EPSOM U3A Inc.

epsom1u3a@gmail.com

Website https://u3aepsom.nz/

MEETING PLACE

Royal Oak Bowls, 146 Selwyn St, Onehunga

10am on the 2ND Thursday of most months

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

Next meeting
10-12noon
Thursday 10 April 2025

Greetings to all of you. I hope you are enjoying the long summer and beautiful Autumn weather we are having. I'm writing this as we travel along the western Bay of Plenty coast in our motorhome. The days are warm, the scenery beautiful and the people, friendly and cheerful. It is at times like this that I feel really proud of living in New Zealand. Despite all the moans and groans and for many, increased financial difficulties we are truly fortunate to live in a society that still cares for young and old. We may argue how and how much but we never argue about the principle of all us being cared by our country in some way.

Let's be thankful for what we have and how we can share this with others through our time, money and care. Like being a volunteer!!!

I'm fully aware that U3A is all about learning and sharing ideas as we grow older. It is also true in aging that our very own health and wellbeing is intimately related to having good friends and having connections with groups, family and community.

So please take care of yourself. You are your own doctor. How well we live is entirely dependent on how we live our lives and what we do. Celebrate every day as much as you can.

Let's look at some sayings we hear

'Use it or lose it'. Is this motivational for you?

'Actions speak louder than words.'

Try a relational check with family and friends. How do they see you as a person? What is your view of life? Optimist or pessimist? IE. Is the doughnut big or is the hole bigger?How do you live in relation to others? IE Being harmonious or grumpy?

Let's see if we can make the world a better place in any way we can. Let's act not react.

Finally, as president many of you may have received a scammed email under my name asking you for money. NO NO NO I apologise if this has caused concern for you. As President of U3A I only act on the minuted direction of our excellent and hardworking committee.

Go well, make friends, be a friend and reach out to others.

Blessings

Duncan

EPSOM U3A EXECUTIVE

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Interest Group Co-ordinators
Joslyn Squire - 021-168 0680
Bill Hagan – – 021 611 247
Guest Speaker Organiser:
Ian Jost - 027-488 7037
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
Art History
Emily Flynn – 021 0902 5094
Big History
Emily Flynn – 021 0902 5094
Christine Keller-Smith – 021 140 9021
Book Chat
Helen Holdem - 021 260 3510
Comparative Religions
Duncan MacDonald - 021-316 661 John Locke- 021-187 8061
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
Phylllis Downes – 630 5867
Lunch Club
Shirley McConville – 622 3542.
Music Appreciation
Carleen Edwards – 624 6298
19th & 20th 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
Travel
Diana Hart- 021 284 4402
Walkers & Talkers Group
Don Buchanan ph:620 7572.
Wellbeing for Seniors
Duncan MacDonald – 021 316 661.

MARCH SPEAKER REPORT	Our speaker for March was Erin Griffey, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Auckland. She is also a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in London and has published two books, one of which will be available in October this year. Erin specialises in researching early modern European visual and cultural materials, with a particular interest in adornment and beauty display. Her talk was fascinating, as she explored the relationship between beauty, aging and power in the period from 1500-1700, during the Renaissance. Beauty was regarded as the key to love, happiness and marriage, with women of all social strata expected to be soft, delicate and fair, with clarity, shine and good health shown in their fine-textured skin. Beauty was synonymous with youth, with ages 15-25 being seen as the time beauty flourished, even though many women of that era lived into old age. This was also an era when disease and aging did not discriminate due to outbreaks of smallpox and other disfiguring illnesses that affected rich and poor alike. Artists portrayed the ideal woman in their paintings and doctors advised on restoring complexions, removing wrinkles and signs of aging. ie. Beauty was social currency and women's value was measured by their beauty. At the time, medicine was dominated by belief in the four humours, with youth related to heat, moisture and good colour, (eg fresh rosy skin) whereas age was represented by darkness, coldness, and decay. This is evident in paintings of the time. (eg The Seven Stages of Women, by Hans Balding Grien.) Artists were often commissioned to paint portraits of women in the arrangements before marriage contracts were completed. Paintings of the aged Queen Elizabeth, in her 60s, were distorted to emphasise her power and command when wearing her glorious apparel and jewels, at a time when her facial features were being challenged by age. Beauty was political and the queen could not be seen to be losing her influence through age and infirmity. Cosmetic, culinary and medicinal traditions were closely allied, with many books of the time published to advise women how to prepare topical lotions and creams or how to restore the body from the inside out, by drinking prepared restoratives. (eg Rosemary and white wine to reduce skin blemishes, ointments to remove stretch marks after pregnancy.) Even though men may have published most of these advisories, women were the gatekeepers of the recipes and prepared most of products in their homes. Some even sold pre-prepared products to the public. Evidence exists from as far back as ancient Egypt, of women using cosmetics, and beauty aids such as mirrors, combs, brushes, and tweezers.) In 1687, Marie Meurdrac published "La Chymiedes Dames", a chemistry book with medicinal and cosmetic information to teach and empower women to harness their power and produce their own beauty products. It would seem that nothing has changed today, when youth culture and beauty predominate our advertising! Erin Griffey's new book will be published by Penn State University and available in October 2025 "Facing Decay- Beauty, Aging and Cosmetics in Early Modern Europe". (Check it out on Amazon.)
SUBSCRIPTIONS INFORMATION	The 2025 Epsom U3A subscription is $50 per person and is now overdue. Please pay as soon as possible **as Membership will cease if not paid by 30 April**. No cash will be accepted. This should be paid into our ASB bank account – Payee: **U3A EPSOM INCORPORATED** **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.

APRIL SPEAKER **Roy Davison** **Stardome** **astronomer**	Our Speaker for April is Rob Davison -an astronomer, based at the Stardome Observatory in Cornwall Park.He is the Visitor Experience Manager at Stardome as well as being one of its media spokespeople on astronomy matters. Originally from the UK, he studied physics and astronomy before moving to New Zealand to work in the Lake Tekapo district which, as you will know, is home to some astonishingly beautiful dark night skies. His topic is "Mars: The Red Planet" In his talk, Rob will explore humanity's relationship with our neighbouring planet. His address will canvas the past, present and possible future of our relationship with Mars - how our knowledge has changed and grown over time, and how it has impacted us culturally. Mars has always held a strong presence in our mythology, from ancient beliefs of mystical powers to the emergence of Martians in popular culture. In modern times, our technology has allowed us to visit via robotic planetary rovers and helicopters. Terraforming may soon be a realistic prospect. What will the future hold for humans and the red planet?
INTEREST GROUPS	a) The Fabric and Fibre Group is working to ensure a wide variety of craft items is available for the planned craft stall later this year. They would like to hold the stall at the September Branch meeting to ensure as many people as possible attend to purchase items (doesn't coincide with school holidays). b) Art History Group - This new group is up and running and has 20 participants. c) Wellbeing for Seniors – This new group held its first meeting on the 19th March and has 30 participants. d) Please remember to inform convenors as well as the membership secretary of any changes to address, phone number (especially mobile) and email address.
SPEAKING OPPORTUNITY	Are there any members who would be prepared to speak at a Branch meeting as an 'alternate' if the booked speaker is unavailable at the last minute? If you feel you could help out, please make this known to the Committee. For instance, members of some of the Interests Groups may be prepared to speak on work they had previously presented to their groups, in which case they could step in with a few days' notice.
u3a AUCKLAND NETWORK	**Network General Meeting** This was held recently on Friday 7 March at St Chad's Church in Meadowbank. 28 representatives attended from 27 u3a groups across our region. Amongst the topics discussed was the issue of what to do with past records of your u3a group. Here are some of the suggestions that were made:- • Upload your chosen records on to Google Drive • Keep essential documents in a folder which can be handed on to each new President • Keep your group's newsletters in a ringbinder folder and add to it each year **Next Meeting** - Friday, 04 July 2025, 10am for 10.30am, St Chads, 38 St Johns Rd, Meadowbank 1072
2025 MEETING DATES Thursdays, 10am	10 April 8 May 12 June 10 July 14 August 11 September 9 October 13 November AGM **NB Always wear your name badge** and be seated ready at 10am

JEANETTE'S JOTTINGS

LOCKDOWN EFFECT LINGERS

Lockdown may have left thousands of British children with damaged eyesight, according to new research. While the stay-at-home orders helped to cut the covid infection rate, one of the unintended consequences appears to have been a detrimental impact on the eye health of the UK's kids. The gigantic uptick in screen time and a lack of natural light led to what some specialists called 'coronavision'.

A March 2024 study in the British Journal of Ophthalmology found that short-sightedness - known medically as 'myopia' - tripled globally between 1990 and 2023. Scientists detected a 'notable' jump after the covid pandemic. Whereas between 1990 and 2019, global rates of myopia increased by 5.34 per cent, in the period from 2020 - when the pandemic hit - to 2023, that number shot up to a 6.15 per cent rise. Now new research on children in the UK appears to corroborate those findings.

More than 1,000 pre-school youngsters in Scotland were diagnosed with short-sightedness in the wake of pandemic emergency measures – a 42 per cent rise in the incidence of myopia. The alarming figures, unveiled at an international conference, suggest that a lack of natural light while spending more time indoors due to pandemic restrictions may have left many children unable to see properly.

MARTIAN WEATHER

Mars is known for its frigid temperatures, averaging about -80 degrees Fahrenheit (-62 degrees Celsius). Because of its thin atmosphere and distance from the sun, Mars experiences significant temperature shifts, with daytime highs reaching up to 70 degrees Fahrenheit (20 degrees Celsius) near the equator and plunging to -195 degrees Fahrenheit (-125 degrees Celsius) at the poles.

Like Earth, Mars has a tilted axis, leading to seasonal changes. However, Martian seasons last about twice as long due to its longer orbital period. These seasons influence weather patterns, contributing to temperature fluctuations and changes in atmospheric pressure.

One of Mars' most renowned weather phenomena is its massive dust storms, which can envelop the entire planet. These storms are driven by solar heating, wind, and the unique interaction of the Martian dust with the thin atmosphere, providing a fascinating and challenging aspect of Martian meteorological studies. The wind is a substantial force on Mars, shaping its landscape by transporting and depositing dust and sand. Studying Martian wind patterns helps researchers understand erosion processes and landscape formation and prepare for future lander and rover missions.

While liquid water is unstable on Mars' surface, frost and water-ice clouds frequently form, particularly during the Martian winter. These phenomena offer scientists clues about the planet's hydrological cycle and atmospheric dynamics, contributing to our understanding of water's history on Mars.

Studying the weather on Mars provides vital comparisons for understanding Earth's climate dynamics and atmospheric phenomena. The insights gained can improve climate models, enhance our understanding of atmospheric science, and potentially uncover early warning signs of climate shifts on our own planet. Unravelling its meteorological mysteries not only paints a clearer picture of Mars itself but also enriches our knowledge of atmospheric processes across the solar system, making Mars a natural laboratory for scientific discovery.

DOZING INCREASES THE DANGER OF DEATH

Some swear by their regenerative powers – but daytime naps of more than an hour can raise the risk of a stroke by almost a quarter. According to a YouGov study, one in five Britons regularly takes daytime naps. While dozing for 30 to 40 minutes can boost concentration, research showed anything over 60 minutes can also increase the danger of type 2 diabetes or even premature death.

Scientists from the Institute of Nutrition at Fudan University in Shanghai analysed data on sleeping patterns and stroke risk in more than 90,000 people aged over 50. They found those regularly napping for at least an hour at lunchtime were 23 per cent more at risk from a stroke.

Around 100,000 people a year in the UK suffer a stroke, where a clot shuts off blood flow to the brain – often causing partial paralysis, speech problems and even death. The latest study, published in the journal Sleep Medicine, found risks were highest in those who slept for less than seven hours at night. The researchers think unhealthy sleep routines may lead to inflammation in blood vessels supplying the brain – heightening the dangers of a clot.

They said: *'Daytime napping is common around the world. These results show there are adverse health consequences when people used long naps to compensate for short night-time sleep duration.'*

WE HATE HUMIDITY

"It's not the heat, it's the humidity." That adage applies indoors as well as out, which is where an experimental new material comes in. It absorbs humidity within rooms, reducing the need to run power-hungry ventilation systems. As people exhale and perspire, they release moisture into the air. Therefore, if a number of people are present in a room with little or no ventilation, all of that airborne moisture can cause the room to feel uncomfortably stuffy and humid.

To keep that from happening – particularly in hot climates – electric ventilation systems are often used throughout the day, continuously moving the moist air out of the room. Needless to say, this arrangement uses a lot of electricity.

In an effort to address that problem, Prof. Guillaume Habert and colleagues at Switzerland's ETH Zurich university have developed a hygroscopic material that passively absorbs moisture from the air throughout the day. That moisture is released back into the air when the room cools at night, at which point the ventilation system only has to run briefly in order to get the moist air out.

The material consists mainly of finely ground marble, obtained as an otherwise-unwanted waste product from quarries. In a binder jet 3D-printing process, a print head moves through a bed of that powder, depositing a liquid geopolymer made up of a mineral known as metakaolin and an alkaline solution. That geopolymer instantly sets as it's deposited, binding the powder to which it was applied. By repeating this process over and over, three-dimensional objects can be built up in successive layers. For the purposes of the study, the scientists printed a 20 x 20-cm (7.9 x 7.9-inch) tile of the material that was 4 cm thick (1.6 in). Instead of just taking the form of a solid slab, though, the tile has a very porous structure. As a result, the object has nearly four times as much moisture-absorbing surface area as it would it if it were completely solid, while using a 60% lower volume of material in the process.

After measuring the performance of the tile in lab tests, the scientists calculated what would happen if the walls and ceiling of an existing Portuguese library's reading room were lined with the material. For this model, the room would be occupied by 15 people throughout its opening hours, during which time it would not be ventilated. It was ultimately determined that the occupants' discomfort index would be reduced by 75% as compared to if the tiles weren't present. That figure climbed to 85% if the tiles were an additional 1 cm (0.4 in) thicker than the 4-cm test sample.

Source: ETH Zurich

FOILING FERRY

Maritime New Zealand cleared the "Rivian of the sea" to join Fuller360's fleet of diesel ferries late last year, when Vessev revealed that the company expected commercial operations to start from January 29. That day has since arrived, and the first VS-9 – named Kermadec – has started flying passengers over Auckland's waters.

"*The VS-9 is the first electric vessel to enter the Fullers360 fleet and represents an enormous step on their path to being net zero by 2040,"* said Vessev CEO, Eric Laakmann*. "For the public, we're thrilled that they can now also share in what we've been experiencing since the launch of the VS-9 in May.*

"This new era of hydrofoiling vessels traces its origins to the efforts by Team New Zealand in the 2013 America's Cup. It is fitting that today visitors to Auckland can now simply buy a ticket with Fullers360 to experience the new era of how we will move on the water."

The only other foiling electric ferry we know of that's entered into service is the P-12 from Candela – which has received orders from New Zealand. The Kermadec is 8.95 m (29.3 ft) in length and has capacity for up to 10 passengers per trip, plus a skipper and deckhand. Tourists and natives alike will be treated to "a spacious, modern interior designed for comfort and convenience" while enjoying views of the harbour, bridge and Gulf through panoramic windows.

HOW TO FLY CHEAPER

A surprisingly simple tweak is making a venerable military transport aircraft more efficient. Literally gluing a few microvanes to the rear fuselage of a C-17 Globemaster III cargo plane can result in fuel savings in the tens of millions of dollars. Since 1995 this workhouse has become a major asset to airforces in the US, UK, Canada, Australia etc. However, there is still room for improvement.

As part of a modernization program, the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) , the Air Force Lifecycle Management Centre, and private industry have teamed up to find a way to reduce this drag without major modifications to the airframe or the need for shelling out a lot of taxpayer money.

The result was a 3D-printed 4 x 16-in (10 x 41-cm) microvane attached to the fuselage using adhesive. That may not seem very secure, but sticky stuff is often the best thing for the job. Set in a series of steps on the rear of the fuselage, a dozen of these microvanes catch the airflow over the aircraft and consolidate them to produce a 1% reduction in drag. That translates into a 1% reduction in fuel consumption which will save US$14 million annually, along with reducing demands on supply chains in forward areas.

WANTED... Second Hand Books

Good quality books are wanted for the St Andrew's Church book fair.

No magazines, text books, encyclopedias and Reader's Digest please.

DROP OFF:
St Andrew's Church, 100 St Andrew's Road, Epsom from now until Friday 16th May.

Email **office@standrewsepsom.org.nz** for collection of books.

SAVE THE DATE:
Books, Bagels & Banter
Friday May 23rd to Sunday May 25th

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
Books, Bagels & Banter