



Mt Aspiring U3A

News Letter

June

2020

Number 25

Next Meeting **AGM** **July 23** **1.45pm**

Venue **St Johns Room** **4 Link Way**

Main Speaker **Dr Chris Judd "Fake news, conspiracy theories and lies:
a Threat to Democracy?"**

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?

Annual General Meeting Mt Aspiring U3A

Our AGM will be followed by our Main Speaker.

Some of our current committee will not be seeking re election. If you are interested in being on our committee please contact John Binney at johnbinney@iinet.net.au.

He will be very happy to hear from you. This is a great opportunity to be more active and make new friends

AGM July 2020

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Preamble

Having operated within the original Constitution and Rules of the Mt Aspiring U3A since 2018 the Committee has found some amendments are necessary for administrative purposes and to avoid ambiguity. These amendments relate to the timing for payment of subs, cancellation of membership in the event of non-payment and the need to be financial to vote at the AGM and any SGM. The amendments listed below will be put to the 2020 AGM for ratification by members.

Amendments for Ratification at 2020 AGM

The following clauses shall be amended to read as follows

Clause 3.3 a) – There is money owing to the Society in respect of membership or other fees 16 weeks after the date of the invoice, provided that reasonable efforts have been made to inform the member of the default and its consequences.

Clause 3.5 – Membership shall cease upon resignation, in writing, to the Secretary.

Clause 5.1 – The Annual General Meeting shall be held each year not later than eight weeks from the end of the financial year, with the date time and place to be fixed by the Committee.

At least fourteen (14) days written notice shall be given to members.

A quorum shall consist of two-fifths (40%) of all paid up members.

Only financial members of the Society shall be eligible to vote.

The business of the Annual General Meeting(*remainder of clause unchanged*)

Clause 5.2 – *At the end of the existing clause add a sentence* - Only financial members of the Society shall be eligible to vote at a Special General Meeting.

Change the existing clause 8.1 to 8.1 a) and add a new clause as follows

Clause 8.1 b) – Annual subscription shall cover the period from 1 August to 31 July. Subscription notices shall be issued within 4 weeks following the AGM and subscriptions shall be payable within 8 weeks of invoice.

PLEASE NOTE

Our committee are recommending and will seek your approval at the AGM to reduce the 2020-2021 subscriptions for Mt Aspiring U3A to \$40. Reason being the unusual circumstances we are currently living through during The Covid 19 Pandemic.

A Word From Our President

The committee made the decision to recommence our general meetings in July, just days before the Government announced the reversion to Alert Level 1. We might have brought the meeting date forward, but decided not to change this, allowing us all to become accustomed to the new circumstances.

I take this opportunity to confirm the winners of the competitions I set during the lockdown. Martin Unwin not only solved the maths puzzles but pointed out an error in the layout of the long division exercise ! A chocolate fish is coming your way Martin. Sheila Owens not only wrote the best short story, but also the best caption for the photo. Since Sheila returned to the U.K. for the lockdown period this presented a problem as far as the awarding of the prizes was concerned: 'solved by sending her a book from the Book Depository (The Children Act by Ian McEwan –recommended). In her emailed thanks Sheila wrote: “ We are very jealous of your Level 1....it feels like Level Chaos here. Quarantine introduced TODAY after 10 weeks of lockdown...masks introduced today after 10 weeks of lockdown...non-essential shops due to open next week despite a continuing trend of new cases. A 'world-beating' Track & Trace process (world-beating in whose eyes???)...People have perceptibly lost faith in the government and even the government's scientific advisers appear to have lost faith in the government...throw Brexit and racial riots into the mix and you have a real heady cocktail.”

Despite our border problems we can be very grateful we live where we do.)

There will be changes in the new committee, from July. As always we are keen for nominees. If you'd like to join this great band of people in guiding and developing our Society please get in touch with our secretary, John Binney (2041134402 or johnbinney@iinet.net.au), or any member of the committee.

Best wishes,

Rich.d Paxman

Study Group Notice Board

Book Group

The Book Group held its first face-to-face meeting this month and shared the usual broad range of genres. One book that caught attention was '*Beneath a Scarlet Sky*' by Mark Sullivan and the following was the review:

“Is it a novel as described on the front cover? I think it is much more than that - as it is based on a true story - and it powerfully tells us of young raw courage, of coming of age, of a deep love, and then true courage when the awful, frightening risks were known and experienced.

This book had a strong impact on me, which came from a number of angles: it opened my eyes to the war history of the north of Italy and how the population was so divided. I learnt about how the Nazis treated Italy after the fall from power of Mussolini and how they used Italy to supply their troops with fuel and food, and then came the retribution and reprisals.

The main character, Pino, is a wonderful man - whom we meet when he is a young innocent and we follow what happens to him during the war. His deep love and passion for Anna is a central part of the story.

It is not too much of a harrowing book to read - but it is a story that takes place during WWII, so there is trauma. When you know that the book is based on Pino's words it will help you to get through the first pages which seem a little stilted, a little unusual. Pino tells his story when he is in his 80s - and it is really wonderful that he was able to share his earlier life, as it could so easily have been lost to the world. And knowing that the events that happen in the book are true and vividly described make it much more than a novel.

James Patterson described it as 'an incredible story, beautifully written and a fine and noble book'. It is well worth reading."

Local History Upper Clutha Group 2

This is a second Local History Upper Clutha Group with Steve Moss as convenor. We have 4 members so far. Steve will notify these members. Our first meeting will be the second Friday of July which is July 10 at 1.30pm at Steve's home at 32 Alice Burn Drive, Luggate. A physical/historical overview. If you are interested in joining this group contact Steve at steve151moss@gmail.com.

Contributions and Opinion Writing By Members

Allan McLean History of Medicine Study Group

MORE ABOUT EPIDEMICS.

By the time this SARS-CoV-2 virus has done its rounds we will each have some firm ideas about epidemics and likely chances of survival. We have combatted imposed isolation by scouring the internet for all sorts of knowledge, true or fake, and done our share of reading. I cannot really commend reading the life of Samuel Pepys, although, as described by Arthur Bryant there are descriptions of the plague in London in 1665, the Great Fire of 1666, the British navy's humiliation at the hands of the Dutch in 1667 (as punishment for the behaviour in the Court of Charles II) and of Pepys's health - his bladder stone and subsequent lithotomy, his blindness developing in 1669 and preventing further diary writing (he probably developed presbyopia as happens to many when the book they are reading must be held further and further away until the print is out of sight), and his challenges with lice infestation, one of the consequences of his chasing seventeenth century skirt.

“Afterwards he got his wife to cut his hair and look under his shirt, whence it appeared that he had been entertaining other guests, for ‘when all comes to all she finds that I am lousy having found in my head and body about twenty lice little and great, which I wonder at, being more than I had I believe these twenty years. I did think I might have got them from the boy’, he explained, ‘but they did presently look over him and found none. So how they come, I know not, but presently did shift myself, and so shall be rid of them and cut my hair close to my head. And so with much content to bed’” – but earlier he had been in the coach with Deb! These creatures were *Pediculus humanis capitis* or *corporis*, and in the escutcheon, *Pthirus pubis*.

We are alert to the white particles that arrive in our grandchildren’s hair, and whole classrooms will be placed on “lice alert” but modern medical head lotions provide quick relief.

Late in 1489, Spain hired some mercenary soldiers, who had been fighting the Ottomans in Cyprus, in its assault on Moslem forces in Granada. Soon afterwards, the Spanish troops began to go down with a disease with headache, rash and high fever, swelling and darkening of the face, delirium and then stupor – this was typhus, from the Greek “typhos” for smoke. Inflammation led to gangrene that rotted fingers and toes, causing a hideous stench. Three thousand Spanish soldiers were killed in the siege, but six times as many to typhus; it then followed armies around Europe (camp fever) but also beggars (road fever: during the 1845-7 Irish famine there were people collapsing and dying on the roadside, with typhus, relapsing fever and dysentery), prisoners (gaol fever: John Pringle recorded his observations in Newgate Prison in the 1750s) and ships (ship fever). Typhus and the cold of the winter were responsible for the deaths of many of Napoleon’s 600,000 army in Russia.

The causative organisms are *Rickettsiae*, and the disease entities include epidemic typhus, scrub typhus (in Eastern Asia and Western Pacific), Q fever and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The reservoirs are usually wild rodents and the vector a tick or a louse; louse-borne typhus is one of the great plagues that follow war and famine, and in Eastern Europe from 1918 – 1922 there were 30 million cases. However, geography didn’t guarantee immunity and I remember a story about my grandfather who returned from Britain and WW1 with what his military records state was “trench fever” – I wasn’t sure if this was a euphemism for “shell shock” but further reading identified this likely to be “Relapsing fever” – as described above. Davidson describes that for centuries epidemics of louse borne typhus had occurred when men were brought together under poor hygienic conditions and become verminous. They were described under various terms eg rickettsial arbo disease, and transmission of lice, mites and ticks were facilitated by rodents and deer eg tick-borne transmission via sleeping in mudhuts, or variants such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever. What my grandfather came home with was attributed to life in the trenches and difficult hygiene – nowadays antibiotic treatment with chloramphenicol or tetracycline is possible, but not then.

To continue on this theme, the consequences of warfare, the American Civil War (1861-65) involved millions of fighting men, and the Union army lost 186,216 men to disease, twice the number killed in action – nearly half were claimed by typhoid and dysentery (blood stained diarrhoea). Dr William Jenner (1815-98) was a graduate of the new London University – not to be confused with Edward Jenner, 1749 – 1823 and of cowpox fame – became professor of pathology at University College Hospital and with clinical duties at the London Fever Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children (Great Ormond St Hospital). In 1849 he published on differentiating typhus from typhoid at post-mortem examination. You will remember that the “black” Queen Victoria was miserable because her Prince-Consort had died; Jenner had cared for Prince Albert during his fatal illness (1861) from typhoid and later looked after the Prince of Wales with the same disease in 1871. In 1861 Jenner had been made Physician-Extraordinary to the Queen, and a year later promoted to Physician-in-Ordinary – this sounds very high and mighty but Queen Victoria was very unhappy and neurotic and surrounded herself with physicians and surgeons. In 1856 the Bristol physician William Budd argued that the typhoid agent lay in the patient’s stools and was due to something ingested. This was when (1855) London was having another epidemic – cholera – and again the water supply was under suspicion. One of the differences was that cholera and typhoid were not

just affecting the lower class. The sanitary reforms of the 1840 – 50s were driven by the miasma theory: manage the mains and drains to remove polluted water and air. It was the evolution of microscopy and the promotion of microbiology that led to “the germ theory” and a greater understanding of such epidemics.

One of the historical sagas involves Mary Mallon, born in 1869 in County Tyrone and like many Irish folk of her time, emigrated (as a teenager) to the US. From 1900 she started work as a cook for wealthy New York families. A pattern emerged: her employers and other domestic staff became feverish and nauseous, stricken by typhoid. Seven out of eight families she worked for became infected, but she remained healthy. Mallon denied responsibility but declined requests for stool and urine samples. She was taken into detention by the authorities and isolated on North Brother Island, but released after 3 years, in 1910, on the condition that she no longer cook. Cooking was the only skill that Mary had, and so she changed her name and obtained a position as a cook at the Sloane Hospital for Women – followed by a typhoid outbreak in 1915. Mary was nicknamed as “Typhoid Mary” and placed in quarantine for the rest of her life. Her refusal to allow testing and to recognise the danger she posed to others put the authorities in a difficult position, but estimates were that she had personally albeit unwittingly infected thousands.

Despite our science and better understanding of transmission of viruses, the 20th and now 21st centuries are not free of epidemics and after this latest, due to SARS-CoV-2 virus, there is no reason to think this is the last. A textbook on Immunology by Gordon Reeves and Ian Todd (2000) starts

“In Britain, eighteenth century Bills of Mortality listed cholera, diphtheria, smallpox, tetanus and typhoid as major causes of death whereas today the annual mortality statistics emphasize the importance of cardiovascular disease and cancer. The balance has shifted so much that a series of deaths from a particular infectious disease is likely to precipitate the setting up of a committee of enquiry. These changes have been brought about by the introduction of successful immunisation programmes in conjunction with chemotherapy and various public health measures.”

How wrong to believe that epidemics and infections were a thing of the past or only threatening in “developing countries”. The recent stories of bird flu, swine flu, Ebola and Zika as well as Covid-19 are not the end, but place Public Health, and the World Health Organization under the international spotlight and our gratitude for relative isolation. ABM 6/6/20.

From Grant Bisset

Quentin Smith
QLDC Councillor
Wanaka Ward

Sunday April 5th 2020

Dear Quentin

You have asked for input to the annual plan, future strategy etc. I offer you my perspective for your consideration.

My view is that especially in recent years the QLDC has let us down, and badly. The organisation seems to be out of control.

Since I moved here in 1992, I have been involved in Aviation, Tourism and property.

In recent years I’ve been involved in two projects that have gone horribly wrong for the community thanks to the QLDC. Firstly, Tussock Rise LTD, we bought the Industrial B zoned land between Gordon Rd and Connell Tce off the Gordon Family trust.

We proposed a rezoning on the basis that Industrial B was inappropriate given the lands location, it had residential on 3 boundaries, is elevated with great views and centrally located. It made no sense to us to have 19th century model heavy industrial in the middle of a resort town. We proposed that we build an IT park at the Gordon Road end to diversify our economy, Google and Disney have gaming programmer staff in various locations who would much rather live here. Technology and IT products can be distributed for next to zero cost over the internet, a perfect fit for Wanaka. We also proposed worker accommodation, Business Mixed Use, and residential land so it transitioned from the Ballantyne Rd industrial A to the now zoned LDSR to the west.

We accepted that would represent a win for us, so we wanted to share that win with the community by gifting land to the CHT and a free museum site with community observatory to foster curious minds. QLDC threw it in our face. They wouldn't even accept an application.

What is really concerning though is the apparent dishonesty and deception QLDC have engaged in. I have previously quoted to you examples QLDC staff misleading submitters and not being truthful. Whether this is confusion or deliberate deception is yet to be established but whatever the case it is unacceptable.

We were astounded to find at a recent Environment Court mediation that the QLDC staff did not remotely understand the process they had been the architect of. Simply extraordinary incompetence that bleeds the ratepayer dry.

The Bright Sky Land Company spent hundreds of thousands on a failed SHA consent application simply because the QLDC could not meet its obligations under the RMA.

This too cost the Community Housing Trust dearly.

Quentin, I have tried very hard over the years to do the right thing to produce a good balanced outcome for both myself, our shareholders, and the community too. The QLDC have been obstructive, frustrating, and ultimately paralysing.

My view is that there is a cultural problem in the organisation. There is a lack of leadership and business discipline throughout. You will recall the letter we recently wrote to the Planning committee, not one councilor had the decency to acknowledge or reply. When I wrote to Tony Avery terminating the SHA consent the only way I knew he had received the letter was getting a call from infrastructure staff wondering how the QLDC were going to run their services across our land now the consent application had been pulled.

The QLDC seem to operate in silos with a lack of coherence and understanding between the silos. This is symptomatic of poor, or even no leadership within the organisation.

We have tried to engage with the councilors, current and past. The modern councilors give every impression of being ineffectual, unlike days gone by. It would appear the Crux article about the deafening silence from our elected representatives hit the nail on the head.

Senior QLDC staff make no bones about the elected councilors being transient irritants, ignorant of the way things work and simply a frustrating fact of working for local government. This attitude is symptomatic of the tail wagging the dog.

Putting aside any views on the airport development, the way the Wanaka airport was effectively "Sold" to the QAC behind closed doors was astounding. I simply do not understand why a conditional contract wasn't signed that was subject to approval after a robust discussion and consultation with the community. That way commercial and community needs could be met.

I think you will find there is little appetite for a high-volume low yield model of tourism for the Upper Clutha. The airport was our asset and should be developed to meet community needs not simply drag more freedom campers into the area.

There has been a high level of concern about increasing house prices, there will be more concern about decreasing ones when the owners find they have negative equity in their home. We all have to work together to get through the next period and mitigate the damage. That includes the QLDC.

Like all businesses in this region the QLDC needs to cut its cloth to meet the reality of the new world. This should be seen as an opportunity to get things back on track so the region can have a decent future and when the bounce back comes, we get sensible outcomes.

Right now, we need strong leadership to restructure a QLDC that is fit for purpose, not representation that is conspicuous by its silence.

Regards

Grant Bisset

bissetg@xtra.co.nz

0274 323121

From The Editor

Kia ora

Mid winter is upon us with all it's beauty and coldness. Down here in the deep south we are fortunate to be able to experience four seasons each with it's unique beauty. Even in these days of 'no sun' we know the sun will shine eventually. As our country works through the ongoing problems that Covid 19 continues to throw at us, we need to believe 'the sun will shine again.' A season of re growth will follow. How we choose to grow will be up to how we choose to think.

Nga mihi

Jenny



Mt Aspiring U3A Committee and Contacts

President	Richard Paxman	paxmanr0@gmail.com
Vice-president, Study Group co-ordinator, also speaker convenor	Gaynor Corkery	Gaynor.corkery@hotmail.co.nz
Treasurer/Membership	Helen Horner	hr.horner@gmail.com
Secretary /Publicity	John Binney	johnbinney@iinet.net.au
Venue Liaison	Allan MacLean	a.maclean@ucl.ac.uk
Newsletter Editor	Jenny Moss	jennykaymoss@gmail.com
Penny Hartley:		pninahartley@gmail.com
Allen Hogan:		ajhogan05@yahoo.co.nz
Barbara Lindsay:		lindsay_barb@extra.co.nz

