u3a Plettenberg Bay

Newsletter
July 2023



Art masterpieces
The Kiss – same title, but two different takes on love, passion and eroticism. Rodin, p. 2 and Klimt, p. 4.

Talks
- Dementia, page 6.
- Will Plett have enough water in the future? Page 8.

Walks
Join us on the Kwendalo garden walk on 23 August. Check our website calendar for details.

Contact us
www.https://plettu3a.org.za

Welcome to our new look newsletter!

After the launch of our new website last month it was time to freshen our image in all of our communications, specifically with regard to the use of our logo.

This is the last time that the programme schedule will be sent as a separate document together with the newsletter. From now on please make use of our website programme calendar, which allows you to view our forthcoming events by day, week or month. It is also printable. After clicking on a specific event you can either click to invite a friend, RSVP, or copy the event and its details to your online or phone calendar.

Let us know what you think of our new website and newsletter.

Best wishes,
Plett u3a committee

Welcome

A very warm welcome to our new members: Adele and Peter Adamson, Pam Meara, Catherine Glennie, Frank Hollenberg, Jules Pechey and Alison Glitz.

Interest groups

- **Chess**: Frank Hollenberg is trying to start a chess fraternity amongst Plett u3a members. Please contact Frank if you would like to join this group: 082-566-2964.
- **French** for beginners: Ingrid James (076-689-5245) is back from leave and her Tuesday morning sessions have resumed.
- **German**: Doris Engelhardt will be back in August. If you would like to join either a beginners or an advanced German group please contact Doris: 082 626 0212.
- **Poetry**: The next meeting will be on Thursday 10 August at Chrissy Hay's home. Topic: American poet Stanley Kunitz (1905 – 2006).

Plett u3a DVD library

Those who regularly attend our documentary film viewings on Monday mornings will know that we have an extensive DVD library. Plett u3a members are welcome to borrow DVDs. Please contact Ian Hogan if you would like to receive a copy of the DVD catalogue and/or would like to borrow any DVDs. Email: iphonly365@gmail.com, Tel: 072-940-7298.

Past activities

Documentaries

Monday 3 July: Private life of a masterpiece - E22: Rodin – The Kiss

The Kiss by Auguste Rodin is considered to be one of the most romantic and erotic sculptures in the Western world. The embracing nude couple depicted in the sculpture appeared originally as part of a group of reliefs decorating Rodin's monumental bronze doors, *The Gates of Hell*, commissioned for a planned museum of art in Paris. *The Kiss* represents Paolo and Francesca in Dante's *Inferno (1320).* These adulterous lovers lived during Dante's lifetime. As Francesca De Rimini and her brother-in-law, Paolo Malatesta, were reading the romantic story of Lancelot and Guinevere together their passion grew. Rodin captures the moment when the pair realize their love for one another and kiss for the first time. Francesca's husband, Giovanni, discovers them and stabs them to death. In the sculpture you can see the book slipping from the man's left hand.

When Rodin decided in 1898 to exhibit *The Kiss*, alongside his monolithic statue of the writer Honoré de Balzac, at the annual Salon it was an immediate success. It was quickly copied in various sizes. The Barbedienne foundry alone produced 319 bronze casts.

In 1900 the gay Bostonian antiquarian and connoisseur Edward Perry Warren commissioned a full-size replica of the sculpture, stipulating that "the genital organ (lacking in the original) of the man must be completed". The finished piece was delivered in 1904, but it proved too large for Warren's house and had to be stored in the stable block. During the First World War, Warren loaned it to the Lewes Town Hall, where it was publicly displayed in the Assembly Room, then a recreation space for troops billeted in the town. A number of puritanical local residents, led by headmistress Miss Kate Fowler Tutt, fearing it would incite lewd behaviour among the soldiers, objected to the erotic nature of the sculpture and successfully campaigned to have the sculpture draped and screened from public view.



The Kiss
Marble sculpture by Auguste Rodin, 1882.

The Tate bought the sculpture in 1955. Half a century later, *The Kiss* caused controversy in Britain once again. When the British artist Cornelia Parker was invited to participate in the Tate Triennial in 2003, she decided to wrap up *The Kiss* in a mile of string. This was a reference to a 1942 Surrealism exhibition in New York where Marcel Duchamp criss-crossed the exhibition space with a "mile of string", so that his tangled web would obscure the other artworks. Parker felt that *The Kiss* had become clichéd. Many viewers of the sculpture found it offensive to the original artwork, prompting artist Piers Butler to cut the string while couples stood around engaging in live kissing. Parker just tied the string back together and put it back on the sculpture.

It was rumoured that the inspiration for the woman in *The Kiss* was Rodin's mistress, the sculptor Camille Claudel, but the sculpture was begun before they had met. The two nude figures in an embrace shocked the public upon its release in 1887. The risqué position of the nude figures, as well as the clear portrayal of female desire, was considered highly controversial. At that time female sensuality was particularly taboo. Caught in a moment of unbridled passion, Francesca is leaning deeply into the kiss, suggesting that she might be the initiator. Her arm is pulling Paolo's head down, her leg is over his and her other foot is pinning his down. Paolo, on the other hand, has his knees close together, his back is straight and taut and his hand is touching her thigh only lightly with a raised thumb, indicating the initial stages of the embrace. No actual kiss takes place. The lips of the two figures never meet, suggesting the couple was interrupted and met their demise without ever kissing. By posing the lovers with their lips just inches apart Rodin creates a feeling of anticipation. Its blend of eroticism and idealism makes *The Kiss* an iconic image of sexual love.

Monday 3 July: Private life of a masterpiece -E16: Rodin – The Kiss



The Kiss
Painting
by Gustav Klimt, 1908

The Kiss by Austrian Symbolist painter Gustav Klimt is regarded as one of the most sensual of paintings. It was created between 1907 and 1908 in Vienna's extraordinary intellectual climate at the turn of the century.

Klimt painted *The Kiss* soon after his three-part *Vienna Ceiling* series, which created a scandal and were criticized as both "pornographic" and evidence of "perverted excess". *The Kiss*, however, was enthusiastically received when exhibited in 1908 under its original title *Liebespaar* (the lovers) when it was purchased, still unfinished, by the Austrian government.

The Kiss is an oil-on-canvas painting with added gold leaf, silver and platinum and was the last painting of Klimt's "Golden Period". Klimt's use of gold leaf in paintings was inspired by a trip he made to Italy in 1903. When he visited Ravenna he saw the Byzantine mosaics in the Church of San Vitale. For him, the flatness of the mosaics and their lack of perspective and depth only enhanced their golden brilliance.

Klimt never married but was known to have a prodigious sexual appetite, and he is thought to have fathered around 14 children. He had an obsession with women, especially red heads. Many of his paintings have a hidden sexual meaning. Love, intimacy, and sexuality are common themes found in Gustav Klimt's works, examples being the *Stoclet Frieze* and the *Beethoven Frieze* (both precursors to *The Kiss)*, which focus on romantic intimacy. It is thought the figures in *The Kiss* may be Klimt and his companion Emilie Flöge, but there is no evidence for this. Others suggest the female was the model known as 'Red Hilda'; as she bears a strong resemblance to the model in three other of Klimt's paintings.

The painting depicts a naked couple embracing each other, their bodies covered in elaborate beautiful golden robes decorated in a style influenced by the contemporary Art Nouveau style. It is thought Klimt used robes to counteract the criticism regarding the erotic symbolism in his earlier works. The outline of the couple locked in an intimate embrace resembles an erect phallus. The couple and the surrounding landscape are two-dimensional**.** The figures on the richly-coloured flowery meadow are seemingly on the edge of a cliff that ends under the woman's exposed feet. The figures are shown against a gold, flat background which could represent either heaven or a void. The man wears a robe printed with geometric patterns representing the masculine force, whereas the pattern of the woman's robe is floral, with circles and swirling lines. He wears a crown of vines while the woman wears a crown of flowers. The man's face is not shown to the audience. Instead, his face is bent downward to press a kiss to the woman's cheek, while his hands cradle the woman's face. The face of the kneeling and surrendering female figure is upturned, but the woman's eyes and mouth are closed and not open to the man's kiss. *The Kiss* represents the mystical union of spiritual and erotic love and the merging of the individual with the eternal cosmos. A celebrated example of the Art Nouveau movement, *The Kiss* by Gustav Klimt is one of the most iconic paintings in its depiction of a universal, timeless vision of romantic love.

Classical Destinations is a music travelogue presented by Simon Callow. The tour of Europe highlights the great classical music created in each of the featured cities and regions. As the episodes are only 30 minutes long, two episodes were shown in each session.

Monday 10 July: E1 – Salzburg: birthplace of Amadeus

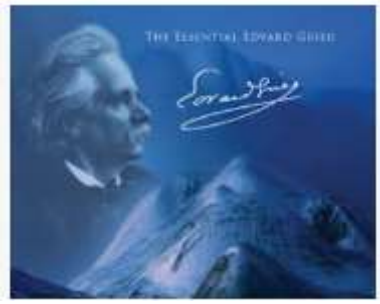


Salzburg (Salt Castle – salt mining was a previous major source of income) is an Austrian city of medieval and baroque buildings on the border of Germany, with stunning views of the Eastern Alps. Mozart's birthplace is at No. 9 Getreidegasse, on the third floor. Mozart was born here on 27 January 1756. He was the seventh child of Leopold Mozart, who was a musician of the Salzburg Royal Chamber. Mozart's birthplace is preserved as a museum displaying his childhood instruments. Callow provides a summary of Mozart's life and works, whilst a violinist, Niki Vasilakis, plays some of his better known pieces.

E 2: Across Austria to Vienna



We travel through magnificent countryside to Vienna via beautiful towns and villages that Mozart would have travelled through to reach Vienna, the city that attracted composers such as Brahms, Haydn, Schubert and Mahler. Their stories and relationships with the grandiose Habsburg capital are described amongst the city's great landmarks.



Monday July 24: E3: The real song of Norway

The journey through the spectacular mountains, ravines and fjords of Norway end at the capital of Oslo, as we follow the life of the country's most beloved composer – Edvard Grieg.



E4: Finlandia

The elemental sights and sounds of Finland, from Helsinki to the snowy vistas of Lapland and a visit to Santa and his workshop and the country's icy beauty, are all captured in the music of Sibelius. We hear the story of the Finnish musical legend and visit the composer's home of Ainola.

Talks

Wednesday 12 July: Nadja Fredericks on dementia

Nadja is the founder of Demenz Care in Plettenberg Bay. Her talk, mostly a question and answer session, attracted a record number of visitors. Nadja's focus is on creating awareness and acceptance of dementia through knowledge and seeing the illness from a different perspective beyond the medical diagnosis.



Source: Dementia fact sheet September 2022; World Health Organisation

With the ageing of the world's population dementia is becoming a major public health issue of the 21st century (see graph). The definition of dementia is 'the loss of cognitive functioning'. Dementia has become an umbrella term for many different types of neuro-degenerative diseases that affect the brain, of which Alzheimer's is the most widely known. Dementia is the result of changes in certain brain regions that cause neurons (nerve cells) and their connections to stop working properly. The causes of dementia are not fully known. Dementia is not a normal part of ageing, but most affected people are older than 65. Unfortunately there is a stigma attached to dementia, resulting in a lack of awareness and misconceptions, as well as isolation and fear for the patient and family. There is no prevention or cure for dementia and it only worsens over time.

Some of the risk factors are family history (rare), certain health conditions (heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure), smoking, drinking too much alcohol, being physically inactive, socially isolated, depression, insomnia, and former head injuries/concussion (caused by rugby, falls, etc.). It is very important to consult a neurologist for an accurate diagnosis. There is no way of preventing dementia but the risks can be lowered if you have a healthy lifestyle by, for example, adopting a diet with lots of fruit and vegetables and less meat, avoiding sugar (cocaine for the brain) and alcohol, exercising daily, stimulating your mind (with puzzles and brain-challenging games), creative hobbies (painting, knitting, woodwork), getting a good night's sleep (without sleeping tablets), daily meditation/praying (calming the mind and reducing stress levels), staying socially active, keeping blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels in check, and reducing, in consultation with your doctor, the number of prescription drugs if you take more than five daily (to reduce the risk of adverse drug interactions).

The signs and symptoms of dementia vary and may include: experiencing short-term memory loss (whilst possibly retaining excellent long-term memory); loss of vocabulary (hunting for words); changes in mood and disposition; changes in appetite (complaints regarding lack of taste); loss of social skills, poor judgment; confusion; difficulty speaking, understanding and expressing thoughts, or reading and writing; wandering and getting lost in a familiar environment, trouble handling money responsibly and paying bills; repeating questions; using unusual words to refer to familiar objects; taking longer to complete normal daily tasks; losing interest in normal daily activities or events; self-absorption and not caring about others; withdrawing from company (to 'work'), problems with movement and losing balance (causing falls and possible fractures); behaving and speaking inappropriately, although they can sometimes hold 'normal' conversations when in the company of others for a short while.

Creating an environment that makes it possible to live well with dementia requires caregivers who will keep the patient stimulated and safe, provide proper nutrition and daily exercise and administer medications (which may include micro doses of psilocybins – mushroom-derived chemicals) to support mental function and reduce depression and aggression, where relevant. While the patient may initially be involved in meetings, dementia support is principally intended to benefit the primary caregiver/s, especially as the disease progresses.

Many people get irritated when dementia patients repeat questions or stories about their past. The past is a happy place for such people; their present circumstances can arouse feelings of stress and anxiety. As music evokes powerful emotions that bring back memories, it can help to play music the patient enjoyed years ago. As Nadja said, we all need music in our life to improve our health and wellbeing. Responding to a dementia patient's repeated questions with 'I've just told you …' is useless. The once-healthy neurons (nerve cells) in the brain have stopped working. They have lost connections with other brain cells and died. In other words, it is not physically possible for such patients to remember what you have just said to them.

Dementia imparts heavy physical, mental, emotional, financial and social tolls. As patients gradually lose their various personas (social facades or fronts) they created throughout their lifetime they become their true self. Nadja found that, as their cognitive ability declined, she was able to connect with her grandfather and father on an emotional level (heart-to-heart) that would never have been possible otherwise.

Learn more about dementia

- **Free online courses:** The Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre (https://mooc.utas.edu.au) provides free online courses throughout the year. The courses are repeated if you miss out on one, such as the July 2023 course: 'Understanding dementia'.

- A new (July 2023) study by Monash University has found that activities involving literacy and mental acuity can lower dementia risk in older adults (Article: Computers, crosswords & creativity are best for lowering dementia risk (newatlas.com); Research paper: Lifestyle Enrichment in Later Life and Its Association With Dementia Risk | Geriatrics | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network)

- People with dementia are still able to learn new things, study finds

Wednesday 26 July: Peter Pyke – Water, our most precious resource



Peter began by outlining the water supply situation in South Africa. The National Water Act (no. 36 of 1998) provides for basic human needs and the 'ecological reserve'. The latter relates to the water required to protect aquatic ecosystems, in terms of both the quantity and quality of the water in the resource. This means that the amount of water that can be extracted from water resources is governed by law and will vary depending on the class of the resource.

South Africa is an arid country with an average annual rainfall of 464 mm, most of which occurs along the eastern coastal regions. Our dams lose a lot of water due to evaporation; the bigger the surface area the larger the loss. It is predicted that South Africa in future will suffer from intensified droughts due to climate change, resulting in reduced rainfall and/or increased evapotranspiration. Currently more than 40% of SA's water supply is provisioned by the Vaal-Orange-Senqu water system. SA ranks no. 8 in the world for large dams. Use of the Canadian-designed Integrated System Monitoring software enables SA to annually determine the amount of water that will be available 3-5 years in advance, based on river flow records and summations of dams' capacities. The actual versus projected data is reviewed monthly. When shortfalls are encountered water restrictions are applied as required.

Plettenberg Bay relies on four water resources: the Keurbooms River, Roodefontein Dam, the desalination plant (near Beacon Isle) and boreholes. Seven of the ten boreholes are non-functional due to vandalism. The desalination plant's abstraction pumps will soon be replaced, which means the plant will be operational again after almost a year. The desalination plant is intended to only be used to cater for the high water demand during the tourist season, when it provides about 15% of Plett's water requirements. Plett does not have a lot of groundwater and much of it contains high levels of iron, which requires special water treatment, after which the treated borehole water has to be blended in with the normal water supply.

All of Plett's water is drawn from the Keurbooms River, unless the river flow drops too low, in which case water is drawn from the Roodefontein Dam. All water then goes through the water treatment plant (located behind the municipal clinic off Marine Way). In terms of the ecological reserve, Bitou can only extract 300 litres per second from the Keurbooms River. Roodefontein Dam is small and buffer dams are needed. All proposed alternative water supply systems are costly. Suggestions range from increasing the capacity of the desalination plant, recycling sewage and building a new dam, such as the proposed Wadrif Dam (past Wittedrift off the A340). The Wadrif Dam would be approximately three times the size of the Roodefontein Dam and be close to the current Keurbooms extraction pipeline. Geological surveys are being conducted to determine whether the Wadrif Dam site may leak.

The current influx of people, especially in the tourist season, has increased Plett's water demand considerably. (Plettenberg Bay's population has grown annually by 5.54% since 2001, from 18 567 then to an estimated 60 745 in 2023.) Plett's current daily water consumption ranges from 9 ML to 29 ML per day. Unless additional water resources can be secured Plettenberg Bay will continue to experience water restrictions to avoid water shortages. Plettenberg Bay's tap water is safe to drink. The water quality is consistently rated as one of the country's best in the annual Blue Drop Certification Reports published by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Peter is a civil engineer who was involved in the construction of many dams in South Africa over 40 years. He served on the SA National Committee on Large Dams (SANCOLD) and the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD). Before retirement Peter investigated options for reconciling water demand and supply in South Africa. Currently Peter is an Exco Board Member of the Plettenberg Bay Ratepayers' and Residents' Association, responsible for the Water portfolio.

More information: See the 2023 'Bitou Water Assessment Report'.

Committee

Chair	Jan Hough	084-674-4235
Vice Chair	Lorna van der Merwe	082-784-9903
Secretary	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Facebook	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Finance & DVD library	Ian Hogan	072 940 7298
Marketing & communications	Felicity (Flick) Grube	082-557-7779
Membership	Peter Grube	083-381-5929
Newsletter	Felicity (Flick) Grube	082-557-7779
Outings	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Programme coordinator	Lynette Timme	079-313-9641
Website	Felicity (Flick) Grube	082-557-7779

Special interest groups

Chess	Frank Hollenberg	082-566-2964.
Computer basics	Peter Grube	083-381-5929
French conversation (full)	Merle Decot	084 581 7379
French for beginners	Ingrid James	076-689-5245
German	Doris Engelhardt	082 626 0212
Music (Monday Music Memos)	Peter Grube	083-381-5929
Poetry group	Chrissy Hay	083-648-0306
Science group	Henry Timme	078-877-5829

General enquiries u3aplett@gmail.com



Cover image: Keurbooms Lagoon, Plettenberg Bay

Photo credit: Public domain