

# Mt Aspiring U3A

## News Letter

April 2020

Number 23

### ANZAC Cove

Such an ordinary beach,  
a presence of welcome.

Familiar.

A place in our history  
far from home,  
yet so right to be here.

This beach could be our beach  
for swimming and picnics,  
with families and friends,  
but the calmness felt here  
hides the pain and the tears,  
of ANZACs and Turks in 1915.

Gravestones on a beach,  
we ponder,  
as poppies are laid  
we pay our respect.

Just an ordinary beach  
but it conveys so much.

We can never forget.

Jenny 2010



## **A Word From Our President**

While a few 'experts,' with the benefit of hindsight claim that we could have done better it is my opinion that the Government and our health authorities have handled the threat of Covid 19 very well indeed. We have been fortunate to have had distinct borders and a low population density, but I have been impressed with the composure and competency of both our Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, and the Director General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield as they have fronted up to the televised press conferences. Both have been articulate and transparent.

The results, especially the declining number of new cases, speak for themselves. But we are not out of the woods by any means. Now the challenge is to return to normality, to re-start the engine of our economy (to once again indulge in the pleasure of a flat-white !) without giving the virus any further opportunity.

With that in mind I am conscious that many of our members constitute the "vulnerable demographic": we cannot take risks. Therefore, in consultation with the committee, I am advising that we have cancelled both the April and May general meetings. At this stage we are hopeful of recommencing in June, but this is not certain: we will advise you in a Newsletter, nearer the time. Whenever it is the next general meeting will become the AGM. We will send out the required formal notice in due time, but if you would like to join the committee, or know of someone who would, please let me know.

Meanwhile, I hope you are all coping with the isolation, keeping fit physically and mentally, even as far as possible, enjoying life.

*With best wishes,*

*Rich.d Paxman*

## **From the Editor**

### **Bubble Sharing Contributions for May**

While we are in our bubbles we offer you the chance to share with members something you have been doing. This could be a review from an online source you are enjoying. You may like to provide a photo with explanation of a project you are working on. Some writing or art and craft work. How are you exercising? Photos from your neighbourhood. Please ensure your contributions are as attachments. Not in the body of your email. Makes my job easier.

All contributions to [jennykaymoss@gmail.com](mailto:jennykaymoss@gmail.com)

Thanks.

Jenny

However do remember living a slow life is often good for us. We do not have to be productively busy all of the time. Doing nothing is quite fun and good for us at times. Enjoy the space and time we have been given.

'2020 - The year my wheelie bin went out more than me.'

In the meantime some of our Study Groups have news and contributions to share. So too some of our committee members. Hope you find something of interest.

## **From Gaynor Corkery**

### **The End of the Fucking World - Netflix**

In spite of the rather shocking title, this series (there are two of them) - is actually quite a sad comment on our times.

Bored with killing animals, 17 year old James is plotting his first murder when a new girl at school Alyssa, catches him off-guard! These two ill-fated and flawed teenagers are thrown together when they flee from their small town somewhere in Northern England. Alienated from their families and from society they are aimless, talentless and most frustratingly for the viewer - inarticulate! They drive across England with little coherent conversation, developing a strange loyalty to each other. Stupid decisions get them into many tight spots and soon they are in trouble over their heads. Compelling viewing, this movie is enhanced by a wonderful soundtrack of crooning pop songs like "Why does the world keep on turning?" At its resolution, I felt that I had actually watched a fractured love story.

### **The Capture - Netflix**

This series of 6 episodes, is decidedly unsettling!

It tells the story of a soldier returned from Afghanistan and exonerated from a crime of war. He soon finds himself accused of an unrelated murder, based on damning close-circuit television footage. Did he do it, or is it possible to manipulate and falsify a video recording? The focus is on the possibility of technology being used for the purposes of the State, and it is uncomfortable to consider that things may not always be what they appear to be. Truth can be a matter of perspective. If we can be duped in this - what else might we be misled about? (Discomforting questions to consider during our lockdown!) Despite a satisfying resolution, this movie leaves the viewer feeling betrayed at best and helpless at worst! Well worth seeing!

## From Barbara Lindsay

I am generally happy pottering around in the sunshine outside, but that is not always possible. Recently when it all turned to custard out there I decided to get my sewing machine out of hibernation and make up a face mask, in the event that when we are 'set free' masks are deemed useful items of protection.

There are dozens of patterns for masks on Google and I adapted mine from them so it has two layers, the outer is cotton and the interfacing is tee-shirt material, with a pocket to insert a paper tissue as an extra layer. It has a twistie tie to shape over the nose.

It is not perfect, and the washing machine distorted the twistie, so next rainy day I may try again.

Meantime may the sunny days continue. Best wishes to all!

Barbara



## From Jenny Moss

I have an Auckland friend who has recently published her first ever two books on Amazon E Books. Before I could download these I downloaded a Kindle App at no cost on my phone. I had not known I could do this. My friend is publishing under the name Jo Squire.

Her first book 'Tales of The Dispossessed' is set mainly in London in the early 1980's. The main character is a young Kiwi woman who is a musician. If you spent any time in London at this time you will enjoy the wonderful descriptions of people and places as this Kiwi woman explores the city and it's many characters who enter her life.

The second book 'Maisie and Paisley's Exotic Escape' is a great read especially for those who have been on a bus tour in Turkey. If you have not done this then here is a perfect way to explore Turkey with these two women as they become involved in the somewhat shady dealings of some of their fellow tour bus passengers. These books cost about \$4 each to download. Both are easy reads.



## Updates From Our Study Groups

### Book Group

Convenor Barbara Lindsay

The Book Group has started despite lockdown and is continuing with its monthly 'meeting' date of the second Tuesday of each month. We are each reading a book of choice, either from our own collections or the on-line library service, and submitting an email review for everyone else in the group to read.

This month Sandra Binney read '*Ordinary Thunderstorms*' by William Boyd and this is what she reported (the storyline slightly condensed):

"This is a fast moving book, a thriller/murder mystery. I am not usually drawn to this type of book, but kept reading as it always left me wondering what was going to happen next. It is well written with everyday colourful language in some chapters, but this did not stop me reading.

The story tells of an unfortunate Adam Kindred, a research climatologist, in London for a job interview. A series of coincidences leave him no choice but to lose everything you take for granted - his family, home, money, passport and mobile phone. He is framed for a murder he did not commit and in the middle of a pharmaceutical corruption scandal is forced to go underground by living on the street and changing his identity. He later takes on another person's identity and his life changes again as he gets work in a hospital and starts searching in regard to a drug being tested. The pharmaceutical company is forced to go under after some findings are put out to print and aired at a shareholders' meeting.

I was completely immersed in this book after a few pages, and surprised I read it but think it was because it was fast moving, an interesting story and characters. I was taken by how one can become anonymous with no paper trail and yet get around a huge city like London."

### Astronomy Group

Convenor John Binney

The Astronomy Study Group held its last meeting on 17 March just prior to lockdown. I will keep the government's Covid advice under review and recommence the meetings when appropriate - probably when we move to Level 2. It is then proposed to have a number of sessions to talk about the different celestial structures - galaxies, nebulae, super nova remnants etc.

## **The Movie Group**

Convenor Sandra Binney

At this point in time the movie group is in limbo with all cinemas closed. There are plenty on Netflix or other options if people want to watch a movie at present. There have been several on TV but to list them I feel people can make their own choice.

Once we get through this lockdown we will be ready for a good night out at the movies.

## **Walking Group**

Convenor Jill Paxman

We have been in contact but can do no more until we are able to meet again as a group which I know we are all looking forward to this time very much.

## **Current Affairs Group**

Convenor Chris

The essence for the Current Affairs groups is that meetings will continue on with the pre-existing schedule but now digitally, till further notice.

For the monthly meetings, members will set a discussion topic and presenter for the following meeting.

## **Science Group**

Convenor: Geoffrey Tomkins

We have only had the one meeting to date, but to foster the group during lock-down Geoffrey Tomkins and Ron Horner will be contacting group members to come up with a subject of interest.

This would include a brief explanation of their interest in the subject - a couple of paragraphs - plus links to resources to explore (You-Tube, Wikipedia, TED, expert articles, even TV documentaries.

Each subject would be circulated to all members over the coming weeks, and comments or questions invited and responses circulated informally by email as people review subjects in their own time.

We hope to keep the group interest maintained and brains busy until better circumstances arrive.

## **History of Medicine Study Group**

Convenor Allan Maclean

Nothing like a pandemic to give the chance of learning how we coped with such challenges in the past, and I have circulated a brief paper "Epidemics, Plague and Pestilence" describing how such threats came about - if we had stuck to being "foragers" and hunter-gatherers, and not attempted to domesticate animals to supplement our diet and help with issues of travel and working the land, we would have been much safer. The first epidemics are recorded in the Old Testament, and by the Greek writers - no-one was sure what caused them but "ungodliness" was high on the list, along with "miasma" and "contagion".

My next discussion paper, hopefully finished before the end of the month, is "Old and New Epidemics", and starts with the old nursery rhyme:

Ring-a-ring of roses,  
A pocket full posies,  
A-tishoo! A-tishoo!  
We all fall down.

Could apply to our current predicament until we practised social distancing, took care with our sneezing and coughing, and learned how to reduce risks of transmission. In those days "quarantine" was that - 40 days and nights.

Have included some facts about the 1918-9 "Spanish" flu epidemic, but welcome stories and comments from anyone, whether in the study group or not, about the impact of that epidemic on NZ.

## **Whisky Appreciation Group**

Convenors: Allen Hogan & Allan Maclean

Allen Hogan has circulated a video recently on how to appreciate your favourite malt, and the extraordinary measures your house cat will take to have a wee dram. I circulated a piece on "Blended Whisky" and a description of "The Whisky Barons" is coming shortly.

If there are members of our U3A, and not necessarily members of our study groups, who want something to read in their isolation, please email me at [a.maclean@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:a.maclean@ucl.ac.uk)

## The Writing Group

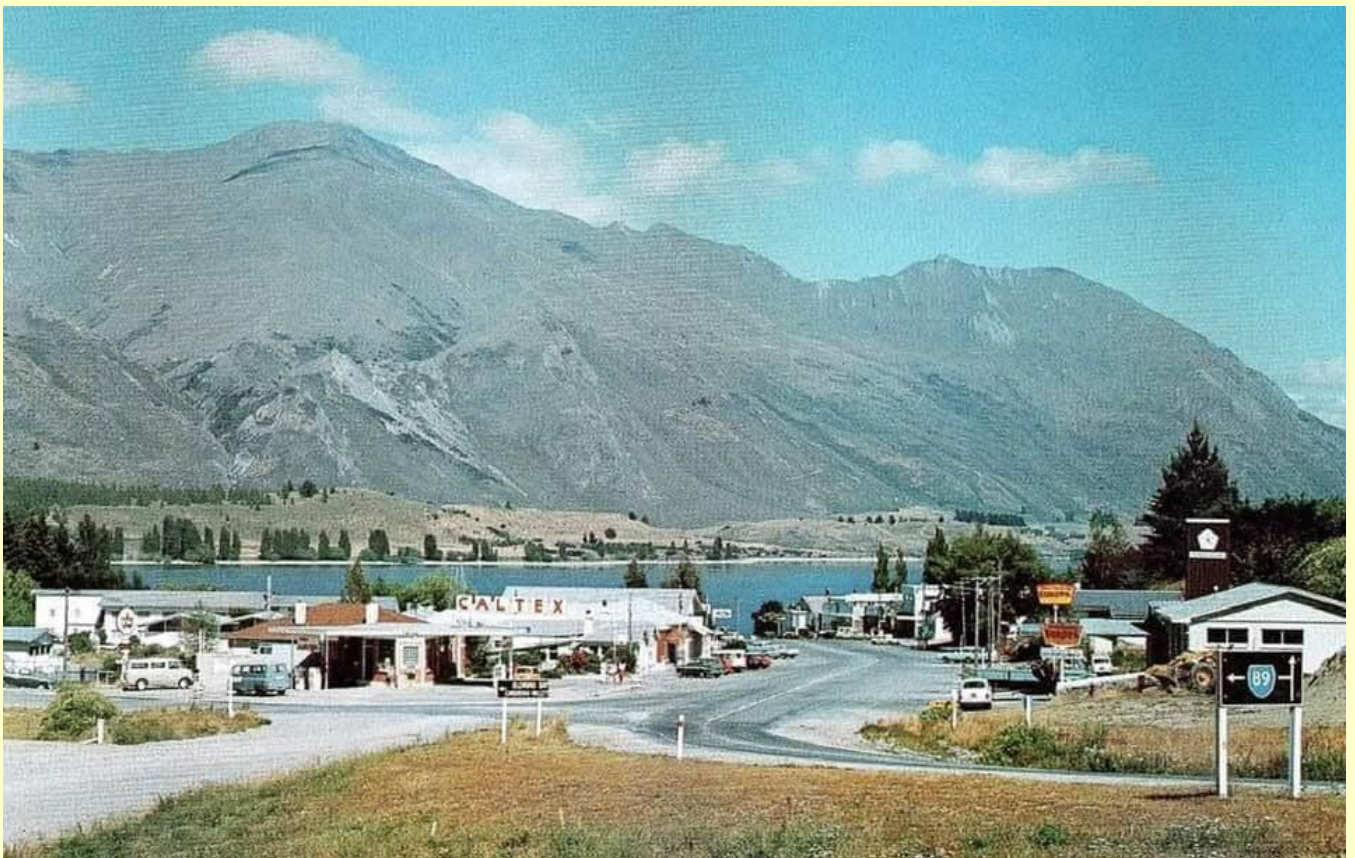
Convenor Gaynor Corkery

We are sharing our own writing with one another by email as/if/when the spirit moves us. Group members are advised to check their junk mail from time to time as apparently some of Gaynor's messages have ended up there! I'm sure it's nothing to do with the quality of the message!!!

## Local History Group

Convenor Jenny Moss

Those members who wish are undertaking their own research to share with the group.



Looking down where the Brownston Street Roundabout is today.

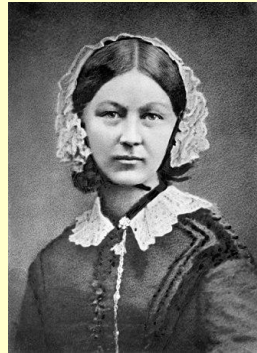
Taken early 1970's.

This memorial commemorates the residents of the Wanaka and Upper Clutha District who gave their lives in the Anglo-Boer War, the First World War and the Second World War.





**Did you know?** That Florence Nightingale was born 200 years ago on May 12 in Florence in Italy. Her birth date is celebrated each year as International Nurses Day.



Check her out online.

**It was 1869 when Kathleen O'Mara wrote this poem, after The Irish Famine, which was reprinted in the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1919**

And people stayed home.

And read books,  
and listened,  
and rested, and exercised,  
and made art,  
and played,  
and learned new ways of being,  
and stopped.

And listened deeper

Someone meditated,  
someone prayed,  
someone danced.

Someone met their shadow.

And people began to think differently.

And people healed.

And, in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways,  
dangerous,  
meaningless,  
and heartless,  
even the earth began to heal.

And when the danger ended, people found each other,  
grieved for the dead people,  
and made new choices,  
and dreamed of new visions,  
and created new ways to life and  
healed the earth completely,  
just as they had been healed themselves.

## **Mt Aspiring U3A Committee and Contacts**

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