



September 2015

www.u3abayofislands.wordpress.com

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President's report

Having just returned from our Northern hemisphere trip, I realise how self-conscious I am about referring to New Zealand as home; however, home it certainly is, and how glad we are to be back. Our trip was a marathon, with many miles travelled on crowded roads, lots of highlights, including a four day stopover in Singapore, to be yarned about over the next months and a freezing cold "summer" Highland Games in St Andrews!

I would like to say a big thank you to Sue Robertson who chaired the General meeting in August – thanks Sue. I hope to see you at the next General Meeting on Monday 5 October.

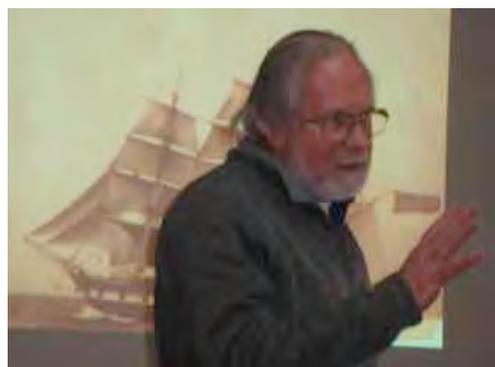
Stuart Leitch



Report on General Meeting Monday 17 August 2015

Lyndsay Alexander, whose interest and subsequent study of whaling was sparked by seeing a whaling chase boat in Russell some years ago, gave a most interesting and informative talk on whaling in the Bay of Islands to the audience of U3A members and guests.

Lyndsay described the effect that whaling in the 1800's had on modern society, the layout of ships, the rigid rules regarding the places for officers and crews on board, the sometimes long periods without sighting a whale and the need to keep crews occupied. Whaling was a global industry with oil in great demand for lubrication, whalebone for knife handles and other uses, baleen for corset stays, riding crops and many other applications.



New Zealand (Russell) was an important port as were Hong Kong, Hawaii and other ports around the Pacific. Some areas were hunted in winter and some in summer, depending on where the whales, in particular, sperm, right, and humpback were to be found. While whaling ships came from various countries the main source would have been New Bedford and Nantucket in America. It is interesting to know that N.A.S.A. has the largest store of sperm whale oil in the world. Sperm whale oil is not affected by temperature change and is used as a lubricant on space craft and space probes and so the little probe sitting on

Mars probably has whale oil as a lubricant. Whaling declined during the American Civil War as shipowners were reluctant to send out a ship that could be captured, and again with the discovery of gold when there were fears crews would desert the gold fields. The discovery of fossil fuels saw the demise of whaling except for what little whaling is done today. It was a fascinating talk delivered by someone with a real passion for his subject.

Don Jansen

Next General Meeting Monday 5 October 2015

Our speaker at the next General Meeting will be a representative of Far North Search and Rescue (FNSAR) who will be describing the work undertaken by this volunteer organization.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome four new members this month, Kerry Walshe and Terry Peterson, Dale Bell, and Gerry Brackenbury. We hope they enjoy all U3A BoI has to offer.

Christmas Parade

We are keen to show that U3A is much more than a bunch of academic old fogies! The Kerikeri and Paihia Christmas Parades are an opportunity to bring the many aspects of this lively organisation to the attention of the wider community. If you would like to join the fun please contact me (Moira) warnockmoira@gmail.com/ phone 09 407 6389.

Group News

New Groups

We are looking forward to our two new groups starting this month.

Art History Two on Friday 18 September and **Genetics** on Wednesday 9 September (details in the Group Schedule). We wish these groups well and are sure they will be interesting additions to our choice of activities.

Natural History will begin in February and meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.00 am. Pam Jenkins has kindly agreed to facilitate this group which will be hosted by Margaret and Tom Lindsay at their home in Waimate North Road. The group will be based on the excellent BBC *Natural History Collection*, a series of DVDs covering Life, the Ganges, Wild China, the Galapagos and Life in Cold Blood. There are still places available in this group so let me know if you are interested.

Proposed Groups



The Sketching group has now finished but our tutor, Mike Dee, has offered to lead a new group called **Art – Alternative Approaches**. Here is the proposed outline:

- Topic 1 - Op Art and Creative Doodling: expanding drawing ability through a series of open ended exercises.
- Topic 2- Grids: how to enlarge, extend and manipulate images using grids. Produce a formal acrylic painting or coloured drawing of a landscape from an original photograph using a grid.
- Topic 3 -Altered Art: This contemporary art form combines scrapbooking, collage, print making and assemblage. Projects: a luggage tag – an altered carton – an altered book

These projects should last at least 6 months. The group will meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m. at Cherry Park House. If you would like to exercise your creative side please contact me (ras1@clear.net.nz or 09 402 8949) so we can get the group started as soon as possible.

Our “out and about groups” are very popular and have the advantage that numbers are not restricted. Starting in October or November (day to be decided) we are hoping to start an **I Spy** group that will visit local habitats to look for, identify, and learn more about the birds, wildlife, trees and plants around us. You do not need to be an expert, but if you are then please come and share your knowledge with the rest of the group. We have some interested members but need a few more to get going.

If you are new to U3A and are not yet sure whether you are interested in Cooking or Computers, Shakespeare or Singing, reading the Group Reports in the newsletters is a great way to get a flavour of what the groups are doing. You can read about more groups in previous copies of the newsletter which are available on our website - <https://u3abayofislands.wordpress.com>.

Margaret Rasmussen

Featured Groups

Art House Films Groups One and Two - Winter Film Day

July 29th was a splendid day for Art House Films members. Once again Keith and Lesley McNaughton welcomed us into their warm, cosy home for a day of films, foo and fellowship.

The two films viewed were produced in Spain in the 1970s. Each uses a family's interactions, or lack thereof, as an allegory of life in the 1940s after General Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War. *Spirit of the Beehive*, directed by Victor Erice, stars Ana Torrent as the seven year old younger sister in a family of four. Misled by her older sister, Ana often uses her creative imagination to supplement the information her naïve, innocent mind cannot yet understand. Ana's beautiful, expressive eyes pull viewers into her childhood dilemmas and actions.



Ana Torrent – *Spirit of the Beehive*

Cria Cuervos, directed by Carlos Saura, was produced two years later and also stars Ana Torrent. Now nine year old Ana is the middle of three sisters who have lost both their mother and father to death. All three girls rely on childhood imaginations to cope with misunderstandings and frustrations. However, in this film, viewers are drawn in as reality and fantasy swap places at unexpected times and places.

The world of films is new to me; therefore, I have been amazed by the variety of old and new quality videos from various countries presented each month this past year. Writers, directors and actors have entertained and enlightened me. However, the part of each film day I have enjoyed most is our discussion time after each viewing. The combined insights from members of the group have made the message of each film even richer. When we have had "winter film days", the two films have had a connection that has led us into lively comparisons of the message and/or presentations. Clever people, these U3A members!

Pat de Meurers

Cooking Group Report – 25th August 2015

My first task was to give a report on my trip to the UK. This had relevance as we were about to produce a good old British standby – Toad-in-the-Hole! (Why it's called that I have no idea). This is the combination of Yorkshire pudding batter, with sausages of your choice – on this occasion Nurnburgers from a well-known local butcher with a substantial onion gravy.

First we lightly griddled the sausages – I didn't want to take the chance they wouldn't properly cook in the oven later. A Yorkshire pudding batter was prepared (plain flour, milk, eggs – an extra egg makes sure the pudding rises -and a pinch of salt. The oven was set to 230°C and while it reached the desired temperature we indulged in fruit cake with tea or coffee.

The next stage involved getting an oven-proof dish up to temperature with some flavourless cooking oil.

When this was smoking, the sausages were put in the dish and the pudding mix poured over. Then it was into the oven for 20 to 25 minutes. I was able to look through the glass door to see when they were ready. In the past, without the glass door, I was tempted to open the oven door and cause the nicely rising pudding mix to collapse.



The onion gravy involved finely slicing onions, frying them till they caramelised, thickening with flour and then adding some liquid (cider to go with pork sausages) and seasoning to taste. We then had a slightly early lunch!

Stuart Leitch

History of Ireland Groups - final report

In our meetings this year we learnt about Ireland's recent past, starting in the 1960s with the Civil Rights Movement that demanded an end to discrimination against Catholics. Peaceful marches were attacked by gangs of Unionists determined to maintain Protestant control. Watching documentaries and contemporary TV footage, we saw the conflict escalate through a number of phases: sustained riots, sectarian violence; British troops deployed to keep order; internment without trial.

After Bloody Sunday, when British soldiers killed 14 unarmed protesters, the new Provisional IRA began a war of attrition to drive the British forces out of Ireland. Loyalist paramilitaries responded by murdering randomly selected Catholics. This was the start of 'The Troubles', a 30-year conflict in which more than 3,600 people were killed by republican and loyalist paramilitaries and security forces.



In June we watched videos in which politicians from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Britain and America described their roles in a complicated series of secret negotiations that led, after 10 years, to the 1988 Good Friday Agreement, the end of the fighting and the formation of a devolved power-sharing government within Northern Ireland, wherein the government consists of unionist and nationalist parties.

In July we learnt about the economic boom in the Republic of Ireland, funded by European development funds, which the government invested in education, infrastructure and attracting foreign companies. This fuelled a period of rapid economic growth that transformed Ireland from one of Europe's poorest countries into one of its wealthiest. Disposable incomes soared to record levels, enabling a huge rise in consumer spending and leading to a property bubble.

From 2001, house prices were pushed ever higher by property speculators underwritten by unregulated reckless lending by banks in Ireland and abroad. When the Global Financial Crisis hit Ireland in 2008, the bubble burst, house prices dropped by 50%, hundreds of housing estates were left unfinished and developers defaulted on loans of billions of euros. The government guaranteed Irish banks' creditors - but this caused its debt to spiral out of control. In 2011 the government received €67.7 billion in loans from the EU and IMF on the condition that the government implemented severe austerity measures.

This year the government paid off the IMF early, saving more than 1.5 billion euros in interest, but it may take another 15 years of austerity before the EU loan is paid off.

Now that we have finished our three-year journey through Irish history, I would like to thank all who travelled with me for your support and friendship.

Lesley McNaughton



Photographs: Top right: British soldiers in Northern Island. Mid left: IRA Patrol in West Belfast. Bottom Left: Queen Elizabeth II shakes hands with Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister (2012)