



Mt Aspiring U3A

News Letter

March

2020

Number 22

Next Meeting	March 26 1.45pm
Venue	St Johns Room 4 Link Way
First Speaker	Mike & Liz Elliot The Bwindi Experience.
Main Speaker	Dr Chris Rudd "Fake news, conspiracy theories and lies: a Threat to Democracy?"

Speaker Profiles

First Speaker

Mike & Liz Elliot (supposedly!) retired farmers from Southland, living in Wanaka since May 2017. "Our trip to Uganda in 2019 to see gorillas was the precursor to an organized trip to Kenya and Tanzania to see African wild life in general."

Main Speaker

Dr Chris Rudd is a senior lecturer in the Politics Programme at the University of Otago where he teaches courses on politics and the media, and New Zealand public policy. He is the co-editor of the two editions of *Politics and the Media* (Auckland University Press, 2013 and 2016) and a third edition is planned 2021.

Abstract What is fake news? How does such news spread so rapidly and why do extremist ideas and movements flourish as a result? Does fake news pose a genuine threat to democracy?

A Word From Our President

We (and the rest of the world) are having to come to terms with the threat of Covid 19. It's just another form of 'flu, but one for which there is no vaccine. We have sought advice from our medical experts and their response will be found in the Newsletter. I rather like the editorial in a recent ODT, it read: "Keep Calm and Wash Your Hands."

Barbara Lindsay had the wonderful idea to invite new members to get together with committee members, for a coffee, a great idea for "rapid immersion" . On 10th March we also invited Sue Sweet a visitor and member of the Guernsey U3A to come along, and took the opportunity to grill her on that U3A and life in the Channel Islands.

From L to R: Barbara Lindsay, Sue Sweet, Russell McGeorge, Gaynor Corkery, Richard Paxman.



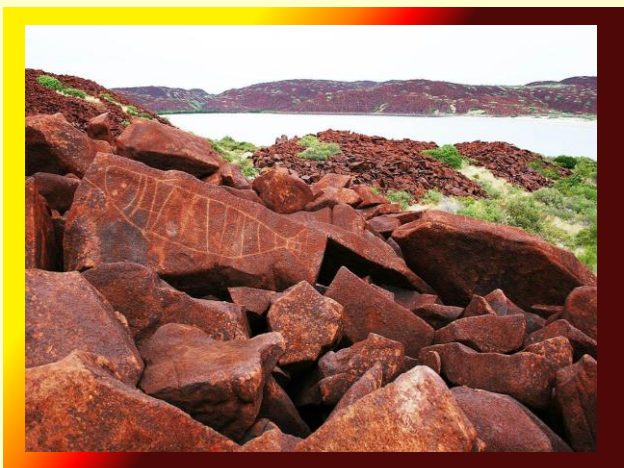
In a couple of months we will be holding our Annual General Meeting. This means we will be electing a new committee. This is not a formal notification but rather a "heads-up", inviting you to consider joining the committee yourself, or proposing someone else. It's not onerous: rather think of it like another Study Group, for enthusiasts ! All the positions are open for election, except mine – I will become the Immediate Past President.

With best wishes,

Rich.d Paxman

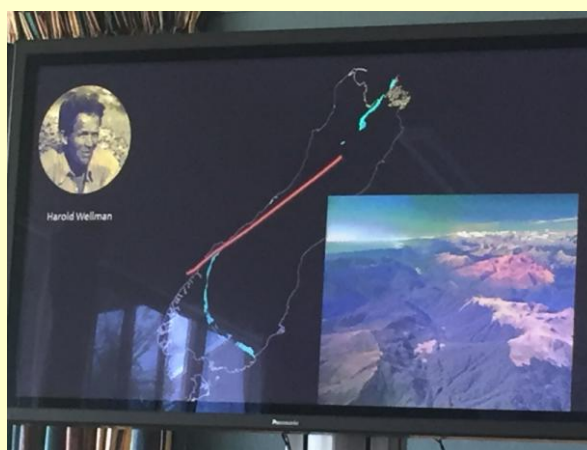
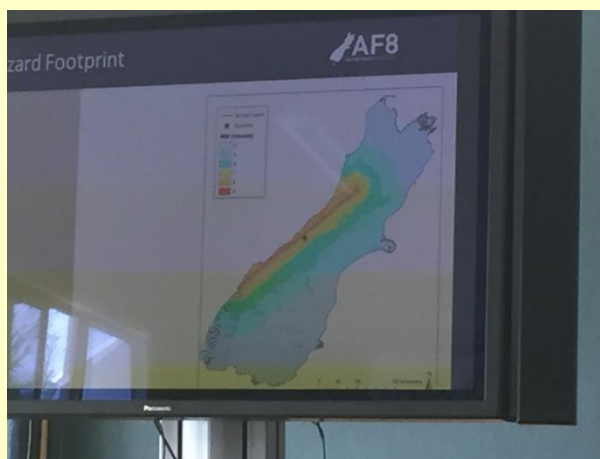
Last Month's Speakers

Jenny & Steve Moss described some of what they learnt about the mining industry working alongside ancient Aboriginal Rock Art in The Pilbara in Western Australia, and perceived problems for this precious history because of the mining.



Our Guest Speaker, Dr Carolyn Orchiston gave an explanation for AF8 - (Alpine Fault Magnitude 8).

A magnitude 8 earthquake occurs every 300-500 years and we are now in the period exceeding 300 years so an earthquake is expected. Her work has been to assist agencies like Civil Defence to develop their plans for emergencies. The Alpine Fault is basically 600km long with 400km in a straight line down the West Coast. A rupture anywhere on this line can be a devastation affecting not only the locals but tourism and transport. This talk has led to much ongoing discussion eg how prepared are we?



Dr Carolyn Orchiston

Study Group News

Gaynor Corkery is our committee member responsible for co-ordinating Study Groups. Please contact her if you need more information and/or would like to start a new study group. gaynor.corkery@hotmail.co.nz

"Members of Mt Aspiring U3A are encouraged to convene or join a study group that interests or educates them. The society will register and promote any study group that has a member prepared to convene it. Membership of a Study Group will be restricted to paid-up members of Mt Aspiring U3A, and subject to the decisions and goodwill of the volunteering convenor. Each convenor of a study group will have autonomy over the members; criteria for membership; venues; and operating costs." Mt Aspiring U3A Constitution

Flower Power

There's more to Flower Power than Petals.

Would you like to explore the history of floral art to discover how flowers have been an integral part of life through past ages up to the present?

The Flower Power group will also find out through practical work, how the principles and elements of design in art have influenced the evolution of modern floral design work.

To find out more please call Convenor, Penny Hartley on 021 0513 213 so that we can arrange an informal meeting over a morning cuppa, after the March 26th meeting of Mt Aspiring U3A.

Soil Health

If you're keen on edible garden or on establishing one, you simply must visit Randolph Holst's urban garden! It is quite inspirational! Call him to arrange a time: 03 443 2673. He is keen to share his knowledge about soil and sustainability, and to set up a study group.

The Book Group

Convenor Barbara Lindsay has 6 interested members so far, and is happy for more. She wants to get everyone together to decide on a format and a meeting time. Please ring her (027 4196 261).

Science Study Group



Present were, from L to R; Piet Beukman, Dennis Pezaro, Peter Wheen, Martin Unwin, Ron Horner, Geoff Tomkins. Photo by Richard Paxman, who apologises for the poor quality (will do better next time !) .

The Science Study Group held its inaugural meeting on Thursday 5th March, when Co-convenor Geoff Tomkins gave a presentation on Genetic Engineering, focussing on the new technique known as CRISPR. (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats !). This led to a lively discussion on the highly restrictive New Zealand legislation (the HSNO Act) which threatens to inhibit the development of gene manipulation technology in N.Z.

Members Forum

This is a new section in our newsletter where members are urged to express their personal opinions. Contributions are limited to 200 words and the editor has the right to abridge or censor. These are personal views and do not reflect the views of or are endorsed by Mt Aspiring U3A. However we support members in expressing their opinion and sharing with others, Please email to jennykaymoss@gmail.com.

Our first opinion piece is from Richard Paxman.

The other day I wrote to Andrew Little, the Minister of Justice. The main point I put to him was that

the “right to remain silent” is being abused, particularly in the tragic cases in which children are being killed (the Kahui twins) or severely beaten (the Flaxmere boy).

My suggestion in such cases is that the Prosecution Service be permitted to invoke the concept of “collective guilt”: that all adults in the household be held as equally responsible. If this threat is sufficient to break the code of silence then so be it.

I also put it to him that a jury in a criminal trial is expected to make a judgment based on “the balance of probability”, and yet key information which would improve their decision making is withheld from them: namely the criminal record of the accused. In the case of the murder of Grace Millane, her character was impugned by the defence, yet his behaviour was kept hidden.

I doubt my comments will influence his decisions, but it felt good to get it off my chest.

Notice Board

Corona Virus - Covid-19

In light of the looming threat of this new virus we sought the advice of our medical experts, Denis Pezaro and Peter Borrie, regarding our meetings and individual behaviour. We summarise their comments as follows:

Members with ANY acute symptoms, chills, fevers, sore throat, dry cough, sneezing even just feeling off colour, should self-quarantine. Do not attend meetings

If you sneeze or clear your throat do so INTO A TISSUE (or leave!). Try to avoid contact with people from outside our region, particularly where infection is present. If you think you have made a potential contact consider self-quarantining.

Temporary recess (of the Society) is probably not necessary if members are willing to accept the self-discipline needed for safety. **THINK tissues, alcohol hand rubs, hand washing.**

From The Editor

Kia ora

2020 is becoming a year with many worldwide events affecting us here in New Zealand. Dr Orchiston within the context of her talk on Alpine Fault line earthquakes asked us to consider in our emergency plans, *Who we rely on and who relies on us?* This is another timely reminder that knowing the folk in our neighbourhood and having a social network is important. So I guess the message this year is that we need to look out for ourselves and others.

Nga mihi

Jenny



Model T Times were when motor cars had dignity !

Graeme Thompson gives Piet Beukman a lift in his beautifully restored 1926 Ford Model T.

R Paxman

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