



WESTERN SUBURBS Newsletter

November 2020

Welcome !

On 5 October **Judith Amey** gave us a very interesting tour of Morocco. As always Judith's talk was well researched, accompanied by attractive, colourful photographs. We were engrossed as we learnt about the history of Morocco, the most westerly Muslim country in Africa.

It has been invaded and influenced by many countries. Berbers; Phoenicians; Carthaginians; Romans; Vandals and Visigoths have all invaded and left their mark. It is currently an independent kingdom.

Donkeys, cheap transport for farmers, are used in the souks and medinas. Dates are an important crop, and a Date Fair is held annually. Khetara is a sophisticated system of collecting and transporting water for irrigation, Morocco boasts the world's oldest university and library in Marrakesh, founded by a woman. Ouarzazate is popular with film makers, due to large open spaces, good weather, locals happy to be extras, and sets that can be reused. Modern touches are the mobile phone towers resembling palms, and public solar powered booths for charging phones.

Sue Wilding

Professor **Bob Mead** gave us another fascinating insight into forensic medicine. He spoke about cognitive bias - how things are not always as they seem. He used many visual examples and film clips to demonstrate how information can be influenced by context, by initial sight, and by noting what you expect to see, and ignoring what is really there. He used the case of Patricia Stallings to demonstrate an example of cognitive bias resulting in wrong conclusions. She was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment on what seemed like watertight scientific evidence of causing her baby's death by poisoning with anti-freeze. In prison she gave birth to a second child who began to display the same symptoms as his elder brother. But Patricia had had no contact with him after his birth. The mystery was solved when the baby was diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder and it became apparent both siblings had inherited the same recessive genes from their parents. In this case there was a series of examples of cognitive bias that lead to the injustice of Patricia Stallings' conviction.

Bob Mead's advice to his forensic students - 'Beware cognitive bias'!

Terry Harvey's presentation on 19 October on the British East India Company was excellent, as usual. At its height it was the indirect ruler of India with a balance sheet of \$8 trillion in today's money. It minted its own currency, had its own army, own college, and controlled a quarter of the worlds' population and half its trade. There was widespread corruption, looting of India's resources and treasure, forced cultivation of opium instead of grain leading to famine (10 million died in the Bengal famine of 1769), and engagement in piracy and slavery.

The Company began in 1571 when 101 British merchants came together to ensure a monopoly of trade between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Malacca. By forming a company investors spread the risk of losing everything in one voyage. In 1634 Oliver Cromwell did not interfere in their practices as they brought great financial benefits to England. Charles II gave them the right to mint money, raise armies, and responsibility for civil administration thus extending the monopoly the Company already enjoyed. By 1757 the Company was running Bengal as a country and paying its shareholders a dividend of 25% per year.



Due to several factors the Company began to lose control. The name - East India Company - survives today as a chain of stores selling fine foods.

Using his own photographs and film he has produced **Marcus Wong**, the WA Young Volunteer of the year in 2019, raised our awareness with his presentation, *Voices unheard & Stories from East Africa*.

In Uganda there is no social welfare system nor is there any sympathy for those who fall on hard times. Half of the population is under 15 but few have fathers to guide them.

Illiteracy hampers the Afar people of Ethiopia. Nomadic people who keep moving and therefore do not destroy their environment find providing continuous education for their children a real challenge. The practice of FMG (female mutilation of genitalia) is widespread. With illiteracy one's brain tends to be in a box and not able to think of ways to change, or other ways of doing things. This makes it difficult to see different ways, let alone embrace changes.

Excursion

A small group of us enjoyed learning about the work of the **Fremantle Sea rescue Operations Centre** on Monday 26 October. Staffed by volunteers this essential service is available 24/7. We were given a lot of fascinating information about how people are rescued, radio contacts, safe boating, and even a brief history of the site on Cantonment Hill. That is not to mention the fantastic 360° views from the radio room of the tower. If another visit is organised it is highly recommended you put your name down. Thanks to Ian Deany for organising it and driving the Men's Shed bus, and to Andrew Brockis for an excellent presentation.



Jean, Gabor, Claudia and Laurie (with the binoculars) admire the view from the Sea Rescue Operations Tower on top of Cantonment Hill, Fremantle.

NOVEMBER'S PROGRAMME



AGM

2019-2020 Annual General Meeting of U3A UWA
State Library Theatre,
commencing at 1:45pm
Sunday 1 November

Following the AGM **Tom Picton-Warlow** will present a talk entitled *Duchamp, Computing, Collaboration and Friendship*.

Monday 2 November

1.00pm. **Peter Farr** Pioneer Engineers Morse to Smart Phones. Peter has extensive experience as an engineer and senior manager with the Post Master General's Department/ Telecom Australia/ Telstra and he is now an engineering and management consultant. He will highlight the legacy of engineers in the evolution of telecommunications in Western Australia since 1950.

2.30pm **Charles Wei**, Growing up in China. Personal experiences of a childhood in China under

Mao Zedong's government. Charles' family was classified as 'black listed' so he only completed seven years of education. After voluntarily becoming adopted by another family for a better life, he was able to continue to University. He came to Australia in 2012, and now runs an IT business.

MOTO

MOTO is an opportunity for us to get to know each other a little better in a social setting. Our next gathering will be at Freshwater Cafe (3 Lilla Street Peppermint Grove) at **10.30 am Saturday 7 November** for coffee & cake To RSVP or for more information contact Sue (043894460, mokine@activ8.net.au)

Monday 16 November

1.00pm. **Nigel Ridgeway**, British Involvement in Israel.

2.30 pm. **Craig Challen** Tham Luang Cave Rescue. A veterinary surgeon by profession, Craig participated in the Tham Luang cave rescue of 13 children in Thailand in 2018. A story that captured world wide interest.

Monday 30 November

1.00pm **Identity or how you came to Perth** . Short talks by U3A members. Contact Gabor 9384 3488 if you would like to contribute.

2.30pm **Dr Ian Foster**, The Future of WA's Climate Ian's work as a climatologist covers the effects of climate on agriculture in WA, with emphasis on climate variability and change.

Monday 7 December

12 noon Western Suburbs AGM at the Grove Community Room. All members are encouraged to attend.



1.00pm **Christmas function** at the Albion Hotel. Two course meal with one glass wine/beer, tea/coffee

Bookings and payment essential by 30 November.-\$20 members, \$40 non-members.

BRAIN WORK OUT TIME

Can you crack the code. Same number stands for the same letter each time.

26 25 28 9 23 18 13 7 19 22 19 26 13 23
18 8 14 22 8 8 2



Newsletter compiled by Judith Amey ☎ 0414 76 78 77

Answer: A bird in the hand is messy.