



May 2015

www.u3abayofislands.wordpress.com

U3A Bay of Islands, PO Box 833, Kerikeri 0245

U3A.Bay.of.Islands@gmail.com

From the President

Looking out of my window I can see the smoke from various bonfires. Clearly summer is over and autumn is upon us.

Thanks to all of you who came to the General Meeting to listen to the inspirational Elizabeth Forgie. Kerikeri High School is clearly in good hands.

The committee recently had a get together with our facilitators. This was, in the main, to say a big thank you for all their efforts on our behalf. I would like to extend that thank you to the facilitators who couldn't make it, and also to make mention of our hosts – we couldn't exist without their warm and generous hospitality.



Our library display will be up and running between 4th and 17th May. Please encourage all your friends and family to have a look. Something from our diverse offerings may attract their attention!

The committee are on the lookout for a new member to join the team. We meet once a month and follow a fairly standard committee format. Each member of the committee has a role with the result that the load is spread and we can also have fun and enjoy a laugh together whilst getting the "job done". We recognise that our committee members have breaks for holidays, friend and family visits and their "other life" and all our colleagues take up the slack.

Stuart Leitch

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The AGM of U3A Bay of Islands will be held in the St. John Ambulance Hall, Kerikeri, on Monday 15th June 2015, starting at 10 am. The AGM will be followed by a normal General Meeting.

Nominations for committee positions must be with the Secretary by 9:00 am on Monday 8th June, one week before the AGM. Please use the nomination form included with this newsletter. The nominee, proposer and seconder must be financial members of U3A Bay of Islands.

Any motions for changes to the Constitution must be sent to the Secretary by 5 pm Friday 22nd May so that members can be notified in the June newsletter.

Membership Subscriptions

For U3A, the financial year ends on 30th April so membership subscriptions for the 2015-2016 year are due in May. The details for paying the \$20 sub are on the invoice sent with this newsletter. We would appreciate it if you can pay your subs before the AGM so that we can hand out new nametags quickly at the meeting. However you can also pay and collect your nametag at the AGM.

We ask for your contact details each year as this helps us keep our records up-to-date. If posting or paying in person, please fill in your details on the form and include it in the envelope with your sub. If you pay online, please include the information requested on the invoice and also email the Treasurer at U3A.Bay.of.Islands@gmail.com to give her your latest contact details and confirm that you are happy for them to be included on the membership list distributed only to members.

Report on April General Meeting

Our President Stuart Leitch welcomed Elizabeth Forgie, our guest speaker, and members, and reminded us that our June meeting would be the AGM; he would welcome new members to join the Committee. Contributions were requested for the Library Display being held 4th – 17th May.

After Pam Jenkins's introduction, Mrs Forgie showed us a PowerPoint about Kerikeri High School, including its success in improving the proportion of Maori students obtaining good qualifications. A project, Te Kotahitanga, adopted from 2004, had shown excellent results by 2009, and was continuing to do so, participation in the programme having been part of the contract with new staff from 2007.

We saw some of the classrooms, redesigned to be flexible enough to provide learning spaces for both present and future technology changes, in particular “discursive” teaching

(i.e. in groups) and learned something of the programme built around “WAKA” values, which helps students to take great pride in their school and responsibility for it, as a community with varied backgrounds. They participate in over 30 different sports, with considerable success, and cultural activities of many sorts.



Kerikeri High's kapa haka groups, staff and prefects welcoming judges for the PM's Education Excellence Awards.

WAKA

We are Learners Act with Respect
Keep it Safe Always Proud

We were impressed with the results gained at the National Science Fair and the Prime Minister's awards, and were much encouraged by the energy and enthusiasm which stands out from what we heard. For many of us it was a revelation to see how the practice (and the vocabulary) of education has changed since we were involved in it, but if – as seems likely – many schools can learn from what has been done in Kerikeri, we can look ahead for our children and grandchildren with confidence. Liz Berry, on behalf of us all, said a most sincere “Thank you, Elizabeth.”

Hazel Brown

New members

We would like to welcome Gudrun Arn-Weller and Werner Lieger. We hope you will enjoy belonging to U3A. You are welcome to join any groups in the Group Schedule that have space for more members.

U3A Display in the Proctor Library window 4th – 17th May

Our annual display in the library window helps to raise public awareness of our organisation and show the wide range of groups we offer. Please have a look at the display and talk about it with your friends, family and anyone you think might enjoy being part of U3A. Word of mouth is the best advertising.

2014 - 2015 Committee

President	Stuart Leitch	09 407 3458	sleitch21@gmail.com
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Group News

This is the time of year when we think about new U3A groups that may interest people. Please have a think or chat to your friends about what you would like to see included.

To give you somewhere to start, why not take a look at the non-tutored courses which are available on the website of U3A Online? Just go to <https://www.u3aonline.org.au/courses> to see if any of the topics appeal and let me know if they do. As U3A Bay of Islands subscribes to U3A Online, we are able to use these resources.

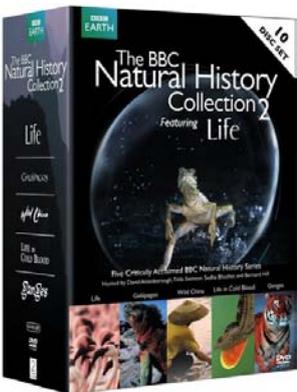
Sing-along Group

Shower singers, Songsters, Trillers, Crooners, Yodellers... wanted!

The talentless and talented alike are welcome. Can't read music? Others say you sing out of tune? It doesn't matter! The primary objective for this group will be getting together for musical fun and the enjoyment of making music (or some semblance of music). Contact us if you're interested.



Natural History



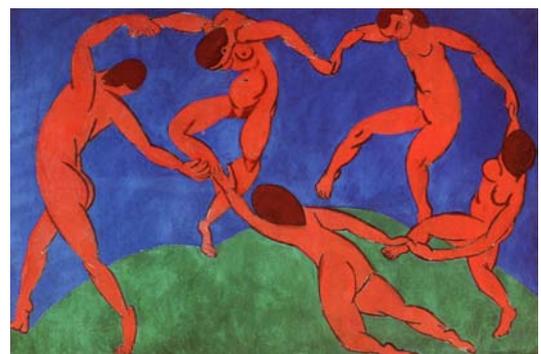
Another suggestion is a group based on the excellent *BBC Natural History Collection 2*, which contains five miniseries: *Life*, the *Ganges*, *Wild China*, the *Galapagos* and *Life in Cold Blood*. The 10-episode *Life* series travels to the outermost frontiers of the natural world for 130 stories of fauna in action. *Life in Cold Blood* reverses the notion that cold-blooded life forms are somehow less complex and interesting than hot-blooded ones.

Ganges is set in India and looks at how that river has dramatically shaped the culture and wildlife of its parent country. *Wild China* reveals a land of unbelievable complexity, from the Himalayas to the barren steppe, the sub-Arctic to tropical islands, through searingly hot and mind-numbingly cold deserts with many mysterious, beautiful and rare creatures to discover.

Galapagos takes us to one of the most stunning natural laboratories on earth, where the creation and extinction of species are more closely intertwined than anywhere else on the planet. Please contact us if you are interested in this group.

Art History

Our Art History groups have always been popular and some people have been disappointed that the current group has been full for some time. Iris Steensma has kindly offered to start a new group later in the year if members are interested. She will begin again with the DVD of Robert Hughes' *The Shock of the New*, a history of Modern Art from Cubism to Pop and the Avant-Garde series, which picks up at the threshold of the 20th century. Episodes will be interspersed with relevant sections of Simon Schama's *The Power of Art* in which eight artists are featured - Caravaggio, Bernini, Rembrandt, David, Turner, Van Gogh, Picasso, and Rothko. Each portrait of an artist uses biography and historical context to help explain the true power of his works.



Robert Hughes talks about *The Dance* by Henri Matisse in *Shock of the New*

These will be supplemented by Iris's own knowledge of art and her extensive collection of books. Please apply quickly if you are interested as this group could fill quickly.

Apply now for the groups above

If you are interested in any of these groups, please contact us by email using the U3A address: U3A.Bay.of.Islands@gmail.com or phone Lesley McNaughton, at (09) 407 6936.

Margaret Rasmussen

Group Reports

Greek Odyssey Group

Our Greek Odyssey is almost at an end. Far from being a study as dry as the bones of the ancients, this has been a fascinating journey through the history and culture of Ancient Greece. We learned of the Minoans of Crete, of Homer's Troy then classical Greece and the birth of democracy. We came to appreciate the contribution of archaeology to our understanding despite its challenges and constant reinterpretation. We were made aware of the huge influence of Greek myth, art and poetry on present day art and literature.



Iris used a wonderful variety of ways to make our learning entertaining and fun. To place the periods about which we were learning into historical context, Iris created an illustrated paper timeline so long that we had to view it on the terrace. She sourced fascinating video clips of everything from bull leaping to Disney animated films about Greek heroes, from the illustrations on Greek vases to readings of parts of Homer's *Iliad* and of Cavafy's beautiful poem *Ithaca*. We made our own clay tablets using the ancient Linear B language, decorated "Greek urns", and played "Hangman" using the Greek alphabet.

As special Christmas treats, we enjoyed watching Offenbach's amusing operettas *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *La Belle Helene*, the story of Helen of Troy. Most of us even enjoyed the homework which made us aware just how many English words originate from Greek. All in all, Iris made us approach each session full of anticipation to see what she might have in store for us. We are grateful to her for making history come alive for us all.

Margaret Rasmussen

Atlantis Group

This group started with reading Gavin Menzies's book, *1421: The Year China Discovered the World*, followed by his second book, *1434: The Year a Magnificent Chinese Fleet Sailed to Italy and Ignited the Renaissance*. Then, in preparation for his book about the exploration of the Americas, we read *The Cultural Atlas of Spain & Portugal*.

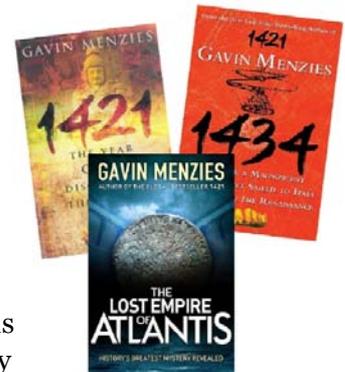
However, in the meantime his book, *The Lost Empire of Atlantis: History's Greatest Mystery Revealed* was published. So we're reading that book now.

It has been suggested that Gavin Menzies is not a scholar or historian and his submarine experience with the Royal Navy is questionable. So we asked, why do we read his books? Prompted by his interest in medieval history, particularly the maps and charts of early explorers, he takes us on his quest for their sea voyages. Who would have known of the great Chinese fleets if not for his books? These days the Ming tomb of emperor Zhu Di in Beijing has a display about the fleet and its commander, the eunuch, Zheng He.

The Lost Empire of Atlantis takes us back to much earlier times. We learn that in the days of the Minoans a canal existed which allowed their boats to travel from the Mediterranean through the Red Sea to India. Also that in the Bronze Age forests were felled to fuel furnaces for the production of bronze, raising environmental concerns about that time and to this day leaving the mountain slopes of the Middle East barren and hard. Now we are moving with the Minoans westward towards North America in their pursuit of tin and copper.

Gavin Menzies may make extravagant claims, but this has stimulated further research.

Maria Manning



Current Affairs Monday Groups

The first rule for a democracy is that elected governments must be accountable to their citizens. Northland has just asserted that right so, of course, the recent Northland by-election was the first topic for discussion at our April meeting. We have members of all political persuasions so the discussion was lively and interesting. Some of us (NZ First supporters) were very pleased with the result, some (National Supporters) were saddened, particularly by the poor candidate offered, and some (Labour/Green supporters) were hopeful that the political pendulum was starting to swing back to the left. Though this might seem a topic for heated debate, the discussion was calm and reflective. We know each other pretty well after several years meeting together, and we respect each other's views. Our diversity of opinions is a strength of our discussions.



A stumbling block set into the pavement outside the last home of Johanna Falk

After that we moved on to other topics as brought up by members of the group: sensationalism in sporting coverage by the media; the restart of the CERN particle accelerator in Europe; a new flag for New Zealand; and Gunter Demning's *Stumbling Blocks* as memorials to Nazi victims in WW2 (look it up in Google). A varied list, to be sure, but typical enough of our monthly meetings.

Keith McNaughton

Opera Groups

Like many U3A groups, the opera groups benefit from the experience and knowledge of our members. We so enjoy the variety of outstanding operas selected for us by Elva Clark, that we asked her to write about how she developed such a passion for opera.



Elva Clark

As a young person and despite a growing appreciation of classical music, I absolutely hated opera singing, especially the “sing-song talking”, which I called recitative and which my father would listen to on the radio. As I grew into my later teens, a friend and I used to attend all the musicals and ballets at His Majesty’s Theatre in Auckland including the Gilbert and Sullivan light operas. It really wasn’t until I enrolled in a music appreciation course run by an excellent tutor at Northcote College in the early eighties that my love and understanding of opera developed, and I started going to see each and every opera production in Auckland that I could.

I began to collect CDs and then to listen to the Metropolitan Opera programmes on Sunday afternoons. My local video shop stocked a few opera videos, which I think spent more time at my place than in their store. And now of course I collect DVDs. Wonderful! - especially the ones with sub-titles.

After moving to Kerikeri my greatest joy was when Mary Johnson suggested forming an opera group for U3A. A joy shared is a joy doubled - and now we have two groups.

I love sharing thoughts about each opera with the members of our groups. Naturally we all have different tastes and it's so interesting to hear what others have to say.

Opera has so many dimensions: the orchestral music, the singing, the stage settings, the costumes and the acting. The addition of subtitles on videos and DVDs greatly add to our understanding of the operas.

Some of the stories are rather ridiculous especially when placed in a modern setting, which is sometimes done these days, but opera companies are (usually) able to find singers who at least look the part and know how to act.

Elva Clark