

U3A STILBAAI

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT : 2018 – 2019

INTRODUCTION

U3A Stilbaai was established in May 2015 and continues to play an important social role in Stilbaai by providing interesting talks and stimulating activities for retired and semi-retired persons.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of U3A Stilbaai has grown beyond our wildest expectations. We started with just over 20 in 2015, after the inaugural meeting in July 2016 we had 122 members, this has grown to 338 members on 30 June 2019. At nearly every monthly meeting we see new members joining, proving that U3A Stilbaai is providing a valuable service.

FINANCES

Our financial statements are tabled separately, our financial position is healthy and it has not been necessary to increase membership fees.

Total U3A Stilbaai funds: Total assets on 30 June were R18 955.54, this includes the amounts in the various Funds listed below. The balance for U3A Stilbaai excluding the Funds was R12 023.22.

Jagersbosch Fund: In previous years considerable amounts was spent on providing equipment and installing the sound system in Die Waenhuis, this year we only paid for improving the lights; the balance in this fund is now R5 922.88. Over the last three years the fund has collected R28 423.70; and we have spent a total amount of R22 500.82 on equipment and improvements in Die Waenhuis.

Bird Group Fund: Monies from the Bird Group meetings are placed in their own Fund – during the year R444.00 was contributed, bringing the balance to R555.44.

Photography Group Fund: The Photography Group meetings also contribute to their fund, the fund has not spent any monies yet and stands at R454.00.

MONTHLY TALKS

There were 11 monthly talks covering a wide range of subjects during the year, they were all well attended by members and visitors – the attendance figures were between 51 and 115. A total of 855 attended the monthly meetings during the year. Our sincere thanks to all the speakers for their effort and dedication.

The monthly talks are listed below, information about the contents is available on our website.

July 2018	Prof Deborah James	Indebtedness and aspiration in South Africa - An anthropological perspective.
Aug 2018	Dr Marié Heese	War art as theme in the graphic arts.
Sept 2018	Tobie Marnewick	Water saving: From government buildings to your home.
Oct 2018	Dr Susan Fourie	Dignity in Death.
Nov 2018	Dr Daan Toerien	Flânerie: Hobby for a Retiree.
Jan 2019	Dr Deon Begemann	An Introduction to Amateur Astronomy.
Feb 2019	Mike Steytler	Malaria and Mosquitoes
Mar 2019	Prof Fanie Olivier	A South African in Poland.
Apr 2019	Gert Claassen	Lost City in the Jungles of Brazil.
May 2019	Belinda Gordon	A Glimpse into the lives of women during the Boer War.
June 2019	Karel Nel	The Gouriqua Reactor that was never built.

COURSES

Bird Identification for Beginners: The courses offered 3 times a year by Johan van Rooyen to groups of 4-5 people are extremely popular and were fully booked for 2019; the first two courses in 2020 are also full.

GROUPS

Hiking Group: The group hikes in and around Stilbaai on Friday mornings. The chosen routes varies between 6 and 12 km (sometimes longer), with an average of about 8 km. There are more than 80 members in the group, with on average 20 to 30 members at a time on a hike. It is an enjoyable way to stay fit, make new friends and discover and appreciate Stilbaai and surrounding areas. André & Hanlie Bezuidenhout convened this group, but recently handed over to Dalene Oosthuysen.

Strolling Group: Regrettably numbers declined in the “Stilbaai Strollers” group, and after the December break the walks were not resumed and the group disbanded. Thanks to Debbie Barltrop for her sincere efforts to keep the group going.

Bird Group: The Bird Group has its own section on the U3A Stilbaai website where more information about the group’s activities is available. They meet every quarter in Die Waenhuis with between 20 and 40 people attending – photos are shown, the bird atlas project is discussed, and there are other interesting presentations about birds.

The group has monthly bird watching excursions on a Saturday morning with 4-6 members participating. The main activity of the Bird Group remains the surveys for the SA Bird Atlas Project in the 75 pentads in the Hessequa municipal area – the surveys are now in an advanced stage with a minimum of 2 surveys per pentad spread over the four seasons. The first year of this detailed monitoring was completed in November 2018, they are now busy with the second year.

Since the inception of the Atlas surveys the group has had excellent co-operation from farmers and landowners for permission to operate on their properties. To acknowledge their co-operation the group formed a “Friends of U3A Stilbaai Bird Group” list of people who each receive the newsletter twice a year, as well as a bird list for their area – there are currently 68 people on the list.

Since February the group has also been collecting owl pellets in the region at the request of the Hessequa Archaeological Society; the archaeologists digging in Blombos Cave use this information to identify rodent remains found in the cave. Pellets of Barn owls have been collected at 7 sites in Hessequa, these have been sent to the University of Bergen in Norway together with soil and water samples for analysis.

Terry Terblanche is convenor of the group, with Johan van Rooyen responsible for the Atlas Project, and Pieter du Toit organising the monthly bird-watching excursions.

Photography Group: The group has 30 members and meet the second Monday of the month at Die Waenhuis, with usually about 7 attending the meetings. Every month a photo project is chosen with the photos presented at the monthly meetings – the merits of each photo is discussed and recommendations for improvements are provided. The standard of photos has improved remarkably over the last year. The equipment used by members range from SLR to cell phone cameras. The group has fun while striving to improve. Lawrence Barltrop and Richard Webb run this group

Share Group: The group of 17 members with Christo Prins convening have quarterly meetings, but exchange information on a regular basis. Their discussions cover trends and expectations on the JSE, economic factors which have an influence on the stock exchange, charts of different indices and shares, and investment opportunities.

Neuro-Science Group: Between 10 and 30 people meet on the third Wednesday of every month in Die Waenhuis where 3 or 4 video topics (usually TED Talks) are shown. Topics shown and discussed over the year include how the brain and its connections affect mental well-being and happiness, how we can take charge of our thoughts, and even changing mental pathways through new learning. Jenni Sharkey has taken over this group and ensures that an interesting programme is provided.

Astronomy Group: The group was formed in January by Deon & Ronelle Begemann and has 39 members. They have had 3 star-gazing outings, the first attended by 27 people, the other had lower attendances. The

Whale Lookout Point above the harbour was identified as a promising gathering point. The group plans to look at stars six times a year, investigating ad-hoc astronomical occurrences with assistance from the Astronomical Society of South Africa's yearbook.

Conclusion: Thanks to all the group leaders for the effort and time you put in to ensure the success of your group activities.

OUTINGS

Getting to Know Stilbaai: During October and November the Getting to Know Stilbaai outings were resumed; the outings included a visit to Pauline Bohnen Nature Reserve with Naomi van Schalkwyk telling us about the wildflowers; Naomi discussing the trees of Stilbaai using the variety of trees at Palinggat as an outdoor laboratory; a visit to Jongensfontein where Naas Palmer told us about the history; and a visit to Riethuiskraal and Melkhoutfontein with talks about their history. Hella Döckel is the brainchild behind these fascinating excursions.

Zandvliet Outing: In August two groups visited Zandvliet Wine Estate outside Ashton where they were entertained to a wine-tasting, enjoyed a nice warm soup & bread lunch. They visited a fruit-packing shed where the groups were privileged to observe a fruit-packing operation at first hand. Thanks to Johan van Rooyen for organising this most interesting outing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks to Jagersbosch for the use of Die Waenhuis for our meetings. It is also encouraging to note that an increasing number of our members are supporting Jagersbosch by becoming members.

Thanks to the Committee for their support and their hard work to ensure the success of U3A Stilbaai.

In conclusion I want to thank you, our loyal members, for your support and enthusiasm. U3A Stilbaai is yours, without you we will not be here. Thank you all.

Niel van Wyk

Chairperson: U3A Stilbaai

30 June 2019