HAMILTON NEW ZEALAND

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Newsletter April 2026

Life is for learning…….learn for life

Next Meeting

Regular meetings of U3A Hamilton are held on the third Wednesday of each month from February to November. Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday 15 April** at 10 am at the Church Hall of Chartwell Co-operating Church located on the corner of Comries Road and Bellmont Avenue (opposite and near Chartwell Mall). Following the guest speaker's presentation, we have morning tea/coffee and a chance to chat. Meet and greet at 9:45 am will be from the following groups:

15 April Environment Group
20 May Play Reading Group

It would be helpful if we had a panel of members who would volunteer to introduce or thank the speakers If you would like to do this get in touch with either Catherine Gurnsey at catherineg@hnpl.net or me (Bob) at wilcock@xtra.co.nz

Morning tea

If anyone is interested in helping out with the morning teas once or twice a year, please contact Judy Bougher at judyb4573@live.com or at a monthly meeting.

Membership

Our membership at the end of March was 265 up from 260 for the previous month. We like to see our membership growing, and posters are available if anyone would like to take one to display in a public place, eg library, Church, lifestyle village. There are also plenty of brochures available for sharing with friends.

Judith Hickman

Speaker Rob Harley

Rob weaves into his presentations some of the most profoundly moving stories you'll ever hear, complete with high-impact video clips from his many documentaries. He has written nine books on a variety of subjects – his latest is called 'Relentless – People who wouldn't quit, stories that wouldn't die.' He's also recently written a book called 'The Courage of Women' in which he explores the bravery and resilience of 11 incredible women who have overcome huge odds to bring about profound societal change in New Zealand and around the world. His most recent speaking engagements have included service clubs, retirement villages, professional conferences and several branches of U3A. He is the recipient of many national and international awards. Please contact Rob at the following addresses:

Email: rob@robharley.co.nz
Website: robharley.co.nz

President's Report

I have fulfilled my original undertaking to serve as your President for one year, during which time I hope that U3A Hamilton has continued to function successfully. I have been assisted and advised by many members. The committee and other helpers have contributed to making everything work smoothly. We have been entertained and informed by a range of excellent speakers. The various Groups have continued to participate in peace, love, and harmony. Events have been successful and enjoyed and appreciated by all those who attended. It is my opinion that thanking people by name is hazardous as I am sure to leave some out. You know who you are, and I thank you all for your willing help and assistance, without you the society would not function.
Please consider nominations for the various positions, especially that of President.
I wish you all well and I will continue to participate in some way or another in U3A.

Keith Buick

Announcement of AGM

On 15 April we will be holding our Annual General Meeting and are seeking nominations for various committee positions. This year a few of our committee members are standing down, in some cases after many years of service. We are most grateful for their positive input to the smooth running of U3A, and are encouraging all our members to think about joining the committee. The committee is an informal and supportive team that works well together. Meetings are once a month during February-November and generally last about an hour. The people who are standing down are happy to give anyone thinking about coming onto committee a rundown of what they do, and it is an opportunity to put your own mark on it and be a bit creative if you want. We would urge anyone able to give a little time to the committee to think positively on this opportunity to put yourself forward.

Nomination forms are included at the back of this newsletter. We are particularly keen to see nominations for President, Secretary, and Membership co-ordinator. Or if you would like to join us as just a committee member and contribute ideas you would be most welcome to stand. And remember, ALL positions benefit from experienced committee members who are happy to guide and support.

Events & Outings

Twenty-six U3A folk attended the March visit to The Hamilton Observatory and were treated to an enthralling, if sometimes meandering, talk by Ian Transom from the Hamilton Astronomical Society. Ian took us on a tour of the solar system with questions asked about the survival times for humans stepping out onto the sun, the planets and Pluto. We learned about Ian's involvement in citizen science that has resulted in co-authorship of scientific papers. Several of us had a look through the 24 inch Dobsonian telescope in the dome.

Bob Wilcock

Interest Groups

Shakespeare for Everybody
After a great discussion of the politics and context of Shakespeare's era, and how this affected his works and writing style, we settled down to read Love's Labour's Lost - a comedy about a king and three of his lords who swear off women for a period of three years to concentrate on study. This resolve is soon severely challenged with a visit from a French princess and her ladies - surprise, surprise they fall in love!

This play has been described as "a witty, lively, romantic comedy that contains some of the most exuberant and fantastic language Shakespeare ever composed". In Act I we enjoyed the playful language, and we look forward to reading Acts 2 and 3 next time, and later perhaps watching a filmed version.

Our next meeting is on Friday 1 May.

Chrissie Williams

Mah Jongg Club
The U3A Mah Jongg group is thriving with another new member coming last week, taking the total number of players to 24. We had five tables of four and the games went well. One member has purchased our 'official' rule book through a friend in Britain, this being The Complete Book of Mah Jongg by A D Millington so we can stick to the straight and narrow.

Freya Shaw, Convener freya.shaw@hotmail.com

Coffee Companions Group

On Friday 10 April we will be at Lyyke Cafe, 1 Greenwood Street, Frankton. Our group is open to all members, so if you'd like to join a friendly group and chat over coffee (or tea) please contact me. You can be assured of a warm welcome and the chance to get to know a few people if you are new to U3A.

Judith Hickman 027 664 6712

Uke3A - Ukulele and Singalong Group

If you are interested in playing and/or singing good old-fashioned songs we all know and love, this is the group for you. If you can't yet play or wish to improve on the few chords you already know, bring along your ukulele and we'll provide some individual assistance. If you play a guitar and wish to come along and join us, please do.

We meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at Hukanui Reformed Church 159 Rototuna Road from 1.00 pm – 2.45 pm. Koha - $2 at each session for the use of the hall.

Singalong:

If you don't want to strum a ukulele, but just like to sing, you are welcome to come along to sing with us, or just come to listen. Anyone is welcome any time. Following each session, many of us choose to have a coffee and a chat together at the cafe at Palmers Garden Centre.

Our next session will be on Tuesday 28 April.

Judith Hickman 027 664 6712
Janet Pope 824 8079

Environment Group

The Environment Group recently did the self-guided heritage tree walk at Woodlands Estate, in Gordonton. Maps, available from reception at the homestead (koha appreciated), include on the reverse side the common and botanical names of the trees and brief notes. Some of the trees were planted in the late 1880s, including a pear tree, a remnant of the Estate's orchard.

As you drive into Woodlands you might notice the Brown Barrel Gum and its distinctive bark! One of the more unusual trees on the walk is the Indian Raisin tree - apparently the fruit stalks were once used as a sweet 'raisin' treat! While we were too early for the autumn colours on this occasion, it won't be long before the Estate can be enjoyed in its full autumn glory.

Gloria Edwards

Plantaholics
Our March activity was a visit to Taitua Arboretum, this is home to an impressive selection of mature trees spread across 20 hectares on the outskirts of the city, on the road to Raglan, and is a worthwhile experience. Donated to the city by John and Bunny Mortimer, who started planting trees and shrubs in 1973 to provide shelter for animals in the area, and with slightly challenging walkways, it is an interesting, educational meander. We had a very enjoyable time wandering along the clear and well-maintained pathways where most of the trees were identified. The Arboretum was gifted to the people of Hamilton in 1997. Then, as usual to cap off such activity we took a short drive down the road to the Village Cafe at Whatawhata. This is worth the drive on its own, a good selection of tasty delights, scones free from gluten and very tasty coffee. A great way to spend a Monday morning.

Neil Curgenven

Recreational Mathematics
The Recreational Mathematics group continues to meet on Friday mornings when the day of the month is a prime number. We have room for a few more members. If you drive slower to save fuel, will you take much longer to get there? Let's do the maths. A 50 km trip at 100 kph takes half an hour. Slow to 90kph and the trip takes 3 minutes more. At 110kph you get there 3 minutes quicker. Down to 80kph only adds 7 minutes to the 100 kph time.

Murray Belchamber, Convenor 07 850 8279

Computer Technology
The Computer Technology group continues to examine aspects of A.I. that we are encountering in everyday life. We have discussed digital Scribe - note taking used by our GPs, which saves them a lot of time. It's proposed that scans and x-rays will soon be 'read' by an AI programme in conjunction with one human Radiologist. AI programmes are being trained to recognise skin cancers: developing better accuracy than human eyes.

Chat GPT and similar AI tools are becoming as accepted as 'googling' for information once was, but the amount of personal data that you surrender when registering for an account is alarming. (If you read the terms and conditions.)
The group is currently at capacity.

Carol

Play Reading Group
In March the group were delighted to read the second act of Ray Cooney's "Caught in the Net" and to learn how his bigamist taxi driver's problems were solved with an unexpected twist in the tale. This play was a sequel to one we read last year, both farces in the best tradition and an author to look for in the future judging by the laughter generated.

Pat Stannard 0272110391

Wine Appreciation
Chenin Blanc Tasting March 2026

Marc Bredif Domaine, Classic Vouvray, France, 2024. The Domaine of Marc Bredif is one of the most famous names in the Loire, renowned for the longevity and quality of the Vouvray. A pale straw colour with slight glimmer of green and outskirts of a watery hue. Aromas of ripe pear, and Jonathan apple with light honeysuckle and spice notes. Palate has good body and well rounded. Dry finish with hints of cinnamon. Good aftertaste. Delicious wine and typical of a Vouvray.

Famille Bougrier, Vouvray, France, 2021. Grapes from clay limestone terroirs of the Loire in Touraine District. Off dry. Tasting of ripe pears, peach, honey and mineral notes. Beautiful well balanced with a long palate and with an elegance and freshness. It has been harvested at peak ripeness with careful ageing in tufa chalk cellar to give this wine its freshness and delicacy. Superb Vouvray.

Kaapzicht Sonsteen Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch Region, South Africa, 2023. Rich texture and complex flavours. Ripe quince, pineapple and stonefruit balanced by a crisp acidity and a hint of sweetness. Produced from old bush vines grown in granite and clay soils and unirrigated by 4th generation family vineyards. Rich and textural and a popular white wine in South Africa. Loved and felt it was a "family driven" celebration white. Lovely different wine from South Africa.

Mt Difficulty, Long Gully Chenin Blanc, New Zealand, 2024.From Bannockburn, Central Otago vineyards. Beautiful aromas of honeysuckle and peach with a lovely rich texture. Quince on the palate. Complex, and honey flavours. Elegant and absolutely delicious. Good body and long finish. Fermented in concrete eggs for added weight and texture. Favourite, Gold Medal.
All wines were delicious and of high quality being a pleasure to taste, with the Mt Difficulty being a nose ahead in the Gold Medal Stakes.

Food pairings: Goat cheese, roasted pork, Asian dishes, shellfish and light salads.

Gay Main.

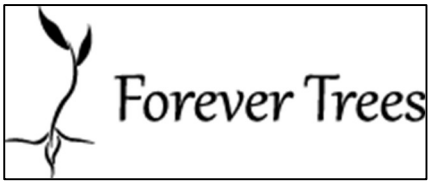
Extras...

Kenya and Tanzania and Madagascar Reforestation Projects
In over two decades of owning and running an international adventure travel company, leading cycle tours around the world, we witnessed deforestation and environmental degradation happening before our eyes. This prompted us to incorporate tree planting into our tours, working with local nurseries and environmental groups.

After selling our travel company in 2022, we have now partnered with four existing reforestation projects across Kenya and Tanzania and three in Madagascar and each year we'll take a group of 10-12 keen people to each destination to help plant more trees! We work with local tree nurseries to buy their plants and we employ local labour to work alongside us, with a goal to plant 10,000 trees over four different reforestation projects in a two week period. In between projects we'll get to experience the wildlife and culture that Africa is famous for so it's not all sweat and hard graft!

This is more than just a feel-good project, we aim to help grow forever forests that will benefit generations to come, preserve water catchments and create employment. With the bonus that we can plant around four times as many trees in Africa than we can here in New Zealand for the same money, so your positive environmental impact is even greater.

So, if the idea of an adventure is getting your hands dirty, whilst hanging out with mates in a beautiful and unusual location; doing genuine environmental good, whilst building relationships and friends you never imagined but that you'll likely keep forever - then join us and roll up your sleeves tree-planting in remote and incredible communities.
Keen to know more? Get in touch:
john@forevertrees.nz or
https://www.forevertrees.nz/travel



John & Mandy
Forever Trees
18 Koura Road
Atawhai
Nelson 7010, NZ
027 2978855
www.forevertrees.nz

Age Concern Waikato

Community & Industry Event

Nicky was involved in the seniors' sector for many years before recently taking up the Director role at the Office for Seniors. She has led the development age-friendly policy and was a visiting research fellow at Oxford University studying international approaches to supporting older people.

In her earlier career, Nicky was with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Diplomatic postings to India, the United States and Fiji gave her insights into how different cultures approach ageing.

Nicky will talk about the Better Later Lives Strategy and how New Zealand can prepare for and support its ageing communities.

Nicky McDonald
Director of the Office for Seniors

Age Concern Waikato is proud to host:

Nicky McDonald,

Director of the Office for Seniors

10 am – 12 noon, Thursday 30th April 2026
The Link
4 Te Aroha St, Claudelands
Hamilton

Questions & Conversation welcome
Coffee & Tea provided
Everyone Welcome, No cost

RSVP - enquiries@ageconcernwaikato.org.nz
Or phone 07 838 2266

With Thanks to our supporters:

U3A HAMILTON
NOMINATION FORM
For a position on the U3A Committee
Nominator:
Name: _____
I certify that I am a member of U3A Hamilton. Yes / No
I make the following nomination for a position on the U3A committee:

Position being nominated for: _____

Person nominated:
I, _____ agree to accept nomination

for the position of: _____

I certify that I am a member of U3A Hamilton. Yes / No

Signatures:
Nominator: _____ Dated: _____

Nominated: _____ Dated:_____

Nominations must be received by the Secretary by 5pm 13 April 2026.

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