



Learning for life

NELSON

Volume 7, Issue 5, November 2015

Next Members' Meeting will be on 24th February 2016 10-12 noon. Venue is the Nelson Golf Club, 38 Bolt Rd, Tahuna. We begin at 10am so please arrive in plenty of time. \$5

From the October Members' meeting

On being a Story Gran

Gay Northcott, ex Chief Physiotherapist at Nelson Hospital and a local JP, delighted the audience of U3A members with her animated account of her work as a "Story Gran". This group has adults reading and sharing stories with preschoolers in our local kindergartens and playcentres. Many humorous incidents with the children were recounted by Gay and appreciated by those present. Gay finished her talk by sharing with us a picture book, "My Gramma." The many chuckles from the listeners demonstrated the appeal that a "good" story has for children of all ages.

David Turner

TV news-technician

Weren't we fortunate at the General Meeting on the 28th? Two excellent speakers and both from various diverse areas. Story Gran and TV news-technician.

Actually I am not sure if Roger Pittman would call himself that, but his adventures so excitingly described, of roaming the world with ITN as one of the news crew, were fascinating. His experiences in places from cold-war Russia to the red-hot Middle East were sometimes amusing and often scary. The tales he told, such as how the Red Army could be charmed into helicoptering in their camera and satellite equipment onto the Great Wall, kept us spell-bound.

Thank you Roger, and Judy for supporting him, and we are glad the experience of meeting us at U3A was sufficiently pleasing that you have now joined our ranks!! We look forward to meeting you at our future gatherings.

Paul Lunberg

LIFE MEMBERSHIP is awarded to LIZ CHINNERY

Liz joined U3A Nelson in 2025. She served on the committee from 2007-2012 and was president from 2010-2011. As well as ably leading the committee, she also chaired many a sub-committee who developed and wrote the articles for the U3A Nelson Constitution and the Guidelines for Convenors. Liz has been an active member of many groups as well as convening the Shakespeare and Our Living Language study groups. We thank her most heartily for her involvement and commitment to U3A Nelson.

Proposed by Kay Hunter. Seconded by Paul Lunberg.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS Roger Pittman

Study Groups I know that some study groups are closing, and most study groups have yet to find out from their members if they intend to continue. I'll do the updates and send around a "What's Available" to all members early in the new year.

Kay Hunter

New Groups

The ABC Group

This is a new group formed to listen and learn about pop music primarily from the 60s, hence the name, the "Anything But Classical" group. This was a period of great social change and ushered in a golden age of new popular music which was quite unlike the music our parents listened to.

We will research various artists and genres to increase our understanding and enjoyment of this iconic era.

Backs of cupboards will be scoured for old vinyl records but we will use other "modern" formats like CDs, DVDs and digital media unavailable at the time. Meeting times and dates are still to be confirmed but provisionally they will be on the first and third Tuesdays at 2.30 to 4.30

Roger Haynes Convenor

This group filled up at the general meeting, but put your name on the waiting list.

Military History

Military History from Ancient Egypt through to at least Vietnam.

Discussions could be under headings such as personnel, material, strategy, tactics, successes, blunders and the overall effect on the societies of the time.

There is a wealth of information online, both documentary and CGI and this could be supplemented with literature ie histories, biographies, autobiographies etc. In other words enough resources to keep an enthusiastic group busy for some time.

Ian MacDougall Convenor

Social Brunchers

The group will explore restaurants and cafes in and beyond Nelson to sample a variety of culinary styles. For members who live alone who wish to meet once a fortnight for lunch or brunch depending on what people want. This is the opposite fortnight to the other luncheon group so some may wish to join both groups. We would meet mainly on a Sunday but sometimes on a Saturday so we can visit places not open on a Sunday. The group will explore restaurants and cafes in and beyond

Nelson to sample a variety of culinary styles.
Pam Jenkins Convenor

UPDATES FROM SOME GROUPS

BOOKCASES

When we enter a person's home, we instantly get a feeling of who they are because of the atmosphere they have created. A glance at their bookcase will extend the story, allowing us an insight into their interests. Our BOOKCASES group meets monthly - we visit each member's home and the host selects a few books from his/her book case and discusses them. In doing so, they introduce themselves. This year we have all been on a wonderful journey of exploration, filled with enthusiasm, learning and conviviality. The range of subjects we have been introduced to has been wide and surprising, and we are left waiting in anticipation of the next chapter.

Sally Mason Convenor

OUR LIVING LANGUAGE

After six years the current Our Living Language Group will end in November. It is not, to use a common idiom, that we are "past our use by date" or even that we have exhausted this fascinating topic, but rather, that is time in the words of John Milton for "fresh woods and pastures new."

What a time we have had together. We have welcomed new members and said farewell to others but always maintained a solid core. In true U3A style our sessions have been participative with each member taking ownership of their own research and presentation. We worked our way through the history of English language development, each year with a changed focus. What an eye opener it was when we discovered that we could neither read nor understand Early English! Always we have been aware of the tension between a language that is constantly changing and the desire of educated people to maintain standards and always we left wondering whose standards? Nowhere was that more so than after our session on the effect of the electronic media on the English language.

Finally let me share some of the usages that turned us into Grumpy Old Men [and women!]:

going forward; journey ,when not referring to travel; heroes, when no life has been saved; "I don't think" when what is meant is "I think"; "could of" instead of "should have"; "less" instead of "few"; "bored of" instead of "bored with";

I could go on but I am fed *up* of writing and I don't want to *speak out*, *I am so not going there* or my contribution will lack *the WOW factor* and you will look for *closure*. *Going forward* I should be thinking *outside the square* when it comes to a topic as *iconic* as the English language *but my oven needs cleaning badly*.

So finally just for fun try saying aloud;

"It's not nu and it's not new-nique to Nu Zilund" "Problee" "Infa-stucksha" "intrish rates" "wea consinnering"

Remind you of anyone? Clue: this person has met both sets of Royals this week – the Black set and the set from Britain.

Liz Chinnery Convenor

WATCHING THE BIRD WATCHERS

What's going on? A small group of Nelson Seniors get out of a vehicle in a paddock

at Paremata Flats. Wearing sunhats and carrying binoculars they make their way through a gate and across the newly tree-planted field, occasionally stopping to stare at something in the trees, or gaze up at something in the sky overhead. Entering the patch of scrubby *plagianthus* they spread out, and half-hidden by the bushes, they creep cautiously about, peering into the shrubbery and pausing from time to time, obviously listening for something. Then, a small green-brown bird hops out of the bush and perches in the sun in full view. Faces in the group beam in delight as they gaze silently at this *matata* (fernbird).

Silently watching, and motionless, they hardly dare breathe; this is what they have come to see and there he is only a few feet away. No-one has a camera, but the moments pass and time almost stands still as they absorb details into their memory. Eventually the little bird with the long rather ragged tail flits away to where it was when first disturbed.

Faces turn skywards at the sound of kereru and tui; the former being chased out of the reserve by a bossy tui. More discussion: perhaps that partly explains the absence recently of kereru in this reserve. Dying kowhai trees, and lack of sufficient food to support populations of both species, so the bossy tui reigns supreme.

Another morning at 8.30, these same Seniors are seen on the Boulder Bank near the sewage ponds, setting out for a walk with backpacks, jackets, sunhats, and binoculars. Making their way slowly along the stony track, they stop and gaze out to sea with great excitement. What can they see? They are watching a long skein of black birds flying south, close above the water. They stand transfixed by such an unusual occurrence in a locality where birds are typically seen singly or in small flocks, not thousands. After 3 or 4 minutes the mile-long thread of black shags passes and the strolling group moves on.

Next our group can be seen on the far side of the ponds wandering about, intently focused on patches of rushes. Ears and eyes are alert to signs of the secretive little marsh crake which live in the rushes and feed on critters in the mud. There's some pointing and signs to be quiet; something has been spotted. The *poaka* (pied stilts) are making a racket, which will surely warn the crake that they should hide. For a couple of minutes eyes or binoculars are focused on a tiny brown bird with its bobbing tail as it briefly ventures out from under cover. Again, surprise and delight are visible on their faces – more "firsts" to add to their birding encounters.

Grace Sutherland Convenor

CONVENORS' MEETING

About 35 current convenors met at the Tasman District Library last week to celebrate the active year we have had. **We thank all our convenors for the participation and enthusiasm they put into U3A, we can't do it without you! MANY THANKS TO YOU ALL.**



Study Group ideas for “½ time”. Morning or afternoon teas should be simple and decided with members’ agreement; try by rotation, leaving a gold coin or cheese and biscuits only. Share the task with your convenors, they are members too!

In Memory of Margaret Vincent and Shirley Jeppe

Little did I think when I took the position of convenor for two of the three groups to which I belong, that I would be writing small obituaries for members of the groups. During the last five or six weeks, unfortunately, this is what has happened.

The first death was that of **Margaret Vincent**, a foundation member of the first History of Jazz Group and the History & Origins of Jazz Group. We enjoyed her enthusiasm for jazz music, her quiet humour and her friendship. Although she was the oldest member of both groups, she had been known to dance a few steps with another member of the group when particularly moved by the beat! She stopped attending when she became ill in June and died in the Hospital Section of The Wood Home in September. She is sadly missed by her friends in the Group. She had no family in this country.

More recently, the Met Opera Group was shocked by the sudden death of **Shirley Jeppe**. A member, not only of our Group, but also the Shakespeare Group, one of the walking groups, and Peter Bell’s Poetry Group at Oakwoods. She died in Nelson Hospital on October 16th, the day after going in for tests. She was an active member of all groups and had planned to host a DVD showing of *Rodelinda*, one of Handel’s operas, on Saturday 17 October at Summerset. Her intelligence, her sense of fun and her contributions will be certainly missed by all the Groups to which she belonged. I believe that she also had no family in this country.

Peter Sutton.

A request from **Brian Say** for help with transport of Blind Citizens of NZ members to meetings. What is needed is for someone to co-ordinate 6-8 drivers to transport folk to meetings twice a year. Contact Brian directly on 03 539 4700

[The committee meeting minutes for September is on the website for you.]

As our next Members’ Meeting is in the new year on February 24th 2016 at Nelson Golf Club, that gives us some good planning time as to what we will study and if we will become convenors!

And now it is a Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for 2016, to all our members, from the U3A Nelson committee.

Contact numbers for U3A Nelson are; P.O. Box 1690 Nelson, 7040

www.u3anelson.org.nz

Jill Dickinson