026



Larry Robbins, a former commander and Hydrographer in the Royal New Zealand Navy, served in the navy for 26 years. His career included command of HMNZS *Monowai* surveying around New Zealand and in the Pacific. In 1994 he commanded the ship during New Zealand's largest search and rescue operation – an operation that he told us about a couple of years ago.

On retiring from the navy, he became Chief Executive of the New Zealand National Maritime Museum for 7 years. Since retiring from that role he has continued to contribute widely to the maritime sector through various charitable and professional roles including serving at sea and ashore with Mercy Ships and in various areas of seafarers welfare work. A keen collector of antique charts, Larry has a particular interest in Captain Cook and his surveys of New Zealand and the Pacific. His 1995 charting work removed from modern nautical charts the last remnants of surveys directly attributed to Cook's original work—or did it? In his presentation **James Cook SNLR**, Larry revisits this fascinating chapter in our maritime history. Larry is a JP and lives in Rothesay Bay with his wife Jane.

THE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to the May edition of our u3abb newsletter. With the world in greater chaos than ever, it's so good that we have such a great group to get involved with. And that's the difference with the u3a movement – we get involved. I guess some of you have heard this definition of involvement versus commitment – 'A pig and a chicken were abandoned on a desert island with no food. The chicken said to the pig "I will lay us an egg – that's commitment". The pig said "I will provide some bacon – that's involvement".'

So lets stay involved with our groups to the benefit of us all. Last month I said I would add into this newsletter, the Top Tips for Brain Health from the Neurological Foundation's last commemorative meeting held at Eden Park. 'It seems that only 30% of physical aging is written in our genes – the rest is up to us. Take charge of your brain health by following these tips'.

Exercise regularly. Choose what you love so you're more likely to keep doing it.	Get good sleep. Shut-eye is your brain's best friend.
Feed your brain with fruits, vegies, lean proteins, whole grains, nuts, seeds, healthy fats and water.	Manage your stress. Getting away from screens and out into nature can calm your brain.
Stay social. Interacting with others is brilliant for your brain.	Get treatment for any health issues, including hearing loss and gum disease.
Mind your numbers; weight, cholesterol, blood glucose and blood pressure.	Stay curious and challenge yourself to learn something new. Your brain will love you for it.

Val Lloyd

Chairperson

IMPORTANT: In November this year at the AGM FIVE of our eleven committee members will be resigning. That leaves a very large hole in the committee numbers and if the u3abb is to survive we really need five or more people to offer their services. The roles to be vacated are CHAIRPERSON, SIG CONVENOR, SPEAKER MANAGER, HALL MANAGER and NEWSLETTER EDITOR. Please please looks around you and consider if you or anyone around you could step up otherwise there may not be any speakers for next year.

NEWS FROM OUR RECENT COMMITTEE MEETING

If you change your address please either update the information on our website or let a member of the committee know.

Can you help us find exciting entertainment for our Christmas meeting? If you know of such a person/group please let anyone on the committee know!

May 31st is your last day to pay 2026 U3ABB fees, if you have not paid already.

- If you know anyone who is interested in joining our U3A, please pass their names onto [Information Officer: Anne Gough \(027 3210729\)](#).
- If the prospective member wishes to complete the forms electronically, encourage them to go to our official website: <http://www.u3abb.nz>.
- **Are you aware of a member's changed circumstances?** If so please let your SIG convenor or a member of the committee know so that we can acknowledge and help if possible.
- **The close off for the June newsletter is May 28th 2026.**

Please send your SIG reports to u3abbnewsletter@gmail.com

Our official U3ABB Website: <http://www.u3abb.nz>

- Any further amendments to times or convenors to Ngaral please so we can update the next newsletter.
- For list of convenors and contact numbers, see the SIG section of the newsletter.
- This information is the latest recorded by our Convenor Co-ordinator Ngaral Hogan as at April 2026.

DATE	SIG PRESENTATION	HALL SEATING	MORNING TEA
5th May	Current Affairs	CVM	Historic Buildings
2nd June	Cycling	International Studies	Art Potpourri

CONTACTS: U3A Roles and their back-up

Chairperson	Val Lloyd 763662	021	B/U Barry Brennan 027 4036380	Newsletter Editor	Lucy Casey 021 778555	B/U Val Lloyd 021 763662
Secretary	Pauline Alsweller 2779395	027	B/U Heather Howarth 022 3100384	Publicity	Fay Weatherly (ex officio) 02102537317	B/U Lucy Casey 021 778555
Treasurer	Barry Brennan 4036380	027	B/U Heather Howard. 021941664	SIG Convenor	Ngaral Hogan 021 379746	B/U Diane Muller. 0210485178
Hall Managers	Heather Howarth 3100384	022	B/U Coleen Carmichael 094795543	Speaker Co- ordinator	Roger Warner 09 4783072	
Information Officer	Anne Gough 3210729	027	B/U Coleen Carmichael 094795543	Website	Lucy Casey 021 778555	B/U Jane Robbins B/U Val Lloyd
Committee members	Lyn Mc Alister	021611366	Systems Manager (ex-officio)		John Ewen	B/U Jane Robbins B/U Val Lloyd B/U Lucy Casey
WEBSITE	u3abb.nz		NEWSLETTER: u3abbnewsletter@gmail.com		EMAILS: general information: u3abbinfo@gmail.com	
ADDRESS:	U3A % 52/17 Georgia Tce, Albany 0632		BANK A/C NUMBER 12 3059 0424 848 00		NEW INQUIRIES: Anne Gough 027 3210729	

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE can the convenor of the group designated for 'Hall Seating' & 'Morning Tea' remind each member of their group that they are needed for this duty before and after the meeting.

SIG GROUP MEETING CALENDAR

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
Mon am Mon pm			10:00 Archaeology 13:30 Genealogy	
Tues am Tues pm	10:00 Main Meeting	13:30 Historic Buildings	10:00 Early NZ History 13:00 Inventions & Discoveries 14:00 Art Potpourri	10:00 Active Travellers 13:00 Committee Meeting
Wed am Wed pm	10:00 Cycling	10:00 Cycling Backup	10:00 Modern History 12:00 Foodies	
Thurs am Thurs pm	10:00 Med Science & History 13:30 Creating Visual Memories (CVM)	10:00 Current Affairs 13:00 International studies 13:15 Art History	10:00 World Wars 1 & 2	10:00 Puzzle Group
Fri am Fri pm	10:00 Mahjong 13:00 Book Group	10:00 Mahjong 13:00 Books & Beyond	10:00 Mahjong 10:00 Film Appreciation	10:00 Mahjong 10:00 Renaissance

Book review – ‘In With Both Feet - A Passport Full Of Stories’,

An autobiography by John Reynolds, Starblaze Publications, 2025

Throughout my working life I have written a lot of business reviews and reports, including when I worked for the government, and I pride myself on recognising excellence in writing. For that reason I have raced to my computer to share my delight in reading John’s latest book.

‘Its about him’ because that’s what an autobiography is, and having known a little of John since belonging to u3abb, I now feel that he is a friend. His warmth and love of life and people shines through in every chapter. We learn about his early life, and he is indeed an Aucklander, being born and raised in Takapuna.

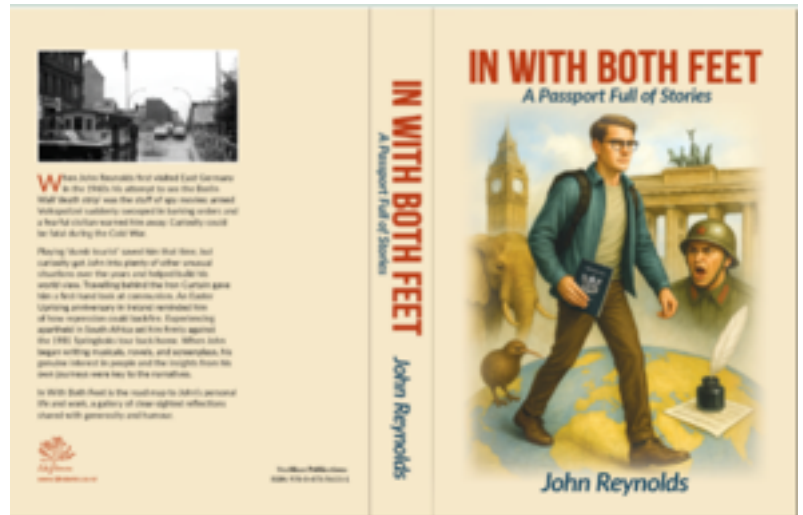
We learn about his academic success or lack of it, and how proud I was to read of his progress throughout his life, to end up as a Doctor of Philosophy. Is there more benefit in life to follow a narrow track and move from school, to university, to working life and experience? Or is it better to leave school, experience life, become a teacher, experience more life, go to university, lecture at tertiary level, then undertake a Doctorate. And all the time with a focus on writing and producing films and documentaries and later, novels. Or is this just the path that some people take, and both concepts suit different lives?

For a reader of an autobiography however, John’s life, full of adventures, places travelled to and people that he met along the way, with his wry way of commenting on their lives and beliefs, makes for an intriguing read. He hasn’t hesitated to take opportunities to advance his love of film and writing, which took him to the UK, Canada and back to New Zealand again, with many many other trips in between. The places visited are described simply, yet allowing the reader to mentally visualise the people and places – much like how John has made his films and plays. As he says, ‘film making is the art of deception’, so in his book he leads readers into the life he was experiencing through the years.

His love and respect for his friends and particularly his family are an integral part of this autobiography, and I would think they are all the better for having him in their lives.

John has, to my mind, avoided an annoying trend in a lot of autobiographies I have read, of including in the second to last chapter, details of all the famous people met. Instead, he writes about how he has met, or almost met, some well-known people in a way that includes the reader in the narration. Well done John for such an interesting life lived so far, and allowing us to also enjoy the ride. And I forgive you for a couple of comments about a relation of mine, that are not too flattering.

I recommend this autobiography to readers, and maybe encourage others to start one of their own.



Val Lloyd

SIG REPORTS

Active Travellers - 4th Tuesday 10:00

Convenor: Lucy Casey 021778555



We were taken on a camper van ride from Perth to Broome, Western Australia, which Lucy & her friend Marcia did last year. Driving 4200 kms with lots of stops on the way. There were stromatolites in Lake Thesis, Larger than life pinnacles in Nambung National Park. Three days in Kalbarri where they visited Natures window, Z bend and an amazing cantilevered bridge 100 meters above the Murchison River - each bringing the



beautiful colours of Australia - blue skies, red earth, blond grasses and green trees. The Murchison River gorge is home to the Nanda people who still often camp by the river. The whole area is now back in the hands of the Nanda people despite many of them being imprisoned on Rottnest island for several years for spearing a sheep! there is a resurgence of flat backed rock wallabies around the Z bend area of the Murchison River thanks to the work of dedicated rangers and locals.



We viewed a diagram depicting the development of stromatolites in both Lake Thesis and Hamelin Pools, Sharks Bay. Shell Beach, a unique natural wonder located in the Sharks Bay World Heritage Area. It is one of the few places on Earth where trillions of tiny white shells, rather than sand, form a beach stretching over 70 kilometres, with layers reaching up to 10 meters deep. These layers compound over years and can be cut into blocks for building.



A visit to Monkey Mia was a highlight with the bottlenose dolphins coming close to shore each day and being fed by the specially trained Rangers from the department of Conservation. On the way from Monkey Mia, a daddy Emu and 8 babies were having a swim in the sea - they are strong swimmers!



As they travelled northwards it was a surprise to learn how very involved the Cape area and Exmouth were with WW2. It was where the USA set up refuelling centres for their planes and boats. Lastly, was a day tour up the Dampier peninsula to visit the Cygnet Bay Pearl farm and some Aboriginal Communities. The Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm uses 'Sea Legs' to harvest their pearls - the Sea Legs boats are made here in Albany Auckland! We did 'birth' a beautiful pearl which sadly was stolen from our camper van two days later while we were asleep! A sad end to a wonderful 80th birthday trip for Marcia!

Archaeology - 3rd Monday 10:00

Convenor: Evelyn Ross: 027 4242147

He wasn't first!



While we all learned that 1492 was the first time Europeans reached North America it has now been proven that by the year 1021 a group of Norse had set up a settlement on the island of Newfoundland. While the story of Vinland had been mentioned in the sagas, it was not until the 1960s that a Norwegian husband and wife team Anne and Helge Ingstad found the site At L'Anse Aux Meadows. While this was not a permanent settlement. the houses uncovered

were of Norse design, and most importantly a simple forge was found and a number of nails made there. Dating of the site was proven by wood which had been felled in the year 1021. It seems that the main purpose of the site was boat repair and collection of timber and other resources, There was no cemetery, and it seems that eventually the Norse decided to abandon the area and return to their base in Greenland. All the same they were first!



Art History - 2nd Thursday 13:15

Convenors: Sylvia Dixon 0221959881 & Thelma Phillips 0274 05470



Our April presentation was on Grinling Gibbons (1648 – 1721), Britain's most celebrated wood carver. His decorative carvings were very popular in his day and transformed the interiors of the nation's greatest palaces, churches and country houses, including Kensington Palace, Hampton Court Palace, and St Paul's Cathedral. Many examples of his work are still intact 300 years later and available for the public to see. We marvelled at the delicate detail in his carvings of garlands of fruit, flowers, birds, cherubs and musical instruments. He was rightly called the 'Michelangelo of Woodcarving.'



Art Potpourri - 3rd Tuesday 14:00

Convenors: Nanette Randall 094738499 & Claire McNaull 094731151

At the April meeting we looked at Portmeirion pottery and the role that Susan Williams-Ellis played in the success of this pottery tableware company based in Stoke-on-Trent in England. Susan was born in 1918, the daughter of Sir Clough

Williams-Ellis, the architect and creator of Portmeirion Village in North Wales. Susan and her husband Evan Cooper-Willis transformed two potteries into a world known company, Portmeirion Potteries Ltd, that went on to purchase Royal Worcester, Spode and Nambe brands. Susan is best known for designing the



Botanic Garden range of ceramics for everyday use. They are decorated with a variety of floral illustrations adapted from Thomas Green's book - Universal Herbal, Or, Botanical, Medical and Agricultural Dictionary (1918). She received an honorary fellowship from University of Arts, London in 2005.

We also watched two short videos 1) Portmeirion V&A and 2) Portmeirion Group by The Telegraph Business Group Club.



Book Group - 1st Friday 13:00

Convenors: Monette Ewen 275666217 & John Ewen 0274993528

Books and Beyond - 2nd Friday 13:00

Convenors: Glenys Plaistowe 027 5412241

'Any title related to a South American country' was our challenge for April resulting in a wide range of genres for discussion. Short stories, accounts of political figures, travel diaries, modern fiction (often a bit mystical) and many in translation certainly pushed us 'Beyond' our comfort zones.

Titles for May - our own reading, and **June** - a book written by a journalist.

April's booklist: **Palmares** by Gay I Jones; **Mouthful of birds** by Samantha Schwebelin; **Ben Canto** by Ann Patchet; **Groomoko** by Aphra Behn; **Junkie Buddha** by Diane Esguerra; **The Motorcycle Diaries** by Ernesto Che Guevara; **My name is Emilia des Valles** by Isabelle Allende; **Eva Peron** by Alicia Orteiz; **Family Album - short stories** by Gabriela Aleman; **Socialist Dreams and Beauty Queens** by Jamie Maslin; **In Venezuela** by Michael Palin; **The Seamstress** by Frances de Pontes Pebbles; **In Patagonia** by Bruce Chatwin; **Turn right at Machu Pichu** by Mark Adams; **One hundred years of solitude** by Gabriel Garcia Marquez; **The woman in red** by Dianna Giovinazzo



Creating Visual Memories - 1st Thursday 13:30

Convenor: Fay Weatherly 02102537317

Our April meeting was scheduled for a photo-shoot at the Sculptureum at Matakana. Saving our cash, we changed our venue to K Rd. Catching the 866 bus from Albany Station proved to be an efficient and cost free way to get there, the beginning of our learning experiences for the day. Before we did this, none of us had heard of the 866 bus or had any idea where it went. We were also excited to have the whole group there to enjoy the sun (lasting all day) and coffee at "Besties" in St Kevin's Arcade. We had plenty of photo opportunities in this historic street. At the Khyber Pass end, we found the old graveyard complete with the grave of Governor Hobson. Pigeon Park on the corner still has Greer Twiss' sculpture, "Karangahape Rocks" in prominent place. The buildings which used to house Rendels and George Courts have been repurposed into shops [a bit seedy] and apartments. In exploring the state of the Mercury theatre, we discovered one of the new stations for the underground railway - this one opens in October. Back to St Kevin's

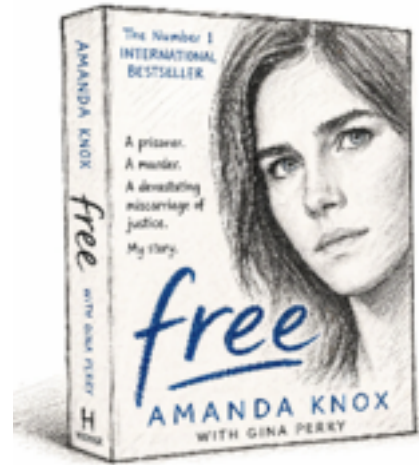


Arcade for a look at Myers Park just down the hill, followed by lunch and another efficient trip home. Now we just have to each create an Audio Visual Presentation using our photos. Shouldn't be too hard.

Current Affairs - 2nd Thursday 10:00

Convenors: Pauline Alsweiler 027 2779395 (temporary convenor)

Heather ran the quiz and gave us lots of interesting information while going through the answers. Stuart then spoke to the group about Amanda Knox's book "Free". Amanda Knox was a young American student who travelled to Italy in 2007 to study. She was accused of killing an English girl and was convicted and sent to prison for 26 years. She appealed her conviction and was acquitted. The police appealed her acquittal and her acquittal was overturned. She was retried and reconvicted. She appealed again and in 2015 Italy's highest court acquitted her again. She returned to America but found great difficulty in re-establishing herself because of her earlier conviction and media pressure. She suffered badly from loneliness while in prison in Italy and on returning home. The group discussed loneliness and the negative effects of media exposure. After the tea break, Jane led a discussion on AI and the concerns we have about it.



Cycling - 1st Wednesday B/U 2nd Wednesday

Convenor: Piers Hamid 027 4439764



Our March 26th ride organised by the Dysons was well attended by 10 or so riders. It was kept local to avoid great petrol expenses and the route ran from the Glenfield end of Upper Harbour Drive over the Hobsonville Bridge down to Hobsonville Point. We explored the area which continues to develop to a high standard with many hundreds of modern households. Convenient cafes, a regular market day and ferry transport to the CBD round off what is a very desirable residential area. Coffee and many cakes were consumed at the Catalina Café – thoroughly enjoyable!

Early NZ History - 3rd Tuesday 10:00

Convenor: Glenys Plaistowe 0275412241

Waimārama, a seaside village in Hastings District, Hawke's Bay is a popular surf beach, suitable for surfers of all levels. The iwi of the local Marae honour their connections to the Takitimu canoe that arrived in the late 1300's. Motu-o-Kura or

Bare Island is located just off the coast and is a popular spot for fishing and diving. The population of 240 residents swell to thousands in the summer season. Rewi Manga Maniapoto (1807–1894) was a Ngāti Maniapoto chief who led Kīngitanga forces to repeated stands against the NZ government Invasion of the Waikato during the NZ Wars. He had been educated by the Wesleyan missionaries and had encouraged his tribe to adopt European style farming with the planting of wheat, the establishment of several flour mills, and the mass planting of fruit trees. During the 1850s he became influenced by Māori who wanted greater autonomy and sided with those Māori who withheld their land from sale. Rewi went to Taranaki and took part in the fighting against the government. In July 1863, Grey ordered the invasion of the Kingite territory. Maniapoto fought 1863-64 and made a final stand at Orakau in 1864. Surrounded by the government forces and with limited supplies of food and water, they were invited to surrender or at least let out the woman and children. The Kingites replied with the famous words "Ka whawhai tonud mātou, Ake! Ake! Ake!" (We will fight on for ever, for ever, for ever.)



Film Appreciation - 3rd Friday 10:00

Convenor: John Reynolds - 0212533203



Our group thoroughly enjoyed the classic movie *On Golden Pond* that starred Henry Fonda, his daughter Jane Fonda and Katherine Hepburn. It is a coming-of-age drama, more character driven than plot driven. Beautifully photographed and brilliantly acted it is based on the storyline in which curmudgeon Norman (Henry Fonda) is estranged from his daughter Chelsea (Jane Fonda). Nevertheless, at their Golden Pond house, he and his wife (Katherine Hepburn) agree to look after Billy, the son of Chelsea's new boyfriend, and a most unexpected relationship blooms.

Our group tends to view older classics such as this that invariably display high class acting, scripting, camerawork and music that have been enjoyed by countless viewers down the years. After the screenings we have a chat about the film's key points. A very pleasant way to spend a Friday morning!

Foodies - 3rd Wednesday 12:00

Convenor: Gay Brennan 4739878

We were very grateful to Sophie who stepped in at the last minute and organised a lunch for us after the original organiser pulled out. She chose November café in Long Bay which has an emphasis on Vietnamese food. Some members chose the Vietnamese pancake which turned out to be very large and full of prawns. Others had big bowls of the 'Pho' noodle soup with a choice of beef, chicken or tofu. A couple of people tried the 'Banh Mi Chao' – a Vietnamese big breakfast served in a hot pan. While looking similar to the usual Big Breakfast, which they also serve, it had some unusual additions such as pate, beef, pickle and chips! Everyone enjoyed their food and the company. A big thank you to Sophie! Due to some resignations, the Foodies group has room for a few more members. If you enjoy interesting food and would like to try new cuisines with like-minded company at our monthly lunches, please contact the convenor on 021 607 567. We would love to have you join us.



Genealogy - 3rd Monday 13:30

Convenors: Gay Brennan 4739878

Teresa described her genealogy research resulting from an autosomal DNA test on MyHeritage. She combined what she called 'qualitative' research i.e. from family stories and histories, with 'quantitative' research from old records such as the legal rolls in Scotland which can provide information about family relationships and property ownership. She told us that these old records, often written on vellum, are being transcribed with the information slowly being made publicly available. She combined this with family history books, written with references to established records to trace her ancestry back for hundreds of years – for instance in the Scrope family of Castle Combe.

The other part of Teresa's research she talked about is from the **Ancient Origins** feature on MyHeritage. This uses the analysis of ancient human samples, such as bones and teeth that can be thousands of years old, from archaeological sites around the world. By extracting DNA segments and genetic markers to compare with modern DNA, MyHeritage publishes reports on which ancient populations are closest to you genetically. From these reports, Teresa has found ancestral links to Utah, the Orkneys and ancient Scottish kings.

Historic Buildings - 2nd Tuesday 13:30

Convenors: Sylvia Dixon 022 1959881 & Gloria Ward 021 2353113



The Duomo in Milan is built on a central site, which was opposite the Forum in Roman times. It took nearly six centuries to complete and features a mixture of architectural styles, while being predominantly Gothic. The stylistic diversity reflects the fact that 78 different architects worked on it over the centuries. Holding 40,000 people, it is the largest cathedral in Italy (not counting the larger St. Peter's Basilica in the sovereign state of the Vatican City).



Visconti, the ruler who began the project in 1385, decided that the beautiful Candoglia marble would be used for the façade, covering a brick structure underneath. He authorised the Candoglia Quarry, located in Mergozzo,

Piedmont, to provide the marble specifically for the Duomo and, further, to transport it along the rivers and canals to Milan.

One of the highlights of visiting the Duomo is the rooftop walk. Another is the beautiful portals with bronze doors featuring religious scenes. The Tribunio Tower is a magnificent octagonal lantern tower rising over the cathedral's crossing and is topped by the golden Madonnina (a statue of Mary), a symbol of protection and identity for the residents of Milan.

International Studies - 2nd Thursday 13:00

Convenor: Anne Gough - 027 321 0729:

Inventions and Discoveries - 3rd Tuesday 13:00

Convenor: Peter Dawson: 478 4780



Heather described the early canal structures, covering bridges, locks and aquaducts, including the only swinging aquaduct over the Manchester Ship Canal. The Duke of Bridgewater financed the canal named after him to carry coal to the emerging factories of Manchester. Later Josiah Wedgwood promoted the Trent and Mersey canal linking those 2 rivers and the Bridgewater canal. This building enabled the further development of the Industrial Revolution.



After a short break Roger Warner got us thinking about the progress that has been made in telecommunications since the 1930's with a video of the route a message would have taken back then to get a birthday telegram from parents in NZ to their son travelling on the Queen Mary liner.

He followed with a markedly contrasting video of the automated process used today to manufacture civil and military drones in their thousands.

Mahjong - Every Friday 10:00

Convenor: Penny Walton: 0212204988

Medical Science and History -1st Thursday 10:00

Convenor: Dorothy Butcher 4791526

Our presentation in March was about autoimmune diseases. These are conditions where the immune system attacks the body's own healthy cells and tissues. They are lifelong conditions, although symptoms may come and go in flare-ups. The causes are not fully understood, but risk factors may include genes, viral infections, and environmental exposures. A UK study found that 13% of women and 7% of men in the records studied had one of the 19 most common autoimmune diseases. Researchers are exploring future treatments such as CAR-T cell therapy, CRISPR/Cas9 and mRNA based treatments. There is some evidence that Epstein-Barr virus may be linked to some autoimmune diseases and vaccines are being developed to prevent infection or suppress the virus following infection. Our second speaker told us that Nature still holds a wealth of secrets useful for medical treatments. The venom of the Gila Monster in the USA contains peptides (extendin-4) similar to the human GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) hormone. Research on extendin-4 in the venom has resulted in treatments for type 2 diabetes and the associated control of obesity (Wegovy and Ozempic).



Now the venom of a mottled pinkish-white snail off the coast of Queensland has been found to contain a cocktail of peptides that triggers paralysis in fish. This venom contains more than 250 compounds some of which block pain. From a small fraction of these compounds the pain blocking drug *ziconotide* has been developed. It is estimated that this is 1000 times more potent than morphine and reputedly not addictive. Pain relief requires multiple targets and these venoms have evolved to work on their victims in hundreds of ways at once

Modern History - 3rd Wednesday 10:00

Convenors: Carne Blandy 021998734 & Frank Graveson 027 2595323

Our first presentation was 'The Bay of Pigs Invasion', a failed military operation on the coast of Cuba in April 1961. It was carried out by Cuban exiles who opposed Fidel Castro's Cuban Revolution but was planned and financed by the U.S. government. When Castro legalized the Communist Party and strengthened ties with the Soviet Union, the CIA began covert economic, political, and military activities and operations to remove his government. Cuban exiles in Miami were recruited and trained in neighbouring countries because the US did not want to be officially involved in the invasion.



Fidel Castro and Che Guevara

The newly elected President Kennedy authorised the invasion and on April 15th April rebel planes began to attack Cuban airfields with minimal success. The land invasion was met with heavy fire, two escort ships were bombed and landing craft destroyed. A US naval force was off shore but the President refused to allow US forces to get involved. The battle ended in three days with the invading forces surrendering.

The CIA had underestimated the military strength of the Cuban government and overestimated the capabilities of the exile force. They expected that most Cubans opposing the Castro regime would join the attacking force and that the President would intervene. It was a serious embarrassment for the US and the increased tension with Russia led to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The second presentation told the story of Britain's last, and smallest territorial acquisition – the annexation of Rockall Island in 1955. The island is 370 km west of the Scottish Outer Hebrides and is just 25 meters wide and 17 meters high—the tip of an extinct volcano. As the Cold War intensified and Nato and Soviet submarines regularly patrolled the North Atlantic, Britain considered that securing Rockall was a key to controlling sea space. Britain's claim to sovereignty allowed it to claim rights to the rich fishing waters and the potential oil and gas reserves on the continental shelf extending 200 nautical miles westwards from Rockall into the North Atlantic – its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) – a bountiful yield from such a small acquisition.

Ireland, Iceland and Denmark contested the right to sovereignty and to the sea claims. The United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea 111 (UNCLOS), signed in 1982, included a clause that an island that could not sustain human habitation or economic life could not claim an EEZ. Rockall could do neither. Britain did not sign up to the Convention and so ignored this and continued to defend its extensive EEZ.

However, 15 years later, in 1997 Britain decided to sign up to the Convention and so had to retract its EEZ boundaries to now extend westwards from the Outer Hebrides, and in doing so gave up exclusive fishing rights and opportunities to 60 000 sq. miles of sea. Whilst still a member of the European Union it shared this space with Ireland, and Denmark and so the loss didn't matter much. However, it did not seed sovereignty and continued to claim its rights to the 12 nautical mile territorial zone around the island. Ireland contested any rights to these territorial waters; instead claiming historical fishing rights to these territorial waters. Irish fisherman estimated losses of 7 – 8 million Euro a year.



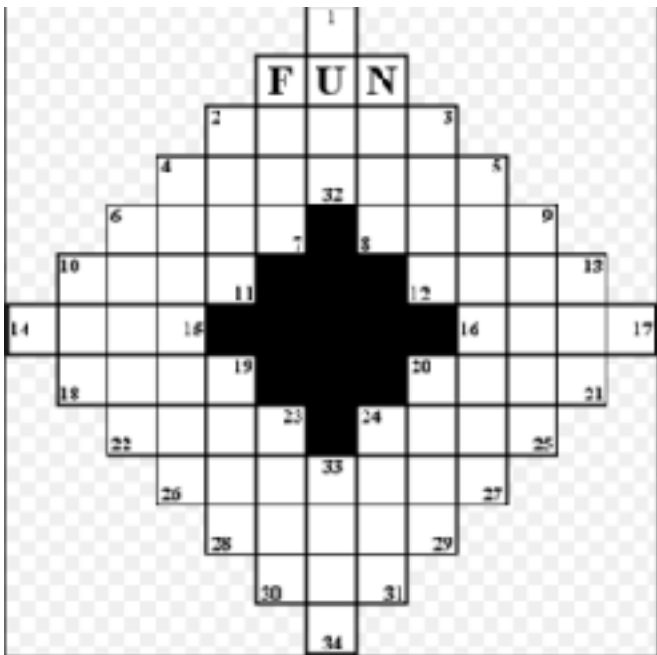
When Britain left the EU the dispute over the fishing rights intensified. However, following a meeting in London in May 2025, the UK and the EU formalised an agreement granting full reciprocal fishing access to each other's EEZs and territorial waters until June 30, 2038.

Rockall, as small as it is, has been the cause of strained relations between Britain and some of its neighbouring countries for over 70 years, and by any measure the island has been of very little strategic or economic value to Britain.

Puzzle Group - 4th Thursday 10:00

Convenor: Fay Weatherly 02102537317

Our meeting was at Tricia's apartment as Ian was away. Fay introduced us to the first ever crossword puzzle, called a "Word Cross" at the time, invented by Authur Wynn and published in the New York World on Dec 21st 1913. This was in the shape of a diamond with no black squares. Sadly it contained several obsolete words which made the solution difficult.



FILL in the small squares with words which agree with the following definitions:

- 2-3. What bargain hunters enjoy.
- 4-5. A written acknowledgement.
- 6-7. Such and nothing more.
- 10-11. A bird.
- 14-15. Opposed to less.
- 18-19. What this puzzle is.
- 22-23. An animal of prey.
- 26-27. The close of a day.
- 28-29. To elude.
- 30-31. The plural of is.
- 8-9. To cultivate.
- 12-13. A bar of wood or iron.
- 16-17. What artists learn to do.
- 20-21. Fastened.
- 24-25. Found on the seashore.

- 10-18. The fibre of the gomuti palm.
- 6-22. What we all should be.
- 4-26. A day dream.
- 2-11. A talon.
- 19-28. A pigeon.
- F-7. Part of your head.
- 23-30. A river in Russia.
- 1-32. To govern.
- 33-34. An aromatic plant.
- N-8. A fiat.
- 24-31. To agree with.
- 3-12. Part of a ship.
- 20-29. One.
- 5-27. Exchanging.
- 9-25. Sunk in mud.
- 13-21. A boy.

A few puzzling questions:

1. Find a connection for: ringo dialect buzzard callum.
2. Find two words with different spellings but similar pronunciation that can mean: FROLIC/CHANCE
3. What is the answer to this rebus puzzle: **NOON T**
4. A lovely glove and a small silent cat can be described as "a cute mitten" and a "mute kitten". This is called a spoonerism.
 - o Can you think up a similar spoonerism for a martial arts star and an unpackaged French cheese.
 - o How about completely false information and no filled pastries.

Answers to Puzzles at end of newsletter

Renaissance 4th Friday 10:00

Convenor: Monette Ewen 0275666217

Margaret gave a presentation on some feminists of the Italian Renaissance. In the 16th and 17th centuries. Venice was a hub of the Italian Renaissance. Fortunes were being amassed from trade, the arts flourished and ideas of every persuasion were discussed in the academies and salons. It was an exciting place to be but not for women. Their lives were greatly constrained by patriarchy and the papacy. Even wealthy women were denied schooling and expected to run secluded lives.



Moderata Fonte (1555 - 1592) and Lucrezia Marinella (1571 -1653) were

both born into wealthy and supportive families and each was acknowledged for their outstanding intellect and writing skills. Although the details of their lives were vastly different they each wrote widely and are best remembered for their powerful feminist titles. Sadly, Moderata died at the early age of 37 just one day after completing 'The Worth of Women' which was only published some years later. Lucrezia is remembered for 'The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men' written specifically to challenge the hugely misogynist work of



Giuseppe Passi 'On Women's Faults'. Such was the power of these works that Passi

was forced to back down and claim he was misunderstood!

Arcangela Tarabotti (1604 - 1652) was the victim of **Monarchization** - an outrageous custom condoned by both the state and the papacy whereby husbands or fathers could get rid of troublesome or problematic wives and daughters by forcing them into convents against their will. Arcangela, the eldest of 6 daughters, was born lame and considered unlikely to attract a husband. So, at age 13, and strongly against her will, she was forced into the local convent where she lived the rest of her life. She campaigned bitterly against **Monarchization** and wrote works criticising both the state and fathers for the cruel and deceitful treatment of their daughters. Even though confined to the convent she was able to develop a few outside contacts but most of her works were published only after her death.



These women lived 400 years ago so it is sad to think that many of the customs they so fiercely criticised are still commonplace today.

World War 1 & 11 3rd Thursday 10:00

Convenors: Piers Hamid 0274439764 & Heather Howarth 0223100384

We held a most interesting meeting and many of the group contributed their own stories of the Yanks in NZ. Evelyn led us on a most interesting topic "The battle of Manners Street"

From 1942 to 1944 up to 45,000 mainly young servicemen from the United States were stationed in New Zealand awaiting deployment to the war in the Pacific. While initially welcomed as allies, tensions began to grow as the newcomers were brash, well paid and did not understand the culture of the locals. This was particularly because many of them came from areas where discrimination against coloured folk were commonplace.



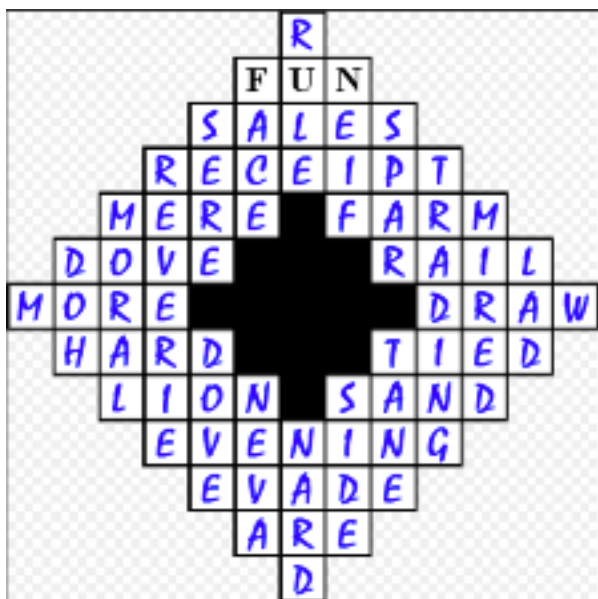
In April 1943 at the Allied Services Club in Manners Street some Americans barred the entry of Maori soldiers to the club. A riot then broke out involving up to



1000 servicemen and local citizens culminating in the military police removing many of the combatants back to their camps. Fear of the knowledge of this disturbance was then suppressed for over 20 years as both governments feared the news would affect the ongoing battles in the Pacific.

Puzzle Group Answers Below

1. Leaving out some letters we end up with: ring dial buzz call - all associated with old fashioned telephones.
2. Gambol and gamble
3. Afternoon tea
- 4 Bruce Lee and Loose Brie
A pack of lies and a lack of pies.



Keep learning like you will live forever