



Supporting
Lifelong Learning

Howick Inc.
PO Box 39035
Howick 2145
NOVEMBER 2019

FINAL EDITION



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2019-2020**

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ROSEMARY OVENS *Almoner/Welcomer*

MARY KENNEDY *Minutes Secretary*

NOVEMBER 11 MEETING

9.30 am, Howick Bowling Club

GUEST SPEAKER: Peter Wilson: Demystifying North Korea

TEN MINUTES: Short story

TEA ASSIST: Earth and the Universe

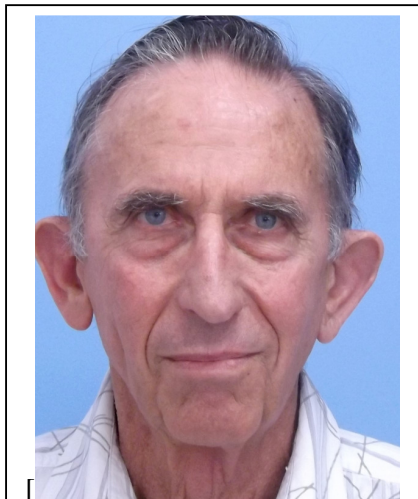
**REGISTER TODAY FOR
MUSEUM VISIT**

THE Past President's Excursion to the Viaduct Harbour Maritime Museum is scheduled for Nov 20, at 11 am. Please register at today's meeting with Margaret Nicholls, Immediate Past President/Director of Studies and organiser of the event. She needs to liaise with the museum management on the number going on the guided museum tour (which includes an exhibit on the first contact between Maori and James Cook in 1769), as well as those taking an hour-long sail around the harbour on a heritage boat, the Ted Ashby. Those also taking the sail option will need to indicate this when registering. There will also be a guide to escort members on the boat ride at 11.30 am. Museum entry is free but the ride is \$20 for seniors.

Participants are to meet at the Half Moon Bay ferry terminal to board the 10.15 am service to the harbour. The ferry is free to Gold Card holders. Members will return on the 2.30 pm ferry after lunch at their own expense. There is a choice of harbour-side eateries. Those who plan to make their own way to the CBD should be at the museum entrance by 11 am to link up with the party.

For new Howick U3A members who wonder what this event is: The Past President's Excursion is a curated visit to places of interest organised by the Immediate Past President, who shall decide on the nature and location of the visit to attract the widest possible participation.

Go to maritimemuseum.co.nz to learn more about the Maritime Museum.



A PEEK INTO THE HERMIT KINGDOM

GUEST speaker Peter Wilson (picture) spent time in North Korea in 1997 doing United Nations aid work during a period of widespread hunger when floods ruined crops and damaged cropland. He is also secretary of the NZ-DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) Society. He will give a glimpse of life in North Korea and touch on its nuclear standoff with South Korea and the United States. An agriculturalist for most of his life, Mr Wilson spent four decades in developmental work in Asia and the Pacific region. He has been involved in farming projects, poverty alleviation and post-conflict reconstruction in the Indo-China states and in East Timor. His first contact with Asia came in 1969 when he headed a New Zealand Red Cross resettlement team to then-South Vietnam.

NEXT MONTH: Our own Jenny Hough will talk about her experiences as a tour guide at the Christmas morning tea meeting on Dec 9

SENIORS DISCOUNTS WEBSITE ACTIVATED

A WEBSITE and app for merchandise and services discounts for Gold Card holders can now be accessed by seniors after the Ministry of Social Development revamped the portal as it had fallen into disuse. The upgrade cost taxpayers \$7.7 million. Go to supergold.govt.nz for discounts details plus instructions on how to download the app onto your phone or tablet. There are 9,500 shops across the country representing 75 national and regional chains where seniors can get discounts and specials. Biggies to have signed up to the scheme include Qantas, Spark and The Warehouse.

RESIGNED

ERIC Collins and Anne Searle have resigned their memberships.

PASSING

We record the passing of Dorothy Bell (on Oct 25, aged 93) and two past longstanding members -- David Bone (Oct 2, aged 88) and Marjorie Silcock (Oct 2, aged 92.)

RNZAF LEGACY – A DAUGHTER’S TRIBUTE

BEVERLY Johnson wants to share with members two web pages - www.aircrewremembered.com/johnson-thomas-randall-french.html, www.aircrewremembered.com/johnson-thomas-randall-french-biography.html - which detail a dark episode in Royal New Zealand Air Force annals. This was in 1945 when the air force lost seven pilots in an abortive attempt to rescue another RNZAF pilot adrift in Simpson Harbour off Rabaul, in the southern Pacific. Her father, Fl-Lt Thomas Johnson, took part in the rescue. The second web page is Ms Johnson’s biography of her father and his role in the fateful mission. These web pages under the handle aircrewremembered.com were developed as a global project to remember the many Allied airmen who lost their lives in WWII. Members who want to learn more about this episode in RNZAF history may contact Bev Johnson (beverlyaj144@gmail.com, 5355009.)

REPORT ON LAST MONTH’S TALKS

‘OFF TO KILL HITLER’

SHEILA Russell’s account of her paternal cousin Albert Armstrong’s 1944 escape from a German POW camp in the company of a large group of Commonwealth airmen was based on first-hand sources. The events of the Stalag Luft 3 escape in occupied Poland inspired the heavily dramatised 1963 film, *The Great Escape*. The truth, the unvarnished truth, is far more absorbing than cinematic fiction. Mrs Russell drew on her parents’ reconstruction of the cousin’s role in the planning and also the recollection of Armstrong’s wife. Armstrong himself said little after he returned at war’s end, a reticence common among war returnees. Young Sheila, who had her own memories of his exploits, had been playmates with him until the day he decided to join the Royal Air Force. He was off to kill Hitler, she thought. He was not yet 18, the minimum age for enlistment.

We know how the end came for Hitler. As for Armstrong he was among the last to be recaptured, so fortuitously escaped the mass executions ordered by an enraged Hitler. He came home from the war “a shadow of the man he once was”, Mrs Russell recalled. He had been shot down over Tobruk during the North African campaign, bailing out straight into German hands. Then came the POW ordeal. Then the fight from captivity that didn’t work as planned. This was family history in the raw.

What stood out in Mrs Russell’s narration of the captives’ planning was the daring in spite of the odds: seismographs to detect ground activity, the heavy guard, dogs patrolling the perimeter fence, sandy soil which conspired with weather variables to make escape difficult. The scouring through the earth was industrial-scale, comparable in parts with the 110-km Cu Chi tunnels which were integrated with the Ho Chi Minh Trail through which the Vietcong funnelled troops and materiel to fight the Americans in the Vietnam War. The Stalag Luft tunnels burrowed down to 25 feet to beat the seismographs were built to the standards of mining shafts, meaning they had to have air supply, lighting and be fortified well enough to withstand roof and wall collapses. Armstrong, being slight, was one of the tunnellers. Fake documents and localised clothing to help escapees make their way through enemy territory were another feat of preparation.

Scores of Allied mass-escape attempts during the war have been documented. Some succeeded, some had mixed results, many failed. This one failed partly because the numbers were too large. In the Hollywood production of sheer escapism, the day of reckoning was blessed with fine weather for an

unimpeded getaway. Steve McQueen rode a motorbike (as only he knew how) and cleared the fence. The truth? Freezing cold, unseasonal snow for March, and a tunnel cave-in which impeded the fleeing captives. And no motorbike to distract the Germans.

Heavily-breathed steam issuing from the escape tunnel alerted the guards after a good number of the airmen had got away – and it was all over. Mrs Russell's account said 50 of the recaptured men were eventually executed, 20 were returned to captivity and six made it to freedom. Those waiting in the tunnel had quickly retreated to their cell blocks. Her cousin had got as far as the mountains beyond the camp before he was spotted by local guards and turned over to the Gestapo.

Still, he got to marry his favourite girl in the end. 'A bit of a lad' was how Mrs Russell remembered her cousin.

AN ODYSSEY THROUGH FAIRWAYS AND GREENS

IN her 10-minute talk, Jean Denholm recounted with affection and some humour her golf-playing family's sojourn through the fairways of New Zealand and of how family life was lived up and down the North Island, in tune with her father Jock Lambie's work as a club teaching pro. For him, the journeying began appropriately in Troon, Scotland, where he was born. As Mrs Denholm said, any mention of Troon would bring the rejoinder, "He must play golf, then?" But of course father did.

Rather like what Eden Park is to rugby followers, Troon is a temple to golf, one of a handful of courses where the British Open is rotated. Founded in 1878 Royal Troon has hosted the Open nine times. Winners there have included Arnold Palmer. Anyone within its orbit would fall for its fatal charm, its history. Her father had caddied at Troon, including for some famous names, and was intent on playing golf for a living after he left school. But came the war and his plans got into the rough, as it were.

Still, golf became his calling, not as a touring pro but as a teaching pro showing beginners the correct way to swing a club. This began in earnest after he emigrated to New Zealand, in 1925. Almost his first call upon arrival was made to the NZ Golf Association, which set him up with a Wellington golf club (Heretaunga) as a teaching pro. Thus began a peripatetic life during which he met his future wife, followed by a round of appointments in towns as varied as New Plymouth, Napier (where Jean was born), Hastings and Levin. Young Jean learnt her golf at the Levin course, a hobby she picked up because, she allowed, that was "where the young men were". Her brother also took up the game.

She remembers fondly the family's time in Wellington at the Miramar Golf Club where her father had landed a plum job. Its substantial clubhouse was the family's quarters, a place she described as a "wonderland to us children". Her father managed the pro shop, mum and an aunt did the catering for members. Even the family cocker spaniel was pressed into service, ferreting out members' lost balls after the day's golfing was over. Father would have them cleaned and sold as seconds. Another happy time was at Chateau Tongariro which had a nine-hole course. While her father organised summer recreations for hotel guests, the kids had the time of their lives sampling the resort's delights with the mountains as a backdrop.

OUT AND ABOUT

++ A **DENMARK Design** exhibition is on at the **Auckland Art Gallery**, ending Feb 2 2020. It features 200 objects – furniture, fabrics, graphic design, ceramics and toys. Well-known Danish brands featured include **Georg Jensen, Royal Copenhagen** and **Arne Jacobsen**. Details on aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition/denmark-design. Seniors \$14, 10 am to 5 pm.

++ **OPERATUNITY's** concluding show for 2019 is **Christmas at the Proms**, billed in the publicity as a "salute to two musical traditions as we present the best of the Proms and the best of Christmas in one great celebratory concert". At St Columba Church, Ti Rakau, on Nov 19 starting at 11 am. Bookings 0508 266237 or go online operatunity.co.nz.

++ **UPCOMING Thursdays@7 spring concerts** at All Saints Church Howick are on Nov 14, 21, 28 and Dec 5. Performers on the respective dates are the **Emanon Duo, Te Anahera NZ Harp Ensemble** and pianist **Marianna Kang**. The Dec event is a **Christmas gala**. Details on wattsandwatts.co.nz/thursdays-at-7

++ **THE New Zealand Symphony Orchestra** plays **Mahler's** sprawling **Second Symphony (Resurrection)** at the Town Hall on Nov 23, 7.30 pm. This is a large 90 min work with two sopranos, two choirs and an augmented orchestra. **Edo de Waart** conducts. Tickets from Ticketmaster (ticketmaster.co.nz).

++ **GIBBS Farm sculpture park** (2421 Kaipara Coast Highway, north Auckland) is holding a fund-raiser for the **University of Canterbury students association** on Nov 22, 10am-2 am. Tickets \$105 + gst – phone Lisa Kulczycki of the UC alumni office 03 3693839. Go to gibbsfarm.org.nz for photo gallery.

<u>Groups (yellow denotes full)</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Convenor</u>
Anthropology 1 3 rd Thurs 10 am	Nov 21	BM Theatre	<i>Festival Foods</i> All to contribute	Jennie Leyland 534 4034 Betty Reid 534 9895
Anthropology 2 4 th Mon 10 am	Nov 25	Cora Young's 55 Rodney St	<i>The Trobriand Islanders</i> Margaret Hieatt	Margaret Hieatt 534 9131
Architecture 1 st Fri 10 am	Dec 6	The Booths' 3/47 Orangewood Drive	Potpourri	Malcolm/Dilys Booth 534 3604
Aviation and Aerospace 1 st Wed 10 am	Dec 4	BM Theatre	Member contributions	Clive Bolt 534 2946
Book Discussion 4 th Thurs 2 pm		Activity pause until early 2020		Margaret Smith 576 3206
Civilisations 3 rd Mon 1 pm	Nov 18	Cora Young's 55 Rodney St	Last meeting 2019: Potpourri and bring some bites for tea	Cora Young 534 8623
Earth and the Universe 4 th Tues 10 am	Nov 26	BM Theatre	<i>Alan Guth on Cosmic Inflation</i>	Clive Bolt 534 2946
Famous & Infamous 1 1 st Tues 10 am		No meeting in Dec		Peter Garrick 535 4085
Famous & Infamous 2 3 rd Thurs 2 pm	Nov 21	June Barton's 16 Tui Vale, Cockle Bay	<i>Petworth, 3rd Earl of Egremont</i> Allan Reid	Allan Reid 534 9895
Famous & Infamous 3 1 st Thurs 10 am	Dec 5	Dannemora Gardens restaurant	Morning tea at 10 am	Gill Muggleston 534 9863
Forum 3 rd Fri 10 am	Nov 15	Beverly Luxton's 1 Village Dr, PPV		Beverly Luxton 576 9625
French 4 th Fri 1 pm	Nov 22	Gayleen Mackereth's 170 Cook St	<i>Napoleon</i>	David Dwerryhouse 534 4829
History 3 rd Tues 10 am	Nov 19	BM Theatre	Potpourri – 5,10 min each on any history topic	Judy Lee 535 8547
History of New Zealand 2 nd Thurs 10 am	Nov 14	1 Tanglewood Place, off Sale St	TBA	Alan La Roche 534 7366
Literature 3 rd Wed 10 am	Nov 20	Judy Wilson's 32 Butley Dr	<i>Irish Myths and Legends</i> Merle Hayne	Judy Wilson 576 6340
Movies 2 nd Mon, 1 pm	Nov 11	Jean Denholm's 2/21 Drake St	Group discussion	Margaret Nicholls 536 6709
Nature Walks and Talks 2nd Fri 9 am	Dec 13	Meet Howick Historical Village	To Pakuranga creek, Highland Park and back	Alan La Roche 534 7366
Opera 1 2 nd Tues 9.30 am	Nov 12	BM Theatre	<i>Fidelio</i> by Beethoven Jonas Kaufman	Jean Denholm 534 6844
Opera 2 4 th Tues 1 pm	Nov 26	BM Theatre	<i>Le Comte Ory</i> by Rossini 153 min	Geraldine Rose 537 1917
Philosophy 1st Mon 10 am	Dec 2	BM Theatre	Discussion: Pre-selected articles that guide us to get better at living life	Christopher Nixon 535 5309
Poetry 2 nd Tues 2 pm	Nov 12		Two poems from each	Beth Voogd 534 7468
Science 4 th Wed 10 am	Nov 27	BM Theatre	Potpourri	Jim Hine 534 4259
Sunday Discussion 2nd Sun noon		No meeting in Nov		Joan Clarkson 537 6397
Travel 1 st Wed 10 am	Dec 4	Jan Porritt's 61 The Parade, Bucklands Bch	<i>Chicago Plus</i> Warren and Alice Taylor	Warren Taylor 534 3482
World of Art 1 3 rd Mon 10 am	Nov 18	BM Theatre	<i>Marc Chagall</i>	Garry Law 271 6505
World of Art 2 3 rd Tues 1.30 pm	Nov 19	BM Theatre	<i>Miro</i> Dulcie Scurrah	Heather Watson 274 4747
World of Music 4 th Wed 1.30 pm	Nov 27	Ngaire Taylor 6 Stevenson Way	<i>Mahler's Symphonies</i> Chua Huck Cheng	Ngaire Taylor 534 8538
World War II 2 nd Thurs 2pm	Nov 14	Allan Reid's 4A Patons Rd	<i>Douglas Bader's Wingmen</i> Warren Yardley	Allan Reid 534 9895
Writing 2 nd Tues 1.30 pm	Nov 12	Bev Johnson's Apt 144 BM Village	<i>'And Then The Rooster Crowed'</i>	Marian Heywood 534 1159

