

U3A STILBAAI

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT : 2022

INTRODUCTION

The restrictions on meetings and gatherings imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic was eased and then lifted during the year, we could resume normal activities again. By the second half of the year most of our activities had again resumed, some of them in a slightly different format. Attendance at monthly meetings have, by year's end, equalled the numbers we experienced before the Covid restrictions.

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of the year our membership stands at 321, similar to that of the past few years. We lose a number of members at the start of every year, but new members join. Records of the past four years indicate that our total membership varies between 300 and 340 each year.

FINANCES

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

We end the year with a deficit on Income of R4 924.22. The reason is a donation of R10 000 to Jagersbosch as a contribution to the purchase of a back-up power inverter and which now enables us to use the projector and sound system in Die Waenhuis during load shedding black-outs. In spite of the deficit net assets on 31 December 2022 are R20 160.60, and the bank balance was R9 535.60.

MONTHLY TALKS

During this year we presented 11 monthly talks. During the first few months the Covid-19 restrictions were still in force and we could only accommodate 50 people in the hall, but by the second half of the year the restrictions had been lifted and we could again allow unlimited numbers. The attendance at our October meeting was 90 people and at the November meeting 110.

The monthly talks for 2022 are listed below,

2022	Speaker	Title of Talk
January	Dr Deon Begemann	The Stilbaai midge: Part II.
February	Dr André van Tonder	Coastal engineering in perspective.
March	Dr Pieter du Toit	Journey in Tibet.
April	Derek Odendaal	The wonderful Cederberg.
May	Karel Nel	Conspiracy Theories.
June	Prof Johan van Staden	The life and work of Lise Meitner: The splitting of the atom.
July	Dr Marié Heese	Why do people write historical novels?
August	Adv Sam Maritz, SC	"Uit die Vuis" – experiences of a Senior Advocate.
September	Dr Johan Buys	Matchings, Marriages and Mathematics.
October	Dr Jan de Vynck	South Cape near-shore marine ecology and the long-term relationships with humans.
November	Niel van Wyk	Stilbaai in the olden days – a bit of history and a few memories.

Our sincere thanks to all the speakers for the effort and dedication they put into preparing their talks.

GROUPS

Group activities had been severely curtailed by the Covid-19 restrictions, but activities have gradually returned to normal. A new group was formed, a Botanical Walks Group where indigenous plants are identified and studied during walks in the veld.

Astronomy Group: The group regularly shared astronomical phenomena via WhatsApp. The internet makes it possible to warn members timeously if there something interesting to see, like the international space station passing over Stilbaai, moon eclipses, comets and special groupings of planets.

The weather made it possible to gather four times at Deon's house to look at the moon, planets, stars and sunspots through a telescope. The group has 28 members, of which 9 are actively involved.

Convenors: Deon & Ronelle Begemann.

Bird Group: Since the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions, the Bird Group is again fully active. The activities of the group in 2022 are set out here according to the Bird Group's objectives.

Promoting the awareness and protection of birds in our region and create opportunities for people to share their experience and knowledge with others by:

- Organising bird presentations/talks/lecture – There were three meetings with photographic presentations of birds by members of the group, as well as one lecture on the identification of swallows and swifts of Hessequa, and a second on the identification of cisticola's.
- Presenting bird identification courses for beginners, as well as more advanced courses on "Little Brown Jobs" and the like – Two beginners courses were presented, as well as two courses on the identification of larks and pipits of Hessequa.
- Organising bird outings – The short local walks commenced in September, there were four walks.
- Supporting the Southern African Bird Atlas Project by structured atlasing in Hessequa – The atlasers of the Bird Group continued their systematic seasonal surveys in Hessequa and achieved all objectives successfully.
- Supporting the Virtual Museum by submitting photos of birds, mammals, reptiles, dragonflies and damselflies and more – Members of the Bird Group submitted at least 2 500 photo-records during the year.

Convenor: Krysia Stenvert.

Botanical Walks Group: The group explored different habitats in Stilbaai, from limestone to strandveld, to our endangered salt marshes and frontal dunes. The high level of endemism of our flora and the numerous red-data species found in this mosaic of vegetation was emphasised exhibiting the interconnectedness of the natural world. Two themed walks dealt with parasitic plants and the issues of alien and invasive plants.

At the end of each walk a photographic record drawn from the web for ideal pictures with descriptions is sent to the group. Members are encouraged to send in their own photos or questions.

The very dry conditions have had a negative effect on the flowering of our orchids and many other species, Christina hopes to this present in a better light next year. It's been a short year since the start of the U3A Botanical Walks on 13 September with a wonderful and interactive group.

There are currently 17 people in the group, attendance at walks average 10 people.

Convenor: Christina Mars.

Hiking Group: The hiking-group had a wonderful year of hiking with many new routes that have been discovered. Of the possible 47 hiking days only 3 needed to be cancelled due to bad weather. A total of 1,401 hikers participated during the year with an average of 32 hikers per occasion.

A total of 377 km has been hiked during the year. The group also took on some adventurous routes, which was some of the highlights;

- On 16 September **34** hikers took on **Sleeping Beauty**, **17** hikers made it to the summit.
- The adventurous **Blombos to Jongensfontein** route was completed by **22** hikers on 11 November.

The hiking group, twice during the year had a "Wors Broodjie Braai" and an enjoyable get together after the mornings hike.

The year ended on a high note with **56** hikers completing the ever-popular Geelkrans route, which was the highest number of hikers together.

Convenor: Karl-Heinz Niemand

Neuroscience Zoom Group: The group consists of 125 members drawn from U3A's all over South Africa of whom 25-45 sign on for live zoom sessions and many more watch the recording at their own convenience. Notifications of meetings are sent each month to our own group members, all U3A branches in SA and to U3A Cape Town members. This wide sharing of the invitations has brought new, additional U3A participants to every meeting.

Our 2022 topics are always informative and can be reviewed on the following link: » [Click here](#).

The group discussed Loneliness, Procrastination, Anxiety, Hope, Perception and more, presenting a range of views and research on these topics from the field of Neuro Psychology and Behavioural Sciences. Guest presenters expanded on Journaling (Esmé Goldblatt), as well as Psycho-history and transgenerational trauma (Helene Lewis MSc (Psych)).

This is an information sharing group that has had real impact on members lives.

Thanks to U3A Cape Town and Esmé Goldblatt for hosting this forum.

Convenor: Jenni Sharkey

Photography Group: The year 2022 was an improvement on previous two years as the group worked its way through the Covid-19 restrictions. With 24 members, most of them active on an ongoing basis, the group enjoyed 11 monthly meetings and were able to contribute R471 to the U3A budget. There were some challenges with load shedding impacting us on occasion. The 'theme concept' as personal challenges has been well received resulting in very interesting and stimulating results ... well done group members for being innovative!

The members appreciate the use of Die Waenhuis for their monthly meets as it is central and accommodating. An interesting aspect of the membership composition is the migration away from Stilbaai for visits to family elsewhere in South Africa and sometimes overseas ... this of course results in some new material being displayed.

The group looks forward to another year of opportunity to test their skills, enjoy the equipment, capture interesting subjects and generally appreciate what they see around them.

Convenor: Richard Webb.

Share Group: The Share Group consists of approximately 12 members with an average of 8 attending each meeting. Meetings are held every two months.

Members learn from each other and discussions cover a wide area about investments and in particular share investments. Aspects relating to valuation levels, prospects of share prices, price-earnings ratios, state of markets, investment styles, etc. are discussed. The highlight was that the group's share selections grew an average 12.1% in spite of a falling or bear market. The share that fared best was Grindrod which grew by 110% in 2022.

Convenor: Deon Grobler

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

OUTINGS

No outings were organised for this year, mainly because the Covid-19 restrictions were still in force for most of the first half of the year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks to Jagersbosch for the use of Die Waenhuis for our meetings.

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

10 January 2023