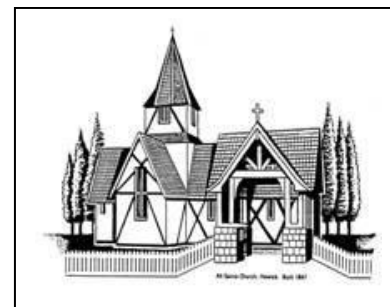




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 September 2022



Supporting  
 Lifelong Learning

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**Next General Meeting:**  
**Monday 12 September 9.30am**

**Dr Helen Murray:** More than a knock to the head: dementia and contact sports athletes

**Howick Bowling Club Speaker:**

**Short story: Marian Heywood Tea team: Writing**

If you have not already done so, please pay \$25.00 subscription to U3A Howick bank account, 12 3040 0556154 00, using your surname as a reference. (If you are unable to pay online, you can pay Joni in cash at a general meeting.)

**Editorial:**

A comment by last month’s speaker, Paul Moon, on the subject of Māori in Antarctica piqued my interest, so I decided to have a closer look.

A paper published in the Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand, by Priscilla Wehi et al, (2021) suggested that “Māori/Polynesian voyagers likely discovered Antarctica in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century.” Her evidence was gathered from Māori oral histories, and other “grey literature”, which consists mainly of an article translated from Maori in 1899, telling of the travels of Hui te Rangiora, who described “rocks that grow out of the sea...a foggy, misty, dark place”. The clincher, apparently, lies in the use of the word a-pia, arrowroot, which apparently looks like ice when scraped. On the basis of her research, Wehi suggested indigenous people should have a greater influence in Antarctica, perhaps even giving it personhood status.

There was some sensible response to Wehi’s claims. A later article in the same journal, which also included Māori authors, including Sir Tipene O’Reagan, politely refutes the likelihood of early Maori voyages to Antarctica . While acknowledging that Maori oral history can be accurate, this story was likely mistranslated and was probably mythical. They point out that evidence of Polynesian settlement even in New Zealand has not been found before the 14<sup>th</sup> century suggesting that mass Polynesian migration had not begun much before that. Voyagers in light clothing and in traditional wooden sailing vessels would have had little or no chance of survival in Antarctic waters. The Listener, too, published an article examining the story in the context of, “the debate over matauranga and ‘western’ scholarship.”

What I find astounding is that information from the original article has been published as fact (at least in their headlines) by a plethora of publications – smithsonianmag.com, the New York Times, The Guardian, NBC News and Radio New Zealand to name a few. Livescience.com states, “Antarctica was likely discovered 1100 years before Westerners found it”.

There is some belief in academic circles that knowledge is cultural, that what we have been allowed to know has been controlled by Western white men, and it is now time for marginalised groups (indigenous, gender diverse,

disabled etc.) to take over the narrative. Perhaps these groups have every right to jostle for centre stage. But I happen to believe that objective truth does exist, however elusive. And if we are to navigate the quagmire of fake news and disinformation proliferating these days, it is more important than ever to know how to evaluate the information we read and hear.

## September Speaker: Dr Helen Murray



*Short Bio:* Dr Helen Murray is a research fellow at the Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland and captain of the New Zealand women's ice hockey team. Her research examines the cellular anatomy of the human brain and how it changes in neurodegenerative diseases, with a particular focus on dementia in contact sport athletes.

*Talk Title:* More than a knock to the head: dementia and contact-sport athletes.

*Outline:* What is happening inside the brains of our top contact sport athletes?

Many are experiencing symptoms of a degenerative condition called chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) – a progressive brain disease that causes dementia and is associated with repetitive head injuries. By examining the brains of former athletes after death, we are learning about the long-term consequences of concussions. This talk will explore what we know about the brains of contact sport athletes and how this knowledge will help us unravel the mysteries of progressive brain disease.

## Ten-minute speaker - August: Judy Wilson

Judy Wilson gave us an interesting ten-minute talk about letter-writing and the lives it reveals. We all remember writing letters and aerograms in the 1970's – which seemed so much more personal than modern electronic communication. Judy read a few letters written to her aunt during World War 2. Letters from the woman's husband posted in the early part of the war stopped when he went missing in Pearl Harbour in 1942, but she continued to receive sensitive and caring letters from his friends. Her husband was not declared dead until four years later. Judy commented on the fortitude of people in those times, who had to live with so much uncertainty and loss.



Photo by Warren Yardley

## August Speaker: Professor Paul Moon



Paul Moon's excellent and thought-provoking talk explained how nostalgia and utopia affect the way we look at history. He began with an interesting anecdote about an interview with a rather aggressive reporter on the subject of Treaty claims. He gave her a greenstone mere, which he said was passed by Hone Heke to the Maori queen and must only be held by women. The woman held it and felt transported into its history. In fact, the mere had been made in a factory in Avondale. This, he said, is the power of narrative. We project meaning onto objects.

Nostalgia helps us to make sense of the past by romanticising it. We talk of "the good old days", and can, in retrospect laugh about situations that were extremely stressful at the time. It can be part of the psychological evolutionary process. On the other hand, nostalgia can be used for political purposes, such as Trump's "Make America great again" campaign. We can also be nostalgic about historical events where we were not present. This is known as prosthetic nostalgia. People who went on an art deco weekend in Napier stated that it must have been a wonderful era. In fact, Napier was rebuilt after a catastrophic earthquake during the depression era in the 1930's. Professor Moon reminded us of times when we re-watch a movie we loved in the past. It is dated, and not as we remembered it. We may remember the past as better than the present but, in reality, there never was a golden age.

Utopianism is also a myth. While it may seem subversive and revolutionary, a utopian world would be perfect and un-changeable. North Korea, and Hitler's Germany, for example, were based on utopian ideas. Early settlers in New Zealand, too, were led to believe that it was paradise here. It was said you could grow pineapples in Wellington. Heaphy's paintings of New Zealand successfully flattened the land to make it look more attractive. Utopianism is often nostalgia repackaged. New Zealand was presented as a pre-industrial version of the UK. In the first Labour Government of Michael Joseph Savage, there was a belief that no-one was homeless. Everyone had their villa or their state house, with its quarter-acre section where they could grow their own food. The Values Party in the 70's also pursued a policy of utopianism. They wanted zero population growth, a ban on advertising and a halt to economic growth. They wanted to keep things as they were.

The problem with utopianism is that it doesn't last. Perceptions of the past are vanishing and we seem to live in an eternal present. We post pictures of our lunch that will be deleted by tomorrow. This sense of living in the present can be a reaction to fast change. Some want change, while others want to return to the way things were in the past. This can cause conflict.

When Cora asked about "the elephant in the room," colonisation, Paul made some interesting comments. He pointed out that the image of pre-colonial times is an example of prosthetic nostalgia. Tribal Maori life can be perceived as peaceful and idyllic which surely it was not. Colonisation can be seen as worse than it really was, leading to a slave mentality. It is hard to get back to the facts. There is a worldwide desire for decolonisation, but we can't resuscitate the past.

Professor Moon sees progressivism as an attractive proposition, but is unsure what the goal of this movement might be. We were certainly left with plenty to think about.

## From the Committee:

**Treasurer:** As you may know, Joni will be resigning as Treasurer at the end of the year. She has done a sterling job setting up systems, and will be happy to assist a new person to take over. If you have any bookkeeping or accounting knowledge, please consider offering to take over this important role. Talk to Joni, Colleen or any of the Committee members if you think you can help.

### *Interest Groups*

A book for proposing new interest groups will be on the front table at general meetings. Once enough members have listed their interest, the group will be formed. If there is insufficient interest after 6 months, the proposed new group will be scrapped. For those not present at general meetings, but who have an interest in proposed groups, please contact Judith Nel to put your name down.

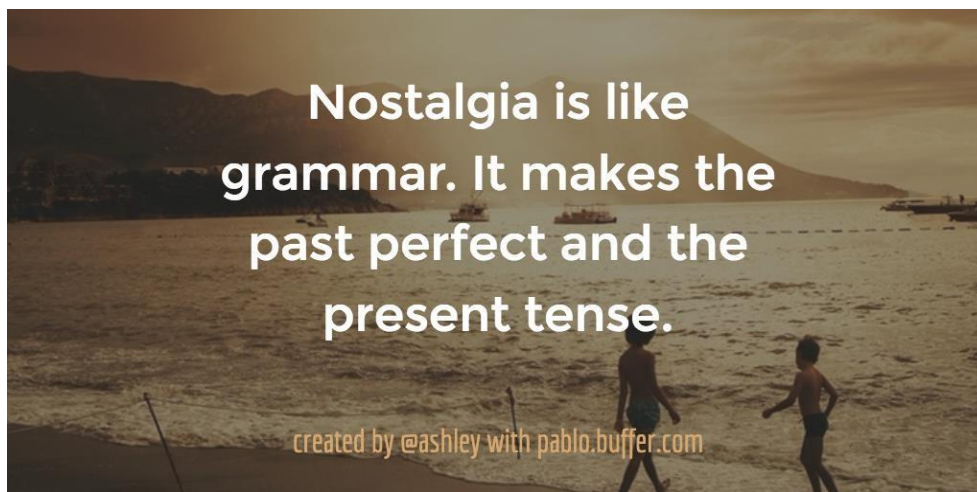
**History of NZ 2** has 5 members already and will be convened by Graeme Diver. Details of this group have been included in the timetable. Call Graeme on 0274728033 if you are interested in joining this group.

**Mobile phone photography** is also ready to go, convened by Colleen Rigby - phone 0272916781. Again, details are in the timetable.

**Memoirs/writing 2** - this group was proposed as a second writing group, but we have had a suggestion that more people would be interested in exploring writing their memoirs and learning what works best. So far we have two people interested and would need a Convenor to step forward.

## Out and about:

- Royal Czech Ballet presents Swan Lake at the Bruce Mason centre on 24 September, and at the Aotea centre on 25 and 26 September. Booking and details on Auckland Live website
- *The wasp*, described as thrilling and darkly funny, will be performed at Q Theatre 14 to 24 September. Details on their website.
- Art in the Park, 8 to 11 September, Eden Park. Details on Ticketek website.
- Sole Mio will perform their Homecoming tour on 13 October at the Spark Arena. Book via ticketek.
- There is a free talk about Da Vinci at the Aotea Centre from 27 September to 7 October.



<b>Groups (yellow- full green - new group)</b>	<b>Date 2022</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Convenor</b>
Anthropology 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs 10 am	September 15	4A Paton Road	Origins of the Pacific	Betty Reid 534 9895
Anthropology 2 4 <sup>th</sup> Mon 10 am		55 Rodney St		Margaret Hieatt 534 9131
Architecture 1 <sup>st</sup> Fri 10 am	September 2	6 Stevenson Way, Cockle bay	Ngaire "NZ Lighthouses" Margaret Nicholls "Underground Houses"	June Lamborn 535 8069
Book Discussion 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs 1.30	September 22	9A Merino Avenue	Books	Joni Burgess 537 4834
Civilisations 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon 1 pm	September 19	55 Rodney Street	Music in Pharaonic Egypt, by Warren	Cora Young 534 8623
Comparative Religions 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday 1.30pm	September 28 <i>changed date</i>	Buddhist Temple, Chapel Road Botany	Tour of temple	Margaret Nicholls 536 6709
Current Affairs 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed 1.30pm	September 14	11 Shelly Bch Pde Cockle Bay	Major Current Events since 1993	Jan Naish-Wallis 027 220 3777
Earth and the Universe 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues 10 am	September 27	BM Theatre	Latest Research	Clive Bolt 534 2946
Famous & Infamous 1 1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs 10 am	September 1	Dannemora Gardens Library	Barry Barclay	Gill Muggleston 534 9863
Famous & Infamous 2 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs 1.30 pm	September 15	159 Pah Road, Cockle Bay	Flora McKenzie	Joni Burgess 537 4834
French Circle 4 <sup>th</sup> Fri 1 pm	September 23	74A Aberfeldy Avenue Hland Pk	Napoleon contd.	David Dwerryhouse 534 4829
History 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues 10 am	September 20	B M Theatre	Tower of London, DVD and member contributions	Judy Lee 535 8547
History of New Zealand 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs 10 am	September 8	6 Stevenson Way	Pot pourri	Alan La Roche 534 7366
History of New Zealand 2 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday 1.30 (new)	September 27	39 Devon Road	TBC	Graeme Diver 0274728033
Literature 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed 10 am	September 21	32 Butley Drive, Pakuranga	Janet Frame by Ngaire taylor	Judy Wilson 576 6340
Military History 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday 2pm	September 8	4A Paton Road	Magda Goebbels - First Lady of the Third Reich	Allan Reid 5349895
Mobile phone photography 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday 2pm (new)	September 21	1/19 Butley Drive	Mobile phone functions intro	Colleen Rigby 0272916781

Movies 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mon, 12.30 pm	September 12	2/21 Drake Street , Howick	Discussion of movies seen	Margaret Nicholls 536 6709
Opera 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues 9.30 am (not full)	September 13	BM Theatre	Othello/Pagliacci	Rosemary Ovens 5343429
Opera 2 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues 1.15pm	September 27	BM Theatre	TBA	Geraldine Rose 537 1917
Philosophy 1 <sup>st</sup> Mon 10 am	September 5	55 Rodney Street	Trends from the 1950's – Cora and Christopher	Cora Young 5348623
Science. 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed 10 am	September 28	BM Theatre	Pot pourri	Jim Hine 534 4259
Sunday Discussion 2nd Sun noon	September 11	Dannemora Gardens Cafe		Joan Clarkson 537 6397
Travel 1 <sup>st</sup> Wed 10 am	September 7	159 Pah Road, Cockle Bay	Trip to Angkor Wat contd.	David and Adrienne Teape 5336103
Walks and Talks 2nd Fri 9.30 am	September 9	Meet at scenic end of Tamaki Bay Drive off Williams Ave	Tamaki Bay Drive Reserve to Bridge St	June Poole 021583893
World of Art 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon 10 am	September 19	BM Theatre	Pot Pourri	Garry Law 271 6505
World of Art 2 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues 1.30 pm	September 20	BM Theatre	Ukrainian artists – Jeanette Fenn	Philippa Wilson 5342558
World of Music 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed 1.30 pm	September 24	261 Bleakhouse Road	Julia Forsyth	Ngaire Taylor 534 8538
Writing 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues 1.30 pm	September 13	1/8 Aylmer Court Eastern beach	Turkey	Marian Heywood 534 1159