



epsomlu3a@gmail.com

Website <https://www.epsom.u3a.nz>

MEETING PLACE

Royal Oak Bowls, 146 Selwyn St, Onehunga
10am on the 2ND Thursday of most months

NEWSLETTER

February 2024

Next meeting
10-12noon
Thursday 8th February 2024

Blessings and Greetings to all Epsom U3A members. I hope that this summer and the holiday season has been a good time for you with warm sun and warm relationships.

I have had my first committee meeting with a short agenda and time for a social lunch. At the meeting we had a discussion about two main things. These were the importance of helping all U3A members feel welcome at our monthly meetings. So please wear your name badges and make an effort to welcome new people who come to our monthly meetings.

We also discussed the fact that U3A is a learning organization as well as a social organization and it is in the interest groups that you will learn topics of interest as well as developing new friendships. As well as social activities and learning you will also gain more by being part of or leading interest groups.

I want to pay tribute to all who make Epsom U3A such a successful organization remembering especially all those who work in the background. Thank you for your work and commitment.

No matter what our age or what we have done in our lives it is never too late to learn. I always wished I could be musical in any kind of way which I frequently talk about. So my grandchildren are now trying to help me use a keyboard. (It is very hard being left-handed)

So 2024 is a new year and it is very hard to anticipate what will happen for us in the world but I did read over the holidays that to grow older gracefully we need to be doing the following:

1. Realising our own health and wellbeing is tied up with being intentional in our lives
2. We need to be aware of what is happening in the world and our community.
3. It's imperative that acting for ourselves and others helps us have a healthier life
4. Keeping up social activities is very important. (research has indicated that regardless of our health, increased longevity occurs when we follow the above activities)
5. Connectivity is related to increased longevity.
6. We have a responsibility to ourselves and loved ones in looking after our wellness.

So, may I suggest that participating fully in Epsom U3A and its activities, learning new things could have positive outcomes in your daily life.

Finally I hope to visit the interest groups as soon as possible. May this year be one of surprise, satisfaction and learning as you participate in Epsom U3A. If I had a theme it would be to continue to learn, to care for others, to make a positive contribution wherever you can in the community and the world.

Duncan MacDonald.

EPSOM U3A EXECUTIVE

President

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president.u3aepsom@gmail.com

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Secretary

Emily Flynn- 021 0902 5094
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Jessie Mraviciich – 022 019 0896

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Grant Coupland – 638 7496

Interest Group Co-ordinator

Joslyn Squire - 021-168 0680

Interest Group Assistant

Bill Hagan - 625 8920

Guest Speaker Organiser:

Laraine Holdom – 624 4454

Legal Advisor

Mike Matson - 022-630 7968

Newsletter

Jeanette Grant – 638 8566

Greeters:

Don Buchanan - 620 7572

Ngaire Mune– 624 0226

INTEREST GROUP CONVENERS

Ancient Civilisations

John Locke – 021 187 8061

Appreciating Performing Arts

Shirin Caldwell – 630 1662

Architecture

Brian Murray – 021 026 68396

Art Appreciation

Kaye Buchanan – 620 7572

Book Chat

Helen Holdem - 021 260 3510

Current Affairs

Shirley McConville – 622 3542

Fabric & Fibre Crafts

Charmaine Strang – 027-4177 556

Famous & Infamous Group

Gary Preston – 021 297 3087

Foodies

Graham Gunn – 027 445 0929.

Garden Appreciation

Pat Tunstall - 027 3419612

Introduction to Family History

Bryn Smith – 027 280 5235

Latin

Reg Stuart – 630 3576

Lunch Club

Shirley McConville – 622 3542.

Medical Matters

Diana Hart – 021 284 4402

Music Appreciation

Carleen Edwards – 624 6298

19th Century History

John Locke – 021 1878 061

NZ History

Margaret Devlin – 021 115 2539

NZ History 2

Kaye Buchanan - 620 7572

Philosophy

Jocelyn Hewin - 634-1552

Recreational Drawing

Grant Coupland – 638 7496

Scrabble

Joslyn Squire – 021 168 0680

Social Golf

Kay England 629-3281

Te Reo Maori

Jenny Whatman – 027 353 2487

The Enlightenment


John Locke - 021 1878 061

Travel

Diana Hart- 021 284 4402

Walkers & Talkers Group

Don Buchanan ph:620 7572.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Obituary for Norman Fairley 1937-2024</p> <p>We are sad to report the death of Norman, a long-time member of Epsom U3A who had been active in our Famous and Infamous interest group, even as late as December 2023, in spite of his leg amputation last year which he bravely handled and after which he relearned to walk. We will all miss Norman's delightful sense of humour, his intelligent contributions and his congenial friendly nature. Our deepest sympathy goes to Sheila, his partner, and his other family members.</p> <p>Norman was a talented actor of movies, TV films and commercials. He was an active supporter and performer of the Onehunga Dolphin theatre. His varied work experiences included dog training in the British Army and postings in Hong Kong and other parts of the world, working in mines, salesman extraordinaire, a chef for Air NZ , coffee shop owner and working at Carrington Psychiatric hospital where he was much loved for his manner with the patients.</p> <p>We fondly farewell you Norman and may you rest in peace.</p>												
<p style="text-align: center;">CURRENT SUBSCRIPTIONS INFORMATION</p>	<p>The 2024 Epsom U3A subscription is \$50 per person. This should be paid as soon as possible. No cash will be accepted.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The \$50 should be paid into our ASB bank account – 12 – 3067 – 0204618 – 00.</p> <p>Please enter subs in the "code" section and your name in the "reference" section in order for us to have a record of your payment.</p>												
<p style="text-align: center;">FEBRUARY SPEAKER</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr Bruce Hayward on 'The volcanoes of AUCKLAND'</p>	<p>Dr Bruce Hayward will talk about how and when the volcanoes of Auckland erupted and produced the landforms that much of our city is built over and out of. He will answer the question about where and when the next Auckland volcano will erupt again and what has happened to Auckland's volcanoes since the arrival of humans.</p> <p>He is a semi-retired Auckland geologist and marine ecologist who has authored/co-authored 300 scientific papers and 25 books on aspects of New Zealand's fossils, geology, marine ecology, conservation, archaeology and history. Among these books are two on Auckland's volcanoes and a recent co-authored translation of Hochstetter's diary of his time mapping the volcanoes in 1859.</p> <p>He is a past President of the Geological Society of New Zealand, and a former member of the New Zealand Conservation Authority. His studies have been recognised in a James Cook Research Fellow, Fellowship and Hutton Medal of the Royal Society of NZ, and Member of NZ Order of Merit for services to Earth Science Conservation.</p>												
<p style="text-align: center;">INTEREST GROUPS</p>	<p>Please make sure that when you sign up for the 2024 Interest Groups, that you give the Convenors an up-to-date phone number and email address</p>												
<p style="text-align: center;">2024 MEETING DATES Thursdays, 10am</p>	<table><tr><td>8 February</td><td>14 March</td><td>11 April</td><td>9 May</td><td>13 June</td><td>11 July</td></tr><tr><td>8 August</td><td>12 September</td><td>10 October</td><td>14 November</td><td>AGM</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>NB Always wear your name badge and be seated ready at 10am</p>	8 February	14 March	11 April	9 May	13 June	11 July	8 August	12 September	10 October	14 November	AGM	
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SOLAR STORMS

Our Sun is capable of some truly terrifying outbursts – and now scientists have discovered evidence of its biggest tantrum on record. Tree rings dating back around 14,000 years contain a radiocarbon spike twice as powerful as the previous biggest known solar storm.

In 1859, Earth was struck by the strongest solar storm in modern history. It was reported that aurora could be seen almost all the way to the equator – but it wasn't all good news, as the spike also shorted out communications systems and even sparked fires in some telegraph stations. Now known as the Carrington Event, if a similar storm was to hit Earth today it could fry GPS satellites and knock out large sections of the power grid.

Of course, this wasn't the Sun's first rodeo – it was just the first to hit after human technology was advanced enough for us to notice. Scientists have since discovered several other examples, called Miyake events, within the last 15,000 years. These are found by searching for sharp spikes of radiocarbons in tree rings, or for measurements of elements like beryllium in ice cores.

"Radiocarbon is constantly being produced in the upper atmosphere through a chain of reactions initiated by cosmic rays," said Edouard Bard, lead author of the study. "Recently, scientists have found that extreme solar events including solar flares and coronal mass ejections can also create short-term bursts of energetic particles which are preserved as huge spikes in radiocarbon production occurring over the course of just a single year."

Now, scientists have found evidence of the most powerful solar storm on record – as much as 10 times more powerful than the Carrington event, and twice as strong as the previous record-holder, which blasted Earth in the year 774 CE. In the rings of ancient, partially fossilized trees in the French Alps, the team discovered an unprecedented radiocarbon spike dating back 14,300 years ago.

While some Miyake events seem to occur slower and may be attributed to other astronomical sources, the team says that the short timeframe of this spike, plus the fact it lines up well with a beryllium spike found in an ice core from Greenland, indicates a solar origin. Understanding what our Sun is capable of can help us prepare for future events.

"Radiocarbon provides a phenomenal way of studying Earth's history and reconstructing critical events that it has experienced," said Professor Tim Heaton, an author of the study. "A precise understanding of our past is essential if we want to accurately predict our future and mitigate potential risks. We still have much to learn. Each new discovery not only helps answer existing key questions but can also generate new ones."

The research was published in the journal *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*.

Source: University of Leeds

TOP SECRET TUNNELS TO OPEN

Hidden roughly 40 m (131 ft) below central London's streets lies a fascinating but little-known network of tunnels. Originally conceived as a bomb shelter during WWII, the Kingsway Exchange Tunnels were used as a telecommunications center and even a spy headquarters. Now WilkinsonEyre has revealed plans to open them up and tell their story to the public.

As mentioned, the Kingsway Exchange Tunnels were originally built in the 1940s to protect Londoners from Nazi bombs during the Blitz, plus they also served as a home for the Special Operations Executive branch of MI6 – indeed, WilkinsonEyre says they inspired the depiction of James Bond's Q Branch. Following WWII, they were then expanded upon and hosted a Transatlantic telephone link, playing a crucial role facilitating the hotline between Washington and Moscow during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

During its peak, the site accommodated up to 200 staff, supported by self-contained water and air conditioning systems. It also boasted some amenities, including a restaurant, what was thought to be London's deepest licensed bar, and a recreation room complete with snooker tables. However, by the late 1980s, telecommunication technology had advanced to the point that the tunnels were deemed obsolete and they largely remained unused. WilkinsonEyre says that after 70 years of protection under the UK's Official Secrets Act, a significant portion of the underground network will be opened up to the public.

Assuming it goes ahead as planned, the renovation will be focused on a section of the tunnels that measures a combined length of 1 mile (around 1.6 km) and 8,000 sq m (86,111 sq ft). The tunnels measure 7.6 m (24 ft) in diameter, or approximately the width of three London buses, and will be used to host exhibition spaces and displays, as well as some of the original telecommunications gear.

"Subject to planning approval, the vision is to transform the tunnels into one of the world's most unique cultural experiences," explained WilkinsonEyre. "It will bring to life the history of the tunnels by installing high-resolution large-scale curved immersive screens, together with interactive structures, scent-emitting technology and hundreds of individual acoustic pinpoint speakers. With an operational capacity of two million visitors per year, the tunnels could also host different experiences in partnership with major entertainment businesses, artists, performers and curators."

The London Tunnels proposal has been unveiled as part of a public consultation program to gather feedback before a planning application is officially submitted later this year. It has a budget of £220 million (roughly US\$270 million) and is expected to open in 2027.

Source: WilkinsonEyre

DINOSAUR DEATHS

Roughly 66 million years ago, a 7 mile (11 km)-wide asteroid – or perhaps comet fragment – slammed into the Earth's surface, carving out a massive impact crater. Its remnants can still be observed in the modern-day Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico.

The aftereffects of such a cataclysmic event would have been devastating to life on Earth. Back in the 1980s, scientists discovered asteroid dust – containing elevated levels of the rare element iridium – within the geological layer of the Earth dating back to the time that the dinosaurs went extinct.

This suggested that particles relating to the impact, including vaporized elements of the asteroid itself, spread around the world quickly after the strike. They blocked out the light cast by the Sun and, in the process, triggered a global winter. Now scientists have identified a new factor, in fine silicate dust that hung in the atmosphere for well over a decade, blocking sunlight and drastically cooling the planet by as much as 15 °C (27 °F). That's a huge climate shift, considering the projected impacts we're currently facing as a result of 2 °C (3.6 °F) of warming.

SOME OF NEW ZEALAND'S WEIRDER LAWS

- The Māori Community Development Act contains criminal offences that can only be committed by people who are Māori – like refusing to leave licensed premises when told to do so by a Māori warden.
- If you find uranium and don't report it in writing within three months, you've broken the law.
- According to the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 1989, it's illegal to deface, disfigure or mutate a New Zealand banknote.
- The Marine Mammals Protection Regulations state that "no person shall make any loud or disturbing noise near whales".
- You are not responsible for a death – either murder, or manslaughter – if your actions "influence the mind alone" of the person (unless they're sick, or a child).
- Missing your cat, or your wallet? Don't advertise a reward for the return of lost or stolen property "No questions asked". There's a fine of up to \$200.
- The 'Everything Marijuana Book' was banned in 2013 because it encourages the commission of crime. But changes to our censorship laws mean that possession of an objectionable publication – which was a fine-only offence as recently as 2005 – is now punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment.
- You need to give a reason for getting a firearms licence. Hunting or sport is OK, but self-defence is not an acceptable reason in NZ, BUT Under the Bill of Rights of 1688, - an English law that Parliament has declared is still in force in New Zealand - "Protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions".
- The maximum fine for failing to file the annual accounts of an incorporated society is still one shilling a day.

CONVERTING CONTAMINATED WATER

Researchers from the University of Cambridge have created a floating, solar-powered device that converts contaminated water or seawater simultaneously into clean hydrogen fuel and drinking water. Because it works with any open water source and doesn't require external power, the device could be used in resource-limited or remote places.

Photocatalytic water splitting converts sunlight directly into storable hydrogen but often requires pure water and land for plant installation, while generating unusable waste heat. With water being a precious resource, a photocatalytic device that uses any untreated water source, such as a river, sea, water reservoir or industrial waste water, would be a more sustainable option...

They deposited a UV-light-absorbing photocatalyst on an infrared-light-absorbing nanostructured carbon mesh, a good absorber of both light and heat, to generate the water vapor used by the photocatalyst to create hydrogen. The porous carbon mesh, treated to repel water, helped the photocatalyst float and kept it away from the water below so contaminants didn't interfere with its functionality. In addition, this configuration allows the device to use more of the Sun's energy...

They used a white, UV-absorbing layer on top of the floating device for hydrogen production via water splitting. The rest of the light in the solar spectrum is transmitted to the bottom of the device, which vaporizes the water. This, say the researchers, more closely mimics transpiration, the process of water movement through a plant and its evaporation from aerial parts such as leaves, stems and flowers...

The study was published in the journal Nature Water.