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MEETING PLACE

Royal Oak Bowls, 146 Selwyn St, Onehunga

10am on the 2ND Thursday of most months

NEWSLETTER

March 2025

Next meeting
10-12noon
Thursday 13 March 2025

Greetings to all our members.

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and enjoying what is a magnificent summer for those around Auckland. I am writing this while staying at Tawharanui Regional Park. Wonderful beaches! Noisy bird life! Marine Reserve! And people enjoying simply living in a camping environment.

As I've just started travelling again in our motorhome, after my knee replacement surgery in December, I am amazed at how special it is to be living and travelling in New Zealand. From the country scenery and wildlife, it is truly a special place. I feel truly Blessed to live in this country. This is doubly reinforced as a baby boomer I have grown up in the best time in New Zealand's history with good food and medicines I have maintained good health with a robust health system. As a product of this, my increasing aging is directly related to being the recipient of a good time for humanity.

So I am thankful for a good life in every way.

But I am saddened by seeing how much we have moved from a 'we' society to a 'me' society. Also that we don't always welcome new people to our country. We are also very slow to acknowledge and address our past history in terms of land and asset. I believe we must do more for our children's and grandchildren's sake.

So as I grow older I feel more and more committed to others to make this place a better place for all future New Zealanders.

So what about you? What are you doing for family and grandchildren, strangers and friends? If we don't learn to be more caring in all ways for all parts of this country the beautiful scenery will disappear and the social scenery for people will get worse.

So could I suggest that whatever is happening in your life and what age you are that you please make an effort to care for our country. For its scenery, people and a better future for our grandchildren.

One of the things we learn in life is that it is not hard to reach out to others in any way we can. Even a smile can make someone's day.

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

Jenny Whatman - 027-353 2487
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Jessie Mraviciich - 022 019 0896

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Charmaine Strang - 027-4177 556

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

Phyllis 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

<p>FEBRUARY SPEAKER REPORT</p>	<p>Stephen Thomas is a leader in the wider Maori community and is a social support mentor for problem youths, many of whom are in prison, are about to begin a sentence in prison or have just been released from prison. He spoke passionately about his work as a mentor of these young men who have been brought up in difficult circumstances, leading to criminal convictions. There is a pattern of parental neglect, parental separation, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse and mental health issues which have not been addressed; all culminating in youth who feel abandoned by society and who often join gangs for support.</p> <p>Stephen has created and conducted Maori cadet programmes, 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.</p> <p>He has earned the respected title of Matua, and is currently a Social Support mentor for Oranga Tamariki. Stephen is deeply concerned that fully 95% of all young people convicted of crimes or in trouble with the police are Maori or Pacifica. He believes in the importance of strong mentors, empathetic employers who will support these youth and give them guidance to change, and the need for the education system to recognise the social and mental health needs of children before they get to an age where it is difficult to solve their problems. Long term interventions are needed, not just short term boot camps and punitive approaches, as most of these youth have difficulty trusting anyone.</p> <p>Stephen expressed his gratitude at being able to share his ideas with U3A, by donating a koha of a beautiful pounamu neck piece, which the committee has decided, will be worn by presidents at our main meetings.</p>
<p>SUBSCRIPTIONS INFORMATION</p>	<p>The 2025 Epsom U3A subscription is \$50 per person and is now payable, due by 31 March This should be paid into our ASB bank account – Payee: U3A EPSOM INCORPORATED 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>We have 199 members of which seven are new members who joined in 2025. 109 members have paid their subs as of 28/2/2025.</p>
<p>MARCH SPEAKER</p> <p>Erin Griffey</p>	<p>Beauty, Ageing and Power in Early Modern Europe: Women and Cosmetic Culture</p> <p>This talk provides an overview of the relationship between female beauty and power across early modern Europe, underscoring the focus on appearing young in art and in life. Drawing on a wide range of primary sources, it establishes the ways that women actively engaged with beauty culture as makers, authors, experts, teachers, consumers and sellers. And it highlights the reputations and contributions of a range of women, from queens to courtesans and chemists, to this beauty culture.</p> <p>Erin Griffey is an Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Auckland and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in London. She is a specialist in early modern visual and material culture and is interested in aspects of adornment and display. She has published widely on Queen Henrietta Maria and early modern court culture. She has recently completed a book on beauty and ageing in early modern Europe: Facing Decay: Beauty, Ageing and Cosmetics in Early Modern Europe. This will be published by Penn State University Press in October 2025.</p>

<p>INTEREST GROUPS</p>	<p>1] We currently have 26 active interest groups and three groups have over 30 members. A few groups have closed membership. (eg Latin, Scrabble, due to being held in private homes and the venue size.) Convenors have been informed that if they change venues without consultation, we will not cover the costs of venue hire.</p> <p>2] Also, remember that according to 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> <p>3] The Fibre and Fabric Group will be holding another Craft Stall this year at the October branch meeting. Given the great success of the stall last year, it was suggested that we could advertise an 'open day' for that meeting as a means of raising awareness of our club as well as attracting more 'shoppers'.</p>
<p>2025 MEETING DATES Thursdays, 10am</p>	<p>13 March 10 April 8 May 12 June 10 July 14 August 11 September 9 October 13 November AGM</p> <p>NB Always wear your name badge and be seated ready at 10am</p>

INVITATION FROM THE NETWORK COMMITTEE TO EVERY MEMBER IN U3A!

- Are you passionate about a particular subject or event?
- Have you ever been approached in person about being a mini speaker for our event?
- Do you know others in your group who are passionate?
- Have you ever approached them about becoming a mini speaker for our event?

It might be February '25 but it is not too late to be considered!

Here is what you need to do:

- prepare a 12 minute presentation using PowerPoint OR encourage/persuade your member(s) to prepare one
- practise, practise and practise! Know your material thoroughly!
- ensure that you can use a microphone successfully
- present talk to your u3a group
- if you are nominated by your group to be a mini speaker, the next step is to present your talk to the Network Committee via Zoom or Google Meet

The mini speaker part of our EVENT is integral to all that u3a stands for and believes in - ongoing learning by researching and sharing the knowledge gained
From now on, the Network Committee is calling for your nominations for this year's EVENT.

Together, we can do this!
Network Committee 2025
u3anetwork@mail.com

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. The researchers say that access to faster internet services contributed to the rise in the number of Australians with obesity because of its effect on physical activity and eating habits.

"Sedentary behaviour is induced by the need to stay connected online for longer hours, which leads to lower metabolic rate and contributes to obesity," said Ackermann. "This problem is elevated by the need to frequently consume snacks during computer usage, which increases the daily intake of calories that contribute to obesity."

NUTS NEGATE DEMENTIA & DISEASE

New research shows that regular consumption of the superfood not only holds off death, but it also keeps the mind sharp and limits persistent disability... In addition to their well-known abilities to improve cardiovascular health, the tiny protein-packed snack has also been shown to improve sperm count and motility, and fight obesity, diabetes, and inflammation. Plus the magnesium they contain has been linked to warding off DNA damage, while their omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids have been shown to reduce the risk of 19 types of cancer...

For the most recent study, the Monash researchers examined the records of 9,916 Australians over the age of 70 who had completed a 49-item food-frequency questionnaire. After screening out other factors, they found that those who reported eating a handful of nuts as part of their diet either once or twice per day had a 23% lower risk of enjoying disease-free survival (DFS) than those who reported no or very little nut consumption...

"What 30 grams of nuts looks like depends on the type of nut, but typically a 'handful' is equivalent to around 25 almonds, 10 walnuts or 40 peanuts. Choosing a mixture of nuts means you get the benefits of the varying amounts of nutrients found in different types of nuts. Nuts taste best and have the highest nutritional content when fresh, so store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place to maintain freshness."

Source: Monash University

MOSQUITO VACCINATORS?

Mosquitoes do a superb job of spreading diseases like malaria – now a researcher team saw an airborne swarm of organic vaccine delivery systems that would apply all the wisdom of millions of years of evolution to inject entire populations with vaccines and regular booster shots. They have shown it's possible to hijack these pests and distribute vaccines via mosquito bite. In human trials, these mozzie-borne vaccines proved around 90% effective...They didn't even have to modify the mosquitoes...

However it wouldn't be particularly quick or cheap to raise enough insects to vaccinate a whole town, and you'd need to continually breed more to compete with the wild mosquitoes – even if somebody managed to get such an idea past a committee. What's more, thanks to the specific life cycle of these parasites, it also seems unlikely that the method would work to deliver other types of vaccines.

Still, it's a fascinating idea, and there have certainly been other programs targeting malaria that have involved breeding and releasing genetically modified mosquitoes, so we're interested to learn where things go from here.

The study is open access in 'The New England Journal of Medicine'.

February quote - Recent polls have shown that Trump is the second-most unpopular president in modern history, just slightly trailing behind himself in his own previous term! The British news outlet Telegraph pointed out that Trump's [49%] approval upon entering office was the second lowest of any new president since the end of WW2.

DRONES NAVIGATE BY THE STARS

Engineers at the University of South Australia have taken a page from the days of wooden sailing ships and developed a way for drones to navigate by the stars at night using simple, lightweight equipment for areas where GPS signals aren't available.

When you look at images of old aircraft designed for long-distance flights, pull out the magnifying glass or use the image enlarge function and you might see a small plastic dome sticking out of the top of the fuselage. In the days before GPS and radio direction finders, this was how the plane's navigator would fix their position – by using the stars. The principle dates back centuries to the time when ship captains would navigate by using sextants and similar instruments to take fixes on the Sun and stars and then, with the help of astronomical tables and chronometers, calculate their latitude and longitude with an accuracy of about 1.5 nautical miles (2.8 km).

Not bad when you've been sailing out of sight of land for months at a time. Almost exactly the same techniques were used by aviators for most of the 20th century, with the only differences being to adjust for the fact that the star sights are being made from an unstable platform in the sky.

Though celestial navigation is still practised by most mariners and some aviators, it's mainly as a backup for when GPS isn't available or has been degraded because of local conflicts causing the US to shut down the secondary GPS fine tuning. It's possible to put automated systems on a drone that can do the sights and calculations automatically, but such systems are very complicated because they have to compensate for the movements and directions of the aircraft to work. This is not only expensive, it means a lot of extra weight and power consumption.

To get around this, the South Australia team developed an algorithm that allowed them to use a series of images of the night sky to fix the position of a winged drone to within 4 km (2.5 miles) without the need for any outside signals or data links.

According to the team, the new strap-down system is lightweight, low cost, modular, and uses ArduPilot running on a Cube Orange flight controller. During a navigation fix, the drone flies in a circle through all points of the compass as it takes multiple images. By comparing the images, the algorithm removes any biases and aligns the camera with the drone's Attitude and Heading Reference System (AHRS).

The new system, when matured, is claimed to not only have military applications, but also can be used for long-endurance environmental monitoring in remote areas.

DARK CHOCOLATE REDUCES TYPE 2 DIABETES RISK BY 21%

Dark chocolate has been extensively studied for its cardiometabolic health benefits, but findings have been inconsistent, spurring heated debates over whether this treat has pros that outweigh the cons. Now, new research puts dark chocolate back on the table, quantifying its impact on type 2 diabetes risk and weight gain in a study of nearly 200,000 US adults.

New analysis out of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, US and Chinese scientists has determined that eating five serves of dark chocolate a week could reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by 21%, compared to those who abstained completely or rarely indulged.

What's more, fans of milk chocolate did not share in the same potential benefits – in fact, they were more likely to have negative health outcomes. *"Intake of milk, but not dark, chocolate was positively associated with weight gain,"* noted the researchers in the paper. *"Compared with those who did not change their chocolate intake, increased intake of milk chocolate over four-year periods was associated with 0.35 kg [12 oz] more four-year weight gain over time. Increasing dark chocolate intake was not associated with weight change over time."*

The researchers assessed questionnaires answered by 111,654 female nurses and male healthcare professionals selected from the extensive Nurses' Health Study (NHS; 1986-2018), Nurses' Health Study II (NHSII; 1991-2021) and Health Professionals Follow-Up Study (HPFS; 1986-2020). They excluded anyone with diabetes, cardiovascular disease or cancer at baseline, as well as those with missing chocolate data, or who had unusually high or low energy intake. A secondary analysis of bodyweight changes excluded participants on the same basis.

Then, adjusting for risk factors associated with personal, lifestyle and diet, the researchers – looking at data spanning a quarter of a century – found that type 2 diabetes prevalence was lowest in those who ate five serves of dark chocolate a week. In the initial analysis of 192,208 participants who ate any kind of chocolate, 18,862 were found to have developed type 2 diabetes over the course of the studies. This was roughly a 10% lower risk of developing the condition than non-chocolate eaters. However, when the secondary analysis was done – assessing those who said they ate dark chocolate versus other kinds like milk blends – the health benefits swung towards the dark-chocolate cohort. And, in this analysis, there was no discernible advantage to eating just milk chocolate...

Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health