



July 2020

Discussion Groups NEWSLETTER

Discussion Groups

As the world upheavals caused by Covid-19 take hold around the world we appear to be weathering the storm very well. Largely due to the way the virus has been handled within our country. For which we are all very grateful I am sure.

Our groups have continued to grow over the last month. There is now an Opera, a third Current Affairs and a Luncheon group running.

This is excellent as it opens up our organisation to more participation by more members at all levels.

Your Discussion Group committee will be advertising more groups this month in the main body of this newsletter. So please take the time to read about them and think about what, if anything, you would like to participate in.

We would still like to see more members of the Photography group. This hasn't met again since the lock down largely due to the weather being difficult. That does look to be changing however so we can expect big things from this group very shortly.

This last week has seen the start of two new groups. Namely the Luncheon group which met at the Village Green on Friday and the Opera Group which had its first meeting at Ngaire's home on Wednesday. We watched Mozart's *Magic Flute*, filmed in Sweden by Ingmar Bergman. This was a wonderful version of the opera and was enjoyed by all of us present.

Book Club Friday

Facilitator: Garda Cortesi

E: gardacortesi@gmail.com

Book Club 2

Facilitator: Angela Vickers

E: angela.nz@e3/net.nz

Monday Current Affairs

(full)

Facilitator: Joy Hayward

T: 454 4996

E: joyhayward@hotmail.co.nz

Tuesday Current

Affairs *(full)*

Facilitator: Gretchen Kivell

T: 4730031

E: gretchen.kivell@xtra.co.nz

Thursday Current Affairs

Facilitator: Clare Hamel

T: 0211764883

E: hameldownunder@yahoo.com.au

Dining Group

Facilitator: Ann Wood

T: 03 455 6061

E: ann.wood14blaw@gmail.com

Expanding Musical

Horizons *(full)*

Facilitator: Paul Wheeler

T: 476 0462

E: wheeler@outlook.co.nz

Film Group *(full)*

Facilitator: Bill Stanford

T: 027 461 5343

E: billstanford9@gmail.com

Finally, our Podcast group is still on the cards although up to now there hasn't been much interest. If you would like to be involved in any of the new groups offered, please let Ngaire know either by telephone or email so that she can get these groups moving.

Keep warm.
Ngaire Bates

The new groups on offer are:

Excursions Group

Members who have been feeling overwhelmed with Lockdown may welcome this opportunity to join a group on Otago excursions, e.g. a visit to a heritage property, a visit to a wildlife colony, a visit to an historic place. All of this can be achieved with a Facilitator willing to arrange a venue, and willing members sharing a ride.

Easy Walking

Some of us have expressed interest in walking as a group on a selected *flat* locations, e.g. new walking track on Portobello Road harbour frontage; St Kilda/St Clair frontages (John Wilson Drive), or even beach walks when it's warmer. Hands up a Facilitator to kick this one off.

Philosophy Group

Groups discussing philosophical issues have proved very popular in U3A's in other centres, but up to now we haven't started such a group in Dunedin. If we can attract someone with a training in Philosophy as a facilitator it would be great, but this isn't essential.

The group would begin with members raising the issues they'd like to discuss. These don't have to be grounded in any particular school or author, and can be informal, as for instance: which question do we ask a person from Crete if we need to know the way somewhere?

Local History

Facilitator: Stuart Strachan
T: 482 2339
E: sistrachanz@gmail.com

Mahjong Group

Facilitator: Hilary Allison
T: 4772903 Cell: 021 393 323
E: hilary.allison@xtra.co.nz

Photography

Facilitator: Ngaire Bates
T: 4542170
E: ngairemichael@gmail.com

Walking Group

Facilitator: John Hogue
E: hoguetimaru@xtra.co.nz

Opera Group

Facilitator: Garda Cortesi
E: gardacortesi@gmail.com

Luncheon Group

Facilitator: Patricia Irvine
E: trishjockloch@gmail.com

Gallery group (full)

Facilitator: Tash Hurst
T: 467 9747
E: tash.hurst@xtra.co.nz

German Language

Facilitator: Rob Lawson
T: 021 023 91642
E: roblawson75@gmail.com

Five Famous Art Collections

Facilitator: Moya Smith
E: moya.smith@xtra.co.nz

And we don't forget that great philosophers such as Plato used myths, and images, to convey their sense of reality...

Singing

We are looking for members who would be interested in forming a group to just sing. A facilitator who has had some choral experience would be an advantage; but no background in choir or other kinds of singing necessary!

We are unsure where at the moment we could possibly hold this but one suggestion is the small room at the Otago Golf club.

Gardening Group

This group can be whatever the members wish it to be. Learning about plants, swapping plants, how to graft, garden planning, vege growing. The list goes on. We would like eventually to see the group members who are interested visiting other gardens; for both professional and general interest, to learn and see more as a group.

Photography Group

The Photography Group has had its initial meeting and would like to have more members.

The idea is we would go out and about, taking images when the weather permits. When it doesn't permit, we would meet up at someone's home and practise using Photoshop or Lightroom, or other apps, on phones and pads as well as computers, helping each other with issues we are having in processing our images.

To participate you don't need to use a camera! Everyone with a smartphone can & does take photographs; and many phone apps do quite efficient post processing. So, if you're interested, do come along! And if you do have a camera, even better!

Current Affairs

We are also going to begin another Current Affairs Group. A few members who have had their names down on a waiting list have joined forces and started another group. However, this new group is now full so we are looking to start yet another one. So, if you would like to hear others opinions of what is happening in the world and contribute your own worthy comments please join this new group.

Ngairé Bates T 454 2170 E ngairemichael@gmail.com

Discussion Groups' Reports

Expanding Musical Horizons

Our first post-lockdown meeting for the year was the first in a series covering the Romantic period, a movement that encompassed philosophy, literature, art and music. We briefly discussed the historical, political and social contexts of the 19th Century. This was the first of two sessions this year, which look at the favourite topics of the composers, artists and writers of the time.



Caspar David Friedrich "Wunderlust"

We listened to music by Beethoven, Fanny Mendelssohn, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Schubert and Richard Strauss; and looked at art works of Constable, Turner, Aivazovsky and Cole.

Caspar David Friedrich "Two Men Contemplating the Moon"

At our next session, we'll be investigating the art and music featuring fantasy and the macabre, legends, magic and the supernatural. Next year, we'll look at the musical developments of the period.



Tuesday Current Affairs



At our July meeting, the Tuesday Current Affairs Group discussed the second of the referendum issues we need to address: the legalisation of cannabis. We realise the main issue is the age at which young people are able to use cannabis, which is not addressed by the referendum. There would be a call for submissions during formation of the law, at which all options for informing, encouraging, and ensuring young people do not get access would need to be addressed.

Another matter of concern is Oranga Tamariki, which has not changed the way it operates for the better. Newsroom reporting, and that by Radio NZ (The Detail) are worth noting. In addition, we discussed local politics (in the middle of the difficult weeks for National) and ongoing effects of the Pandemic.



Book Club Friday

We meet on the 1st Friday of the month, the next meeting is on Friday 07/08 20 at 67a Tahuna Road.

New members are most welcome. Individuals read the books of their choice and discuss their best read during the meeting. Presenting the book in such a way that others would want to read it is part of the fun. Bringing books to lend out is good, but not necessary.

Tea, coffee and a snack is served and members are invited to contribute something small.

Film Group

*Before lockdown, we had a great movie to begin the year with: Satyajit Ray's **Pather Panchali** — Song of the little Path.*

It's the first film in a trilogy about a boy, Apu, of poor Brahmin family, growing up in rural Bengal — a masterpiece of childhood!

The film focuses on the mother, Sarbajaya, and Apu and his sister, Durga (named for a mythic woman warrior!).

The family is poor; and the film itself, Ray's first, took over two years to shoot because of funding difficulties.

The American director John Huston saw rushes, and declared the film a masterpiece. Indeed it is! And even better than that, a film of great beauty!



*Following lockdown, we've begun again in July with Hiro Kore'eda's **Still Walking**. Recent Cannes' Golden Palm winner, director of Our Little Sister, Kore'eda in Still Walking brings a son to a traditional meeting with his parents.*

The film is set in high summer; and its local audience would be well aware that this is the time of the festival of the dead, known as O-Bon. Graves are visited, and people lost remembered. This family had a favourite son, who died while saving a boy from drowning; and the second son whose work is irregular is considered a failure. Thus the title of the film has two meanings: 'still alive', but also still struggling for recognition. Hence the principal focus of the film is this son and his partner's negotiating their standing with the parents, in an attempt to form a more satisfying relationship.



Overall, the Film Group's revised program for 2020-21 is as follows:

| Title | Director | 3 rd Wednesday |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Not One Less</i> | Zhang Yimou | 19 th Aug 20 |
| <i>The Leopard</i> | Lucino Visconti | 16 th Sep 20 |
| <i>The Sacrifice</i> | Andrei Tarkovsky | 21 th Oct 20 |
| <i>My Neighbour Totoro</i> | Hayao Miyazaki | 18 th Nov 20 |
| <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> | Vittorio De Sica | 17 th Feb 21 |
| <i>Blackboards</i> | Samira Makhmalbaf | 17 th Mar 21 |
| <i>Hiroshima Mon Amour</i> | Alain Resnais | 21 st Apr 21 |
| <i>La Strada</i> | Federico Fellini | 19 th May 21 |
| <i>Seven Samurai</i> | Akira Kurosawa | 16 th June 21 |
| <i>Let the Sunshine in</i> | Claire Denis | 21 st July 21 |
| <i>Blow Up</i> | Mich. Antonioni | 18 th Aug 21 |

Although the group is full, a second Film group is a possibility — let me know if you're interested, at billstanford9@gmail.com

Local History Group

Hi All,

We are in business again after an overlong period of inactivity.

Our next meeting will be at the Hocken Library

10am, Wednesday 12 August 2020

The subject will be educational records of which Hocken has a huge abundance of all kinds: education board, primary and secondary schools, and university.

Afterwards we can have coffee at Emersons across the road.

Thursday Current Affairs

The monthly meeting of the new current affairs group was delayed due to snow flurries and one or two winter ailments, and our July meeting was held yesterday with all 8 members present. This group is now full, this being due to the size of everyone's hosting spaces, and not because we wouldn't love to be able to welcome more members.

We all come from varying backgrounds (and countries) but share a lively an interest in what is going on around us locally, nationally and internationally. We have decided to each bring one item of news to future meetings as there is simply not enough time to present and discuss something from each of these 3 categories - which was what we had planned. Topics raised result in much discussion; and in the current rather calamitous environment it is not too difficult to find something that catches your interest .

Yesterday we moved from talking about recycling household waste in Dunedin and the cost of PLASTIC (!) council bags; the referendum attached to our coming general election; matters pertaining to the rather sneaky way land has been purchased in Tarras to build a new international airport - that locals don't appear to want; delight that Behrouz Boochani has been granted asylum in New Zealand.... frozen lakes exploding in the Arctic caused by methane forming under the melting permafrost. I forget what else! But there was more...

Discussions were followed by afternoon tea and a most pleasant afternoon was had by all. We look forward to further meetings to be held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1.30pm

Five Famous Art Collections

The facilitator of this group, Moya Smith (moya.smith@xtra.co.nz) is offering a 'short course', with discussion:

Five Famous art collections not to be missed

Course presenter with discussion: Moya Smith

This course is an introduction to five famous art collections in the UK and Europe.

I shall present The Wallace collection (London); The Waddesdon Manor collection (UK); the Musee d'Orsay and Louvre (Paris); the Museum Island (Berlin); and Lenbach Haus (Munich).

The aim is to introduce these collections to would-be future travellers, or to those who simply want to view them from the comfort of home.

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