



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

February 2025

Next meeting
10-12noon
Thursday 13th February 2025

Happy New Year to all of our U3A members. I hope you have found some joy over the holiday period and if you have been tripping around holidaying or just enjoying summer at home, I hope it has been a fulfilling time both with your health and relaxation.

For myself the last two months have been very difficult following knee surgery which was complicated with a small fracture in my other foot. This has meant a slow and painful recovery.

It makes me think that with very little activity of any kind and much pain about life in general and what is happening. I give thanks that I have a family and friends to care for and support me. I celebrate my journey of life and joy of living.

I enjoy the beauty of my surroundings, especially the beauty of New Zealand. Our Los Angeles friends have few things around them now to give them beauty, joy or hope. So what can you do by way of celebration and hope during 2025? While some of us are less able to do much due to circumstances, all of us have an opportunity to do something but what? For example: being positive, having hope and doing things for others. One thing we can do is focus on learning.

So I encourage you to participate in our wide range of activities, learnings and growing your mind and body.

Our U3A was established to enable people to try new things. So could I invite you to say that 2025 is the moment to participate, reach out and look at the world in different ways. Remember at Epsom U3A we try very hard to be user friendly in every kind of way. So now is your chance to extend yourself in a New Year so now is the time.

Duncan

Special notice

To all members who planned to start the course on Growing and well-being, this will now be delayed due to illness. Notification will be given of a start date. It will be on the same day and week of the month and the same time but may be delayed by two months.

EPSOM U3A EXECUTIVE

President

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

Immediate Past President:

Kaye Buchanan - 620 7572

Secretary

Jenny Whatman - 027-353 2487
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

Interest Group Co-ordinators

Joslyn Squire - 021-168 0680

Bill Hagan - 021 611 247

Guest Speaker Organisers:

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

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

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

Social Golf

Kay England 629-3281

Te Reo Maori

Jenny Whatman - 027 353 2487

Travel

Diana Hart - 021 284 4402

Walkers & Talkers Group

Don Buchanan ph:620 7572.

SUBSCRIPTIONS INFORMATION	<p>The 2025 Epsom U3A subscription is \$50 per person and is now payable, due by 31 March</p> <p>This should be paid into our ASB bank account – Payee: U3A EPSOM INCORPORATED Account Number: 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>										
SPEAKER Stephen Thomas	<p>Stephen Thomas is a leader in the wider Maori community and is a social support mentor for so-called Wayward Youths, many of whom are in prison, about to begin a sentence in prison or have just been released from prison.</p> <p>Stephen has always been a leader within Maoridom. He was head boy at his college, captain of both the cricket first eleven and the rugby first fifteen He is of Ngai Tahu and Tainui origins.</p> <p>Most of his working life has been in transport and logistics. In those businesses he gravitated naturally to roles involving people – specifically to positions where he could help others in their sometimes-difficult journey through life. Along his own life-path, he has created and conducted Maori cadet programmes, created and managed a prison programme which hired and trained ex-prisoners from Nga Wha prison in Northland and Wiri prison in South Auckland. He has worked in Iwi liaison roles with businesses who have a large Maori workforce and acted in a chaplaincy role after qualifying in Australia. He has earned the respected title of Matua.</p> <p>Stephen is currently a Social Support mentor for Oranga Tamariki but he speaks to us today not as an employee of Oranga Tamariki but as an ordinary citizen of Aotearoa deeply concerned that fully 95% of all young people convicted of crimes or in trouble with the police are Maori or Pacifica.</p> <p>He speaks to us of why this is so. Are there solutions to this issue? If so, what are they? How deep into society must we reach to find them? How can they be implemented? And how can they be made to be lasting and satisfactory answers to what is an increasingly-divisive social issue?</p>										
INTEREST GROUPS	<p>A) Convenors and groups need to consult the Interest Group Co-ordinators and obtain the committee's approval, before booking any venues or changing current arrangements, as this has financial implications. Also it affects the online Guide Book and our timetable, if groups change their meeting times and places. We want to avoid double bookings.</p> <p>NB If Convenors change venues without consultation, we will not cover the costs of venue hire.</p> <p>No further groups are to approach Ryman Logan Campbell Retirement Village as they have asked us not to send further groups there, due to their facilities being used frequently by us and other organisations. We don't wish to lose their goodwill as this is a very good venue.</p> <p>.B) As there is plenty of space at the Deaf Centre, there is no limitation on numbers who can opt in to joining these groups. (ie. Art History, Big History, Architecture, Well-Being for Seniors, Travel.)</p> <p>C) Please remember our policy – attendees must have paid their annual subscription while a potential member may attend one Interest Group meeting only and thereafter may attend once their subscription is paid.</p>										
2025 MEETING DATES Thursdays, 10am	<table><tr><td>13 February</td><td>13 March</td><td>10 April</td><td>8 May</td><td>12 June</td></tr><tr><td>10 July</td><td>14 August</td><td>11 September</td><td>9 October</td><td>13 November AGM</td></tr></table> <p>NB Always wear your name badge and be seated ready at 10am</p>	13 February	13 March	10 April	8 May	12 June	10 July	14 August	11 September	9 October	13 November AGM
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RODENT POLICE

Most of us are familiar with the vest-clad beagle that hunts for illegal fruits and plants in the travellers' luggage at airports. Now, a species of giant pouched rat has been trained to fulfil a similar role in finding illegal wildlife products.

The rodents who underwent the training are African giant pouched rats and, despite their somewhat terrifying name, really only grow to be about 750 mm (about 2.5 ft) long from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail, with the tail taking up about half that length. While that's indeed big for a rat, it makes the animal small enough that it could wander among tightly packed crates in shipping containers to combat illegally smuggled products.

In a new study, 11 of the rats – with names including Attenborough, Fossey, and Thoreau – were first trained to stick their noses through a hole in their enclosure to receive a treat. Then, the rats were exposed to both non-triggering scents and those of commonly smuggled illegal wildlife products and trained to distinguish between the two. The non-triggering scents included electric cables, detergent, and coffee beans, which are all used to hide the scent of illegal animal products by smugglers. The triggering scents included pangolin scales, elephant ivory, rhino horn, and African blackwood, all of which are smuggled and all of which are considered in danger of extinction.

After learning to identify the illegal wildlife products, the researchers gave the rats a break and found that the animals were still able to identify them correctly up to eight months later – a feat that matches that of dogs. The research was carried out at APOPO, a non-profit organization based in Tanzania that previously trained the rat species to identify tuberculosis and landmines.

"Existing screening tools are expensive and time intensive and there is an urgent need to increase cargo screening," said Isabelle Szott, a researcher at the Okeanos Foundation, and first co-author of the rat study. "APOPO's rats are cost-efficient scent-detection tools. They can easily access tight spaces like cargo in packed shipping containers or be lifted up high to screen the ventilation systems of sealed containers."

The researchers now plan to outfit the rats in special vests equipped with a ball-capped cord the rodents can pull to trigger a beep when they encounter any of the illegal wildlife products in real-world settings. The researchers say the new squad of rats could not only help catch wildlife smugglers, but could also help fight other types of smuggling crime.

Source: Frontiers via Phys.org

HOW LONG CAN YOU STAND ON ONE LEG?

By testing how long people ages 50 and older could hold a one-legged stance, researchers found that the amount of time in which a person can stand on a dominant and non-dominant leg significantly decreased with age - and had a larger decline than gait and muscle strength.

Balance is important for injury prevention, and those who are unable to balance on one leg for more than five seconds could be at risk of falling more.

Separately, a June 2022 study found that the ability to balance is linked to a longer life, with an 84% higher risk of death from any cause for people unable to stand on one leg unsupported for 10 seconds. A good rule of thumb is to be able to hold the stance for about 30 seconds or longer for those 69 and younger, about 20 seconds for those 70 to 79 and 10 seconds for those older than 80. It's not going to solve all balance problems and fall risks that happen with aging... People should work on all aspects of balance - static, dynamic and overall strength, including but not limited to standing on one leg.

SOLAR POWER

Space Solar wants to keep the lights on in Iceland by beaming solar power from space in a massive step to limitless renewable energy for all. In what could be the world's first commercial enterprise of this novel renewable energy source, the aerospace company will launch a solar power plant into Earth's orbit.

The plant would soak up the Sun's rays before beaming back about 30 megawatts of clean energy – enough to power 3,000 homes. The 2,000 tonne, 1.7km wide satellite would transmit energy 'wirelessly via safe high-frequency radio waves to ground-based stations', Space Solar says. These six by 13-kilometre stations – about 8% the size of a wind farm – have massive receivers called rectenna that convert the radio waves into electricity... Unlike ground-based solar power plants, Space Solar's solar power plants will be able to generate electricity day and night, regardless of weather conditions or cloud cover... Space-based solar power offers unparalleled benefits with competitive energy costs and 24/7 availability... A solar plant whizzing around the abyss of space is the latest in a wave of clean power being frantically looked at as human-induced climate change upheaves the world.

PRODRUG PAIN RELIEF

Researchers have developed a non-addictive painkiller that remains inactive until it reaches sites of chronic pain. Instead of dulling the nerves that send the pain signals like other analgesics, this new pain pill directly addresses the underlying cause. It remains inactive until it encounters a specific circumstance in the body that activates it... One of the major benefits of using a prodrug is that it delivers medication directly to where it's needed in the body. For something like a pain-relieving medication, that's important...

"Our team has created a targeted prodrug (a compound which metabolizes inside the body into a pharmacologically active drug), and found it to be capable of relieving chronic pain during preclinical trials," said Professor Andrew Abell of the Department of Chemistry and the ARC Center of Excellence for Nanoscale BioPhotonics (CNBP) at the University of Adelaide, and the study's co-corresponding author. "We believe we were the first people to come up with the idea of using this particular chemical reaction in a biological sense, and we already see potential for its use in other settings..."

Chronic pain remains a large unmet medical need, and nonaddictive treatments like this would revolutionize the field, which is currently dominated by addictive opioids...

The researchers' prodrug is activated by a chemical reaction with reactive oxygen species (ROS), like hydrogen peroxide and peroxynitrite, which are found in higher concentrations at persistent pain sites than at other sites. What that means is that the prodrug circulates around the body, inactive, until it reaches these pain sites, where it exerts its effects... repeated dosing maintained its analgesic effects.

Source: University of Adelaide

KEEPING BUILDINGS COOL

Cranking up the air conditioner is one way to keep buildings cool, but it guzzles energy. Passive materials can regulate interior temperatures more efficiently, and now scientists in South Korea have developed a new coating that keeps glass much cooler, while still being transparent. Windows are great for filling rooms with natural light, but they're also a major portal for messing with temperature. When it's cold out, about 30% of the interior heat can escape through the windows, while in hotter times about 76% of the sunlight that hits windows enters as heat.

That's why it's important to plug this gap, ideally without ruining what makes windows appealing in the first place. A new coating, created by researchers at POSTECH and Korea University, could help do just that.

The team designed a material that can radiate heat away while allowing visible light to pass through. It's made up of three layers that have different roles. The topmost layer is polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS), which emits far-infrared radiation, which is felt as heat. The center is a thin layer of silver, which reflects most of the rest of the solar spectrum – however, it's full of micro-scale holes, to allow visible light to pass through.

The third layer is what's called a Bragg mirror, which has been specially designed to reflect wavelengths of the near infrared spectrum, which constitute most of sunlight's heat. This is made up of alternating layers of titanium dioxide and magnesium fluoride.

In tests, the new material was found to keep a glass surface an astonishing 22.1 °C (39.8 °F) cooler than glass coated with just PDMS. That's among the largest cooling effects we've seen with this kind of coating. The hope is that this material could be applied to windows to keep building interiors cooler without sacrificing light, reducing our reliance on heating and cooling systems that can chew through electricity.

"This technology is ready for mass production and has significant potential in architecture and environmental applications," said Professor Junsuk Rho, corresponding author of the study. "Most importantly, it efficiently dissipates heat and reduces energy consumption, positioning it as a key technology for a sustainable future."

The research was published in the journal *Advanced Functional Materials*.

Source: POSTECH

TOO MUCH INTERNET MAKES YOU FAT

A new study has found a link between the rollout of high-speed internet services and a rise in obesity rates in the country. The researchers who conducted the study attribute the increase to the effect of high-speed internet access on physical activity and eating habits.

Obesity remains a significant public health concern worldwide, linked with an increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and death. In the US, for example, it's estimated that by 2030, 78% of adults will be overweight or obese. Australian data shows that two in three (66%) adults were overweight or obese in 2022.

The rise of obesity stems largely from changeable lifestyle, health and environmental factors, including poor eating and sedentary behaviour. Now, a new study by researchers from Monash University, the University of Melbourne and RMIT University has found a link between the rise in obesity seen in Australia and the rollout of high-speed internet services across the country.

Weekly Schedule of Epsom U3A Interest Groups as at January 2025

Week of the Month	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 Locations The private home owner's venue and name is in red. The convenors will give you the address and contact details.	9.30am Walkers and Talkers V Don Buchanan tba Free 1.30-3pm	10am-12.00 Blg History Convenors: Emily Flynn, Christine-Keller Smith Venue: Deaf Centre 6-9pm Foodies W/tba Graham Gunn	10am-12.00 Music Appreciation Convenor: Carleen Edwards Venue: Ranfurly Retirement Village Theatre, Three Kings Free 1.30-3pm	10am-12 Latin Contact Kaye Buchanan 1.30-3.15pm 10am-12. Genealogy (Ryman) Contact Bryn Smith 1.30-3pm Travel Shared convenors at Onehunga CH Diana Hart- Overseer Venue: Deaf Centre	Week1 Free 10am-12 Free 1.30-3pm <hr/> Week 2 -Comparative Religions-Convenors Duncan MacDonald, John Locke Venue: 25A King George St, Epsom
Week 2 V-Variable sites or Visits OCH-Onehunga Community House DC- Deaf Centre 16 Hillsborough Rd tba-To be advised R-Logan Campbell Ryman Retirement Village	9.30am Walkers and Talkers Don Buchanan V tba 10.00am – 12.00 Te Reo Convenor: Jenny Whatman Venue: 1/45 Turama Rd, Royal Oak	10am-12 Art History Convenor: Emily Flynn Venue: Deaf Centre 1.30-3.15pm NZ History Venue: Logan Campbell Village Theatre Convenor: Kaye Buchanan	Free in am 1.30-3pm pm-Book Chat Convenor: Helen Holdem Venue: Epsom/Remuera Croquet Club, Gillies Avenue, Epsom	Week 2 10am.-12.00 U3A Main meeting at Royal Oak Bowls, Selwyn St, Onehunga 1.30-3pm	Week 3 Art Appreciation 10am-12 Convenor: Kaye Buchanan Scrabble 1.30-3.30 Convenor: Joslyn Squire Venue: Members' houses on rotation
Week 3 Free times may be Used. Please check with co-ordinator if any changes need to be made	9.30am Walkers and Talkers V Don Buchanan tbc Free 1.30-3pm	Architecture/ visits 9.45-11.45am Deaf Centre 16 Hillsborough Rd. Convenor: Brian Murray (Time varies) 1.30-3pm Free	U3A Epsom Committee Meeting 10.15am-12.15 at 13C Inkerman St, Onehunga <hr/> 1.30-3 Wellbeing for Seniors-Duncan MacDonald Venue: Deaf Centre	10am-12.00 Latin Reg Stuart Venuetba 10am Recreational Drawing- Ipress café Mt Eden, Convenor: Grant Coupland 10am-12.00 19 th and 20 th Century History Venue: 55 Lloyd Ave. 1.30-3pm Free	Week 4 Performing Arts 10am-12.00 Venue: Meet at Shirin Caldwell's home 10am-12 Fabric and Fibre Crafts Convenor: Charmaine Strong Venue: Ryman Logan Campbell Village 10am-12 Current Events Venue: Onehunga Community House Shirley McConville 10am-12.00 Gardening 1.30-3.30pm Convenor: Betty Townley Venue: Carol Evans 10A Liverpool St, Epsom
4 Week 4	9.30am Walkers and Talkers Don Buchanan tbc 10.00am -12.00 Te Reo Venue: Jenny Whatman	Free in am Lunch Bunch 11.30-1.30 Shirley McConville Varied venues tba	10am-12.00 Famous and Infamous Convenor: Gary Preston Venue: Ryman Logan Campbell Village, Theatre Free in pm	10am-12.00 Philosophy Convenor: Jocelyn Howlin Venue: Private apt. Greenlane Free 1.30-3pm	7pm Last Saturday of each month 500 Cards. Contact Betty Townley