

University of the Third Age Plettenberg Bay

Newsletter November 2022

Dear Members

This newsletter was planned to be published at the end of November as a bumper yearend issue, as there will be no Plett U3A activities from the end of November until February 2023. However, some members have indicated that they do not like reading long newsletters – hence this issue.

The past few weeks have been busy for those that have managed to attend most of our events. One of the aims of this newsletter is to share our experiences with those members who missed out, for whatever reason. As there were many events this is a long newsletter!

Some of the outings have proved so popular that we definitely hope to repeat them sometime in 2023. Also, some of the documentary films have elicited a lot of interest. A few people have asked how they can get to see the episodes they have missed. Most of the DVDs shown form part of Plett U3A's DVD library and they can be borrowed. Please contact Ian Hogan, or another committee member, if you wish to borrow a DVD.

Soon the committee will be meeting to discuss next year's programme of events. If you have any ideas or wishes in this regard please share them with a committee member so that we can make it happen. Alternately, please send your thoughts to us via email: u3aplett@gmail.com

Best wishes,
Plett U3A committee

Programme

Please note that the bi-monthly programme is sent out as a separate document. More information regarding future talks and outings is sent to all members as 'Upcoming events' email notifications closer to the date.

General structure of events programme

Mondays: Documentaries (videos)

Tuesdays: Currently no activities

Wednesdays: Devoted to live presentations and outings

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

Committee		
Chairman	Jan Hough	084-674-4235
Secretary	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Facebook	Beth Hackland	072-266-1821
Finance & DVD library	Ian Hogan	083-261-5861
Marketing & communications	Felicity (Flick) 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	

Past activities

Documentaries

History of Ancient Britain 2: Age of Ancestors, Monday 26 September



Ten thousand years after the Ice Age the rising sea turned the British regions into islands, largely covered with woods. Only a few thousand mesolithic hunter-gatherers roamed and lived off the land. However, apparently in several waves and at several different British coasts, neolithic people invaded from mainland Europe, bringing with them a new way of life based on farming and creating settlements. They left the first monuments (such as Stonehenge and burial structures) which are still hard to read. Neolithic people had superior tool-making and other technological skills. The productivity of their agricultural activities enabled larger numbers of humans to survive and led to the start of civilization – which gave rise to land ownership issues, the development of socio-political structures and armed violence to protect these vested interests.

History of Ancient Britain 3: Age of Cosmology, Monday 10 October



Skara Brae

During this period human lives became ruled by the sun and stars, with Britain in the throes of a Neolithic revolution. In the central fells of the Lake District there is a Cumbrian axe factory, with exquisitely worked and polished stone axes. Travelling back to 3,100 BC and the Orkney Islands is the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae, which was occupied for 600 years.



Almost unique to Britain are the monumental stone circles, of which there are many examples, from Maes Howe, to the Ring of Brodgar, to the Stones of Stennes, and then beyond, to Stonehenge. These monumental constructions of daunting scale are aligned with cosmic elements. Their assumed significance is multiple, partially reflecting a social class of priests and nobility, and possibly (religious) efforts to give people a place in a cosmological context.

History of Ancient Britain 4: Age of Bronze (final episode), Monday 31 October

This journey begins in Norfolk, where 433 ancient flint stone mines dot the landscape. Flint was the hardest material available for tools until copper was discovered on Ross Island, County Kerry, Ireland, by the Beaker People, who travelled from Europe. Subsequently tin was mined along the Cornish coast and the copper and tin were combined to create bronze. Metal axes started to replace stone axes and later swords were created. The production of metal tools initiated a new era of trading and the British Isles, rich in both copper and tin, were at the centre of the trade.



The Amesbury Archer's grave in Wiltshire yielded the greatest number of artefacts and metal-working tools ever found in a British burial from the Early Bronze Age, including beakers, and gold jewellery. Tooth enamel isotope analysis showed that the man originated from an alpine region of central Europe.

The organizational requirements of mining and resulting wealth stirred the emergence of a rich, leading class which presided over the erection of major monuments, some even as personal tombs. The Dover Bronze Age boat (ca. 1575–1520 BC) was made using oak planks sewn together with yew lashings (withies). It was probably used for cross-channel cargo transport. Withies were also used in the construction of round-houses, an enduring form of architecture that lasted 1000 years. In Dartmoor, Devon, there are remnants of the first villages ever created in Britain, with a complex of field systems that ended when the climate changed again and the soil was depleted. The Bronze Age lasted from roughly 3300 to 1200 BC.



Grimspound, one of the best-known prehistoric settlements on Dartmoor.

EarthFlight 2: Africa, Monday 3rd October



This episode highlights the bird migrations (such as those of the barn swallows and white storks) across Africa, as well as the predatory behaviours of birds and animals. Cape gannets arrow-dive among sharks, dolphins and whales as they join the great sardine run up the Western Cape coast. Kelp gulls study the hunting behaviour of the great white sharks to ensure their next meal of seal meat. Fish eagles, baboons and hyenas hunt flamingos as they settle on various soda lakes in southern and eastern Africa. One of the most beautiful dances in the bird world is that of the flamingos. Vultures circle high above the Serengeti, watching the drama of the wildebeest migration below for an opportunity to benefit from a drowning or lion kill – and sometimes they become lion prey themselves.

EarthFlight 3: Europe, Monday 17th October

We soar with the birds as they fly northwards from Africa towards their European breeding grounds over many iconic landmarks, such as the Loire Valley, London docklands and the bulb fields of the Netherlands. White storks struggle to fly over large open stretches of water to reach Istanbul, the gateway to Europe, while cranes take an easier route over the monkey-guarded Rock of Gibraltar. Cranes and geese fly over Venice, the white cliffs of Dover and Edinburgh.

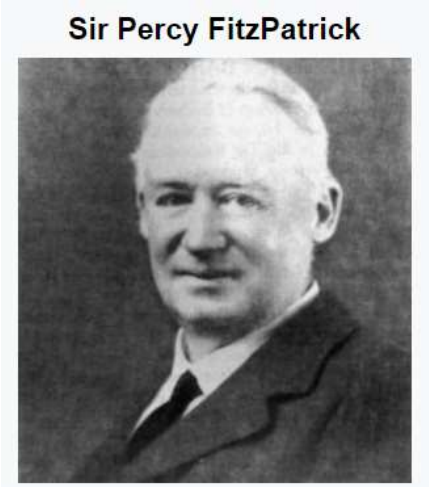


In Rome, the heat of the city in summer lures 20 million starlings that perform nature's greatest aerial display to outwit peregrines. In Hungary, South African sand martins grab mayflies as they rise from the river; and at Bass Rock, Britain's gannets dive in exquisite slow-motion. The story takes an emotional turn as storks and swallows wait for their partners to return to their nests and indulge in a spot of house-keeping to impress their mates. Some of the nests have been family heritages for many generations. Finally, geese touch down in Svalbard to raise a family. To protect their young, a squadron of birds assemble to see off a marauding polar bear.



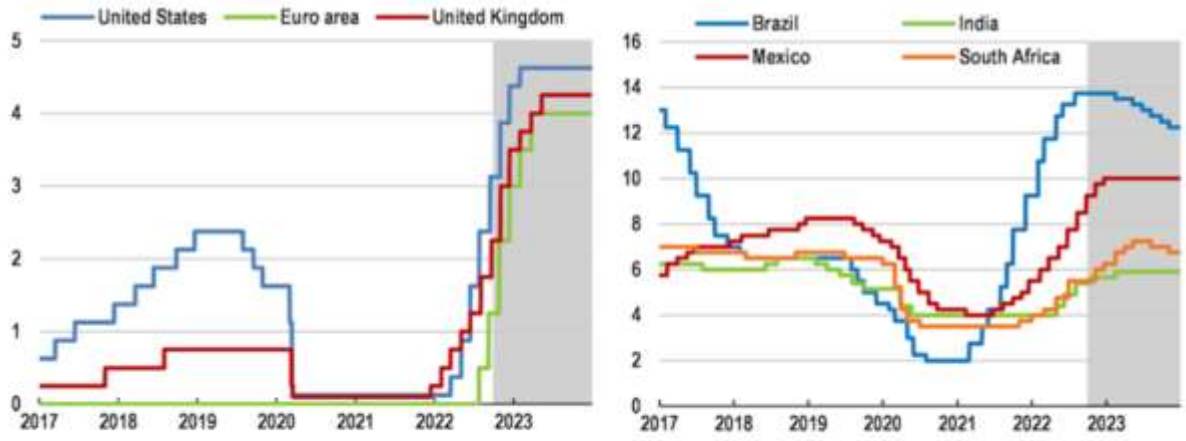
Talks

Sir Percy Fitzpatrick by Marina Niven, Wednesday 21 September



Surrounded by memorabilia Marina Niven chatted informally about her husband's grandfather, Sir Percy FitzPatrick, or "Fitzy", (1862-1931). FitzPatrick was a South African author, politician, mining financier and pioneer of the citrus fruit industry. He authored the classic children's book*, Jock of the Bushveld*. As a politician, he defended British Imperial interests before and during the Anglo-Boer War. His legacies include the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, which was founded at the University of Cape Town in 1959 by Mrs. Cecily K. Niven, daughter and only surviving child of Percy FitzPatrick, for the study of the living birds of Africa. The Percy FitzPatrick Award, initiated in 1970, is an award for the best South African children's book in English.

The psychology of money by Alexander Babich, Wednesday 5 October



Source: OECD Economic Outlook, The Price of War, Interim report, September 2022

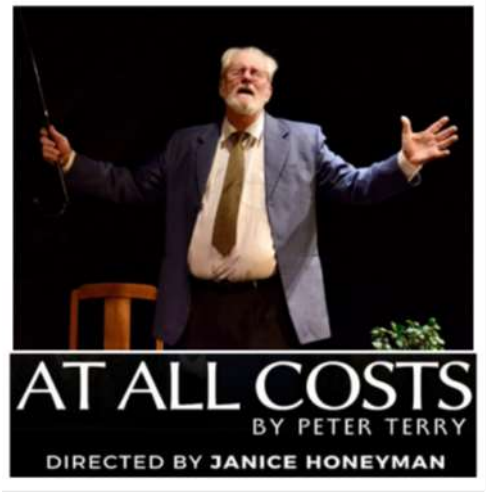
The impact of official interest rates on the economy

Alex (Managing Director of Alexander Babich & Associates and Chairman of the South African Independent Financial Advisors Association -SAIFAA) spoke about money and how we think and behave about our investments, especially in uncertain political and economic times and when planning for our retirement income. Large fund managers have not out-performed the Johannesburg Stock Exchange over the last ten years and predicting the future accurately is not possible.

For those who missed this talk, here are a couple of similar recent articles:

- How to change your thinking on managing money – Piet Viljoen
- Understanding the psychology of money – Rachel Cruze

At all costs: play (one-man show) by Peter Terry, Monday 24th October



This was a heart- and gut-wrenching play that caught up the audience in the vividly re-lived memories of David Wells, who fought in the Battle of Delville Wood in 1916, as a 19-year old lad. His words bring to life the carnage he witnessed, as the 1st South African Infantry Brigade was ordered to hold the Wood *at all costs* (hence the title of the play).

Some of the audience members had relatives who fought in that battle – which has been the case with every audience of the play wherever it has been shown in the country. This play is dedicated to the memory of all the South African men who fought at the Battle of Delville Wood.

Outings

Visit to the Equine-Librium College for Veterinary Physiotherapy, Wednesday 19 October



Professor Sybrand van den Berg gave us an overview of the history and objectives of the college prior to our tours of the campus and its facilities. The college currently offers a 4-year full time BSc Veterinary Physiotherapy degree. Ronel van der Sijde, the CEO, founded Equine-Librium in 2007 and was instrumental in building it up to what it is today. Equine Librium is the only veterinary college in the world that is devoted solely to animal physiotherapy. In 2012 Pof Sybrand (former head of the Department of Surgery at Ondertepoort) became the principal of Equine-Librium College and he still plays an integral part in the lecturing of students. The college treats horses, dogs and cats, but the key focus is on sport horses.

Two final year students demonstrated how they conduct an assessment of a dog for physiotherapy. Later on the tour we saw the patient undergoing hydrotherapy. We watched horses and dogs being exercised in various ways to address specific muscle/joint issues and were shown the veterinary and physiotherapy clinics, stables and lecture rooms – all whilst some students were writing their final exams or were undergoing practical examinations!

It was a fascinating outing and we are very grateful to Ronel, Prof Sybrand, Meryl Prowse and all of the staff members and students for welcoming and hosting us during exam time. Thank you for your warm hospitality and for the wonderful work that you do.