

**December 2021**



**Browns Bay Newsletter**

## **WEBINAR MEETING**

**Tuesday 7 December 10am – 11.00am**

This month we are again having our main meeting using Webinar. This Webinar will have three parts to it. Firstly Fay Weatherly will introduce some videos made by the members of the Creative Audio Visual SIG group. This will be followed by Peter Dawson, with a talk on “The Island of Antikythera”. Finally Garry Clark’s ukulele group will present, probably with a surprise and a Christmas song, a great way to end the year.

The meeting will last approximately one hour. Details on accessing the meeting and the required link will be sent out prior to the meeting by Garry Clark. Joining is just a matter of providing your email address and name on the link. It’s that easy!

## **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Hello members,

So we have struggled to the end of 2021, and I am proud to say that the Committee has been able to provide you with continuous monthly U3A general meetings, whether face to face or through Webinar. We have been lucky enough to have Guy Slocum presenting very professionally to us through Webinar, as well as Steve Hoadley last month, on Geopolitics of Pandemics, and extremely interesting it was, showing us major pandemic history dating from 165 to now. The greatest number of deaths came from the 1918 influenza pandemic (40m+), however we are not over this pandemic yet.

Our Auckland U3A Network President, Margaret Gane, gave a very insightful presentation of a village which locked itself down to prevent other villages from infection during a plague pandemic. I can't say that all Aucklanders have been as disciplined, with leakages to the North and South; however, the majority of us have gritted our teeth and endured. Face to face presenters have also given us entertaining and interesting talks. Not to mention the Special Interest Group presentations, which have been very well presented. Thanks to you all.

I can't let the year end without thanking the Committee for the work they have put in on your behalf, to keep our U3A active and interesting. We are a great Committee. Have you had your turn on the Committee yet? We are a friendly bunch of people, nominations for Committee members can come in now until the 11th January 2022. It would be good to have 3 more people join us. We will send out nomination forms later, which must be accepted and seconded.

Terry, John E and John R and Garry have kept us 'alive' during our face to face meetings and Garry has done wonders again in organising our Webinars. We love your introductions Garry. Fay W and John Ewen have helped a lot to support Convenors who were able to arrange zoom meetings for their groups. Thank you Convenors, for the work you are putting into your groups.

Our first (hopefully) face to face meeting will be 1st February 2022. We have a broad membership base, including those who are elderly and immune compromised.

As a committee and being responsible for the safety and wellbeing of members, we support the government's position which is that vaccination is essential to ensure community safety. Therefore we will be requiring that those members who attend general and SIG group meetings in the New Year are able to provide evidence of a vaccine pass, should this be requested and wear a mask. We will continue to monitor government requirements for group meetings, and update you as these may occur. I promised a picture of my rose bush, and here it is.

I wish you all a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year, and look forward to catching up with you in 2022. If you are leaving Auckland for the holiday break, take care, only take yourselves and your loved ones with you, not Covid hangers-on.

Val Lloyd



## NOTICES

### **Learning what other SIG groups do**

If you know in advance what the topic is going to be for your next SIG meeting you might find it an advantage to broadcast it in your SIG report for the newsletter. As long as you clear it with the Convenor first, you are welcome to attend any Browns Bay SIG meeting.

### **Having your SIG meeting on zoom**

It's made such a difference to our club to be able to continue to meet either through Zoom or Webinar portals. Fay Weatherly

has already helped many SIG groups continue to have regular meetings via Zoom. She is happy to help other SIGs get started with Zoom. She has also offered to run private practices for people wanting to use PowerPoint on Zoom for the first time.

### **SIG meetings in private homes in lockdown and when we move to the Traffic Light System**

We will be following the Government regulations and restrictions relating to face masks (mandatory)' continuing social distancing (2 meters apart) and use of vaccine passes.

### **New Inquiries to join U3A**

If you know anyone who is interested in joining our U3A, please pass their names onto our Membership Liaison Myfanwy Van Hoffen. Your committee has prepared a whole "interest pack" for any such inquiries. Applications and details are on the contact page

### **U3A Browns Bay Facebook page**

Come and join us on U3A Browns Bay Facebook. You can add your photos and all the exciting topics and outings of your SIG for others to read and maybe gain more members. The only rule is that all content must be related to U3A and its members.

## **NEWS FROM THE RECENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Committee meeting**

Your committee meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month, to deal with matters arising, and to agree and finalise your newsletter. This means you are up to date with the Committee's

deliberations. The Committee meeting has been included in the table of SIG meetings.

### **Subscription year**

Your committee has decided that the subscription year for the Club shall be from 1 January to 31 December, i.e. a calendar year. Subscription notices will be sent out early in 2022. All members who are currently financial will be considered as paid up to 31 December 2021.

### **AGM**

The AGM will be held in February 2022. Further information relating to the AGM will be sent out in December.

### **Active Travellers**

In our October Zoom meeting, Maureen and Scott did a presentation entitled Travelling Art to be enjoyed with a Latte. They took us on a journey seeing art around Europe, starting with Vermeer's beautiful 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' in the Mauritshuis and the unusual pictures in the Escher Museum, both in the Hague, to the canal-side Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. From there we travelled to Florence, to see paintings and statues, including from the Vasari corridor across the Ponte Vecchio. A stay in the scenic hilltop village of Casperia near Rome was enjoyed by everyone. Then it was onto the fascinating, modern Israel Museum in Jerusalem, to see stunning architecture, modern art, and sculpture including the Shrine of the Book which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls. Our trip ended back in the Netherlands with the tulips and flowers of the famous Keukenhof gardens.

For our last meeting of the year, members sent in YouTube videos of interesting travel destinations which Lucy collated into a presentation via Zoom. We started by viewing the vast range of wildflowers to be found in the Western Australia national parks. Next was a drone view of the tiny mountainous country of Montenegro, followed by a look at Norwegian Christmas customs in the small village of Drobak and the capital, Oslo. The next two films showed first the beautiful architecture of the fascinating Canadian Museum of Human Rights with its stunning Tower of Hope, in Winnipeg. The second featured some of the museum's displays on human rights - a very appropriate subject during these times of protest and discord. The final video was '10 Places You Should Never Visit'. Perhaps the glimpses of these scary and daunting places reminded us that it's not all bad not being able to travel these days!

## **Archaeology**

Sylvia discussed the "ice man" named Otzi, whose frozen remains were found in the alpine area between Italy and Austria. His amazing clothing and tools were examined and found out more about his diet and general state of health. Evelyn then discussed the mummies which have been unearthed in the Tarim Basin which is on the ancient Silk Road route which connected China to Rome. Some of these very people looked Caucasian and examination of their clothing revealed wool from western sheep not the local Asian breeds.



However it seems that many traders and travelers followed this route for thousands of years which may explain how they came to live and die here also.



## Art History

Our Zoom presentation from Patricia this month was an investigation into the work of Dale Chihuly, an American glass artist and sculptor. He is known for vibrantly-coloured blown and sculpted glass baskets, seashell-like shapes, chandeliers, and large and ambitious sculptural installations found in gardens and museums around the world.

If you have visited the Sculptureum at Matakana, you may have seen two of his pieces in the indoor gallery. The striking colours and fluid shapes of the small pink and blue bowl and the large orange chandelier make them unmistakably Dale Chihuly creations



## **Art Potpourri** No report this month

### **Book\_Group**

As has now become our habit we held two Zoom meetings in November and discussed the following books: *Last One at the Party* by Bethany Clift; *Still* by Matt Nable; *The Madison Gap* by Patricia Donovan; *The Turnout* by Megan Abbott; *The End of Her* by Shari Lapena; *White Bodies* by Jane Robins; *The Sanatorium* by Sarah Pearse; *Year of Wonders: a novel of the plague* and *Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks; *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller; *A Place of Hiding* by Elizabeth George; *The Thursday Murder Club* and *The Man Who Died Twice* by Richard Osman; *Moonflower Murders* by Anthony Horowitz; *The Ghost* by Robert Harris; *The Dickens Boy* by Tom Keneally; *The Accidental Teacher* by Time Heath; *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein; *Beautiful World, Where are You* by Sally Rooney; *Treasure and Dirt* by Chris Hammer; *Snow* by John Banville; *The Man of Numbers* and *Finding Fibonacci* by Keith Devlin; *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell; *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens; *Tell Me Lies* by J P Pomare; *The Housemate* by Sarah Bailey; *Prison Break* by Arthur Taylor; *Farewell Kabul* by Christina Lamb; *The Long Call*, *The Heron's Cry* and *Burial of Ghosts* by Ann Cleeves; *A Line to Kill* by Anthony Horowitz; *Before You Knew My Name* by Jacqueline Bublitz; *The Radium Girls* by Kate Moore; *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot; *The Scene of the Crime* and *Missing Persons* by Steve Braunias and *How to Make a Dress* by Jenny Packham

### **Books and Beyond**

As expected our reports on our reading for the year were not only interesting but provided many titles suitable for holiday



reading. Also , as expected, our members experienced many different ways of actually accessing reading material ranging from scouring our own bookshelves and swapping with bubble members to 'click and collect' drop offs from friends. A number of members reported excellent results from the digital collection from the library as well as Kindles and other reading devices. Our thanks to John and Monette for guiding us through some successful Zoom meetings.

We are all looking forward to meeting in person in the coming year..

**Classical Music** No report this month

### **Creative audio visual**

We welcomed Barry to his second meeting with us and Lois who was able to link to the newly installed Fibre connection in her area. We had missed her contributions over lockdown. Roy also joined us from Blenheim. The November theme was 'A Video of your Choice'. There was the usual variety of good shows to enjoy from Lucy, Val, Geoff, Fay and Lois. Our Christmas Challenge viewing will be held at Lucy's under Covid rules. We are looking forward to meeting in person! Some members are learning to use PTE AV Studio to produce their contributions. It offers a free one month trial and good YouTube instructional videos to get you started. Try it over the Christmas break. Call any CAV member if you need a bit of help. We'd love new members.

**Creative Writing** No report this month

### **Current Affairs**

Well the end of the year approaches and it looks as though we are not going to be able to meet again this year, chiefly because

of the unavailability of our meeting room at Heart of the Bays community centre. But we did have some well prepared, stimulating and interesting topics discussed when we were able to meet.

Next year beckons...

**Cycling** No report this month

**Dance** No report this month

**Early NZ History** No report this month

### **Famous and Infamous**

This month we held a Zoom meeting with a guest speaker who gave us an excellent PowerPoint presentation on the famous builder of a famous tower - Gustave Eiffel. We then learnt about the gruesome history of the infamous Tyburn Tree.

**Film Appreciation** No report this month

**Foodies** No report this month

### **Français pour rire**

We had our last meeting for the year on 22nd November. Patricia Smith spoke to us about Gustav Eiffel, the man, his works - that were numerous - and of course his tower. This was built in 1889 and was to have been pulled down after 20 years. Thank goodness it wasn't! What would Paris be without it?! Fay then gave us a bit of translation before we retired to a French picnic lunch in Fay's Torbay garden - with only a few showers!

## **Genealogy**

In our November Zoom meeting, Val shared details of a 'mystery man' discovered in her background from DNA testing. She was given suggestions on ways of using the DNA results to help identify her relationship to him, which was probably through his unknown father. Val next took us a tour around the New Zealand Society of Genealogists (NZSG) website. For those who aren't members, it was interesting and helpful to see what is on offer in terms of resources and help with research. Gay provided information about the 'Lost Cousins' newsletter and offered to send around details on how to subscribe to it as well as how to access the latest UK General Registry Office Birth and Deaths indexes. The meeting ended with the hope that we might be able to meet in person next year and perhaps have our end of year lunch in the Autumn.

## **International Studies**

We met by Zoom again this month and a good number of members joined in. Dorothy talked about the city of Amsterdam, its historical beginnings from 12th to 20th Centuries and the development during that time. Known as the "Venice of the North" the Dutch damming the sea enabled many parts of the country to be liveable. With a 2.5 million population the city has a reputation for religious and social tolerance, stemming from the 16th century.

The Golden age of Amsterdam was the 17th Century with a vibrant port exchanging goods around the world; Europe's first financial centre leading to the world's first stock market ; Flemish printers settled there and started larger scale printing. The 20th Century was marked by the Nazi invasion and Anne Frank's famous diary describing Jewish families hiding in attics.

Dorothy also talked about famous Dutch painters, especially Rembrandt. Famed for its canals, which run through the streets and are used for commerce and tourism, the architecture of the Rijksmuseum and Concertgebouw concert hall Amsterdam attracts 5.5 million visitors annually

## Inventors and Inventions

12 members logged on to a Zoom meeting. John Ewen gave us an enlightening presentation on the Fibonacci Sequence of numbers, the facts and fallacies about them and the Golden Ratio. Terry finished the meeting with a video on Mint Innovations in Auckland who are revolutionising the recovery of gold, copper and palladium from waste electronics using a combination of electrolytic recovery and microbes to digest the metals. The company, which is a spin-off from LanzaTech who convert carbon dioxide into ethanol with microbes, has obtained grants to open much larger extraction plants in the USA. They say there is more gold in a tonne of electronic waste (100-400g) than there is per tonne of rock in a typical gold mine (1-10g).



**Local History** No report this month

**Mah Jong** Start time 10 am and new members welcome

### **Medical Science and History**

A Zoom Meeting. Fay gave the main presentation on Florence Nightingale. Florence is well known for revolutionizing nursing practices, especially during the Crimean War. By providing basic hygiene, food and good nursing, she considerably reduced the death toll amongst the wounded soldiers. In 1860 Florence established the first professional nursing school in the world at St Thomas' Hospital, London. What is not so well known is that Florence was one of the first women statisticians in the world. Helped by a statistician friend, she was able to analyse the data that she had collected about the causes of death at the hospital in Scutari, bringing her to the conclusion that good hygiene was the essential factor in a good recovery. Her conclusions were on the cusp of the dawning realisation that illness and death were caused by 'germs' not by 'miasma' [bad smells]. Her work, with others, was responsible for the life expectancy in England going up by about 20 years. Her picture appeared on a British bank note, the first woman's to do so. Topics for discussion included: Covid-19 Vaccination and some treatments. Also the impact on the Health System - cancelled surgeries etc and the costs involved.

### **Modern History**

Colin wowed us all with his zoom presentation on "**Taiwan: What does the future hold for this Breakaway Province of China known as the Republic of China ?**" Xi Jinping and the

CCP insist that Taiwan is an integral part of China and must be re-united with the mainland by force if necessary.

Taiwan, a self governing Democratic country , enjoying all the benefits of a democracy, has no desire or intent to re-unite with the authoritarian communist mainland. They totally reject the "One Country-Two Systems" concept of governance having witnessed how this "worked out" in Hong Kong.

The United States is caught between a rock and a hard place in offering any advice or assistance in resolving this burning issue. Taiwan thus remains one of the most dangerous flashpoints in the world today.

Our thanks to John Ewen for negotiating us through to some successful Zoom meetings. We are all looking forward to meeting up again in the new year.

**Music - Mainly Classical**    In recess

### **Puzzles Patterns & Paradoxes**

Our Zoom meeting was well attended and enjoyed by all. Here are a few of our puzzles:

1. What is prestidigitation?
2. What do these words or phrases have in common: Tomorrow, Private Salt, He hates me ?
3. What are the words represented by the arrows?
  - (a) novel     $\uparrow \rightarrow \leftarrow$
  - (b) perceived     $\downarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \uparrow$
  - (c) darned     $\downarrow \rightarrow \leftarrow \uparrow$
  - (d) You and I:  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$

Answers at the end of the newsletter

## **Renaissance**

Our October Zoom meeting had 14 people joining in, including one in convalescence in bed. The meeting began with a talk by Sylvia on the nature of universities during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The earliest universities emerged in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Latin was the universal language of scholarship, allowing students and teachers to move freely between countries. While initially universities focused on teaching revered texts, especially the writings of the ancient Greeks, during the late Middle ages and Renaissance they also became the location of empirical scholarship and scientific research.

Bess 's talk was about Grace O'Malley who was a 16<sup>th</sup> Century pirate and is celebrated in Ireland as a remarkable leader respected not only by her own people but also her sworn enemy The English. Rejecting the role of a 16<sup>th</sup> Century noble born, Grace embraced life on the sea along the rugged West Coast of Ireland where she ruled for decades. Ambitious and fiercely independent, her exploits eventually became known not only in Ireland but also in England leading her to a meeting with Queen Elizabeth. On meeting her Grace refused to bow, saying she didn't recognise the Queen as sovereign of Ireland. Interesting to note, they both spoke in Latin to each other as neither was proficient in each other's language. Born in 1533 and died of natural causes in 1603. Grace had 2 husbands and 4 children. The 4<sup>th</sup> child being the 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount of Mayo.

**The Maori World** No report this month

**Travel** No report this month

## **Ukulele**

Meetings Via Zoom on all Wednesdays at 1.30pm until 90% double jabbed in all of Auckland. Even then ???

Answers to Puzzles Patterns and Paradoxes:

1. Sleight of hand

2. The opposites are Beatles songs: Yesterday, Sergeant Pepper, She loves me.

3.(a)New, (b)seen (c)sewn (d) we [the arrows point to directions on the compass]