



epsom1u3a@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

August 2024

Next meeting
10-12noon
Thursday, 8 August 2024

Blessings and greetings

This report will deal with a few domestic issues that are important to Epsom u3a.

Firstly; you have been sent a draft copy of our proposed constitution. It has been legally written and reviewed. I hope it will not need any major changes. If you have any suggestions then please follow the guidelines sent out with the constitution so they can be received by the committee. A great deal of work has gone into this over three plus years. So a big thank you to all who have been involved.

Next, could I ask you all to consider how you can help Epsom u3a. Maybe by being a volunteer, helper/committee member. Commitment needed would be about 2 hours per month. We will be needing further help at the time of our AGM so could I encourage you to offer your assistance to go on the committee. Please see me, phone me or email me if you are willing to assist and I will meet with you. My ph no is 021 316 661 and my email is dunju46@gmail.com Be aware that many hands make light work so please offer to help.

On Saturday 27 July some of us attended the Auckland regional gathering of u3a at Mt Wellington. It was well organized with four u3a mini speakers who were well prepared and spoke on adoption, women being accepted and allowed to graduate with a degree at university especially Girton College in Cambridge, England.

The main speakers were Paul Spoonley who spoke on the changing face of Auckland in the next 30 years as it is currently the 4th most diversely populated city in the world. 75% Of new immigrants settle in Auckland so in 20 years' time 50% of the population of NZ will live in Auckland. There will also be greater diversity in Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch. He also shared that he discussed the idea of light rail with Sir Dove Myer Robertson as a young student.

The second speaker was Sir Ashley Bloomfield who spoke about New Zealand's needs in Health, Education and Welfare planning and infrastructure with a sharp message New Zealand has to do better. He spoke of the trust that citizens have for business, politicians, media education, and health, which is diminishing across all of society. The message is clear that we must plan and deliver all our services better.

Winter is here. Please take care of yourselves and reach out to others.

Love and care

Duncan

EPSOM U3A EXECUTIVE

President

Duncan MacDonald - 021-316 661
president.u3aepsom@gmail.com

Immediate Past President:

Kaye Buchanan - 620 7572

Secretary

Emily Flynn- 021 0902 5094
secretary.u3aepsom@gmail.com

Minutes Secretary

Jessie Mraviciich – 022 019 0896

Membership Secretary

Thomas Tam - 520 1084
membership.u3aepsom@gmail.com

Treasurer & Technical Officer

Thomas Tam - 520 1084
treasurer.u3aepsom@gmail.com

Almoner

Charmaine Strang – 027-4177 556

Assistance & Support

Grant Coupland – 638 7496

Interest Group Co-ordinator

Joslyn Squire - 021-168 0680

Interest Group Assistant

Bill Hagan – 021 611 247

Guest Speaker Organiser:

Laraine Holdom – 021-059 0136

Legal Advisor

Mike Matson - 022-630 7968

Newsletter

Jeanette Grant – 638 8566

Greeters:

Don Buchanan - 620 7572
Ngaire Mune – 624 0226

INTEREST GROUP CONVENERS

Appreciating Performing Arts

Shirin Caldwell – 630 1662

Architecture

Brian Murray – 021 026 68396

Art Appreciation

Kaye Buchanan – 620 7572

Big History

Emily Flynn- 021 0902 5094
Christine Keller Smith- 021 140 9021

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

Betty Townley - 626 6673

Introduction to Family History

Bryn Smith – 027 280 5235

Latin

Phyllis Downes - 630 5867

Lunch Club

Shirley McConville – 622 3542.

Medical Matters

Diana Hart – 021 284 4402

Music Appreciation

Carleen Edwards – 624 6298

19th Century History

Helen Holdem - 021 260 3510

NZ History

Kaye Buchanan - 620 7572

Philosophy

Jocelyn Hewin - 634-1552

Recreational Drawing

Grant Coupland – 638 7496

Scrabble

Joslyn Squire – 021 168 0680

Te Reo Maori

Jenny Whatman – 027 353 2487

Te Reo Beginners

Christine Short – 021 872 227

William Hagan – 021 611 247

Travel

Diana Hart- 021 284 4402

Walkers & Talkers Group

Don Buchanan ph:620 7572.

SPEAKER REPORT

This month's speaker, Kathryn Trounson represented the Better NZ Trust, which has a mission to Promote Electric vehicles in NZ by arranging "show and tell" events for the public. They have also engaged in a road trip from Cape Reinga to Bluff, to prove EVs can go anywhere and that many of the myths surrounding range and efficiency are false.

Kathryn began by defining the differences between BEVs, PEVs and HEVs and discussed the use of the Plugshare app, to locate charging stations, many of which are near cafes, service stations, shopping facilities and public toilets. These are increasing in number but for most people, charging at home will provide enough energy for their day's travel.

EVs are very cost effective to run. eg 100km in a petrol driven car @ \$2.70 per litre would cost about \$20. An EV would cost about \$10 for the same distance, including the road user charge. They have about 30 moving parts compared to 2000 in a petrol driven car so are cheaper and easier to maintain.

Statistics show NZ is falling behind in EV usage. Eg in 2024, there were 108,000 EVs compared to 3 million petrol driven cars, and the number sold has reduced since the clean car discount was removed. China is producing the most EVs with 78 million sold in 115 markets around the world. 13% of all cars in China are electric.(ie 11 times more than in NZ) Ferries, buses, trains, tugboats and trucks are beginning to be powered by electricity.

NZ would benefit from greater energy resilience by using more solar and wind power to produce electricity for vehicles and we'd preserve sovereignty without having to spend valuable overseas exchange on fossil fuels if we had more electric vehicles. A 30% increase in sustainable energy output is needed around the world.

New battery technology is improving range and will reduce the price of electric cars, making them more competitive. (eg MG and BYD cars.) Batteries provide valuable metals (eg gold, pallium, cobalt) which can be recycled so old batteries are a valuable resource and the system for reusing and repurposing needs to be set up in NZ. Oil companies have worked against the promotion of EVs as their profits are threatened and EV car fires have often been misreported when they have nothing to do with battery fires. (eg 55 fires per billion for petrol cars, but only 5 per billion for EV's have been recorded.)

The question we should all ask is what is the cost to our environment and well-being, of doing nothing, if we don't promote change in our vehicle fleet?

Reading list if you would like to further explore this issue.

A climate disinformation explainer

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/14/climate-disinformation-explainer?CMP=share_btn_url

Climate cuts in the 2024 Budget in NZ

Budget 2024: What survived and what was cut from Climate Emergency Response Fund | RNZ News

Norway's path to electrification

<https://www.leadingthecharge.org.nz/all-news/ev-news-and-media-roundup/how-norway-built-an-ev-utopia-while-the-u-s-is-struggling-to-go-electric/>

The return of the Koch brothers

<https://prospect.org/power/2024-02-01-return-of-koch-brothers/>

EECA projects co-funded to build out the charging infrastructure

https://www.eeca.govt.nz/assets/EECA-Resources/Co-funding/211123_SSD_Projects_Graph_UPDATE.pdf

EV or gas - What pollutes more?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oVrIHcdxjA>

Just have a think – are EVs really better for the climate

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi7U6Cj_2aI

and from Kirsten Corson of Drive Electric

Beyond transportation: electric vehicles as batteries on wheels (newsroom.co.nz)

Moving to a circular economy

Evidence supports shift to a circular economy, regardless of ideology - SBN (sustainable.org.nz)

Web sites to visit

www.leadingthecharge.org.nz – the Better New Zealand Trust

www.eeca.govt.nz – the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority

<p>SUBSCRIPTIONS INFORMATION</p>	<p>The 2024 Epsom U3A subscription is \$50 per person. This should be paid into our ASB bank account – 12 – 3067 – 0204618 – 00. 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>AUGUST SPEAKER</p>	<p>Our speaker will be Guy Slocum, CEO Health Concern (NZ) and his topic 'Cold War Fighter Pilot'.</p> <p>Guy developed a passion for flying at a very early age. As soon as he could, he joined the Air Cadets and rose to become the Cadet Leader of his Squadron. At 16, he acquired his glider pilots' licence which was paid for by winning a Government award.</p> <p>Shortly thereafter, he won a British Government flying scholarship which entitled him to undergo a flying course for the private pilot's licence at government expense.</p> <p>The week after he gained his private pilot's licence, he joined the Royal Air Force as a fast jet fighter pilot. During his time in this role, he operated at the height of the Cold War – chasing Soviet intruders in and around the Iceland Faeroes Gap</p> <p>He left the RAF to join a London based investment bank but, after three years, he tired of corporate life and he left to establish his own international investment company which expanded into 18 Countries and ran for 39 years.</p> <p>Currently he owns a Natural Products Healthcare Business in Auckland and is Leader of a political party.</p> <p>Today, he will tell us about his time as a COLD WAR FIGHTER PILOT</p>
<p>INTEREST GROUPS</p>	<p>1 The Genealogy group is now meeting at Ryman Logan Campbell Retirement Village and can take more new members.</p> <p>2 The Travel group (Week 1 Thursday 1.30-13.30pm) and Big History group (Week 1 Tuesday 10am-12.00) are meeting at the Deaf Centre at 16 Hillsborough Rd as from August , and are open to new members now they have a bigger venue.</p> <p>Email the Interest group co-ordinator Joslyn Squire if interested. Please also contact Joslyn if you can convene or host a group, or have ideas for a new group. joslynmsquire@gmail.com</p>
<p>INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY HISTORY GROUP</p>	<p>AUCKLAND FAMILY HISTORY EXPO/TAMAKI HUINGA TATAI KORERO 2024 - Friday 9 August 5pm till Sunday 11 August 5.30pm Fickling Convention Centre, 546 Mt Albert Rd, Three Kings.</p> <p>Ever wondered where you really came from? Or how about your pet? Come make discoveries at our special 10th anniversary event, featuring a wide range of topics on researching genealogy and family history! Auckland Council Libraries and the Genealogical Computing Group (an interest group of the NZ Society of Genealogists) are proud to present a weekend-long event where you can learn from the best.</p> <p>Take advantage of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *free seminars from beginner to advanced level • *computer-based tutorials • *ask-an-expert sessions • *research assistance. <p>No booking required except for Friday night's opening event. Bring your laptops to take full advantage of the workshops and tutorials. Join us on Friday 9 August to Sunday 11 August 2024 at the Fickling Convention Centre, 546 Mt Albert Rd, Three Kings.</p> <p>Friday 9 August: Opening event \$30 per person to cover catering expenses. Saturday 10 August: FREE entrance for all. Sunday 11 August: FREE entrance for all.</p>

	<p>This year's highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Overseas guest speakers includes Dr Sophie Kay UK (Time Team's genealogist and DNA expert) •Youth and technology: Experience AR (augmented reality) with Te Tiriti o Waitangi experience; quizzes and treasurer hunts •Know your PetDNA by Ancestry ®: Meet some family pets who have had their DNA tested – and see the big reveal where we learn about their breed, traits and maybe even their genetic matches! •Raffle prizes: Subscriptions from your favourite genealogy websites, DNA kits; memberships; books, magazine and newsletter subscriptions; entry passes to venues . . . and more. <p>Full programme here: www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/AFHExpo To book for Friday's night's opening event and meet our keynote speaker Time Team's Dr Sophie Kay: https://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2024/2024-auckland-family-history-expo-tamaki-huinga-tatai-korero/auckland/three-kings Come and see us at Auckland Family History Expo – 9-11 August Regards Bryn Smith – 027 280 5235</p>
IN MEMORIUM	<p>The committee would like to acknowledge the recent death of a Life Member of U3A Epsom, Nadine La Hatte. Nadine had been a long standing and actively contributing member of the club, having convened the Poetry Interest Group.</p>
PLEASE UPDATE ADDRESSES	<p>There are still some members who have not updated their address or their email address. Without these, we cannot keep them up-to-date with U3A events. They possibly do not realise they are missing things. Maybe you should ask the next member you meet if they are getting this monthly newsletter?</p>
2024 MEETING DATES Thursdays, 10am	<p>8 August 12 September 10 October 14 November AGM</p> <p>NB Always wear your name badge and be seated ready at 10am</p>

LOOK WHILE YOU WALK.....



THREE ODD ENGLISH LAWS

[1] Skating on icy streets. The Metropolitan Police Act of 1839 actually banned this fun pursuit for safety reasons - and also because it could potentially cause a disturbance to others. So you might have to leave the sledge at home next time the temperature drops.

[2] Wearing a suit of armour in Parliament. A law forbidding this was passed back in 1313. Edward II put the law in place to prevent violence between the two factions of parliament at the time, the Lancastrians - who were pro-royalist - and the anti-royalist party led by the Earl of Gloucester. Curiously enough nobody's ever bothered to repeal it.

[3] Shaking out your rug in the street. According to Section 60 of the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 it's illegal to beat or shake the dust off a rug in a London street. Shaking your doormat on the other hand is allowed - as long as you do it before 8am.

CHINA'S CITIES SINKING

A perfect storm is brewing for China's most densely populated areas due to rising sea levels and subsiding land that has been accelerated beyond normal fluctuations. Scientists have sounded the alarm that, without intervention, urban areas below sea level could triple in size by 2120, impacting up to 128 million people.

It's a grave warning for a nation that has rapidly urbanized like nowhere else on the planet. In 1980, those living in cities and surrounds accounted for around 20% of the population; in 2023, it was more than 65%. Now, it's expected to reach 80% in the next decade. The growth has exceeded earlier modelling, which forecast it would not reach the current numbers until well after 2030.

In population ecology, every species population within its environment has a carrying capacity – the maximum number of individuals that can be sustained before a 'tipping point' results in a decline to below that threshold. Resources – food, shelter, for example – are limiting factors that ultimately control population size. While humans defy many laws of nature, in this case our ability, through wealth and industry, or both, to generate more resources for a given environment's sustained growth, we have been able to stretch our carrying capacity well beyond what would otherwise be unsustainable.

Though us long-living humans may not experience the 'boom-bust' population cycle seen in many species such as rodents and locusts, this latest research by an international team of scientists thrusts our carrying capacity into sharp focus – and, much like in nature, a demand on resources required to support rapidly increasing numbers is at the centre of it.

A double threat – rapid industrialization and development to support the population coupled with the negative environmental impact of that, like rising sea levels through anthropogenic climate change – is what urban China is now facing, according to this new study.

ELECTRIC FERRY BASED ON AMERICA'S CUP

Vessev, a water-transportation start-up company, has just unveiled its slick, America's-Cup-style hydrofoil, 10-passenger electric ferry called the VS-9. It's being touted as the most accessible electric commercial vessel ever – not to mention efficient and green.

Marinas already have power/charging infrastructure, so finding power is no issue. If DC charging power is available, the Vessev VS-9 can charge at a rate of 0.8 nautical miles (0.9 miles/1.5 km) of foiling range per minute. But that's only part of what makes the VS-9 so special.

What makes it really special is the use of foiling technology. The same technology you see on America's Cup racers. At speed, the hydrofoil will raise the hull of the VS-9 about 3 ft (1 m) above the water's surface and allow it to fly at 25 knots (28 mph, 45 km/h) while being so smooth, you and your nine other passengers can pour yourself a glass of bubbly without the risk of spilling a single drop.

It uses an ultra-high authority hydrofoil system with foils that can adapt their shape using high-precision flaps, which allows the vessel to glide near-effortlessly through rough weather and water. This also makes it exceedingly fast and efficient. A chase boat has accompanied the VS-9 throughout its testing phase, with the VS-9 costing 25 times less for fuel compared the the chase boat. Its creators say the VS-9 can save as much as 95% in fuel costs versus traditional diesel- or gasoline-powered vessels, as well as substantially less in mechanical costs over the lifetime of its fossil fuel counterparts...

Vessev announced today that it'll be partnering with New Zealand's largest ferry company, Fuller360, to introduce the "world's first electric hydrofoiling vessel certified for premium tourism use," which will supplement its existing fleet of ferries. .. The intention is for Fullers360 to be 100% electric or hydrogen operated by 2040.

Source: Vessev via Forbes

PYRAMID PUZZLE

Scientists have discovered that the ancient Egyptians may have had help building the pyramids after all – not from aliens, but a long-lost river. Evidence of a previously uncharted branch of the Nile has been found snaking along near dozens of pyramids, lending credence to the idea that blocks were floated to the work sites.

The question of how an ancient civilization managed to move huge stone blocks great distances to build monuments has perplexed the world for thousands of years. Floating them on rafts down rivers is one of the most plausible and widely believed hypotheses, but there's still one problem: the Nile is many kilometers away from where the pyramids were built.

At least, it is currently. A new study suggests that the river was once much closer, but this branch has long since dried up. Using a combination of satellite imagery, geophysical surveys and analysis of sediment samples, the researchers claim to have now mapped out this ancient river branch. They propose the name "Ahramat," which means pyramids in Arabic.

According to the study, the Ahramat branch extended about 64 km (40 miles) in a north-south direction, roughly parallel to the modern Nile but between 2.5 and 10.25 km (1.6 and 6.4 miles) west of it. It was between 2 and 8 m (6.6 and 26.2 ft) deep, and 200 to 700 m (656 to 2,297 ft) wide, which are similar dimensions to the current river.

A map showing the proposed site of the newly discovered branch of the Nile, and how it snaked past many pyramid sites

A map showing the proposed site of the newly discovered branch of the Nile, and how it snaked past many pyramid sites - Eman Ghoneim et al.

Importantly, this old man river seems to have weaved its way past dozens of pyramid sites. Many of them had causeways that end in small structures right where the riverbanks of the Ahramat branch were proposed to have been, suggesting these were acting as docks.

"Many of us who are interested in ancient Egypt are aware that the Egyptians must have used a waterway to build their enormous monuments, like the pyramids and valley temples, but nobody was certain of the location, the shape, the size, or proximity of this mega waterway to the actual pyramids site," said Professor Eman Ghoneim, lead author of the study. "Our research offers the first map of one of the main ancient branches of the Nile at such a large scale and links it with the largest pyramid fields of Egypt."

So what happened to the Ahramat? The short answer is time – it's been well over 2,000 years since the last pyramid was built in the area, and that's plenty of time for the river to migrate eastward. Constant winds depositing sand into the channel could have dried it up, floods could have deposited other sediments into it, or plate tectonics could have diverted it towards its current path.

The discovery could help paint a more accurate picture of life in ancient Egypt, adds context to unexplained structures or texts, and could direct teams to new sites for archaeological excavations.

The research was published in the journal Nature Communications Earth & Environment.

Sources: University of North Carolina Wilmington, The Conversation, Nature

NEW ZEALAND - 2ND SAFEST PLACE TO BE IN A NUCLEAR WAR

Australia has been identified as the safest place to survive a nuclear disaster with New Zealand coming in 2nd. The reasons for our status are

- New Zealand comes in second place thanks to its distance from nuclear targets and its longstanding nuclear-free status.
- The nation's resilience in the event of an abrupt drop in global temperature prompted by a period of darkness would also help. Everywhere in New Zealand is relatively close to the ocean, cushioning it from extreme temperatures.
- Also, New Zealand has an efficient food export economy that could feed their population multiple times over just from exports. According to the study, even in the event of a 61% reduction in crops during a prolonged nuclear winter, New Zealanders would still have enough to eat.

Australia topped the list because it is a robust agricultural producer. The study found that Australia's food supply buffer is gigantic, with the potential to feed many tens of millions of extra people. Also, Australia's good infrastructure, vast energy surplus, high health security, and defence budget all helped in placing it at the top of the list.

But according to the study, Australia has one major factor working against it: its relatively close military ties with the UK and US make it more likely to become a target in a nuclear war against Russia.

Sources: (The Guardian)