



Aspiehelp / The Aspire Trust August 2018 Newsletter

Edited by Anna Melling

Roundup Presenters, In Our Office, reading references, social night alternatives, “Prehistoric autism helped produce much of the world's earliest great art”

Aspie Roundup 2018

Registrations are open for the 2018 Roundup. We currently have early-bird prices on the website, these will be increasing on the 1st of October. See theaspieroundup.co.nz for payment and registration information.



The Roundup will take place on Show Weekend this year—**16 & 17 November in the Rata and Kowhai Lounges at the Cashmere Presbyterian Church, 2 MacMillan Avenue.**



Themes this year are: Aspie Creativity Past and Present, and Designing an Aspie-Friendly Future.

Planned presentations (subject to change):

- Emma Goodall live presentation
- Jeanette Purkis video presentation
- Debbie Ball video on home-schooling
- Sébastien Mathieu presentation on autism treatment in France
- Julie McGeorge “What's good for neurodiverse people is also good for neurotypicals”
- Annie Southern presentation about the brain and aspergers
- Michael Woods will show his latest short horror film
- Babbage family on Charles Babbage and their illustrious ancestors
- Choi Kwang Do demonstration (on benefit of martial arts)

Feel free to email us with any queries—info@aspiehelp.com

Upcoming Fundraising Sausage Sizzles

Here are the dates for the upcoming Sausage Sizzles at Fresh Meats Barrington (Barrington Mall):

Saturday the 8th of September

Saturday the 22nd of September

If you're in the area, come and visit, say hello and perhaps buy a sausage!

We are always grateful for volunteers to help out with the sausage sizzles, even 2 hours now and then is very helpful. (contact the office in advance if you want to help out)



In Our Office



Jane McLachlan has donated a marvellous double-sided banner for the sausage sizzles. We are very grateful for this! Francis is continuing his work on the roster of helpers - so grateful!

Julie flew up to the North Island to be awarded her Diploma in Psychology and Counselling:

I had a great trip to Auckland for my graduation. It was very interesting and one of the speakers was a recruiter of bookkeepers for accounting firms, and he commented that he considered there to be a huge demand for bookkeepers.

I would recommend The Career Academy if you wish to enquire and possibly further your career. They are very affordable and approachable, and the course is online, so very achievable.

We now have a much enlarged library in memory of Jason McDonnell, with some exceptional new books bought with the monies donated at his funeral. We consider reading a vital part of both our education and that of our clients and members.

We also had an interesting visit to Hillmorton Hospital with a client. The Psychiatrist comes from Dubai and was acting as a locum. We were thrilled to hear her opinions on the Mental Health service in NZ!



Our staff from top:
Leith, Julie, and Anna

Social evenings

These are on hold for the foreseeable future.

Our Patron is Stephen Mark Shore, PhD.

The Aspire Trust, Inc is a registered Charitable Trust. Charities Services registration number is CC46192.

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Reading Resources:

Altogether Autism's latest journal

The new Altogether Autism journal is out. It comes out quarterly, and is full of interesting articles and information.

You can download or view it at

<https://altogetherautism.org.nz/subscribe-journal/>

You can also subscribe at the same link.



Where to find Aspie books

A reminder that we have an ever-growing library of books available for members to borrow for 30 days. Our selection has increased dramatically in the last year.

The IHC have a extremely large collection of books on aspergers and autism, both paper books and ebook. Their library is free to use.

<https://ihc.mykoha.co.nz/>



The Christchurch City Libraries don't have a great selection, but I've found they have a few more titles in their ebook library (<https://christchurch.overdrive.com/>) than their physical titles.

Wrong Planet

You might want to look at <https://wrongplanet.net>. They have an online forum, where you can talk to aspies from around the world and share experiences and ideas.

There's an interesting recent blog post about autism's portrayal in the media.



How to eat well when you're unmotivated

Julie found this handy article in the Healthy Food Guide about getting what you need when you're feeling low.

<https://www.healthyfood.co.nz/advice/how-to-eat-well-when-youre-unmotivated>



Social night alternatives:

Our social nights are on hold at present. Here are some alternative suggestions.

Autism New Zealand - Adults with Aspergers group

Monday night group for young adults with Aspergers. This is a social group who meet every Monday evening. Autism NZ employs a co-ordinator to work alongside this group. They plan their own programme for several weeks/months in advance.



For more information please contact the Branch (03) 343 2225.

There is a waiting list for this group, so if you're interested, get on the list sooner rather than later.

https://www.autismnz.org.nz/local_branches/canterbury/christchurch



Board Games at The Wizard's Retreat

The Wizard's Retreat is a board and card game store at Unit 3, 7 Pilgrim Place (the old Game Station store).

They have a Board Game Hangout Night every Thursday, until 9:30pm (start time is whenever people arrive, the store is open from 11am). You can bring your own game, or just come and see what others want to play.



<https://www.facebook.com/The-Wizards-Retreat-112284168801486/>



Prehistoric autism helped produce much of the world's earliest great art, study says

Harsh Ice Age conditions may have favoured the selection of genes which allowed some humans to focus on tasks in great detail for long periods, scientists believe

David Keys Archaeology Correspondent [@davidmkeys](#)

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<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/prehistoric-autism-cave-paintings-barry-wright-penny-spikins-university-of-york-a8351751.html>



Cave painting of lions drawn on the walls of the Chauvet Pont d'Arc Cave in the south of France. It was painted about 30,000 years ago (Wikimedia Commons)

Much of the world's earliest great art is likely to have been created by gifted early humans on the autism spectrum, new research by British scientists suggests.

Archaeologists working in conjunction with autism experts have concluded that humans were able to produce the first realistic art some 33,000 years ago because ice age conditions drove the selection of particular combinations of genes.

Harsh conditions favoured the natural selection of genes which predisposed some humans to develop abilities to focus on tasks in great detail for long periods; to perceive their environments in three-dimensional terms in an enhanced way; to develop greater image retention abilities; and to develop greater aptitudes to identify and analyse patterns of geography and movement.

All of these aptitudes, often found in people on the autistic spectrum, allowed ice age humans to make more efficient flint hunting spearheads (a very time-consuming process needing intense detailed focus), to remember in minute detail (and navigate through) thousands of square miles of hunting terrain, and to remember and analyse patterns of animal behaviour.

But these same newly evolved abilities also made it possible to produce realistic art – dramatic and dynamic images of animals from memory and to draw them in perspective (to mimic 3D reality) in artistic compositions reflecting the patterns of nature.

Medical researcher, Barry Wright and archaeologist Penny Spikins, both of the University of York, carried out research on students at the university and found that 4 per cent were on the autistic spectrum. Most had never realised their autistic status and that they owed some of their abilities and skills to the condition. Significantly, the highest levels of hereditary autism are found in populations of Northern European origin, many of whose ancestors would have experienced the challenges of the Ice Age.

Dr Spikins is a specialist in prehistoric culture who has studied Ice Age art.

“We suspect that the early development of inherited autism was in part an evolutionary response to ultra-harsh climatic conditions at the height of the last Ice Age. Without the development of autism-related abilities in some people, it is conceivable that humans would not have been able to survive in a freezing environment in which finding food required enhanced skills”, she said.

“Detail focus is what determines whether you can draw realistically; you need it in order to be a talented realistic artist. This trait is found very commonly in people with autism and rarely occurs in people without it,” she added.

The new research, published by the UK academic journal *Open Archaeology* this week, means that important aspects of human existence from survival to artistic expression now need to be seen in neurological and evolutionary terms, not just in cultural ones.

Scholars will now look at other key aspects of human cultural development (including earlier technologies, rituals and earlier non-realistic art) to see if they too are products of environmental and evolutionary pressure and resultant neurological change. Fascinatingly, the new research shows that evolution within modern humans was going on long after the emergence of anatomically modern humans around 250,000 years ago. It demonstrates clearly that evolution, even in our own species, never stops.

The key examples of early realistic dynamic Ice Age art have been found in France and Spain at sites like Chauvet, Lascaux and Altamira.