



March 2016

www.u3abayofislands.wordpress.com

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President's Report



It was so nice to see so many of you at the February General Meeting and I do hope you enjoyed Kim Workman's talk as much as I did. The overview of this talk is to be found separately later in this newsletter.

I was privileged to have the opportunity to speak with Kim before this event on Sunday evening when, along with other members of the Committee, we hosted a supper for him. We were able to share some of our early experiences in the Police and found there were many similarities in problems and views about them between the London Metropolitan and the New Zealand Police forces.

Just a reminder that Margaret Rasmussen is waiting to hear if you are interested in the photography and "Ted Talks" groups so that these can be started. Please let her know as soon as possible.

Going on from that, clearly if you have other ideas about any groups you would like to see, Margaret would like to know about these ideas, even if you would prefer not to facilitate them yourself. Your input is always important to the Committee.

Report on February General Meeting

New Directions in Criminal Justice – Or Are They?

Kim Workman QSO is Joint Recipient of the International Prize for Restorative Justice, and former National Director for Prison Fellowship NZ.

Kim started his talk by showing us statistical information which in the past has been used by politicians to justify lots of things depending on the point they were trying to make. For instance, a rise in a certain type of crime might justify increasing the numbers of police officers; however, it was noticeable that the prison population was high and the overall crime trend was downwards. Clearly having more police officers attracts votes in certain quarters.

Another example of political manipulation could be in providing the longer, harsher sentences which sections of the public desire. When these prisoners are released, having served their time, the perception is that rehabilitation should have occurred. Unfortunately this is not supported by the facts. Longer sentences tend to lead to a greater likelihood of re-offending, possibly because the person has become more institutionalised.

Other areas that Kim described were the conundrums of under-reported crimes, particularly those which have a stigma attached, for instance domestic violence and sexual assaults. When the police work hard in these areas and increase the public confidence in relation to the police's capabilities to sensitively deal

with these matters, the police will measure success by the increase in the number of crimes reported. The public, however, will only see a frightening increase in these crimes.

Other examples that Kim gave were two recent murders in the Auckland area. These are sometimes referred to as “sentinel events”. They tend to be one-off, unusual crimes; however in this day and age with social media they can very quickly bring about demands for action. Politicians will often respond with promises of new legislation to deal with this “threat”, when in fact very adequate investigation is taking place and current legislation is adequate to deal with the situation.



Members of the committee entertain Kim Workman

Kim also talked about how the media sometimes play their part. He used the example of biker gangs which in the main are depicted only in a negative light, enabling politicians at election time to garner votes by “getting tough with gangs”. However, Kim used an example of a school where biker gangs were encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s education with very positive outcomes. The school was located in an area known to be “biker gang land” with a very poor record of disruptive students and a high exclusion rate. Parents met with teachers in a non-confrontational environment, not to find fault, but to discover common ground and work together. It was discovered just how similar family values are in gang culture and other cultures, and this was used as a common platform to work together for a similar, rather than conflicting, tactical approach when dealing with the children. Consequently, this school has vastly improved to the point where the rates for problems are below the average. Perhaps a similar radical approach for prisoners will reduce reoffending and institutionalisation.

Stuart Leitch

New Members

U3A Bay of Islands is delighted to welcome new members, Sherryl Neale, Jo Oxenham, Bridget Blake and Clive Blake. We hope that you will enjoy all that U3A has to offer.

Group News

Unfortunately we are unable to form a Greek Odyssey group at this stage so we have decided to leave this for a future occasion. Please let me know if you are interested in either of the groups below.

Picture This – Having Fun with Your Camera

A phone or simple camera is all you need as you go out each month to capture images which will later be shared with the group so members can learn from each other. Your photos may capture the wonderful colours in a rusty panel, the centre of a flower, the shimmer of light on water. Whatever your interest, this group will help you to appreciate the beauty all around you and to have fun with your camera.

TED Talks (Technology, Entertainment, Design)

TED is a non-profit, non partisan organisation which aims to share great ideas from some of the world's most inspired thinkers. TED speakers come from many disciplines and cultures and present short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less), which you can view on <https://www.ted.com/talks>. For example there is a talk from Ziauddin Yousafzai entitled *My Daughter, Malala* which talks about changing attitudes to women in the society in which she grew up. Others deal with education, science, language, technology, global issues and much more.

If you love to be stimulated by new ways of thinking, if you believe in the power of ideas to change attitudes, or if you like to challenge your own views, this may be the group for you. Members will select talks, view them via the Internet and then discuss the issues raised.

Margaret Rasmussen- ras1@clear.net.nz or 09 402 8949

Featured Groups

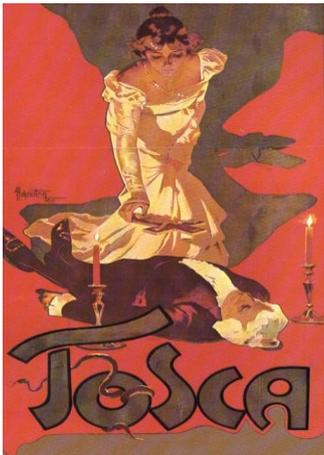
Opera Wednesday

Our opera groups are very fortunate to benefit from Elva Clark's long time love of opera as it is Elva who selects the excellent opera DVDs which the groups watch each month. We asked Elva to answer some questions which may help the non opera-goers amongst us to understand the appeal of the art form.

What is that makes opera special for you? Opera has everything; wonderful music, wonderful voices, the scenery, the costumes, the acting, the interpretation of different directors. The stories, while sometimes being rather fanciful, express the whole range of human conditions and emotions.

How have opera productions changed over the years? Traditionally productions were set in the times in which the operas were written but each director has a different approach so an opera may now be set in a more recent time period and the costumes and setting may be totally new.

Locally, our Cathay Cinema's Metropolitan Opera Live film series has opened up the genre to a wider audience. Filming the singers in close up has meant that their acting abilities have become as important as their singing. The dashing young hero or heroine must look as well as sound the part so we no longer have an overweight older man playing the dashing young hero. With so many opera singers, the top companies can pick and choose the very best performers. The Metopera films provide subtitles to help people understand the story when operas are not sung in English. I always make sure that the operas our groups watch have subtitles too.



What is your favourite opera from the last few months? We watched a particularly great version of Puccini's *Tosca* with three of the world's top opera singers. Bryn Terfyl played the nasty villain perfectly, Jonas Kaufmann, possibly the world's best tenor since Pavarotti and a wonderful actor, played the hero with such sensitivity and Angela Gheorghiu is a wonderful soprano. It was a treat to watch.

Which opera would you recommend to a first time opera goer? *La Traviata*.

Some of our members have been attending the opera groups for many years and it is sometimes a challenge for Elva to select DVDs for them to watch but we are sure that, with her extensive collection and her great love of opera, she will continue to come up with choices which will delight members in the future.

French Conversation

The French conversation group met on the first Tuesday in February. Four of us got together for our monthly chat – some members were still on holiday.

We never plan what we are going to discuss and our members are never asked to prepare anything, although they can if they wish to do so. We just talk in French as far as possible about anything and everything that might be of interest, just as a group of friends get together for a chat. It is sometimes hard to remember what we did talk about but the conversation always flows like good

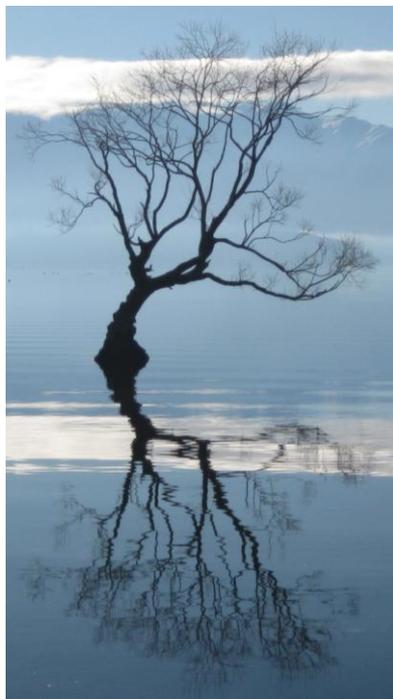


wine. This time we talked about the housing market, the American elections, forthcoming cultural events in Kerikeri and Auckland and our holiday experiences.

We always round off the afternoon with a refreshing cup of tea or coffee. New members are always welcome.

Stephanie Beggs

Poetry Group 1



The "Tree" theme for Poetry Group 1's February meeting produced many varied poems. *Trees* by Joyce Kilmer sparked conversations about femininity, masculinity and gender of authors and their different descriptions. Robert Frost's poems described how trees contribute to and shape the different landscapes and seasons in England. The cutting down of a tree in *Grrr* by Apirana Taylor and the death of a tree in Pam Jenkins' poem *Elegy* provoked discussion about chainsaws, firewood and pohutukawas.

This was followed by John Betjeman's *Harvest Hymn* a parody of "We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land", a satirical comment on the urbanisation of the English countryside in 1966, resulting in ploughing up the hedgerows, the demise of many fine trees and the concretisation of the land. *Forest* is a poem that refers to mystical and spiritual qualities, which led on to chat about trees' varying qualities, the difference between pine forests and the bush. *Japanese Maple* by Clive James, who is suffering from leukaemia, describes how he wishes to see the autumn colour of the Japanese maple that his daughter bought for him. This led on to discussion about trees surviving us, genealogy, personal histories and the birth and DNA of women in Africa.

In both poetry groups members are reading out their own poems now. Appreciation and positive comments continue to encourage this, so other U3A members who like to write poems or past Creative Writing group members who like poetry for pleasure, please come and join us.

Sue Robertson

Art History Friday

Last year this group watched "The Big Picture", a series about New Zealand art by Hamish Keith. This year we are crossing the Tasman and will be watching "The Art of Australia" presented by Edmund Capon. Our two countries share a British colonial history, but there are also many differences, historical and geographical. How has this influenced art?

Edmund Capon doesn't whitewash history; convicts and bushrangers all make their appearance, but so do the settlers clearing and farming their land, the sheep shearers, the explorers and the goldminers and then there are the landscapes and cityscapes, a mosaic which makes up this vast country.

The Australian colours of the land are different from New Zealand and for a European artist that means creating a different colour palette. Our landscapes are usually green; in Australia a landscape can be painted without any green at all.

One artist who came to Australia against his will was Joseph Lycett, a London engraver, sent to Australia for forgery.

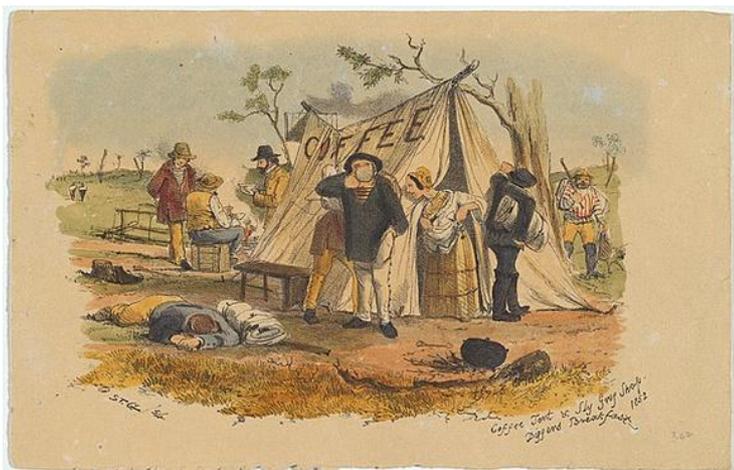


"Golden Summer" by Arthur Streeton

In Sydney he continued his successful career and flooded the market with forged five shilling bills. Sent to Newcastle, he designed the church and back in Sydney was employed as an artist recording the development of the colony.

In 1821 he received a full pardon, returned to England, but unfortunately turned again to his old game of forgery. On being arrested he cut his own throat rather than be deported again.

In 1841 the gold rush years began, peaking around 1860 when two tonnes of gold flowed into the Melbourne Treasury building each week and was then shipped on to England where it enabled Britain to pay off all her foreign debts.



One of S T Gill's paintings of the gold fields

Edmund Capon uses the artists to tell the history of the country, but he doesn't cram in every artist hanging in an art gallery. Some favourites do get left out. A slideshow can make up for this and we can see the delightful sketches of the goldfields by S. T. Gill, the 19th century studio photographs of Aborigines by John William Lindt, and the French wallpaper made in 1806 by Joseph Dufour et Cie, called "*Sauvages de la Pacifique*" depicting the travels and death (in the far distance) of Captain Cook.

In the second half of the 19th century the Impressionist artists painted in Europe and the Heidelberg School in Australia. How did their paintings differ from those in France? We shall find out next month.

Iris Steensma and Lorraine Jamieson

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