

## From the President, Lesley McNaughton ...

It was good to see so many members and guests at our general meeting in February, especially since it was such a wonderful meeting. Kate Martin enthralled us with her lively talk about Bishop Pompallier's mission to Western Oceania and Aotearoa. She showed excerpts from letters and rare illustrations sent back to France by Pompallier and his Marist missionaries. These give a new view of events, people and daily life in New Zealand between 1838 and 1854. In 2009, after 16 years of laborious transcription, the letters were published in nine volumes as *Lettres reçues d'Océanie*.



Kate Martin, Manager of Pompallier Mission at Russell

Kate also showed photos of the 2002 hikoi, when Maori Catholics from Northland brought Pompallier's remains back from France and carried him to places where he had set up missions before they laid him to rest in the church at Motuti in the Hokianga.

Kate has been honoured by the French Government for her research about and promotion of the Pompallier Mission and the considerable depth of her knowledge was really revealed by her answers to questions asked at the end of her talk.

After such an exciting talk, there was a buzz of lively conversations over a delicious lunch. Many thanks to all the members who helped make this occasion such a success.

This meeting replaced the *soirée* we've held in February in the last three years. The Committee decided to return to our earlier practice of having five general meetings because the numbers attending the *soirées* decreased each year. I would welcome any comments from members about this.

You will see on the next page that we are starting six new groups - five in March and one in April. There will also be at least one group starting later in the year. I think it is important to emphasise that groups can start at any time of the year. When talking with people who took U3A information packs at the Senior Expo in October, we found that many were waiting for the New Year to join as they didn't want to join courses that were about to end. They thought our courses all started at the beginning of the year like those of educational institutions. Perhaps we could avoid this confusion by talking about 'interest groups' rather than 'courses'.

Last year we actually started 12 new groups covering six areas of interest: two in February, three in March, two in April and five in July. Five of those groups and five older groups finished before the end of 2012. Of the 10 groups that finished, seven were set up to use a particular resource - either a series of TV episodes or an online course - supplemented by material presented by their facilitators. The other three groups had been running for a long time but ended after their numbers had dwindled.

I would like to thank all our facilitators; we depend on you and it is your enthusiasm and energy that make U3A such a great success. Most facilitators run meetings in their own homes and write the newsletter reports for their groups but this isn't essential, so thanks also to all members who contribute in these ways. Finally a special thanks to Ngaire for all her work organising our new groups.

# From your committee

## New members

Welcome to Rosemary and Tom Everitt, Mary Forder, Valerie Holland, Anne Leitch, Dorothy Merchant, Lil Piripi and Judy Ramsey, who have joined U3A since our last newsletter. We look forward to getting to know you and hope that U3A will enrich your lives, as it has done for so many of us.

## U3A Display in the Proctor Library 4th - 17th March

Please have a look in the library window and encourage your friends to do likewise. Our thanks to Pam Jenkins, the facilitators and other members who are helping with this display.

**New groups** - see the Course Schedule for more information

**Important:** If you put your name down for one of these groups, simply turn up at the first meeting. Please tell Ngaire Bates if you can't attend that meeting or wish to withdraw from the group.

If you are not on Ngaire's lists but would like to join any of the new groups, contact Ngaire:  
Email [mikni@ihug.co.nz](mailto:mikni@ihug.co.nz) phone 09 407 8219

## NZ History in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century - two groups - starting 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March

Pam Jenkins will facilitate two groups supplementing *The New Zealand Wars* TV series with her own material. Ngaire Bates will host a group on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday and Margaret Lindsay will host a group on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month. If you have already put your name down for this group and don't know which group you're in, please contact Ngaire straight away.

## Western Civilisation - starting 13<sup>th</sup> March

This group will view and discuss the TV series *Civilisation - A Personal View* by Kenneth Clark that looks at the history of Western art, architecture, and philosophy and also some of Simon Schama's *Power of Art* series. Judy Barrett will facilitate the group in her home because the number of applicants is now too large for Eileen Welch's home. The group will meet at 10 am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month.

## Philosophy - starting 15<sup>th</sup> March

This group will meet in the home of Jennie Abbott Barnaby on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month. It will be facilitated by Robert Wright who enjoyed our first Philosophy group so much that he did an honours degree at Massey and is now working towards a Masters degree in Philosophy.

## Current Affairs - starting 28<sup>th</sup> March

Since the first Current Affairs group is full, Stuart Leitch will facilitate this new discussion group. It will meet at 1:30 pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month in Stuart and Anne's home.

## Opera group 2 - starting 3<sup>rd</sup> April

Elva Clark will facilitate this group as well as continuing her role in the first Opera group. The new group will meet at 1:30 pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month in the McNaughton home.

## Facilitators' Meeting - advance notice

The annual Facilitators' Meeting will be on the afternoon of 21<sup>st</sup> April at the McNaughton home.

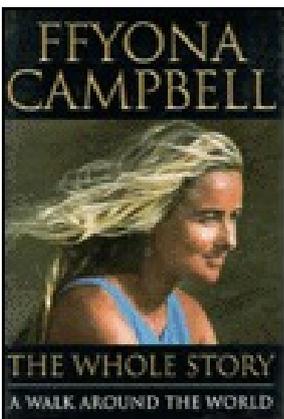
2012 - 2013 Committee			
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## From the groups ...

### Book Discussion One: Marilyn Lescher reporting

With the topic of 'a hero', public or personal, I was anticipating a great session. What I couldn't foresee was that two of our group would have a problem sorting out a hero at all. However, their deliberations were most entertaining. Winston Churchill was eventually chosen by one, despite having been declared to have too many flaws to be a hero. We couldn't accept that, as all humans have flaws. Meanwhile that member is ploughing his way through the three volumes of the trilogy written by the great man himself.

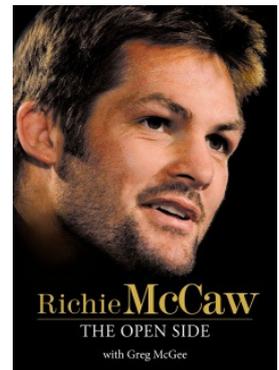
A good choice was Nancy Pickmere, a local admired for her many years as an historical writer; several of her books had been brought along. Sonja Davies, a much-respected New Zealand activist amongst many other accomplishments, was portrayed in *Bread and Roses*. Another notable Kiwi was painter, Rita Angus, especially admired for her firm stance as a woman artist and the uniqueness of her work.



From a British naval family background, a very determined Ffyona Campbell became the first woman to walk around the world. She wrote several books but *The Whole Story* summarises all her journeys.

There were two marvellous sports books: *Richie McCaw, The Open Side*, and *Andre Agassi's Open, an Autobiography*. Both these sports stars are fine men, heroes for zillions of people. McCaw's book, accurately reported as well written, is a real treat. He has been an astonishing achiever all his life: head boy, dux, etc.

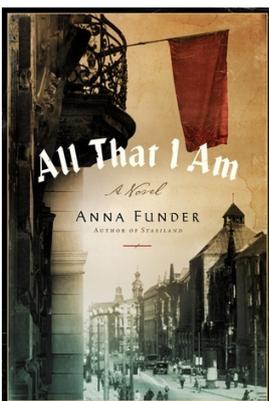
Next month we are to present a book set in Africa.



### Book Discussion Two: Dave Lawton reporting

Our February hosts, Graham French and Gillian Topfer, put on an even more sumptuous and enjoyable tea party than ever. The topic was holiday reading.

*All that I Am* by Anna Funder is a novel about the difficult events for Jews leaving Germany before



WW2 and on arrival in UK, where the welcome was not wholehearted. The events are related from two complimentary viewpoints. The reader could not put it down. *Try Whistling* by Andrew Ford is a volume of essays about classical music and musicians. The reader found it a worthwhile read but it probably requires some previous knowledge of the music and an interest in it.

*The Man Who Left Too Soon* by Barry Forshaw is a biography of Stieg Larsson. His untimely death has given rise to a number of conspiracy theories arising from the number of people who apparently would have liked it to happen. The book concludes that the theories are groundless and that he died of natural causes. The family squabble over the assets of the estate is also related.

*Protecting Paradise in Paihia* tells the story of the Williams House in Paihia which houses the public library. The surprise is that the house is, in fact, not very old. It was a focal point for family get-togethers and also treated as the family bach for holidays. The book moves on to more recent times and tells of shabby attempts to demolish the house in pursuit of greed.

The March meeting topic will be 'Land Sea or Air'.

### Antarctica: Dave Lawton reporting

The February meeting is taking place after the deadline for this issue.

## **Iberian Studies: David Fisher reporting**

In February the group found themselves studying Spain and Portugal's economic and social progress through WWII post-war years, in particular the change in women's 'lot' as both countries emerged from their respective dictatorships. This was both considerable and interesting. In fact, the session finished with the words:

"... only 2 percent of men regularly did the dishes whereas Statistics NZ would have us believe that over a third of retired men in NZ regularly do the vacuuming. It is time perhaps for a movement to protect men's rights (in NZ)."

Anyway, in the normal course of events, at our March meeting we should finish with history on the peninsula, and be in a position to study the geographical regions. Only, before we get around to that, we are expecting something quite different. We are hoping to be addressed by a young Spanish lady who will tell us directly of life in modern Spain.

## **Music Appreciation: Hilary Mowat reporting**

To celebrate the start of the new year we brought along our latest CD purchases. The music covered from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Trad, that most prolific of composers, gave us *Annie Laurie* and *Mull of Kintyre*.

Madrigals and romantic songs from composers Henry VIII (yes, the king - a very accomplished composer) and Irishman Sir Charles Stanford, a piece from Brittain's *War Requiem*, and arias from operas were our vocal offerings.

Excerpts from Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* and *Bassoon Concerto* and sprinklings of piano pieces from Beethoven, Liszt and Debussy filled up the rest of the afternoon.

Next time we will march on into March with marches. Please note the change of venue.

## **French Conversation: Stephanie Beggs reporting**

Our group got off to a flying start to the year with three visitors who joined us for the afternoon. We hope they will become regular members. This gave us plenty to talk about, as we were all eager to introduce ourselves, talk about our interests, and find out a little about our guests. People in Kerikeri lead such full lives and it is always fascinating to hear about their experiences and adventures in faraway places.

We look forward to our next meeting in March. New members always welcome. À bientôt.

## **History of Aviation: Maurice Pickup reporting**

We had a good crowd attending our first meeting of the year. Only one person couldn't come and he sent an email of what he had prepared ... thanks Doug!

The subject was 'unorthodox or home-built aircraft'.



Blohm & Voss 141

**Blohm & Voss 141**

I had made a model of an asymmetric German aircraft called Blohm & Voss 141 which was a WW2 German tactical reconnaissance aircraft. It is notable for its uncommon structural asymmetry. Its first flight was on February 25 1938. While performing well it was never ordered into full scale production.

I had also prepared a presentation of unorthodox aircraft and displayed them via my iPad and TV screen. David, too, had prepared a presentation of home-built aircraft on his iPad which we also watched on the TV screen.

At our March meeting we will study seaplanes. Would members please bring along contributions.

## Exploring The Power of Myth Wednesday Group: Gillian Topfer reporting

This episode provided a very thought provoking and enjoyable afternoon. We looked at the concept of sacrifice and at the differences in sacrifices between hunting cultures and vegetal cultures and the way each propitiated their gods to achieve their desired outcomes. In order for there to be life, there must be death.

It was interesting that the sacrificial victims appeared to regard it as an honour. They had been chosen to benefit their society. Joseph Campbell pointed out that sacrifice still exists today. Soldiers' heroic rescues of fallen comrades without thought of their own danger, being just one example.

The universal nature of myth was illustrated with two stories, the coming of corn to the Algonquin Indians and the coming of the coconut trees to the Polynesians. Two cultures - far, far apart - yet one myth.

"Follow your bliss" Joseph Campbell exhorts, so we had a round the table discussion examining our ideas of our own bliss. He feels it is an absolute necessity for each person today to have a sacred place. It can be room, or even a certain hour of the day - but it should be a place of creative isolation where you can simply experience and bring forth what you are and what you might be. A place or a time where the world does not impinge, where you can find a connection with your inner self, or your own gods thus finding your bliss.



### Myths at Pompallier House

The March meetings of both Myths groups will be at Pompallier House, where Kate Martin will take us on a tour and talk about myths

We will all meet outside Pompallier House at 2 pm on 20 March.

Some will have lunch in Russell first.

Please let Iris know quickly whether you are or are not coming, whether you will join us for lunch and whether you can take others to Paihia in your car.

[iris@smith-steensma.net](mailto:iris@smith-steensma.net) 09 407 3002

## Exploring The Power of Myth Friday Group: Ngaire Bates reporting

In the February episode - titled 'Sacrifice and Bliss' - Joseph Campbell continued to be most interesting.

He felt that it is important for people to have a 'sacred' or personal place in today's fast-paced, technological world where they can go and not have to think about debts, news, friends, and worries. It needs to be an 'incubation space' where one can go and listen to music, or read a book, for example.

He also discussed the need for sacrifice in order to have new life, such as a mother's sacrifice for her child, and the sacrifice to the marriage relationship. His stories to illustrate the points he is making are extremely telling and thought provoking.

He says that death and life are two aspects of the same thing. One is necessary for the other, and life is always on the edge of death. One should lack fear and have the courage of life. Death is only of the body or the vehicle of the soul - and our souls live on after death.

Finally, he talks about bliss. If you follow your bliss you will go where your body and soul want to be. He believes in 'rapture, being, and full consciousness'. If you hang on to your rapture it will bring being and consciousness. If you recognise your joy, hold onto it and don't let it go.

Instead of our normal meeting in March, we will join the Wednesday Myths group at Pompallier House. Please read the notice above and reply to Iris quickly.

### Shakespeare One: Marilyn Lescher reporting

Our February meeting was cancelled at the last minute. At the same time in March we will gather to see what *Much Ado About Nothing* is really all about.

### Shakespeare Two: Margaret Lindsay reporting

Our February meeting, still to be held, will be too late for this issue. I will hopefully get a double report done at the last minute next month.



## Current Affairs: John Gibb reporting

The ancient pilgrimage trail of the Camino de Santiago across the north of Spain to the cathedral city of Santiago de Compostela first took the interest of our members.

We were next recommended to watch a recent introduction to life on a space station with a video tour by Expedition 33 Commander Sunita Williams aboard the International Space Station. Members were urged to watch the YouTube clip at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doN4t5NKW-k&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doN4t5NKW-k&feature=player_embedded). The video was made in November 2012 and is a fascinating tour of everyday life on a space station in a weightless environment.

The Novopay debacle received copious comment.

From house valuations in NZ we moved on to Russian politics and the strange case of Sergei Magnitsky who died in prison in 2009 and was being put on trial in 2012. Prior to his arrest in 2008 he was said to have uncovered a tax scam worth 5.4 billion rubles and involving interior ministry officials.

## Art History One: Keith McNaughton reporting

What do the images below have in common? The right answer is that the image of each leader has been carefully crafted to persuade his subjects that this person is non-threatening and uniquely qualified to lead. Our subject for February was the Art of Persuasion and, as Nigel Spivey explains in the BBC programme we watched this month, political spin goes back a long way. One might, like the leader buried at Stonehenge, wear ornaments and jewels to impress; one might, like Darius of Assyria, adopt a logo such as a bow as a symbol of military power, wisdom and leadership; one might use a likeness of the leader himself and adorn it with the symbols of power, like Augustus or George Bush. The techniques are many and sophisticated, and truth is not necessarily the objective.



Would you buy a used chariot from this man?

In March we will be featuring an 'Easter Special'.

## Art History Two: Hilary Mowat reporting

The subject of this episode was 'The Art of Persuasion'. Nigel Spivey showed us that 'persuasion' and 'propaganda' are not at all new and can be traced back thousands of years. Darius I, King of Persia (550-486 BCE) was an expert on propaganda. He showed us how it can be done. His administrative skill, and his intelligent and tolerant leadership, earned Darius I the title of Darius the Great. He built the magnificent city of Persepolis and left behind inscriptions telling the story of his successes. These were like giant billboards. Other examples followed, from Pharaohs to the recent USA presidential campaigns.

In March we will also be featuring an 'Easter Special'. This meeting will be at Ngaire's house.

