

University of the Third Age Plettenberg Bay

Newsletter October 2022

Dear Members

This is the second last newsletter issue for 2022.

There will be no Plett U3A events during December or January due to the holiday season. As you will see from the email attachments the 'Programme calendar' will from now on be distributed as a separate document, so that you can print and stick it somewhere where you can easily read and mark it. Hopefully this means you won't miss our future events!

Thank you to those who responded to the various questions in the last newsletter regarding future Plett U3A events and activities. Your feedback was helpful.

We always welcome your comments and suggestions. Please either chat to a committee member or send us an email: u3aplett@gmail.com.

Best wishes from the Plett U3A committee members

Programme

Please note that the bi-monthly programme will from now on be sent out together with the monthly newsletter as a separate document.

Overviews are provided under 'Forthcoming events' below. More information regarding future talks and outings will be sent to all members as 'Upcoming events' email notifications closer to the date.

General structure of events programme

Mondays: Documentaries (videos) alternate between two different topics.

Tuesdays: Currently no activities.

Wednesdays: Devoted to live presentations and outings.

Thursdays and Fridays: Used for U3A special interest group meetings.
(None scheduled for the rest of 2022, other than French conversation.)

Forthcoming events

Documentaries

EarthFlight: Six episodes on bird migrations across the world. The first five programmes are on migrations over six continents: North America, Africa, Europe, South America, Asia and Australia. The sixth episode shows how these extraordinary bird's-eye view films were produced.

History of Ancient Britain: This BBC documentary looks back thousands of years to tell the story of how Britain and its people first came to be. From the glacial wasteland of ice-age mammoth hunters through to the Stone Age and the Bronze Age, the series taps into the latest discoveries and experimental archaeology to show how science is helping to solve some of the longest-enduring mysteries of ancient technology, such as how Stonehenge was constructed.

Talks

October 5: Alex Babich will talk to us about the psychology of money: you, your money and how we think and behave towards it. Alex is the Managing Director of Alexander Babich & Associates and Deputy Chairman of South African Independent Financial Advisors Association (SAIFAA).

Outings

October 19: Visit to Equine-Librium College for veterinary physiotherapy. Equine Librium consists of the college, various veterinary therapy clinics, stables and livery as well as the Bitz and Pieces shop. The college currently offers a 4-year full time BSc Veterinary Physiotherapy degree. We will watch various animal patients, such as horses and dogs, undergoing different types of physiotherapy, including swimming.

November 23: Year-end function - buffet lunch at Totties with a talk on the history of Rheenendal.

Play

18-22 October: As so many of our Plett U3A members are involved in the production by David Hall-Green and the Bitou Amateur Theatrical Society (BATS) of the dark comedy 'Arsenic and old lace', you don't want to miss this play at St. Peter's Church. Book your tickets online: https://www.quicket.co.za/organisers/44783-bitou-amateur-theatrical-society .

Past activities

Documentaries

EarthFlight Episode 1 - North America



Although the focus of the EarthFlight series is on migratory birds, there are some astonishing additional vignettes of bird and animal behaviour. This episode covered bird migrations along the east and west coasts of America. The flock of snow geese is accompanied by bald eagles, who regularly hunt them, especially when the exhausted birds land. In California, brown pelicans look down on devil rays that perform astonishing somersaults and then splash back into the sea with wide open 'wings'. The pelicans time their migrations to California to gorge on grunion fish that wriggle ashore to spawn in the sand.

In Alaska bald eagles swoop to steal salmon from fishing brown bears. On the Great Plains, cowbirds duck and dive under the feet of fighting bison. Egrets follow a pod of dolphins that herds shoals of fish and then drives them onto the shore, where the dolphins then temporarily strand themselves to feed. Millions of shorebirds rendezvous with prehistoric horseshoe crabs emerging from the sea to lay eggs in the sand. California gulls take us to Mono Lake, where they catch alkali flies by running along the shore with open beaks, like demented vacuum cleaners.

History of Ancient Britain Episode 1 – Age of ice

In this series TV historian and archaeologist Neil Oliver traces the development of Britain and its people before, during and after the last ice age. Several species of humans intermittently occupied Great Britain for almost a million years. Fossilised footprints on the Northfolk coast provide the earliest evidence of human occupation around 900,000 years ago. Neil discusses various fossil remains: the oldest (around 500,000 years old) were found at Boxgrove in Sussex. Fossils of very early Neanderthals dating to around 400,000 years ago were found at Swanscombe in Kent. The partial skeleton of the Red Lady was discovered by William Buckland in 1823 at Paviland cave in Wales. Originally believed to be a Roman Britain prostitute, the remains have since been found to have been those of a young male. He was buried about 33 000 years ago, together with parts of a mammoth that may have killed this hunter gatherer. Neil shows examples of prehistoric art dating back 14,000 - 15,000 years: a running horse engraved on a horse's rib bone and an ibis and other birds carved into a cave roof.

Britain was mostly unoccupied by humans during the last ice age, which peaked 22,000 years ago and lasted until about 11,700 years ago, except for brief intermittent periods of a warmer climate,

when the ice gave way to a tundra habitat. During the Palaeolithic period the ice was one kilometre deep over Scotland, and Britain was part of the European peninsula, which enabled humans to migrate from the Continent.

Archaeological digs in the Scottish Hebrides found a Mesolithic (7,000 - 9,000 years ago) fishing camp on the Isle of Coll, shell middens on another island and on the island of Colonsay 1/3 million pounds of hazelnut shells were unearthed. The hazelnuts were probably ground to create food for winter. These finds indicate that Britain's prehistoric humans travelled between islands to source various types of food. On the northeast side of Scotland, in the Montrose Basin, 6,100 years ago an enormous landslide in Norway caused a giant tsunami to rush 40 kilometres inland, causing a massive loss of life, and permanent, large-scale alteration of the geography. Britain became an island.



How do footprints become fossils?

After watching the DVD this intriguing question arose. Herewith an explanation:

Most footprint and track fossils were formed in soft mud or sand near a pond, lake, river, or beach. If the weather was dry for days or weeks the footprint dried out and set hard before the imprints could be erased by water or wind. Then fresh mud (sediment) covered the prints. The sediment was subsequently buried under more sediment and became compacted and cemented together to form rock (lithification). This process is much the same as the formation of body fossils.

Outings

Flower walks, 14th and 15th September





Sundew (*Drosera aliciae*)

Over the two days a total of 31 Plett U3A members were led on flower walks along the Kalanderkloof path by Brittany Arendse (conservation scientist) and Hendri Coetzee (CEO) both of Nature's Valley Trust. We marvelled at the beauty of the examples of our richly diverse Cape Floristic Region (CFR), which is home to 9 000 species of flowering plants, two thirds of which are found nowhere else on earth. The most significant plant groups of fynbos are proteas, ericas and restios, of which we saw many examples.

Each plant has evolved to attract specific birds, insects or rodents to ensure optimum pollination and seed dispersal.



Narrow-leaved sugarbush *(Protea neriifolia*, one of the bearded proteas

Red/orange flowers are pollinated mainly by birds (such as *Erica discolor*), blue, purple and white flowers attract insect pollinators and some flowers have darker 'runways' to guide bees and other insects deep into the flower (for example, pelargoniums, gladioli). Restios (bushman's paintbrush) are wind-pollinated, hence their beautiful dangly heads. Bushmen pulled apart young restio stems (which then look like quills) into which they stuffed the fluffy seed heads of the kapokbossie/wild rosemary (*Eriocephalus africanus*) to make paint brushes for their cave art. Bearded proteas have hundreds of individual florets in one flower head and are a source of nutrition to a variety of creatures. Some sundews (*Drosera* spp.) have burgundy coloured leaves with a sticky sugary coating to attract, trap and then consume insects.



Riversdale bell (*Gladiolus rogersii*)

As this outing was over-subscribed it will be repeated, possibly in six months' time, when other species will be flowering. For those who would like to repeat our walk, or perhaps hike along other paths in the area, we suggest you download the Nature's Valley Trails Guide (https://www.naturesvalleytrust.co.za/assets/Uploads/NV-Hiking-trails-compressed.pdf). Visit the website of Nature's Valley Trust for additional information: https://www.naturesvalleytrust.co.za/ .

Images supplied by Beth Hackland and Nature's Valley Trust.

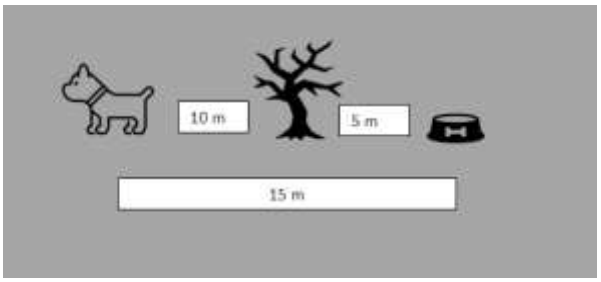
Thank you, Brittany and Hendri, for a wonderful morning and fascinating walk.

Brain games



Solution for September puzzle





Contacts

Committee		
Chairman	Jan Hough	084-674-4235
Secretary	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Facebook	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Finance	Ian Hogan	083-261-5861
Marketing & communications	Felicity Grube	082-557-7779
Membership	Peter Grube	083-381-5929
Outings	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Programme calendar	Lynette Timme	079-313-9641
Special interest groups		
Bridge for beginners	Chrissy Hay	083-648-0306
Computer basics	Peter Grube	083-381-5929
Science group	Henry Timme	078-877-5829
French conversation (full)	Merle Decot	
General enquiries	u3aplett@gmail.com	