



Supporting Lifelong
Learning

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August 2024



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President's Report

General Meeting:
August 12, 9.30am
Howick Bowling Club, Selwyn Road, Howick
Speaker: Early 20th Century Magazine Advertising
10-minute speaker: Chris Cameron
Tea team: World of Art 2
Group reports A to K

Those of us who attended the U3A network day had a great and inspiring day. Paul Spoonley talked us through statistics of how Auckland is becoming super diverse and is spreading out to be bigger than London. Our population is changing with an increased number of older people and decreased fertility, but the population is increasing due to immigration. The new immigrants are adding to greater food choices and changes to choices of sports. This includes rugby being less popular due to complex rules! Basketball is increasingly popular, even I have a basketball and hoop in our garden! Sir Ashley Bloomfield challenged us to think about social cohesion and how we could strengthen this. How could trust be improved between people, the community, government, private sector and the media? The 10 minute speakers were also interesting and included a geologist searching for the beginning of time, while we puzzle about how fast time flies. It was a great day to sit back and listen.
June Poole

Editorial:

I have noticed recently in the media a growing sense of division between generations – boomers, Xers, millennials and gen z's – as if we are separate groups of people each with our own separate characteristics. In particular, I notice that boomers are often depicted as the group that have created the terrible conditions the younger generations have to confront, as the greedy withholders of wealth or, alternatively, broke and dependent on the state. We are seen, too, as having a litany of illnesses, creating a strain on the health system. The nauseatingly patronising retirement village ads currently proliferating on TV present our generation as a bunch of giggling morons, who make harnesses for sausage dogs who are perfectly capable of walking, sit in movies with froth on our lips and who “take no prisoners on Wednesday Bridge nights” Ugh.

But really, aren't we the people we always were? We were once young, and are now old – as everyone who lives long enough becomes. We have our own distinct personalities, our own challenges and anxieties, and we remain the friends and family members we always were. Yes, we grew up embedded in the time and place into which we were born, just as everyone does. Every generation, I suppose, sets the scene for the generation that follows it, and every generation views those younger or older with a certain scepticism, but to my mind the whole “generation gap” trend takes away the opportunity for all of us to be seen as individuals, all part of the same human race.

August Speaker: Jenny Lynch



Jenny Lynch is a former editor of the NZ Woman's Weekly, where she began her career in journalism. She also worked on the Weekly News, Sunday Herald, Thursday magazine, and in Australia and Canada. Although principally a feature writer, she gained wide experience in other magazine roles. At various times she was a columnist, fashion writer, theatre critic and layout designer. Jenny was educated at Epsom Girls' Grammar and in the United States. In 1976 she returned to the NZ Woman's Weekly, where she became assistant editor the following year and editor in 1987. She led the magazine for seven years.

Jenny is also the author of four non-fiction books including a memoir, "Under The Covers: Secrets of a Magazine Editor" and "Ready To Wear: The Changing Shape of New Zealand Fashion."

Her latest work, a novel titled *The Secrets They Kept* is out now. Her talk to U3A is on Early 20th Century Magazine Advertising.



July Speaker: Professor Helen-Danesh-Meyer - Myths and Mysteries of the eye.



The interesting and well-presented talk by Professor Danesh-Meyer provided a huge amount of information about the eye and vision. Vision is, of course hugely important. A study by John Hopkins in 2016 found that blindness was the most dreaded event - along with terrorist attacks !

Cataracts are not growths in the eye. But are embedded inside the eye, sitting behind the pupil - the size of a pea. In the past, surgeons used to pop them out. And the patient had to lie in bed for a week. (In fact, it is said that St Lucy, the Patron Saint of blindness, actually took out her whole eyes to deter a pagan stalker.) Now the procedure is much more sophisticated and much safer.

Cataracts cause clouding of the natural lens which goes white then yellow. Blurry vision occurs eventually and even before that increased glare in the dark and halos around lights at night will be noticed.

There is a myth that cataracts only occur in older people. Indeed, everyone over seventy has some degree but cataracts can occur even in children. Babies are checked for it at birth. To minimize early development of cataracts, wear sun glasses, avoid steroids if possible and don't smoke. Cataracts can be caused by diabetes and the tendency to get cataracts can be passed down through families.

The surgery takes 15 to 30 mins. An incision of 2mm is made. The cataract has skin and a pit. The stone is softened and then the fleshy bit. Then the surgeon implants a lens where the cataract used to be. 75 years ago during the first surgery someone noticed perspex in the eye so realized a perspex lens won't be rejected. Now we also have multi-focal implants and the operation has a 99% chance of success.

Glaucoma is a chronic disease which affects one in ten people. It can be managed but not cured. It occurs when the fluid that irrigates the eye does not drain properly. Initially it is a silent disease and advanced symptoms come quickly. If diagnosed early blindness is rare, so it is important to get regular eye checks. If you have glaucoma you must keep taking drops.

Glaucoma causes high pressure in eye. Because the optic nerve is sensitive to pressure, the pressure can cause hollowing of the optic nerve, which can be diagnosed by looking at the eye.

The optic nerve contains fibres like a telephone cable - 1 million fibres. You can lose 400,000 and still see normally, but then you will lose peripheral vision.

The eye drops which are used to treat glaucoma can have side effects. Your eyelashes can grow, and your eye colour may darken. It can slow your pulse and lower blood pressure and can cause vivid dreams, hair loss and impotence.

Laser treatment can improve drainage. The procedure takes 2 to 3 minutes and lasts 6 months to 6 years. It can be repeated. A new invention involves placing tiny microstents into the eye to open up the drainage channel.

Research

The Vision research foundation was established when Phyllis Mead left her estate for the foundation.

The optic nerve at the back of eye can tell us what's happening in the brain and scanning techniques can help to identify conditions early. The optic nerve can be a biomarker for dementia. An eye tracker can detect concussion. And examination of the eye can detect problems with the cardiovascular system, brain tumours etc.

Research is continuing. It has been discovered that nerve fibre thickness can predict success of operations on tumours.

A leading cause of blindness in Africa is vitamin A deficiency and there is now a plan to put vit a in chicken nuggets.

An amplified MRI can measure the brain's movement and interpret pressure in brain, removing the need to do invasive lumbar punctures.

Finally, it has been discovered that shingles can cause glaucoma or cataracts, so it is important to get vaccinated.

New Zealand has limited funding for research and continues to look for new donors.

From the committee:

U3A Howick website: To become a follower on our website, just google u3ahowicknz.co.nz and then click on the bottom right corner of the home page where it says Follow and enter your email address.

U3A Facebook page: Join this facebook group (u3ahowick) for interesting information and updates.

From the Convenors:

Psychology. Our topic focused on “The Aging Brain”. Reference was made to a booklet: "Successful Aging & Your Brain", with discussion focused on Brain Changes in Aging & What we Know about Healthy Aging. <https://www.mcgill.ca/infoneuro/files/infoneuro/successful-aging-booklet.pdf>

We concurred that the brain doesn't transform With the exception of a stroke, the aging brain changes gradually in its abilities to perceive sensations, process information, create & store memories, and learn. Except for a decrease in processing speed, the healthy mature brain performs about as well as a youthful one in any task requiring planning, analysis, and organization of information – just not as fast! And with the wisdom of a lifetime, the elderly, but healthy, brain usually outperforms the youthful brain in judgment. We discussed ways to keep our brain healthy - to take charge of our brain health and maintain our cognitive & mental agility:

Colleen introduced us to an acronym: COACH is from: **C**onscientiousness, **O**penness to new things, **A**ffiliation to others, **C**uriosity and **H**ealthy Lifestyle, and suggested that we could make it “COACHING” by adding: Intellectual stimulation, **N**ovelty (one new thing a day) and **G**

We shared how we could support our own mental agility by: learning new things e.g. musical instrument or language, reading books e.g. Viktor Frankl’s “Man’s Search for Meaning” which involved identifying a purpose to each person's life through one of three ways: 1. the completion of tasks, 2. caring for another person, or 3. finding meaning by facing suffering with dignity. (**keep on learning – keeping mentally stimulated**);socialising, not isolating - we have social brains, impacted, mostly, through relationships and experiences – the importance of avoiding loneliness (**maintain social and emotional connections**);maintaining a healthy diet (**nutrition**);walking on irregular surfaces, standing on one leg while doing mundane activities e.g. brushing your teeth, walk backwards (**movement & exercise**);maintaining good “sleep hygiene” e.g. increasing quality sleep by optimising your sleep schedule, and pre-bed routine – Late-night REM sleep loss severely impacts brain connectivity (**sleep**);using self-calming activities, “count your blessings” – taking the time to see the positives in your life (**manage “toxic” or chronic stress**);not seeing yourself as being “invisible” – try to ensure your life has a sense of purpose and meaning (**join a volunteer organisation!**) and, above all, **be kind to yourself.**

Out and about:

- Auckland Museum has several exhibitions; Wildlife photographer of the year, Through the Eye of the Lens, a digital photo exhibition and Te Ra, the only customary Maori sail in existence
- Whanau Marama: New Zealand Film Festival – 7 to 18 August 2024. Details through Auckland Live
- A taste of Ireland: Irish music and dance July 12 to August 18. Details and booking through eventfinda
- Howick Little Theatre: Around the World in 80 Days. Book through hlt.org.nz
- Guitarra – Paco Pena and Grigoyan Brothers. Auckland Town Hall, 24 September. Book through Auckland Live
- Mozart the Great, Auckland Town hall 16 August. Book through NZSO.
- International film Festival 7 to 18 August Civic Theatre. Book through Auckland Live

Groups(yellow=closed * members welcome	Date 2024	Venue	Topic	Convenor
Anthropology 3 rd Thurs 10 am	August 15	BM Theatre	Pot pourri	Betty Reid 534 9895
Architecture 1 st Fri 10 am	August 2	BM Theatre	Bridges/ Pot pourri	June Lamborn 535 8069
Book Discussion 4 th Thurs 1.30 *	August 22	3 Mcmillan Place	Books	Sue Townson 0212147408
Civilisations 3 rd Mon 1 pm	August 19	1/73 Frank Nobilo Drive	Early Peruvian Civilisation	Linda Stubbs 0272975601
Comparative Religions 4 th Monday 1.30pm	August 26	Howick Baptist Care Home Lounge	Christianity contd.	Margaret Nicholls 021344083
Current Affairs* 2 nd Wed 1.30pm	August 14	11 Shelly Beach Parade	How can we prevent children going into state or religious care	Jan Naish-Wallis 027 220 3777
Dinner Club 3 rd Tuesday 6pm	August 20	Benjarong		Jan Naish-Wallis 027220 3777
Earth and the Universe 4 th Tues 10 am	August 27	BM Theatre	How it all began	Clive Bolt 534 2946
Famous & Infamous 1 1 st Thurs 10 am	August 1	Cinema lounge Dannemora Gdns	Pot pourri	Gill Muggleston 0212395140
French Circle* 4 th Fri 1 pm	August 23	74A Aberfeldy Ave	French colonies in Indian Ocean	David Dwerryhouse 0210315416
Gardenz 1 st Tuesday 10.30am**	August 6 10.30am	94 Beresford St W. Freeman's Bay	Visit to Urban Jungle	Linda Stubbs 0272975601
History* 3 rd Tues 10 am	August 20 date TBC	BM Theatre	DVD Stephen Fry and the Gutenberg Press	Judy Lee 535 8547
History New Zealand 2 nd Thurs 10 am	August 8	40 Ellesmere Cresc PP village	Pot pourri	Alan La Roche 534 7366
History of NZ2* 3 rd Tuesday 2pm	August 20	9 Tranquility Rise	Maritime history of NZ from scows to shipwrecks	June Poole (Temp) 021583893
Literature 3 rd Wed 10 am	August 21	32 Butley Drive	Short Stories	Judy Wilson 576 6340
Military History 2 nd Thursday 2.00pm	August 8	9 Tranquility Rise	Boer War/Role of African troops from Tanzania in WW1	Derek Priscott 5344293
Mobile photography* 3 rd Wednesday 1.30pm	August 21	Whitford (TBC)	Contact Sue to confirm if bad weather	Sue Townson (temp) 0212147408
Movies * 2 nd Mon, 12.30 pm	August 12 1pm	Monterey Theatre TBC	Mr Blake at your service	Jan Naish-Wallis 027 220 3777
Opera 4 th Tues 1.15pm	August 27	BM Theatre	'Elektra' – Richard Strauss	Geraldine Rose 5371917
Psychology 2 nd Thu 1.30	August 8	7 Tainui Road	The brain, learning and memory	Len Nel 0276627234
Philosophy 1 st Mon 10 am	August 5	2 Citation Way, Botany	Temperance	Christopher Nixon 5343843
Science. 4 th Wed 10 am	August 28	BM theatre	Pot pourri	Jim Hine 534 4259
Sociology 1 st Thursday 1.30pm	August 1	7 Tainui Road	Cults, clans and communities	Len Nel 0276627234
Travel 1 st Wed 10 am	August 7	159 Pah Road	We walk the historic Roman-built Hadrian's Wall	David Teape 5336103
Walks and Talks 3 rd Fri 9.30 am	August 16	Meet Wattle Farm reserve	Wattle Downs	June Poole 021583893 Goeff 0211154560
World of Art 1 3 rd Mon 10 am *	August 19	5 Luke Place Eastern Beach	Pacific and Pacific Rim art	Garry Law 0275665764
World of Art 2 3 rd Tues 1.30 pm	August 20	BM theatre	Botanic Art by Jeanette Fenn	Philippa Wilson 5342558
World of Music* 4 th Wed 1.00 pm	August 28	TBA	TBA	Julia Forsyth 021 164 1664
Writing 2 nd Tues 1.30 pm	August 13	Apt 103/13 Fairway Gardens	Overseas	Mary Kennedy 02102250341

