



August 2013

U3A Bay of Islands, PO Box 833, Kerikeri 0245

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From the President Lesley McNaughton

We were all shocked and deeply saddened by Marilyn Lescher's sudden death. Her health had been fragile for many years but she had survived other crises and she appeared to be very much her usual self when she attended her U3A Shakespeare group on Wednesday 10th July. So it was a shock to learn that she had died that night, but nice to hear that she'd enjoyed her last day and slipped away peacefully in her sleep.

In recent years Marilyn devoted herself to U3A. It became her life and she loved it. She facilitated many of our groups in her home and was a keen participant in lots of other groups. She enjoyed the company and the lively conversations on a wide range of subjects.

During her five years on the committee Marilyn undertook many tasks and we all benefited from her enthusiasm, organizational skills and attention to details. Her achievements included the splendid lunch party to celebrate the first ten years of U3A BOI and a fabulous summer Soirée with music from Lounge Sweet wafting over the lawns of Kingston House.

However, Marilyn's greatest contribution was the U3A newsletter, which she edited for many years. This is our main communication with members and plays an essential role in welding our many interest groups into a cohesive organization. It is also the most important item in our information pack for potential members. Marilyn rightly took great pride in the newsletters she produced - she used to tell me that sending off the latest issue was like giving birth.

Marilyn treated every day as a gift and enjoyed life to the full - a great example for everyone of how to cope with disabilities and get on with life. She touched all our lives and we will miss her. Lesley



U3A General Meeting

Valerie and Rex Hunton

will treat us to a presentation called

Turning Point.

In 1987 they left New Zealand to work in the Pacific, Rex to teach a new way of medicine and Valerie to teach a new way in visual arts.

10:30 am Monday 19 August

St John Ambulance Hall, Kerikeri Road

Please bring finger food for our shared lunch. Kitchen Duty: Western Civilisation

From your committee

New members

Welcome to Ian and Sue Robertson. We hope you'll enjoy U3A and make many new friends.

Newsletter Editors

Ngairé Bates is now our Newsletter Editor and Iris Steensma is our Deputy Editor. We are lucky to have two such creative and capable members ready to take on this important task. Group reports should be emailed to Ngairé as soon as possible after each meeting. mikni@ihug.co.nz

Ngairé is also our Secretary so please pass on to her the names and contact details of any prospective members so that she can send them an information pack and contact them.

Group News - Margaret Rasmussen reporting

Iberian Studies has now finished. Many thanks to the facilitator, David Fisher, and to Joan Lawrence who hosted the meetings. The members enjoyed being together so much that they will meet in Joan's home at their normal time on 9th August to discuss forming another group. This will be announced in the next newsletter so that all members have a chance to join.

Sadly we have had to rearrange the groups that were facilitated by Marilyn Lescher.

Shakespeare One will now be facilitated by Lindsay Matterson. A backup facilitator will be sought by the group at their August meeting. Please see the Course Schedule for further details.

Book Discussion One will meet in August at the home of Cecilia Robertson. The group will decide at that meeting whether they wish to appoint a facilitator or share this duty. See the Course Schedule.

We would like to thank Lindsay and Cecilia for their help.

Unfortunately the **Art History Two** group has become so small that it is no longer viable so this group will go into recess. We may decide to form a new Art History group at a later date if there are sufficient numbers interested.

Please remember to give the facilitator of your group a call if you are unable to attend a meeting.

At this stage of the year we would welcome suggestions for new groups so, if you have a subject you would like to explore or, if you are willing to facilitate a group, please contact Margaret Rasmussen, Course Convenor, (09) 402 8949 or ras1@clear.net.nz. U3A can help with resources for new groups.

Membership Renewal - Subscriptions

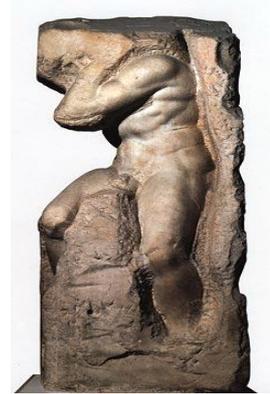
Subscriptions for the 2013-2014 year are overdue. If you haven't paid yet, please help us by paying quickly so that we can send out your nametag for this year. If you have paid but have not received your nametag by the end of July, please contact our Treasurer, Maebeth Hart, preferably by email.

Our 2013 - 2014 Committee			
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From the groups ...

Western Civilisation: Judy Ramsey reporting

Watching *The Hero as Artist*, we moved to Rome. The symbol of the change in the Renaissance, from a world of man to a world of giants and heroes, is best illustrated by the Belvedere, designed by the architect Donato Bramante, in the courtyard of the Vatican, known as 'Il Nicchione' (the monster niche).



When Pope Julius II decided to put his own stamp on the face of Rome by pulling down and rebuilding the Church of St Peter, he hired three men of genius to carry his project through; Michelangelo, Raphael and the architect Donato Bramante. Julius also commissioned a grandiose tomb for himself, which never eventuated, although Michelangelo did complete some sculptures destined for the tomb, and some half-finished sculptures known collectively as 'the prisoners'. These half-finished sculptures seem to be fighting to free themselves of the marble from which they were being carved. Michelangelo believed the sculptor was just a tool of God, who could, with divine guidance, reveal the figure already contained within the marble. We may never know why they were incomplete, or whether Michelangelo purposely left them that way to depict the 'spirit of the stone'.

Another hero is Leonardo da Vinci. He arrived in Rome in 1513 and although technically he is a Renaissance Man, he has become accepted as a man belonging to any era because his curiosity, sketches and imagination are applicable to any age.

Next month: *Protest and Communication*

Music Appreciation: Hilary Mowat reporting



Our topic of *Born in the USA* gave us a large variety of composers to listen to. From the Phillip Glass violin concerto (surprise - we liked it!!!) to unknown to us composers such as Richard Whiting and Carl Davis. No American music scene would be without George Gershwin. We even had a contribution of a Paul Simon concert held in Africa.

Next month will feature a concert on DVD. Come and see who and what will be playing.

Philosophy: Robert Wright reporting

In the first part of the meeting we had a group discussion on two readings: the first *Metaethics* and the second *If moral claims cannot be known by observation, how can they be known?* These readings are an approach to the centre of our group's focus in seeking a theory of why it is that prima facie we know that an action is right or wrong. We now understand these moral values are abstract, not physical, and questions about them fall within the metaethics' domain, and thus, the value placed upon them is by humans.

This value is held by some to be 'Culturally Relative', dependent upon the society in which we live, others believe these values can be reduced to natural properties and deny they are abstract. The questions were asked - Is morality a myth? Are morals simply emotions? Are they commands from a divine authority? The group explored all these with, it seemed, the inference to the best explanation inclining towards cultural relativity.

However, later in the meeting we examined Michael Huemer's theory of 'Ethical Intuitionism', an alternative view that will be continued and concluded upon during our next meeting. The August meeting will also introduce the theory that Darwinian evolutionism played a great role in shaping our moral attitudes.

C19th New Zealand History: Pam Jenkins reporting for both groups

In this last session, we considered the Vogel scheme for building infrastructure, which included large-scale Government assisted immigration. It was at this time, many Scandinavian immigrants arrived settling mainly in what became Dannevirke and Norsewood. Te Kooti, who had been imprisoned on the Chatham Islands without trial, had a vision and established the Ringatu faith. Along with other Hau Hau adherents who had been imprisoned with him, he escaped and war broke out again on the East Coast. The passive resistance at Parihaka, led by Te Whiti and Tohu, and the community established by Rua Kenana at Maungapohatu in the Urewera, were both destroyed as a result of Government action. The shots fired at Maungapohatu were the last shots of the New Zealand Wars. Resistance to a Dog Tax at Waima in the Hokianga was resolved without resort to arms.

On 17th August there will be a meeting at James Kemp Hall at 1.30 pm when the new organisation Heritage Northland will take the place of the Northland Branch Committee of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Those interested in Northland History will have the new structure explained by Shonagh Kenderdine, Chair of the NZHPT Board.

Creative Writing: Joy Olds reporting

The Creative Writing group had a pleasant session with a possible new member attending as well as Margaret, the U3A Course Co-ordinator. After reading out our efforts for the month, and a lot of general discussion on how and where the group is going, we decided the task for August should be:

1) Write something using the phrase "on the night of the full moon" and 2) write something describing a 'first'. Plenty of scope there for some interesting writing. Next month's meeting is at Joy's home on Friday 9th August at 2 pm. New or interested members will be welcome.

History of Aviation: Hilary Mowat reporting

Top Dressing Aircraft was our topic, and we had anecdotes and technical things to talk about. One member had often watched his farm being top-dressed from an aircraft and was so into planes that he made his own!

I related the story about some Fletcher Top Dressers sold to someone in Turkey. After months of waiting these aircraft remained unpaid for. Several pilots flew into Turkey and flew the planes out of the country. To stay under the radar (literally) they could only fly at a maximum of fifty feet above the ground. Next month we'll look at 'work horse' aeroplanes and more top dressers.

Art History One: Diana Sandifer reporting

At the age of 70, homeless and destitute, Katsushika Hokusai produced, what were to become his greatest works, *The 36 Views of Mount Fuji* (c. 1831) and in particular *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

In his earlier life he had become a master at the art of Ukiyo-e (Floating World), a genre of woodblock art that drew on motifs from the pleasure world of theatre, geisha and courtesans. These prints were mass produced and cheap. This art was distinctly Japanese, developing as it did in the insulated world of 18th century Japan.



With the opening of Japan's borders to trade, artists in Japan were exposed to European ideas and, in turn, Japanese art came to influence many European Impressionist artists of the time. Hokusai's work was also influential in the development of Art Nouveau and Japonism.

In turn, his famous works show the influence of western ideas in art - realism, perspective and the use of the new colour dye Prussian Blue.

The Great Wave has been imbued with many new meanings in both East and West. It has become an image for all time and all cultures.

This fascinating study was followed by lively debate on cross-cultural influences in present day art.

Iberian Studies: David Fisher reporting

Iberian Studies met on Friday 12th July for the very last time in its current form. We have reinvented ourselves twice before and there is some desire for us to do so a third time, but as the saying goes - "Watch this space". There is another that might apply should the reinvention materialise, namely - "Under new management". Anyway on this last occasion we had a look at the Spanish and Portuguese Atlantic Islands, so we finished in effect in holiday mode. Well, your correspondent did. He recalled a short holiday in La Gomorra in the Canaries 25 years ago. Why you may ask? Indeed! It's probably still much the same. No beaches, well some shingle with pebbles 30cms in diameter. The very worst roads, much like the beaches, and the very worst wine I've ever tried to drink.

Book Discussion One

This group's meeting was postponed until August. See the Course Schedule.

Book Discussion Two: Gillian Topfer reporting

Our venue was Eileen's lovely new house in Oakridge Village and our topic was "The Environment" which produced a variety of books in accordance with our readers' interests.

Counter Attack - Against Subtopia by Ian Nairn was the most unusual and it dealt with architecture and town planning for postwar England. It divided the country into Metropolis, Town, Arcadia, Country and Wild and had wonderful photos that had been touched up to show suitable treatment for each category. *Waterways* by James Crowden explored England's waterways from their sources to the sea while *The Land of Ghosts* by David Campbell looked at the Amazonian rainforest and the way the rubber trees were pirated. *Sanctuary* by Eric Dorfman was about sanctuaries in NZ including the Far North, well worth reading by anyone who wants to visit the areas mentioned in the book. David Attenborough's *Life on Earth* dealt with life on this planet from the beginnings to the present and, from Bill Bryson's *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, the section on Charles Darwin showed his struggle, as someone brought up with religion, to present his findings without upsetting the Church too much. A collection of academic essays edited by Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking called *Environmental Histories of NZ* contained accounts of the transformations of nature that occurred following Maori and later European colonisation of NZ. And *The Future Eaters* by Tim Flannery explained how humans consume the things they need to sustain their future.

Our Next topic is a book that is quirky, odd or unusual.

Greek Odyssey Wednesday: Gillian Topfer reporting:

We knew this course was going to be challenging, educational and fun. Did we expect to be given the Greek Alphabet to learn as homework? - no, not exactly. Did we know that we would recognize our own names written in Greek on the first day? - no, not really. Let me add the word exciting to the course description because this happened and we did.



We watched a short Documentary on the Myth of Theseus and the Minotaur of Knossos. The Minotaur was the ghastly offspring of King Minos' wife Pasiphae and a white bull, the gift of Poseidon, and was born with the head of a bull and the body of a man and had a predilection for devouring young men and women. King Minos then had the Labyrinth built to contain the monster and, until the hero Theseus came on the scene, 7 young men and 7 young women were sacrificed to the Minotaur each year. Theseus killed the monster. Then we segue to 1899 AD when a British archaeologist, Arthur Evans purchased land in Crete and during the next year unearthed an ancient palace with

grounds that covered 2.2 hectares and was laid out in a way to suggest the legendary labyrinth, associated with King Minos, causing Evans to name the civilisation Minoan. A look at early Greek pottery taught us to recognise black-figure pots and red-figure pots.

Greek Odyssey Friday: Tom Lindsay reporting

A new course, a new group; what were we getting into? Ancient Greece, Plato, Aristotle et al? No, much earlier than that, in a time most of us think of as being prehistory. This first meeting was to look at Ancient Crete and its contribution to classical Greece. There is evidence of habitation there as early as 7,000 BCE and of a possible civilization around 5,000 BCE, the first in Europe. A start was made with an introduction to the Greek alphabet, and it was intriguing to find the familiar pi, from maths calculations, masquerading as the lower case Greek p. We all acquired Greek names but have yet to learn how to pronounce them.

Preliminaries over we watched part of the *Minotaur's Island* which covered the myth of the fabled Minotaur, the rule of King Minos and his Palace of Knossos, the political and commercial power exercised by the Minoan's at their peak and the mystery of their eventual decline and extinction. Inevitably much of what we know is based on the interpretations of archaeological discoveries, particularly those of Alfred Evans and part of our discussion focused on their accuracy and the integrity of some of the reconstructions. Still slides of artefacts and pictures added to the discussion and we acquired the knowledge to recognise pre and post 520 BCE pottery. The finale was a video of the modern equivalent of an ancient Minoan custom, bull leaping. So ended the first lesson and eight participants left with whetted appetites, looking forward to our August meeting



Opera Wednesday: Elva Clark reporting

In July we enjoyed watching *The Marriage of Figaro*, a 1998 Metropolitan production conducted by James Levine. With Bryn Terfel, Cecilia Bartoli and Renee Fleming in the major roles, how could this ever-popular light-hearted opera be anything but wonderful viewing?

Our August Opera will be director Joseph Losey's film version of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*; filmed on location in Vincenza, Italy with Ruggero Raimondi as the philanderer Don Giovanni, Jose Van Dam his servant Leporello, Kiri Te Kanawa as Donna Elvira and Teresa Berganza as Zerlina and the orchestra and chorus of the Paris Opera. About 176 minutes. This meeting will be at Jan Flower's home.

Opera Thursday: Mary Johnson reporting

At our last meeting we really enjoyed watching a Metropolitan Opera production of *Eugene Onegin* starring Renée Fleming, Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Ramon Vargas. The Conductor, Valery Gergiev, was a joy to watch with his fluttering right hand prompting one viewer to wonder if he was a pianist in his other life.

Superlatives flow all too easily but were well earned; the singing, the casting, the acting, the costuming and the staging which deserves special mention with the minimal props of masses of autumn leaves or chairs delineating a party space or a ballroom on an otherwise large bare stage. Clever stuff.



There was even a credible story line. It could well have been subtitled 'That which goes around, comes around'. Self-absorbed Eugene Onegin asks socially inexperienced Tatiana (from that god-forsaken town on the steppes) how she doesn't get bored with country life. Tatiana, an avid reader of the day's Mills and Boon equivalents, falls for the handsome stranger and stays up all night writing him a passionate letter which next day is curtly rebuffed. Years pass before they meet again, by which time she a self-composed and charming married woman, and world weary Onegin realises too late what he let slip through his fingers and writes her a passionate letter which is duly rejected. Of course there is much more to the story than this...

In August we will be watching Mozart's singspiel, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

Shakespeare One: Lindsay Matterson reporting

A mixture of both Shakespeare groups was present including Marilyn at her last U3A outing. She had prepared a synopsis as well as Margaret Lindsay so we could pick and choose. *King Lear* seemed quite a challenge and it certainly was. We were very grateful for the subtitles. The colour seemed mainly absent but black and white added to the gloomy theme. It requires a very experienced actor in the title role and Michael Hordern was excellent as he had at least half the dialogue. The daughters, sons and various Dukes were all good and we were pleased that many of the (no doubt) gory deaths were enacted off stage.

Next month we will watch *The Winter's Tale*

Shakespeare Two: Jack Beggs reporting

We watched *A Winter's Tale*, which was superbly acted, as are all of these BBC series.

So many of Shakespeare's plays seem to employ a theme where a king's or lord's wife is wrongly accused of adultery. The cuckold is a recurring character in Elizabethan drama and literature. In this case, it all ends happily.

King Leontes of Sicily is convinced, wrongly, that his wife Hermione is having an affair with his boyhood friend, Polixenes the King of Bohemia, who is visiting. Leontes imprisons her where she gives birth to their daughter. He believes that he is not the father and orders the child to be abandoned in Bohemia. He has sent messengers to consult the Oracle at Delphi who returns with a message absolving Hermione. He initially refuses to believe this, but by thus offending the god Apollo, causes his son to die and Hermione to collapse in apparent death. Leontes spends years lamenting his foolishness.

The baby is found and raised by a shepherd, and by a series of improbable coincidences is wooed by Florizel, the son of the Bohemian King. As you can predict, when Perdita's origins are discovered, everyone is reconciled and they are married, thus re-uniting the two estranged kings. The final dénouement is when Hermione is apparently resurrected from the dead. Shakespeare does not make it clear whether she was not really dead in the first place or it is some sort of miracle, however, we must allow the great man his licence.

Next month we watch *Twelfth Night*.

French Conversation: Stephanie Beggs reporting

Health matters seemed to be on our minds this month. Amongst other things we discussed the perils of smoking and links between cancer and the fluoridation of water - a highly controversial subject with many arguments for and against. Our thanks to Ann and Howard Lunn for their hospitality.

On Sunday July 14th, six members of the group met at the home of Hilary and David Mowat to celebrate Bastille Day. After a glass of wine and a rousing chorus of *La Marseillaise* we settled down to enjoy a delicious four course lunch, each course provided by a group member. Salade de carottes, Coq au Vin, Fromage, and Crème Brûlée were on the menu. We all agreed that this was a most enjoyable way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Merci beaucoup tout la monde et "Vive La France!"

Computer/Camera: Heather Pickup reporting

We met at Elsa's new home in Kerikeri, with a full membership present, including Ian Robertson who is a new member. Elsa's daughter Sandra, who is visiting from Dubai, also joined us. Most of our time was spent discussing computer models, genealogy and problems. Ian and Sandra were very generous in helping to solve the problems. Sandra demonstrated how to do a screen shot, which basically means photographing work on your computer screen. She also showed uses for this shot. A discussion was also held on Apple versus Microsoft machines. Our two experts preferring Apple!

Photos taken over the past two months were circulated and admired.

History of Ireland: Lesley McNaughton reporting for both groups

The crash happened on the morning of my meeting with the Wednesday group. My computer wouldn't start so I couldn't use my presentation. Panic - should I postpone the meeting? No, I could change the topic. The Anglo-Norman invasion and conquest of Ireland would have to wait until August. So we looked at the earlier history of the Normans, watching the first part of *The Normans*, presented by Robert Bartlett, Professor of Medieval History at The University of St Andrews.

He showed how the Normans developed from a band of marauding Vikings after they conquered part of northern France and formed Duchy of Normandy. They became Christians, adopted the French language and customs and became famous for both their culture and formidable military prowess.

Duke William invaded England in 1066 and made himself King of England. Normans replaced the Anglo-Saxons as the ruling class of England, savagely cut down all opposition and built scores of castles to intimidate and control the population.



A scene from the Bayeux tapestry

This programme captivated us and we loved seeing details of the Norman abbeys and cathedrals, and of the fabulous Bayeux Tapestry.

We also gained an understanding of why the Normans, driven by their insatiable desire for power, lands, and wealth, were so successful; and how they changed England.

This was such an excellent background for looking at how they changed the Gaelic speaking countries that I will use the same episodes from *The Normans* with the Monday group on 29th July.

Current Affairs Thursday: Stuart Leitch reporting

We shared information from a personal perspective of the recent "Let's Talk Crap" campaign. The costs were felt to be inaccurate, and scaremongering in respect of the existing systems in place, and the Council preference of "reticulation" was under-priced without real capital costs being explained. It clearly did not include other viable options.

It appears that whatever weight the submissions might have, they can be ignored by our elected representatives, and they will make the final decision as they see fit.

We then had a discussion looking at the five-year plan for the Northland District Health Board (NDHB). Statistics were considered which highlighted an aging population with the resources consequently stretched. In addition, depending on the situation or condition being treated, great and difficult distances had to be negotiated to attend one of few hospitals provided in the Region. There was also the possibility that attendance at an Auckland hospital may be needed, at the expense of the NDHB. Other identified difficulties were a lack of privacy in most medical facilities, the need for greater financial resources, and the impact of poverty, which includes diet and smoking. It was agreed that education of schoolchildren may change the impact on the latter problem.

The conclusion was that the economic development of Northland would clearly have a knock-on effect on poverty and healthcare.

The economic development of Northland will feature in next month's meeting.

