HAMILTON NEW ZEALAND

www.u3ahamilton.org.nz

Email hamiltonnzu3a@gmail.com

Newsletter February 2026

Life is for learning…….learn for life

Next Meeting

Welcome back to U3A. Our first meeting for the year will be on the third Wednesday of the month, i.e. **Wednesday 18 February** at 10 am (meet and greet at 9:45 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.

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

Membership

Our membership at the end of 2025 was 259 with 31 new folk joining us during the year. Our membership has remained steady over the past five years with the majority of people involved in one or more of our special Interest Groups. We like to see our membership growing, and have posters 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

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.

Meet and Greet Roster

The roster for 2026 is as follows:

Month	Interest Group
February	Mah Jong Group
March	Reading Group Three
April	Natural Environs Group
May	Play Reading Group
June	Hiking Group
July	Coffee Companions
August	Plantaholics
September	Shakespeare for Everyone
October	Ukulele & Singalong Group
November	History Group

Speaker

Matthew Brown, Craigs Investment Partners – financial decision-making for retirees. Matthew joined Craigs in May 2023, bringing with him a wealth of experience from a seven-year tenure as an Investment Manager in London. He also has a background as a freelance financial writer, covering global share markets. Matt advises clients across all aspects of investing, specialising in portfolio management for private clients, family trusts, and KiwiSaver.

Matthew's talk will focus on investing and financial decision-making for retirees in a practical, easy-to-understand way. Topics will include investing beyond term deposits in a lower interest rate environment, understanding income options and diversification, and a plain-English update on current economic and market conditions. The session is purely educational and designed to help attendees feel more confident about their financial future.

President's report

Greetings to you all.
I hope you had a happy festive season and are feeling positive for the outcomes of 2026 as we begin another year of U3A education and activities. Our speaker for the next meeting Wednesday 18February will be Matthew Brown from Craigs Investment Partners. More information to follow in this newsletter. Some events which we could look forward to this year are; Motat, the Observatory, Hamilton Gardens, and Lawn Bowling. More details to follow. At the Wednesday meeting I will be asking for expressions of interest for the bowling, so give that one some thought. If you are finding that you have "time on your hands" and you need some stimulation and excitement then why not consider putting your name forward for nomination on the committee, we would love to hear from you. You can always nominate someone else!!!

Keith Buick

Subscriptions 2026 now due

Greetings members, we are now seeking your membership subscription for the coming year - a few of you have already paid. This is still only $20 for the year, and we appreciate your ongoing support. All members for whom we have an email address should have received an invoice, and when you pay with online banking you will receive an emailed receipt when I update the database - (please allow me a little leeway for that as I will be away for a couple of weeks, and will do the updates as soon as I get back).

For those who prefer to pay cash, payment can be made at any meeting - just look for the Treasurer sign on the desks at the back. For the February meeting our membership secretary Judith Hickman will be able to receipt cash payments in my absence.

Best regards,
Christine Williams, Treasurer.

Events & Outings

After our successful visit to the Hamilton Observatory last year, we have decided to offer a second visit, on 12 March (i.e. next month). Again, the cost will be paid for by U3A. The March visit be will mainly for those who missed out last time, either because of inclement weather, or they preferred to visit on another day. But anyone who would like to come and did not go last time is most welcome. I will put out a notice soon confirming the date of the visit and asking for members to confirm that they will be attending.

Bob Wilcock

Interest Groups

You will all be getting ready for another year of learning in your groups. We currently have a vacancy in the History group so if you're interested, please contact me. Janet Hanfling has also suggested a new group, see details below. I look forward to getting some more interest groups off the ground this year. So, let's hear what you would be interested in finding more about in 2026.

Margot Buick

Proposed New Group: The Wheelie Walkers
A group for those people who use a walker (sometimes called a stroller) to help them when they walk. The purpose of this group is to:

- Share problems with and solutions for transporting and using a walker.
- Share information about places where it is easy to take a stroller. And those where it is difficult or impossible to take a walker. Eg: Can we take one into the BNZ Theatre?
- Share information of walks where it is easy to take a walker.
- Advocate for people with disabilities who use walkers in all public buildings.
- Ideas and solutions. Eg: is it easy to take a walker on a bus? I haven't tried it yet.

I'm sure there will be other topics. My idea is that it must be a group that is helpful and positive. To register your support for this group please email: janet.hanfling@xtra.co.nz

We might have a quick meeting after the February U3A meeting.

Janet Hanfling

Shakespeare for Everybody
Our Shakespeare-for-Everybody interest group, is currently small but we have started the year full of enthusiasm. At our December meeting we finished reading one of Shakespeare's lesser-known plays Cymbeline, (another play with themes of innocence and jealousy, this one based on the ancient Celtic British king Cunobeline).
We started our new year watching the first part of Richard III, with an interesting discussion on history versus literature, noting the need for 'political expedience' for playwrights in an era where one's very life may depend on having the favour of the current monarch. We also looked ahead to Shakespeare productions we would be able to attend including the comedy Much Ado About Nothing, which will be part of the imminent Hamilton Arts Festival, and a planned Auckland trip to see Macbeth at Auckland Theatre Company in August.

Chrissie

Book Discussion Group 2
This group meets at 1.30pm at a member's home on the fourth Tuesday of each month. The format is to discuss any book or books that we have read recently – any genre, any topic. It is a relaxed meeting of book discussion and matters arising from that. We generally finish about 3pm.
The group is limited to eight members. We currently have a full complement but I will add the name of anyone interested in joining this group to a waiting list.

Sheila Emslie

Coffee Companions Group

Our February gathering will be at the **River Kitchen Cafe** at St Andrews Golf Club at 10.30 am on Friday 13 February. On Friday our venue will be The **District Cafe** Home Straight Te Rapa.
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 learning to play this friendly little instrument we offer individual tuition. If want to upgrade your current skills, or to sing and play with friends, come along and join us. Following each session, many of us choose to have a coffee and a chat together at the cafe at Palmers Garden Centre.

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.

Our next session will be on Tuesday 24 February, then Tuesdays 10 and 24 March.
Judith Hickman 027 664 6712
Janet Pope 824 8079

Play Reading Group
The play reading group got underway, as we usually do, in January, and certainly got off to a good start. It was great to find that Roy Clarke, the writer of the long running TV series Last of the Summer Wine had also written a stage version, which we fell on with great delight. The characterizations and dialogue were just as good as expected and remained faithful to the long running BBC series, it certainly proved that laughter is the best medicine and was a great way to start our year.

Pat Stannard, 027 2110391

Recreational Mathematics
The small but keen group of Recreational Mathematics continues to welcome new members. However, if we apply any sort of mathematical calculation to the attendance numbers, then statistically we have a low probability of continuing through another year. A few of us will survive as a discussion bunch while realising that Hamilton folk don't count for fun.

Meanwhile every Friday that falls on a day of the month that is a prime number (including the 1st) is the day that the door opens for a morning of alluring guestimates.

Prime Fridays in 2026 are: 13th February; 13th March; 3rd April; 17th April, 1st May (yes we know); 29th May; 5th June; 19th June; 3rd July; 17th July; 31st July; 7th August; 11th September; 2nd October; 23rd October; 13th November; 11th December.

Murray Belchamber Phone 07 850 8279 or 027 229 7883

Plantaholics
Our group had a meeting in December to talk about where we were and if we should continue. We have been meeting for several years and decided to continue but changed our day to the third Monday of the month. Starting in February we will alternate between members home gardens, local gardens and gardens of interest. To add a little extra, we will be looking at a "plant-of-the-month" and the host will research and make a presentation. Our group has its complementary 10 members.

Neil Curgenven

Hiking Group
The Hiking Group will have its first outing for 2026 on 12th February.

Des Johnston Phone: 027 702 0247 Email: desnviv@xtra.co.nz

Notices

Two items we received were a request from Claire Marsh, VUW, regarding a research project, and the announcement of a celebration for the 125th anniversary of Paul's Book Arcade.

Claire Marsh
"I am writing to you on behalf of the Emotion, Lifespan, and Memory (ELM) Group in the School of Psychology at Victoria University. We are currently running a study that is looking at the relationship between memory and wellbeing for adults aged 65 and older.

Knowing that U3A is associated with lifelong learning and that members have a wide range of diverse interests, we were wondering if you would consider putting an invitation for our study in your next newsletter?

Our study is funded by the Royal Society Te Apārangi Marsden Fund and we have been granted ethics approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee."

PBA 125

Paul's Book Arcade

1901-2026

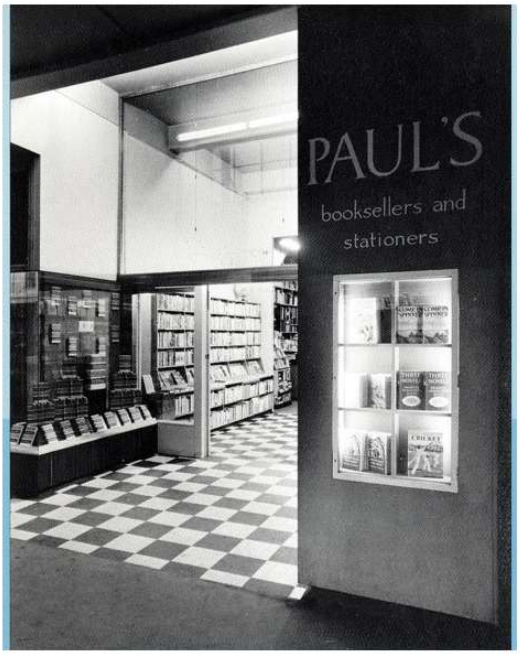
125th Anniversary

7 March 2026

PBA 125 event at The Link Community Centre, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 4 Te Aroha St, Hamilton East - 10am to 4.30pm

A celebration of the iconic Hamilton and Auckland bookshops, William Paul, and Blackwood & Janet Paul publishing

For staff, customers, friends, published authors and artists, and anyone with personal connections or memories - as well as researchers, historians and architects



- Speakers, presentations
- Catered lunch, morning/afternoon teas
- Exhibition, displays, memorabilia and souvenirs
- Mix and mingle
- Architectural tour

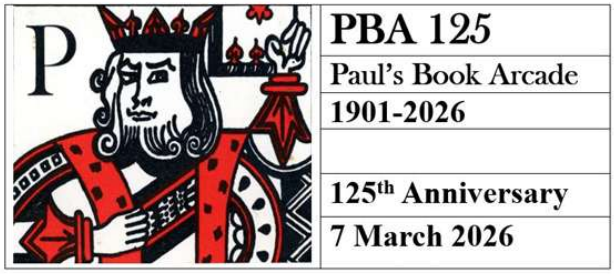
Pre-paid $50 registrations are required from November 2025 until 7 February 2026

Keep up to date by Facebook or email:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1135502001961464 (Paul's Book Arcade - 125 years)

paulsbookarcade125anniversary@gmail.com

Phone 07-855-8428 Jeff Downs



A group of enthusiasts is organising the Paul's Book Arcade 125th Anniversary on Saturday 7th March 2026. It is a celebration of the iconic Hamilton and Auckland bookshops, William Paul family, and Blackwood & Janet Paul publishing.

The main event from 10am to 4.30pm is for staff, families, customers, friends, published authors and artists, readers, researchers, historians, architects and anyone with memories or connections.

Venue: The Link Community Centre, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 4 Te Aroha St, Hamilton East (on the corner of River Rd and Te Aroha St).

Pre-paid registrations are required - now open, closing 7 Feb 2026

The cost is $50 per person. Attendance is limited to 100.

Registration instructions:

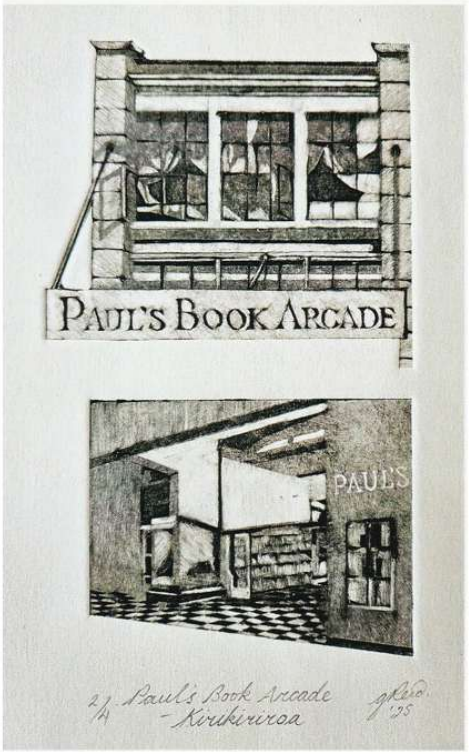
Deposit registration totals @ $50 per person into PBA125 ASB account:

12-3122-0414272-00 Jeffrey DOWNS **or** Matthew GRANT

Reference your given name+surname and number of registrants

Essential - Email remittance advice to paulsbookarcade125anniversary@gmail.com with your name in the subject line and your address, phone number and the names of attendees in the message ; special dietary requirements.

Hamilton artist Gemma Reid has produced a limited-edition intaglio collagraph of the main Hamilton shop front in 1963. It has been reproduced on an anniversary card for attendees.



Further information and updates

Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1135502001961464 (Paul's Book Arcade - 125 years)

Email
paulsbookarcade125anniversary@gmail.com

Phone 07-855-8428 Jeff Downs

What's on

Speakers/presentations such as:

- Mary Paul – Memories as a child and young adult
- Matt Grant - Ernst Plischke as Paul architect
- Jeff Downs – Outline history of the Paul business
- Staff panel - Memories of working at Paul's
- Susan Gresson – The Paul legacy

Time for mix and mingle

Catered refreshments

Exhibition, displays and memorabilia to view

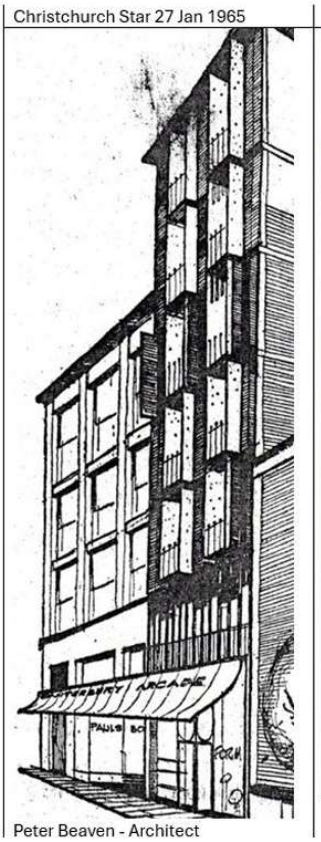
Hamilton central architectural walking tour map of Paul shops and exhibitions

Complimentary booklet on the Paul shops 1901-1983

Souvenirs

Paul's Book Arcade was an iconic bookshop founded in Victoria St Hamilton by William H Paul in 1901. William's son Blackwood took over in 1933. Blackwood was joined by his wife Janet Wilkinson in 1945, until his early death in 1965. The couple also ran a publishing business which lasted until 1968 when it was sold to Longmans. By then about 275 titles and editions were published. Blackwood and Janet established an Auckland branch shop in 1955.

Christchurch Star 27 Jan 1965



Peter Beaven - Architect

The main Hamilton shop was redesigned by modernist Austrian architect Ernst Plischke around 1949. He also subsequently fitted out the Auckland shop.

The Whitcoulls subsidiary, University Book Shop Ltd, took over the retail businesses in 1972 and operated them as Paul's University Book Shop / Paul's Book Shop. The Hamilton Victoria St shop closed in 1983.

Jeff Downs - 10 Nov 2025