



University of the Third Age
The Age of Active Retirement: People Exchanging Knowledge

Newsletter May 2025

Our speaker on the 19th May is Dr Richard Jones on 'The Importance of Sleep'

The talk will give an overview of the basics of sleep, of functions which occur primarily or only during sleep, including the key one – synaptic homeostasis.

Richard will also look at several sleep disorders, but particularly obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) which has become increasingly recognized as a major adverse contributor to our health, including an increased risk of developing and progression of neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Richard is a Biomedical Engineer & Neuroscientist Director, Christchurch Neurotechnology Research Programme, New Zealand Brain Research Institute; Adjunct Professor Electrical & Computer Engineering, University of Canterbury; Adjunct Professor School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing, University of Canterbury.

Message from the President



With no meeting on Easter Monday, it's been a quiet time this month. Earlier on Jane and I went to the new Network meeting. The old Network, which is an umbrella group for most of the Canterbury U3As, dissolved last year for lack of people willing to be on its committee. This year three people are resurrecting it. Most U3As were represented and we all told the meeting how our own group functioned. It was quite reassuring to find out that we fitted the bill and seem to be middle of the road. The useful part of the Network is that it supplies a list of good speakers that U3As have enjoyed. Jorgen did a big job of reorganizing this last year and it keeps being updated as members send in recommendations.

Previous Meeting

Our speaker at the March meeting was Dr Tony Bywater, Emeritus Professor of Agricultural Systems at Lincoln University. He spoke convincingly about the dry times ahead for our planet. By 2050 we will have 9 billion people, with not enough fresh water, farming area or food to feed them all.

Food costs have risen – for rice, corn and wheat, the latter by 130%. In Italy there were food riots. They eat pasta! Science is often stymied, as when a new strain of rice was produced through genetic engineering. Greenpeace stopped that.

Tony believes algal farms and eco farms and greens grown on flat roof tops are a partial answer. He suggested we start a “Vege Club” to grow and share lettuces.

Latest News & Updates

Calling All Book Readers: Book Group

Five enthusiastic members would like 3 to 5 keen readers to join them.

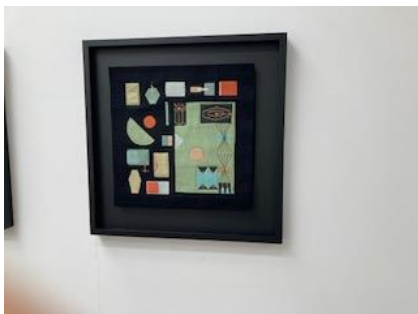
Each year we read ten books from BDS (Book Discussion Scheme) and meet in the café after the monthly U3A meetings.

If you have any ideas on starting a new Interest Group, please get in touch with Mary Lynch at granmarylynch12@gmail.com or phone: 3849664

INTEREST GROUP UPDATES

Art Appreciation

Our February outing began with morning tea at Little Battersea cafe. This tiny oasis in industrial Sydenham is just a 2 minute walk from Chambers gallery at 80 Durham St South where we saw the work of three artists. Susanne van Tuinen’s “Re-Form” demonstrated the



flexibility of aluminium, a material whose potential “captivates” the artist. Peter Gibson’s “Striations and Secretions” showed how corrugated card is formed into simple geometric constructions, hardened with shellac then overlaid with plaster and paint. Lee Harper’s “The Theory of Space” consisted of works in linen, cotton and silk or wool, cotton and silk resulting in “pictures” of pleasing shapes and colours.(see photo.)



Our March outing required more walking. Morning tea at Robert Harris, South City was followed by a walk along Colombo St to two Sydenham Galleries. Form Gallery was showing "From North to South", glass objects by Philip Stokes inspired by Arctic visits.(see photo "Arctic Cathedral II" in foreground and "Arctic Cathedral I" background). A short walk



followed to 2 Kingsley St. to NZArtbroker to see "Life on Mars" paintings by Lyttelton Artist Gill Hay showing the "foliage and beauty of trees as significant to her daily walk on the Cass Bay track" (see photo "Dreamland") but the title of her exhibition acknowledges ongoing climate change.

Cycling Group:

9 cycling group members had a local ride on Wednesday 9th April. There were two meeting places with one group starting at the Mt Pleasant Community Centre and the second group starting from the bottom of Cannon Hill at Bridle Path Road. The groups came together when the first group had biked up Mt Pleasant and down Cannon Hill. The combined group then went to Scarborough Fare for coffee via Heathcote Valley, Ferrymead, the Coastal Pathway and Sumner. It was a most enjoyable, relaxed ride on a wonderful clear, crisp autumn day.

Geology/Botany Group

New Zealand Ferns and their Propagation

Graham Worner



Graham helps the Fern Factor business with the propagation of ferns. The whole process takes a year from the time the spores fall off the backs of ripe fronds till there is a new plant in a 10cm pot in the shops.



Spores need water to germinate. Each has male and female sex organs but needs sperm from a different plant to swim to its eggs. Spores come in hundreds of thousands and need controlled conditions to breed unless they are in a forest. The temperature and watering are controlled until the microscopic fertilized cells put up a tiny shoot. Then dedicated women use tweezers to transplant them into tiny plug pots from which they are grown on and repotted to sell.

History Group - OUR VISIT TO MONA VALE

What a delightful morning we had yesterday at Mona Vale and what an excellent turnout!!! We needed extra tables and chairs too, but all worked out well.

We heard some of the background history of the house itself from Ben Lay, garden curator here at Mona Vale and he was then our tour guide as we made our way outdoors and around the grounds of Mona Vale. Together with one other gardener, the two men, supported by several teams of volunteers maintain these beautiful grounds. There is much planning as plots change in the seasons, and as weather affects growth and development. The big, old trees form a canopy for what lies below and help provide an expansive vista that stretches across the three rivers and the park-like lawns.

Several areas stood out. The recently reopened bath house has now been fully repaired. What was once a bedraggled pool area, surrounded by weeds and unsafe structural walls, has now been replaced by re-built, safe walls, an overlaid wooden floor and new interior gardens. The fernery, once a highlight of the NZ Exhibition (later gifted by Annie Townend to Mona Vale) is a quiet restful place, with ferns



and pools of water to walk around. As Ben and his team replant some old unkempt areas out the back by the car parking area, new gardens are laid. One space, by the rear of the brick walled garden, still remains to be changed. But - gardens are an ever present challenge and joy. It's great to revisit this special place in our city that is open for all to share.

CLUB DIRECTORY

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INTEREST GROUP DETAILS

Below is the list of U3A Pegasus Interest Groups, their convenors and contact details. If you would like to join any of the groups, please contact the convenor.

ADVENTURES IN TRAVEL	Meets monthly in members' homes on 1 st Tuesday of the month at 3pm in members' homes. Contact Lyn Russell 021 2388 788 Email: nylrus1951@gmail.com
ART APPRECIATION	Meets monthly, 2 nd Friday of the month. Contact Helen Harkness Ph 384 2890 Email helenharkness294@gmail.com
BOOK DISCUSSION	Meets monthly after the U3A lecture, 3 rd Monday of the month in the Mt Pleasant Community Centre. Contact Mary Lynch email granmarylynch12@gmail.com or Judy Eden edenjudith@xtra.co.nz (This group is now full.)
CAFÉ GROUP	Meets monthly, 2.30pm on Tuesday of the week following 3 rd Monday of the month. Contact Jenny Long jennylong@xtra.co.nz 384 8463.
CANTERBURY HISTORY	Meets monthly, 2 nd Monday of the month. Contact Judy Calder Ph 384 1269 Email judycalder@hotmail.com
CYCLING GROUP	Meets monthly, 2 nd Wednesday. Contact Jane Cowan-Harris Email: janechbythesea@gmail.com , Mob 021 043 5342
DVD INTEREST GROUP	Lists of the DVDs are held by Yvonne Boulton. Contact her on Ph: 021442275 Email yvonneboulton@xtra.co.nz
GARDEN GROUP	Meets 4 th Monday of the month. A mixture of speakers, garden visits and 'tea & cuttings'. Contact: Gaynor Button Email: buttonmg@gmail.com
GEOLOGY/BOTANY	Meets twice a month on 1 st Monday at Redcliffs Bowling Centre and 3 rd Wednesday for an outing. Contact Pat Whitman Ph 384 3475 Email patwandpate@gmail.com
SCRABBLE	Meets fortnightly Tuesdays 1.30pm. Contact Alison Harrington Ph 022 307 4039 Email: alison.harrington@outlook.co.nz
INTEREST GROUPS COORDINATOR	Mary Lynch Email: granmarylynch12@gmail.com