

## From Lesley McNaughton, President

As you'll see from Stuart's report below, we had another interesting general meeting last week. I was particularly interested to learn that Chinese and American submarines play cat and mouse games in our waters. The Chinese hide beneath boats from their fishing fleet, to avoid radar detection and mask the noise from their diesel-powered subs, while the nuclear-powered US subs follow close behind.



I like meeting people with similar interests.

On other matters, I'm pleased to tell you that we will soon have our own website. It will have information about U3A, including brief information about our current groups and notices about our general meetings. We are collecting little snippets from individual members to add a personal touch. Have you a brief comment about what you like about U3A or a photo of yourself, or your group, involved in U3A activities? If so, please send them to me by email. The individual photos will be small, so close-ups are best, though we can create these by cropping larger photos. Let's show them how much we all enjoy U3A!

*Lesley*

## General Meeting Report

At our meeting on 21st October, Dr Paul Buchanan gave us an overview of "Intelligence Collection and Analysis". Paul has an extensive background in the "Intelligence" community and "Academia" and has many books, papers and "opinion pieces" to his name.

The opening point he made was that a Government required a clear, long-term strategy, which would then highlight the tactical options to be deployed to achieve that aim. This would be in terms of methods to be utilised, i.e. human, electronic or tactical.

It was interesting to note that clearly within the intelligence community people employed at embassies abroad were well known as intelligence gatherers with diplomatic immunity, but it was those deployed as "Non Official Cover" (NOC) such as business people, academics, etc, who were the real "spies", and these would be afforded no diplomatic protection if rumbled. Paul also went into detail about the differing types of non-human intelligence gathered.

The next stage described was probably the most important - the analysis of what one has, and then, what to do with it. Is the information genuine, and therefore could be used to inform strategic and/or tactical thinking.

Paul placed the intelligence into four categories: Political/Diplomatic, Military, Economic and Socio-cultural. When analysis is complete to whom do you disseminate this intelligence? This involves the National Assessment Bureau and various other agencies.

This is very much a truncated version of an interesting talk. Far more information can be obtained on Paul's website: [36th-parallel.com](http://36th-parallel.com)

*Stuart Leitch*



## **From your committee by Margaret Rasmussen, Course Convenor**

### **New Groups for November and December**

Two exciting new groups will start soon, Local History in November and Art House Films in December. Thanks to the facilitators Judy Ramsay and Keith McNaughton. (Details are in the Course Schedule).

### **New Groups for the New Year**

I am very pleased to announce five new interest groups to start in the New Year:

#### **Sketching for Beginners - Facilitator Mike Dee**

You will work with our expert tutor to achieve the ability to create drawings in six sessions using a simple still life study. You will learn about hand-eye co-ordination, how to 'see' objects objectively, perspective without tears, how to place groups of objects convincingly on the page and how to complete the 'optical illusion' with tonal graduation. There will be examples from working artists and insider tips along the way. A small koha will be requested to cover venue hire, tea and coffee.

#### **Cooking For One - Facilitator Stuart Leitch**

When one lives on one's own, preparing meals can become a tedious chore. In this hands-on programme you will learn to make appetizing dishes which are simple to prepare and which will use mainly the basic ingredients most people have in their store cupboards. Dishes can easily be adapted to cater for more than one. There will be a small charge to cover the cost of food and for use of the kitchen facilities.

#### **Do It Yourself - Tutor John Button**

This small group will meet in a workshop with an experienced tutor to learn how to do those little jobs around home that often provide a challenge. This may appeal to people who have previously been used to having someone else take care of maintenance. At the initial meeting you will be asked the sorts of things you would like to learn - changing a washer?...putting up a shelf? It's up to you.

#### **Victorians and Oscar Wilde - Facilitator Pam Jenkins**

The content will be based on Jeremy Paxton's BBC series using Victorian art as the springboard to examine the Victorian period. Oscar Wilde became the darling of the followers of the Aesthetic Movement who were rejecting the utilitarianism and ugliness of the industrial age. For them beauty in art and life was what was important above all else. The Oscar Wilde plays the group will view satirise late Victorian society and values. This group will learn through viewing, sharing and discussion.

#### **Home Brewing - Facilitator Des Dickinson**

Have you ever wanted to try your hand at brewing your own beer? Des has been doing this for some years now and is keen to share his knowledge and enthusiasm with others. He will show you the equipment required and demonstrate all the steps in the process. There is a very good chance you will get to sample the results as well. This group will set its own meeting days to fit in with the requirements of the brewing process.

If you would like to apply to join any of these groups, please contact me as soon as possible as some groups fill up quickly and other groups can go ahead only if there is sufficient interest from members. Margaret Rasmussen: 09 402 8949 or [ras1@clear.net.nz](mailto:ras1@clear.net.nz).

We are extremely grateful to our members who have volunteered to be facilitators for the above groups. Whether they are experts in their fields or whether they are prepared to share their enthusiasm with the group as they learn together, they are the ones who make our groups possible.

As always, we welcome your ideas for new interest groups.

## Philosophy



Our group meets on the third Friday of each month, currently at the home of Ngaire Bates, where we examine and discuss an aspect of modern philosophical thinking. This may sound a bit off-putting, but really it's not. A helpful way of getting to understand the nature of philosophy is to look at the derivation of the word. The word *philosophy* is of course of Greek origin and signifies 'love of (or search of) wisdom' (*philia*, love; *Sophia*, wisdom). Our group has narrowed its focus in this search into *how* do we know that a certain action is right or wrong; further is it even possible to know these things? We began by looking at what Plato had to say on this, he concluded that some things could be known from observation (physics), but there were other things; love, hate, terror, horror, which could be known only by the mind, a process we term as knowing 'metaphysical' things. We have examined some modern theories on how do we know these metaphysical things - intuition, evolution, and naturalism for example, without yet reaching a consensus.

Each month in advance we agree upon a relevant topic. To help in focusing our discussion, material is made available electronically and verbally presented in a general form in the first part of the meeting and openly discussed in the second. No video presentations are used, mainly since nothing suitable is available; we simply involve ourselves in *doing* philosophy.

### Current Affairs - Thursday Group



This month's meeting focussed on mineral mining, and oil and gas exploration in and around the Far North.

Prior to our discussion we listened to a National Radio interview by Kathryn Ryan. She interviewed Ivo Vegter, a South African journalist and author of a book describing what he termed as "environmental exaggeration"!

The premise of the book is that people are extremely sceptical of Government sponsored research and are equally dubious of research conducted on behalf of multi-national "big business"; but apparently not particularly disbelieving of evidence and reports produced by environmental groups.

His evidence understandably looked at historical cases. He suggests that claims made by some environmental groups of "a worst case scenario" were clearly with the clarity of hindsight, seen as a clear exaggeration of what actually occurred, e.g. "disastrous" oil slicks, which nature removed over time. We discussed the conundrum of who one should believe.

It was felt that a company interested in exploration should provide a bond sufficient enough to cover any possible future, environmental, damage in order to restore these areas after "use". Therefore contracts and consents should put an emphasis on safety and environmental sympathy.

Unfortunately, this probably precluded the "little guy" and left it to the larger, multi-national who had the financial clout to meet the requirements and the legal advice to avoid adverse outcomes on their behalf.

Reference was made to Dr Paul Buchanan's talk on Monday, and, with that in mind, and remembering his incredulity about the existence of a Ministry of Primary Industry, it was felt that local industry could look for the "value added option", i.e. rather than exporting trees, export items made from wood.

The next meeting at the earlier time of 12.30pm for a pre-Christmas shared lunch, and then discussion about Christmas traditions, with any light-hearted media items in the lead up to the holiday season.