



May 2014

[www.u3abayofislands.wordpress.com](http://www.u3abayofislands.wordpress.com)

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## From the President

I was delighted that most of our facilitators were able to attend the Facilitators' Meeting in April and that others arranged for their groups to be represented. This is an annual occasion for the committee to thank the people who make U3A such a success, and for us all to share ideas. We spent a pleasant afternoon hearing how the different groups operate and were impressed by the depth of knowledge and enthusiasm of our facilitators. There is such a wide range of approaches to presenting information and it became very clear that many members benefit from complementary material covered in the different groups they attend. Everyone enjoyed chatting over a special afternoon tea. Thanks to you all.

Thank you also to all members who completed our survey. We were pleased that 50% of our members did this and appreciated the many useful comments. The committee will study the results at our May meeting and decide what changes, if any, we should make to the newsletter and website.

Our April General Meeting was delayed to avoid the Easter holiday; it will be on the last day of April. It promises to be particularly enjoyable so I hope you'll be able to come. See below for the details.

The general meeting, in June, will also be our AGM. My two-year term as President will finish then but I will remain on the committee, ex-officio, for one more year as the immediate Past President. At least two new committee members will be needed so please consider whether you would like to join us or know someone suitable who is willing to be nominated. The vitality of the organisation depends on our having capable, dedicated committee members who enjoy working together.

For U3A, the financial year ends on 30<sup>th</sup> April so membership subscriptions for the 2014-2015 year are due in May. The Committee has decided that the annual sub should remain at \$20 and we ask members to pay their subs before or at the AGM. Then we can hand out new nametags at the AGM.

*Lesley McNaughton*

## Untold Stories of the Kerikeri Mission

### Liz Bigwood

Liz, the manager of the Kerikeri Mission Station will entertain us with fascinating stories about the life of early missionaries.

**10:30 am, Wednesday 30th April 2014**

St. John Ambulance Hall, Kerikeri Road

Bring any friends who are interested in U3A.

Please bring finger food for our shared lunch. Kitchen Duty: Local History Group One.



**Note: this meeting is not on our usual meeting day.**

## From the committee



### Group news

Our two Shakespeare groups have decided to combine into one group, which will now meet on the *fourth Tuesday* of the month at Margaret Lindsay's home. We would like to thank Lindsay Matterson for her excellent leadership as facilitator of the original Wednesday group.

### New Groups?

We have a number of ideas for new groups but would like your feedback to see which have most appeal. We could offer any of the three courses below through our membership of U3A Online. Course material could be supplemented with books or DVDs to add interest and variety. Any of these groups would increase our understanding of the rapidly changing world. They are:

- **Left, Right or Centre** (8 units)  
This brief introduction to political ideologies covers such topics as Liberal ideology, Conservative ideology, Democratic Socialism, Fascism, Nazism and Communism.
- **China in Transition: From Mao to Now** (10 units)  
The last dynasty and the first republic, Kuomintang, Chinese Communist Party, Civil War, the Long March, war with Japan, Mao Zedong, Great Leap Forward, death of the "Emperor", aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, Tiananmen massacre, the land and its people.
- **Religions of the World** (8 units)  
What is religion?, earliest religions, polytheistic religions, Chinese, Japanese and Indian religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism.

Two quite different ideas are:

- **Antiques or Collectibles**  
We could have a theme each month, e.g. postcards, plates, linen, glass, Victoriana etc. depending on member's interests. One or two people could research the topic for each meeting and gather any books or DVDs available. Members could bring along any items on that theme. Occasionally we could organise a speaker or an outing, e.g. to an antique shop or museum.
- **Poetry for Pleasure**  
This may be a wonderful way to spend winter afternoons. Members could meet to share poetry they enjoy. They may like to read the works of one poet or look at poems on a theme such as landscape, relationships or humour. It is not expected that members will read their own poems.

Please email me or give me a call as soon as possible if you are interested in any of these suggestions. If there are enough people interested in a topic and we have a facilitator, we can start these new groups quite soon. Contact details: ras1@clear.net.nz or 09 402 8949. *Margaret Rasmussen*

### Notice of Annual General Meeting

The AGM of U3A Bay of Islands will be held in the St. John Ambulance Hall, Kerikeri, on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 BoI.

Any motions for changes to the Constitution must be sent to the Secretary by 5 pm Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May so that members can be notified in the June newsletter.

### New members

Welcome to Jill and Rodney Westerman and John Booth. We hope you enjoy being part of U3A.

## Featured groups

### Opera Thursday Group

It is a far cry from the great opera houses of the world to my living room but there, in the best seats in the house, we too view the finest performances the world of opera has to offer.



Donizetti's Daughter of the Regiment

We laugh, we cry and we suspend belief as convoluted plots twist and turn, delighting in the virtuosity of the singers, gorgeous costuming and clever staging.

However not everything gets the Thursday Opera Group's seal of approval when we take a coffee break or linger afterwards to critique the performance and ply our two resident opera singers with musical and technical queries.

We enjoy being taken behind the scenes at The Metropolitan Opera as well as into many orchestra pits for close up views of the conductors and players.

Hailing from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, opera as a musical genre is an acquired taste for many. The story lines advance in sung recitatives interspersed with arias in which the characters express their emotions in a more structured style. These are the bits we remember.

Sometimes an opera has a spoken dialogue instead of a sung recitative, which finds favour with me.

Our sub-titled programmes alternate serious topics with lighter material with any or all of the recurring themes of forbidden love, jealousy, treachery, misunderstandings, murder and mayhem. Parental guidance recommended!

*Mary Johnson*

Editors' note:

A second opera group was started at a time when the Thursday group was getting crowded. The facilitator is Elva Clark, who loves sharing her passion for opera. She provides the DVDs and introduces the operas for both groups. Members are welcome to attend meetings of these groups to see if they'd like to join. Please phone the hostess first.

### History of Aviation

This group meets and has a welcoming tea, coffee and goodies and then shares information on a particular topic. Our convenor is Maurice Pickup who has a technological interest in aircraft. The rest of the group have a mix of experience being pilots, engineers and model makers, which makes for an interesting discussion with many witty anecdotes and stories and presentations of model aircraft.

One of our members, Ralph Leaf, gave a very interesting, logical presentation of a 6-year project from planning to flying his own aircraft. This was a personal account of "a diversion" from managing his 1,000-acre farm near Dargaville. His talk was illustrated with detailed photos, showing a well-planned, sequential assembly of all parts of the aircraft, complying with certification standards throughout the build. His patience, hard work and meticulous concern for perfection is rewarded in that the plane is still flying today, 30 years after he constructed it.



Ralph in his minicab

We are now exploring the early aviators and putting history right in that it was Gustave Whitehead, who was the first person to achieve a manned, powered, sustained, and controlled heavier-than-air flight and not the Wright brothers. Next session we will look at the antipodean early aviators.

*Sue Robertson*

### Current Affairs Monday Group

This is one of U3A BOI's longest-established groups. We operate in a rather informal manner. Members bring along topics, which may be anything that has caught their attention in the previous month, and these are thrown open to the group for discussion. Topics can be drawn from the international, national and local media, or from general observations on local events.

In March we discussed, amongst other things, the political situation in the Ukraine, whether New Zealand needs a new flag, and the remarkable success of ex-mayor Wayne Brown in obtaining approval from his council to remove trees that were shading a property that he was developing. In April we discussed the regulation of food additives in NZ food, the uninformative but repetitive reporting of the lost Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, problems with plans for the expansion of the marina at Opuia, and much else besides.

Unfortunately, we rarely have vacancies for newcomers. To solve this problem the idea of a second current affairs group was discussed early in 2013. It was suggested that maybe we could split into two groups, one meeting in Kerikeri and the other in Paihia. That idea was firmly rejected and we have stayed together. Even so, time does create some opportunities for others to join us. At our last meeting we welcomed Pat de Meurers and David Jull as our first 'new blood' for some time. Fortunately, a second current affairs group has formed, and it still has vacancies. Perhaps they will become like us over time: a group of old friends who like to get together once a month for a cup of tea and a chat about what's going on in the world.

*Keith McNaughton*

### Local History Opuia Group

This group has 13 members coming from a wide area. A big advantage for the group is that some of our members have lived in the area for many years or, in some cases, all their lives. After considering the diverse opinions of our members at the first meeting, we settled on a format of guest speakers, or visits to historical sites with discussions to follow up on these or on a chosen topic.

At our second meeting we were fortunate to have Kevin Davidson from Kawakawa as our guest speaker. Kevin's subject was Geology, which gave us a good insight into the coal mining industry, which was once very active in Kawakawa and Hikurangi.

In April we visited the Kaikohe Pioneer Village where Sue James, a volunteer, made us very welcome and outlined various aspects of the Village before sending us off on our own to tour the Village. This gave us plenty of time to take in what was there to see. Sue had organised a very nice lunch of savouries, sandwiches and cakes.

After lunch we were treated to a PowerPoint presentation by Bruce Gillies featuring Titore, a prominent Maori chief, his association with both local and overseas Europeans and a suit of armour given to him by the Earl of Aberdeen.



The village far exceeded our expectations. A huge amount of work has been done by local volunteers and the Kaikohe Rotary Club. A large number of buildings, dating back to the mid 1800's, along with other items of interest, were well presented and brought back many memories. There is no doubt that the people of Kaikohe have great pride in their past. Before coming home, some of us visited the memorial to Hone Heke Ngapua, MP for Northern Maori. He was named after his great uncle, the Hone Heke of flagpole fame. It is interesting that, on a map dated 1846, Kaikohe is known as "Heke's Place".

Hone Heke Ngapua

*Don Jansen*

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