



General Meeting for Members: August 4th 2026

10:00 - 12:00am: OUTRAM HALL,
478 Beach Road Murrays Bay

SPEAKER FOR AUGUST 2026

Professor Mark Vickers - Deputy Director Liggins Institute

Professor Mark Vickers is Deputy Director at the Liggins Institute, University of Auckland. The Liggins Institute's vision is 'a healthy start for a healthy life' and our mission is to improve lifelong health through excellent research into the long-term consequences of early life events. Dr Vickers own research focus is on the impact of alterations in the early life nutritional environment on later



health and wellbeing of offspring with a particular focus on the development of obesity and metabolic disorders. Prof. Vickers has published over 250 scientific papers and 26 book chapters in this area and is in the top 2% of research scientists internationally as compiled by Stanford University. Prof. Vickers will present a brief background to the Liggins Institute and some insights from his own research around the impact of altered early life nutrition on health across the life course.

Mark's primary interest is in the developmental origins of health and disease with a particular focus on the association between poor maternal nutrition and the development of obesity and type 2 diabetes in offspring.

THE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to our August newsletter.

Some of our u3abb members attended the u3a Network 'Event' last Saturday and I am really pleased to report that it all went very smoothly. The two guest speakers, Dame Wendy Pye and Shamubeel Eaqub, both presented really well and gave interesting and very thought-provoking talks. The mini speakers were all of a very high standard and gave talks about an interesting range of topics. For my part I was very proud of our u3abb speaker, Monette Ewen, and her talk on 'Chopines' was very well received by the audience. I am increasingly proud of the way our SIG members present at meetings.

We were part of the 'Active Aging' Expo at the Browns Bay Event Centre last Wednesday. It was great to have such support from our Committee and they reported a lot of interest from members of the public. Have a look at a picture of our table. There are a number of different activities that we can get involved in, from volunteering to hobbies. As we have mentioned before, staying social and interacting with others as we mature is one of the top tips for Brain Health.

Val Lloyd, Chairperson

NEWS FROM OUR RECENT COMMITTEE MEETING

HELP.....

As many of you know the TV supplied by Pauline for use by our SIG groups has died. The committee wondered if there is anyone out there that has a spare 35" - 40" light flat screen TV that they could loan for a few months? If you have can you email our secretary Pauline @ : palsweiler@xtra.co.nz

IMPORTANT: In November this year at the AGM SIX of our twelve 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, SECRETARY and NEWSLETTER EDITOR. Please please look around you and consider if you or anyone around you could step up otherwise there may not be a committee next year.

- If you know anyone who is interested in joining our U3A, please pass their names onto Information Officer: Anne Gough (027 3210729).
- If you change your address please either update the information on our website or let a convenor or a member of the committee know
- If a 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 August newsletter is July 29th 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

VERY IMPORTANT

Our **OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING** will be held on **Tuesday 29th SEPTEMBER** this year Due to unavailability of Outram Hall. PLEASE note this in your diary or wall calendar or just tuck it away in the back of your mind.

The SIGs groups will continue their normal schedule at the hall. This change of date **ONLY** affects the **MAIN MONTHLY MEETING**

Report from Active Aging Expo by Fay Weatherly

Our display was set up in the BB Recreation Centre by Fay Weatherly and Val Lloyd at 9am on Wednesday 22nd July in temperatures of 8 degrees.

We used the following:

- A large banner available from the Auckland u3a Network for no charge.
- A power point display showing our SIGs - one for each slide, with a picture. This was on an endless loop.
- A small notice board showing our name and some posters
- 50 pamphlets which soon disappeared - maybe 100 next year.
- A sign-up sheet for people who might consider joining us - used by over a dozen.
- Lucy provided a lot of yellow and black balloons - bright and cheerful and worth including something similar in the future

The day seemed quite busy with plenty of people circulating around the hall. It was very smoothly run with everything we needed 'on tap'.



DATE	SIG PRESENTATION	HALL SEATING	MORNING TEA
4 th August	Art Potpourri	Puzzle Group	Inventors & Discoveries
1 st September	Medical Science & History	WW1 & 2	Modern History

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

CONTACTS: U3A Roles and their back-up

Chairperson	Val Lloyd 763662 021	B/U Heather Howard. 021941664	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 027 4036380	B/U Heather Howard. 021941664	SIG Convenor	Ngaral Hogan 021 379746	B/U Diane Muller. 0210485178
Hall Managers	Heather Howarth 022 3100384	B/U Coleen Carmichael 094795543	Speaker Co-ordinator	Roger Warner 09 4783072	
Information Officer	Anne Gough 027 3210729	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

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website

SIG REPORTS

Active Travellers - 4th Tuesday 10:00

Convenor: Lucy Casey 021778555

Maureen took us on "the SeeMore Mid-Winter Otago Culinary Food Tour"

This intimate six day culinary journey through Central and North Otago was a rare, behind the scenes experience, created as a special inaugural tour and limited to just 10 guests. More than a food tour, this was an exploration of provenance, place and craft, shared with like-minded travellers and offering access few get to experience including a drive through Sam Neill's Twin Paddock's on the way to the Truffle farm! Along the way we met the passionate producers, growers and makers who give this region it's distinctive flavour.



Some of the experiences :

Truffle Hunt, Truffle tasting - delicacies - with the Black Quail 2022 Pinot Noir award winning wine.

Kitchen garden creations visit followed by a Michelin winning dinner.

Otematata Merino Sheep station - 80,000 acres. We experienced the shearers smoko home made goodies.

Hunter Hills Deer Hunting Experience in 4WDs.

Oamaru Whitestone Cheese. YUM.

Riverstone Castle, gardens and restaurant created for love!

Vailli wines tasting.

Converting left over supermarket bread to Gin. We all have our own tiny bottle maturing!

All in all an absolutely fabulous experience



Truffle straight
from the ground
and on bread with
cheese

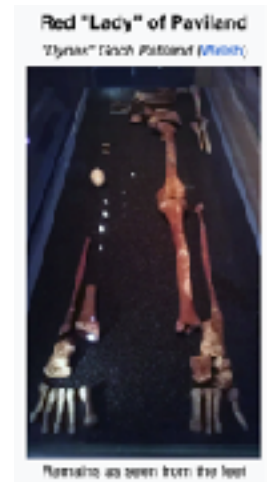


Archaeology - 3rd Monday 10:00

Convenor: Evelyn Ross: 027 4242147

The Archeology SIG heard about the Archeology of Wales, from Paleolithic times through until the present. These archeological discoveries included in 1823 The Red Lady of Paviland, actually a male skeleton, being confirmed as the oldest skeleton of a modern human, dating back 33-34,000 years. Other archeological sites have uncovered Roman amphitheatres when Wales was occupied by the Romans from 78BP, up until the present. They included excavations at Pembroke Castle which revealed rare evidence of early humans, and animals, including bones of a hippopotamus which roamed Wales 120,000 years ago, as well as artifacts of gold and metal. These finds, in what are now UNESCO World Heritage Sites, reveal a great deal about our early prehistoric forebears.

Photo of Red "Lady" of Paviland, Wikipedia



Art History - 2nd Thursday 13:15

Convenors: Sylvia Dixon 0221959881 & Thelma Phillips 0274 05470

Charles Blomfield was born in London on 5 January 1848. He came to New Zealand with his mother and five siblings in 1862, aged 14. On arrival young Charles found employment with a house painter, where he learnt paint mixing, decorative techniques, wood graining and sign writing. He received little formal artistic training.

The NZ landscape captivated Charles from an early age. Surrounded by forests, coastlines, and volcanic scenery unlike anything he had known in England, he began sketching and painting the natural environment, often directly from nature. His work appealed strongly to colonial settlers who appreciated the beauty of their adopted country, while overseas visitors sought visual souvenirs of New Zealand's remarkable landscapes. He married in 1874 and he and his wife helped build the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle opened in 1885 and he decorated it.

During a camping trip in 1875 Blomfield reached Lake Rotomahana at the foot of Mt Tarawera and first saw the Pink and White Terraces which he found "exceedingly beautiful". He returned in 1884 for six weeks and painted many aspects of the Terraces. At the time they were regarded as the Eighth Wonder of the World. On 10 June 1886 Mt Tarawera erupted, destroying the Terraces and killing 120 people. He went back again in October 1886 and painted scenes of the terrible destruction.

His paintings are widely regarded as the epitome of 19th century New Zealand landscape art, although his work, like many of his contemporaries, fell out of fashion during the 20th century, only to be re-evaluated in the 1970s. He died in 1926.



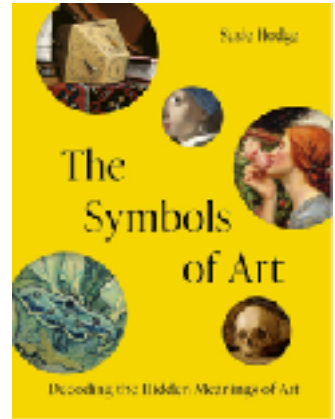
Art Potpourri - 3rd Tuesday 14:00

Convenors: Nanette Randall 094738499 & Claire McNaul 09473115

This month our group shared and explored the topic of Symbols of Art. We looked at the hidden meanings of objects and the use of colours in paintings. The elements of sky, sea, clouds and storms have long been metaphors for the emotions and the unknown.

We watched YouTube reels that illustrated probable hidden meanings of skulls, fruit, birds, colours and flowers in old classic paintings.

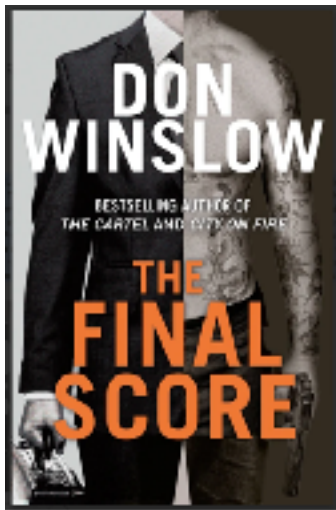
Claire recommended the book *The Symbols of Art* by Susie Hodge. Published by Francis Lincoln in 2026.



Book Group - 1st Friday 13:00

Convenors: Monette Ewen 275666217 & John Ewen 0274993528

Books discussed in July were: **Legacy** by Chris Hammer; **The Final Score** by Don Winslow; **The Divorce** by Freida McFaddon; **Other People's Bodies** by Meegan Nicol Reed; **Sacrifice** by Lynda La Plante; **The Language of Flowers** by Vanessa Diffenbaugh; **In With Both Feet** by John Reynolds; **Heart the Lover** by Lily King; **The End of the Day** by Bill Clegg; **Project Lega6** by Baldwin Greener; **One Last Question, Prime Minister** by Barry Soper; **Northanger Abbey** by Jane Austen; **Imperium** by Robert Harris; **The Works: Gustav Klimt** by Sally Grant; **Nocturnes** by Kazuo Ishiguro; **The Patron Saint of Liars** by Ann Patchett; **A Cornish Stranger** by Liz Fenwick; **Hamnet** by Maggie O'Farrell; **The Finest Hotel in Kabul** by Lyse Doucet; **The Prince** by Niccolo Machiavelli; **Autocracy Inc** by Anne Applebaum; **Democracy Awakening** by Heather Cox Richardson; **Every Second Counts** by Charlotte Glennie; **Prisoner of Peace** by Ilse Hess; **While the Pope Kept Silent** and **The Assisi Underground** by Alexander Ramati; **Bony and the White Savage** by Arthur Upfield; **The Street Lawyer** by John Grisham; **The Moscow Vector** by Robert Ludlum and Patrick Larkin; **Postern of Fate** and **The Mysterious Affair at Styles** by Agatha Christie; **Cut Throat** by Lyndon Stacey; **The Altman Code** by Robert Ludlum and Gayle Lynds; **Eden** by Peter Watt and **All Her Lives** by Ingrid Horrocks.



Books and Beyond - 2nd Friday 13:00

Convenors: Glenys Plaistowe 027 5412241

With Politics as our theme we enjoyed a great variety of titles and points of discussion- it was a very enjoyable and informative session. Our thanks to Glen for our very enjoyable Matariki Afternoon tea.

Our July Booklist: Women and Leadership: Julia Guillard and Ngozi Okongo-Iweala; We need to talk about Norman: Dennis Welch; Helen: Portrait of a Prime Minister: Brian Edwards; Imperium (part of a trilogy): Robert Harris; The Wildes: Louis Bayard; Democracy Awakening: Heather Richardson; The Silence In between: Josie Ferguson; The Last Mandarin: Louise Penny and Mellissa Fung; Mururoa Mon Amour (French Nuclear testing); Manawatia o Matariki: Orakei o Ngata Whatua; A Different Kind of Power: Jacinda Ardern; 107 Days: Kamala Harris

Theme for August: our own reading



Convenor: Fay Weatherly 02102537317

At our next meeting on August 6th at Lois' place, there will be a workshop where we share how each of us used AI in our work. From there we need to prepare our next A.V. entitled "Birds" for our September meeting.



Convenors: Pauline Alswelter 027 2779395 (temporary convenor)



As usual the meeting commenced with a challenging Quiz presented by Mardi. This was followed by a talk from Jon which followed on from the previous talk on Democracies and Autocracies, this talk and discussion concerned the Far East. The only true democracies being South Korea, Japan and Taiwan, compared with the many autocratic nations, led by China. Of concern was the possibility of China trying to take over Taiwan. Especially at a time when Taiwan can no longer fully rely on the USA. With the present chaos in the Middle East and Ukraine and the USA's involvement with Iran, China may take

advantage of this by trying to take over Taiwan. After a brief history of Taiwan, the talk spread to include the various islands, reefs and atolls in the South China Sea that China has overtaken and built many military bases. This being done against rulings by the UN Court of Arbitration and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. This possibly leading to a far greater global shipping and transport problem than presently being experienced in the Strait of Hormuz. After the break Stuart Gaze provided a questionnaire for the group to complete relating to the most important characteristic that a good Prime Minister should have, Christopher Luxon's best characteristic, how people vote (policy or character of candidate), how do we vote (what's best for the country or what's best for us)? which is best - first past the post or MMP? name your current MP, and rank best PM during last 50 years. The results were varied but honesty was the most important characteristic for a PM for a majority of the group and first past the post was the most popular for elections.



Convenor: Piers Hamid 027 4439764

It was the coldest day of the year, and many lucky ones had gone off to warmer places – the Pacific Islands, Western Australia, Europe – but 5 of us braved the weather, heartened with the promise of a sunny day. We set off from the Long

Bay Village and headed to Vaughans Road, and at its eastern end enjoyed the wonderful view over the Long Bay Regional Park and the Gulf beyond.

We then headed back along Vaughans Road and down into Okura Village stopping at the estuary. It was still icy cold and the sun hadn't properly moved from behind the clouds. The photo shows this; but all beautiful nonetheless.

We then headed back to East Coast Road, into Glenvar Road, and to avoid the traffic, headed down Fitzwilliam Drive and Awaruku Road and back onto Glenvar Road. We took the off-road boardwalk around the stormwater ponds on the Awaruku stream and from there to the Long Bay beach. By now the sun was out and the sea sparkling.

We cycled back through the Park to Long Bay Village and a cup of something warm to eat and drink at the November Eatery. Piers, and one member who had lost his way before the start (not good for a cyclist) joined us there.



Early NZ History - 3rd Tuesday 10:00

Convenor: Glenys Plaistowe 0275412241

Film Appreciation - 3rd Friday 10:00

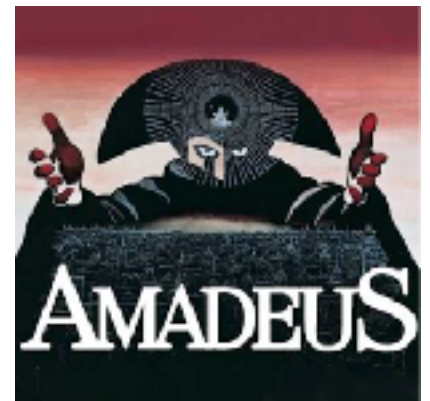
Convenor: John Reynolds – 0212533203

This month we viewed the 1984 production *Amadeus*, directed by Milos Forman, that focussed on the orchestral rivalry between two 18th-century Vienna composers Wolfgang Mozart and Antonio Salieri, in which Salieri struggles to reconcile his professional admiration for Mozart with his jealous hatred, and how he sets out to ruin Mozart's career as his form of vengeance against God. The film was nominated for eleven Academy Awards and won eight, including Best Picture.

Certainly the settings and the costumes were outstanding as was the way in which Mozart's music was used on the soundtrack and highlighted in excerpts from operas and other orchestral works.

Some of our members criticised the screenplay adaptations such as the portrayal of Salieri as a pious loner trapped in a vow of chastity which in reality he was married man with eight children and at least one mistress. The screenwriters clearly wanted to exaggerate the differences between the two rivals for dramatic purposes, this being a feature film rather than a documentary.

Finally, many thanks to our fellow U3A members who were fulsome in their praise of our SIG presentation that featured our members acting brief excerpts from their favourite movies. Your comments were much appreciated and were ample reward for our creative efforts



Foodies - 3rd Wednesday 12:00

Convenor: Gay Brennan 4739878

El Greco in Campbell's Bay was chosen by Suzanne as the venue for the Foodies July lunch. It's known for its Greek and Italian cuisine. We tried a variety of dishes from both cuisines - Soutzoukakia - beef & lamb meatballs in a thick tomato sauce, Dolmades - cabbage leaves stuffed with ground beef and rice, Sikotakia – fried chicken livers with garlic & lemon, mushrooms in a rich garlic cream sauce, spaghetti and penne pasta dishes, and different pizzas. Kosta Grigorakis, the proprietor, was a welcoming host to our group. The reserved parking area outside the restaurant was especially appreciated. Suzanne particularly enjoyed the atmosphere as she'd had the opportunity to travel in Greece several times when she was a Tour Leader. She brought along a book of her lovely, watercolour sketches from Greece and other



Mediterranean countries to show us. We all enjoyed the food, good company and the pleasant atmosphere.

Genealogy - 3rd Monday 13:30

Convenors: Gay Brennan 4739878

Kerry gave a workshop on using Copilot (or a similar AI programme) to enhance and restore old photographs. He showed how the powerful functionality can be used to repair damage, as well as sharpen, lighten and even colorise, old and damaged photos. Members of the group emailed Kerry old photos from their family history. Casting his laptop to the TV, Kerry showed us how he uploaded a copy of the photo into Copilot, then instructed Copilot on what



Repaired photo changed to standard size

to do. He explained that you have to be very specific and use direct wording to make sure you limit what Copilot does. This is to prevent it from making too many changes that could alter the original. Kerry then demonstrated with some of the photos sent in. Options included retaining the old sepia colouring or lightening it to a modern image. The results showed features that had

faded and been lost from the original. In a photo of Christine's grandfather that had a corner torn off, Copilot was able to restore the torn off part and inserted the missing shoe.

From an old black and white wedding group photograph, Valerie had a newspaper cutting that described the colours of the bride's and bridesmaids' dresses. So Kerry was able to instruct Copilot to add the right colours to each dress. In another group photo, he asked Copilot to remove just one child and then save it as a single portrait. The most impressive great-grandmother. Everyone was amazed at the beautiful, delicate portrait that emerged. Kerry kindly emailed copies of all the photographs he'd enhanced to their owners. We were all very impressed with what can be achieved and many went home determined to try it themselves.



Historic Buildings - 2nd Tuesday 13:30

Convenors: Sylvia Dixon 022 1959881 & Gloria Ward 021 2353113

We met to watch one episode of the "Secrets of Historic British Houses" a Sky Open series which had been recorded.



The first house we watched was Knole House in Kent, the home of the Sackville West family. Thomas had been an important member of Queen Elizabeth's court and made a large fortune to build the house. Fascinating descriptions had information of the several hundred year old parchment record of the family tree, showing the lineage of the family, and the sculpture of a beautiful mistress of an ancestor. It was an indication of how Conservators meet the challenge of unrolling the parchment after 100 years of storage and repair the sculpture which had been in the loft for generations.

The next house was Townend in Troutbeck in the Lake District, the home of several generations of the Brown family. They were yeoman farmers and earned a living from the hillside area for 500 years. This was so typical of their type for many generations of rural people. The house is now owned by the National Trust and many features have been retained

by the family for public viewing. One of the interesting Conservation projects was a book of letters between family members going back generations.

International Studies - 2nd Thursday 13:00

Convenor: Anne Gough - 027 321 0729

Dorothy reported on Venezuela.

Venezuela is a country situated on the northern coast of South America, stretching from spectacular, untouched beaches of the Caribbean to the Andes. It was colonised by the Spanish from 1522, but became an independent republic in 1821 after the Battle of Carabobo under the leadership of the Venezuelan General Simon Bolivar. Despite discovering massive oil deposits in the early twentieth century, which prompted a boom that lasted into the 1980's, corruption and mismanagement by the government have led to increasing levels of poverty and deprivation for the population. Since 2014 hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have protested over high levels of crime, corruption, hyperinflation and chronic shortages of basic goods due to government policies. This was met by arrests and enforced disappearances of political dissidents, many believed to have been executed. Many world leaders expressed scepticism when in the 2024 presidential elections, Maduro was elected president for the third time. In January 2026 the USA launched airstrikes against the coastline of Venezuela and captured Maduro and his wife and flew them out of the country, forming a de facto puppet state of the United States. Then in June of this year two large earthquakes struck northwestern Venezuela causing at least 3,500 deaths, many injuries, tens of thousands reported missing and widespread damage to the Caracas area.



Heather took us to the Baltic Sea and the crisis it is undergoing. Firstly the effect of Algae which grows in the summer months and then drops to the sea floor when colder weather comes. As the algae slowly decomposes it uses up oxygen and kills the weeds and plant life on the sea bed. This affects all the wildlife in the Sea and forms a "corpse sheet" on the sea bed. There are 9 countries surrounding the Baltic and 7 rivers pour their pollution into the sea. This causes eutrophication where the pollution depletes oxygen and thus the fishing industry is ended. This is also an issue for many inland seas including in New Zealand and many other countries.

The second crisis is due to the shadow fleets of hundreds of elderly ships carrying oil from Russia to China and India. Many ships carry flags of distant countries. As these ships travel from the North Sea to the Atlantic, many of them travel through the English Channel and have been impounded by France and Britain as they are not seaworthy. The risk of these ships is most risky to the Baltic nations who also impound ships for breaking international rules.

Inventions and Discoveries - 3rd Tuesday 13:00

Convenor: Peter Dawson: 478 4780

Fay Weatherly delivered the main presentation on the history of colour for the July meeting of the Inventors group. Since the days of cave wall art, mankind has sought colours for painting pictures and dying fabrics. Over the years, solutions were found which might have provided a good colour, but which would probably have faded quickly, washed out or been very toxic. The methods used through the ages have been so ingenious that we wonder how they were ever arrived at: The urine of cows, exclusively fed on mango leaves, was collected and boiled to a paste to produce yellow. Murex snails were collected from the rocks in the Mediterranean, a small gland extracted and fermented to obtain the very expensive Royal purple. Lapis Lazuli was brought from a mine in Afghanistan to be the foundation for ultramarine blue - also worth as much as gold. With the discovery of 'new' elements such as cadmium, zinc and titanium, and with the evolution of chemistry, colours we take for granted, gradually evolved to be reliable, cheaply made, fast in water and sunlight and non-toxic.

Following Fay's presentation Terry showed a video on the reasons a bridge has never been built across Cook's Strait.

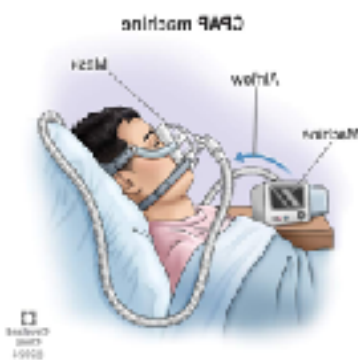


Mahjong - Every Friday 10:00

Convenor: Penny Walton: 0212204988

Medical Science and History -1st Thursday 10:00

Convenor: Dorothy Butcher 4791526



Today, Ian Graham gave a presentation to the Medical Science Group on “The Importance of Breathing”. While he was setting up the ‘loan TV’ which the group uses it finally reached its “use-by-date” and died and he had to adapt his presentation at the last minute. However, Jane, another member of the group, offered to get her husband to bring down a spare monitor and after a small delay, we were under way. He talked about the challenges that we face in the modern world as we deal with the hectic pace of life and how this contributes to our breathing pattern changing from deep in the diaphragm, where it should be, and increasingly up to the chest and shallow - where it shouldn’t be. He gave examples of the impact that has on our stress levels and how we need to Reset our breathing pattern using simple daily exercises. To support his assertions, he shared with us his experience with his own sleep apnoea and how he’s had to adapt to using a

CPAP device to aid his breathing at night. He also referred us to a very interesting website www.takeabreath.world and a book “The Breath Reset Plan”.

Modern History - 3rd Wednesday 10:00

Convenors: Carne Blandy 021998734 & Frank Graveson 027 2595323



Patricia started the morning by telling us the story of a wooden carving, a diplomatic gift and one of the cleverest pieces of espionage technology of the 20th century. It was a gift given by Russia in 1945 to the US Ambassador in Moscow and was intended to symbolise the cooperation between Russia and the US during WWII. It was a hand-carved wooden plaque of the Great Seal of the US and it hung in the ambassador’s study for seven years until, by accident, it was discovered to be more than a mere decoration; it was a covert listening device designed to spy on diplomatic conversations. This ingenious bugging device - dubbed ‘The Thing’ - was invented by a Russian scientist, Leon

Theremin, better known in the west for his invention of an electronic musical instrument, called the ‘Theremin’. The Thing has left behind a technical legacy, inspiring later inventions of surveillance devices and is a perfect case study of how art, technology and politics intersected during the Cold War.

Margaret gave the second talk about Uncle Scrim’ (Colin Scrimger) who was a dominant character at the beginning of Commercial Radio in NZ. He and Tom Garland - both Methodist Ministers - resigned from their ministries to set up

their own church which they named 'The Friendly Road'. In 1930 they had the opportunity to take over a fledgling Commercial Radio station and became possibly the first radio church in the world. The emphasis of their church was to provide support and encouragement for the poor and needy. The number of their listeners increased exponentially and 'Uncle Scrim' became a force to be reckoned with.

In the lead up to the 1935 general election, and amidst the harsh conditions being endured during the Great Depression, the struggling Coalition government feared that if 'Uncle Scrim', who was a known Labour supporter, urged his thousands of listeners to vote Labour then it would be 'game over'. They then took the unprecedented step of jamming his most popular Sunday evening broadcast. The whole country was outraged - an illegal transmitter was found the next morning in a nearby garden shed.

The following evening, he broadcast his interrupted address which, to the Government's embarrassment, contained no attempt to influence the imminent election. This incident initiated much argument and debate on the freedom of speech and the relationship of the Government with media. It is also the incident for which 'Uncle Scrim' is best remembered even today.

The title of the main talk for the August meeting is "36 Days of Hell on Earth". It should be very interesting and generate some good discussion.



'The Friendly Road' on air.

Puzzle Group - 4th Thursday 10:00

Convenor: Fay Weatherly 02102537317

We had a very productive meeting getting through at least 20 puzzles. It was notable for the number of puzzles for which we could find multiple valid answers. e.g. What five letter word becomes (a) more than twelve when you add a letter at the end of it and (b) 13 if you put six letters before it?

Answer: Dozen (a) Dozens - more than 12

(b) **Bakers'** - a bakers' dozen is 13

OR Eight (a) Eighty is more than 12

(b) Seventy - **seventy** eight is more than [but not equal to] 13

Some questions for you:

(1) What is the next letter in this sequence: Y Y H L Y E Y T ?

(2) What links these phrases: Unauthorised entry, eating food, breaking furniture, sleeping?

(3) What is the little dot over the letter made when writing i or j?

(4) **IIIIII = 100**. Make one change to make this statement true.

(5) Think of a five-letter English word. Take away 2 letters and you are left with exactly one. What is the word?

Answers to Puzzles at end of newsletter

Renaissance - 4th Friday 10:00

Convenor: Monette Ewen 0275666217

Who would have thought that John of Gaunt, 4th son of Edward II, King of England and his mistress, Catherine Swynford, through their issue, would one day shape the future of England so dramatically that it would eventually produce the Tudor dynasty, and one of the greatest movements of all time – The Renaissance. Bess explored how, although John of Gaunt never became king, his children and grandchildren would determine England's future. Few people in English history had a greater long-term impact than John of Gaunt and Catherine Swynford's issue. By tracing their descendants we can see exactly how the Tudors emerged from the chaos of medieval England. John of Gaunt was married three times. He began a relationship with Catherine Swynford while still married to his second wife. During that time they had four illegitimate children, the eldest of whom was named John. In 1396 John married Catherine and the four children were formally legitimised in 1397 by both royal and papal authority. John Beaufort, now the Earl of Somerset (the first son of John and Catherine) went on to marry Lady Margaret de Holland in 1397. They had six children including a son also called John who then married Margaret Beauchamp. They in turn had a daughter who was named Lady Margaret Beaufort who subsequently gave birth at 13 years of age to a son, Henry, who would

become Henry VII, the father of Henry VIII, and the grandfather of Elizabeth I, after he defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field.

Thelma gave a presentation on the German artist Albrecht Dürer. He was trained by his goldsmith father to follow in the trade, but his artistic talent was recognised so he was allowed to follow his dream. He was born in Nuremberg where he drew pictures to be cut from woodblocks and, with the advent of printing, these were copied and sold extensively making a fortune for Durer. Twice he walked over the Alps to Venice, staying two years each time. He painted watercolours of the scenery on the way. He married but there were no children to continue the Durer name. He painted many religious scenes and portraits.

We learned about the Medici family's obsession with lemons from Patricia's presentation. In the Renaissance era lemons were highly prized luxury items, symbols of wealth and prestige. As well as being dedicated patrons of the arts, the Medici had a passion for botany and gardens; their ability to control nature was a sign of their power. In the gardens of their country residence Villa Castello outside Florence, they grew exotic citrus trees, with a lemon house, or *limonaia*, to shelter them in pots over winter. Ancient specimens have been rediscovered and today are grown in the gardens for visitors to see. Today the lemon is commonplace; it has gone from once being a luxury item and status symbol, to the ubiquitous fruit we find in every grocery store.



World War 1 & 11 3rd Thursday 10:00

Convenors: Piers Hamid 0274439764 & Heather Howarth 022310

At our meeting we focussed on the war in the Pacific, particularly the battle for the strategic island of Guadalcanal. John Reynolds presented a perspective on the reasons why Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and then Bess Reynolds presented a focus on her father Victor Dawson, a New Zealand corporal who fought with the Americans at Guadalcanal. She spoke of his early life as an Auckland boxing champion and his enlistment in the army at the outbreak of hostilities. She showed photographs taken during the brutal hand-to-hand jungle warfare that characterised the fighting in tropical jungles. Of particular interest was a tape recording told to Shane, one of his grandsons, in which Vic recounted his wartime experiences. This gave all of us a realistic view from a soldier's perspective. Having been wounded he returned to New Zealand where he married his sweetheart Margaret and tried to cope with the recurring nightmares caused by his experiences in fighting the Japanese soldiers in the jungle. In spite of the traumas he experienced Vic had no regrets in playing his part in keeping New Zealand free from the threat of tyranny.

Next month we are going to look at Barnes Wallace and the Dambusters raid

Answers to Puzzle

- (1) R. The letters are the last letter of the months of the year in order
- (2) Think about the story of Goldilocks and the 3 bears
- (3) It is called a **Tittle** as in the saying "every jot and tittle"
- (4) Take the fourth upright on the left and rotate it 90 degrees - giving $111 - 11 = 100$
- (5) Several answers: "queue". Take away the letter u and the letter e and you are left with q.
"loner" - remove the letters l and r and you are left with "one" [Many answers possible]

U3A Meadowbank Winter series 2026

New Zealand History past, present, and future

7 August: Topic: Education Presenter: Peter Lineham
MNZM

Emeritus Professor Peter Lineham was born in Karamea and educated at Burnside High in Christchurch and Canterbury University, graduating with an honours degree in history. He was awarded a Commonwealth scholarship and completed a Ph.D. at Sussex University.

Peter taught history at Massey University for forty years both at the Palmerston North and Albany Campuses, retiring in 2019. His specialities are religious and social history, areas in which he has published extensively. He is well known as a go-to-person by media for informed commentary on current religious, social and moral issues and is a very popular public speaker. For many years Peter has been involved as a voluntary prison visitor. His community and historical contributions were recognised in his appointment as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2019.

14 August: Topic: Health Presenter: Dr Stephen
Child

Stephen Child: Chief Medical Officer Southern Cross Health Society, General Medicine physician at Auckland City Hospital. Member of the Medical Council of NZ and advisor to other Medical Training Networks.

Stephen will present a relatively common case study familiar to him and many other medics, and discuss how this particular case study would have been treated in 1920, 1970, 2020 and 2025.

Because Stephen's information has come from his research, there will be lively interaction with our audience where some of our own would have been working "at the coalface" in these timeframes.

For each time period he will discuss:

What care options were available and at what cost?

What hospital options were available and at what cost?

What treatment options were available at the time?

What malpractice protection did patients have at the time?

Other topics from the floor?

21 August Topic: Economics Presenter: Professor
Brian Easton

Brian Easton is a prominent New Zealand economist, public policy analyst and author, known for his extensive work on the New Zealand economy, social policy and economic history. Over several decades he has contributed widely through academic research, journalism and advisory roles and is recognised for making complex economic issues accessible to the public.

Fridays 7, 14, and 21 August from 10 - 12pm at St Chads

Morning tea provided

Cost \$60.00

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