HAMILTON NEW ZEALAND

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Newsletter March 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 18 March** 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:

18 March Reading Group Three
15 April Environment 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

Speaker

Maria Lupton will talk to us about **Leeches and the accidental path to a unique business**. In her own words "I will start with how we got into supplying leeches, followed by the path of our business over the years, how leeches work and why the hospitals need them so much. I will not be able to answer questions on how to raise or feed them as this is protected by intellectual property for the new owners. But many questions will be able to be asked."

"My husband and I were raised on farms and have farmed most of our lives. We farmed in Northland, where we started with supplying leeches to Auckland Zoo, which led to sending some being sent to Middlemore Hospital. We moved to the King Country taking the leeches with us, and eventually downsized the farm at Te Miro, where the leech business expanded. We started the leeches accidentally about 36 years ago. A long story! Last year we sold the farm and leech business and retired to Fencourt, near Cambridge."

President's report

Greetings to all members.

A good attendance to our last meeting when we were well-informed about the benefits and risks of investing our wealth. Many interesting questions were asked from the floor indicating the interest in this excellent presentation. Thank you to Matthew Brown from Craigs Investment Partners.

Another U3A year is almost gone. Remember, our AGM is held at the April meeting. I indicated at the last AGM that I would take up the position of president for one year. I will therefore not be standing for office this coming year. I would like to thank all those who have given support and assistance throughout the year, it has been much appreciated. Nomination forms will be available now and I strongly urge you to consider a role on the committee. The position of President is not difficult, so if you can speak in front of a crowd at the monthly meetings, chair committee meetings, communicate with the Church Manager, committee members and volunteers, write small reports for the newsletter and the annual report for the AGM, then you should not hesitate and put yourself forward for this position. I know that you will receive support and assistance from the committee members who are remaining. It's a chance to give something back to U3A.

Keith Buick

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.

Subscriptions 2026 now due

The annual subscription of $20 entitles you to attend our monthly speaker meetings with morning tea, and to membership of any of our friendly interest groups. Thank you for your prompt payments so far this year. It is great to get them all in quickly - if you are not sure if you have paid yet, or have other questions, you can flick me an email at treasurerhamiltonnzu3a@gmail.com

Best regards,
Christine Williams, Treasurer.

Announcement of AGM

From the current Treasurer: In April we will be holding our Annual General Meeting - when we seek nominations for the various committee positions. This year a few of our long-serving committee members are wishing to stand down after many years, and we are encouraging all our members to think about joining the committee. The committee is an informal and supportive team, and I would say that in the six years that I have been the Treasurer I have really enjoyed the camaraderie, as well as the opportunity to practise a few skills, and to contribute - which is one of the components of "aging well" after all! I am NOT stepping down and I am happy to continue as Treasurer with the support of the members, but I appreciate that some of my committee colleagues have worked in their positions for longer or need to step down for other reasons.

The people who are standing down are happy to give anyone thinking about coming onto committee a rundown of what they do - nobody sees their job as onerous, and it is an opportunity to put your own mark on it and be a bit creative if you want. I 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. There is also an opportunity for a website editor - we have an easy-to-use website set up, and this is definitely a chance to develop some new skills and maybe be creative! 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.

Membership

Our membership at the end of February was 260 with eight new folk joining us. We are pleased to welcome: Michelle Orgad, Karen Bain, Astrid Van den Berg, David Alcorn, Melissa Underwood, Suzanne Frankland, plus Janice and Fred Mead who came to us from U3A Tauranga.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

Events & Outings

We have 39 people going to the Hamilton Observatory on Thursday 12 March. The evening will start at 7:30 pm with a talk by a member of the Hamilton Astronomical Society on aspects of modern astronomy with no doubt mention of the Hubble and James Webb space telescopes and lots of pictures of planets, comets, galaxies and other astronomical objects. After the talk when it is suitably dark, we will get to look through some telescopes, but this will depend on the weather. Please dress appropriately for the outside temperature. Personally, I think the lecture alone will be worth the visit so don't be put off by the weather. The visit will end at about 9:30 pm.

The Observatory is located next to the zoo at 183 Brymer Road. There is ample parking space but if you wish to carpool you will have to organise that yourselves. You can find out more about the Observatory at https://www.has.org.nz/

Bob Wilcock

Interest Groups

The interest groups have been well organised and running smoothly over this last year. There have been no new groups established over this time. I will be meeting with the group convenors next Monday for a catchup. Thanks to all the co-ordinators for a sterling job in managing their interest groups. A great effort.

I will not be standing for the committee. Therefore, the roll of Group Convenor now will be vacant on the committee. The position of Group Convenor is not arduous, so if you can organise meeting venues and dates, communicate changes with group members, and maintain waiting lists where necessary, then please consider taking this role. Support will be given generously by the committee.

Margot Buick

Shakespeare for Everybody
"A Horse, A Horse, My Kingdom for a Horse". The Shakespeare-for-Everyone group met on Friday 27 February and we watched the last two acts of Richard III, agreeing that the "Hollow Crown" series is a wonderful production. Benedict Cumberbatch portrayed Richard brilliantly as the manipulative and ambitious character intended by Shakespeare. Next up for us in March is the comedy "Love's Labour's Lost", which explores themes of love, friendship and the folly of human intentions through the story of a king and his friends who vow to forsake women for three years, only to fall in love!

We also noted the wonderful local production of "Much Ado About Nothing" recently on at the Hamilton Arts Festival. We have amazingly talented local actors who always deliver an engaging, amusing and appropriate performance. This farce translated perfectly from Shakespeare's time to the Regency era - and as this newsletter goes to print, I believe there may be another chance to see this as a free performance at Garden Place at 7pm on Saturday 7 March.

Chrissie Williams

Page Turners
The Page Turners (formerly Book Discussion Group One) continue to meet regularly and to read a diverse range of books. It is an absolute joy to be part of this group. While each individual has their own particular interest such as: crime fiction, the Beatles, non fiction or historical fiction, I am often surprised by an outlier that doesn't fit the usual categories. These surprises are catalysts for conversation and assist in stretching our reading boundaries.

Susan Gresson

History Group
Our February meeting contained informative and entertaining accounts of city histories of New York, Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul and Barcelona. Several members had visited these cities and had their own stories and photos. Barcelona provided an introduction to our look at Spanish history on March 11 and April 8. We welcome new members to the group. You can come to a meeting and see if it suits you. If you wish to come to a meeting email me at pketheredge@gmail.com

Paul Etheredge

Coffee Companions Group

Our March gathering will be at the at **The District Cafe** Home Straight Te Rapa (opposite Bunnings) at 10.30 am on Friday 13 March. On Friday 10 April, our venue will be 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 24 March, then Tuesdays 14 and 28 April.

Judith Hickman 027 664 6712
Janet Pope 824 8079

Environment Group
Our first outing of the year was to Lake Kainui (previously known as Lake D) off Lake Road at Horsham Downs, on a perfect late summer's day. 'Kainui' means "big food' or "plentiful food" implying that the lake was a vital resource for local Maori as it was used as a natural storehouse for eels and waterfowl.

Lake Kainui is a peat lake, hence its tannin colour. There is a 3.1km flat walking track which takes 45-60mins to walk around. A picnic area and toilet facilities are located to the left of the car park. Dogs on leash are welcome. You get a clear view of Taupiri Mountain and the whole of the Hakarimata range looking across the lake. And if the day is dead calm the reflections on the lake are stunning.

Lake Kainui is a popular spot for coarse fishing - rudd, perch and catfish can be found there. As a protected wildlife reserve, it is a haven for birds including the Australasian Bittern, a rare shy bird that hides in the reeds.

Gloria Edwards

Plantaholics
Our monthly meetings are on the 3rd Monday of the month. In February, we had a morning tea at a member's unit in a retirement village complex and discussed "Plants suitable for small gardens", which elicited a wealth of information and resulted in the creation of a list (contact the writer), along with the aspects of how they grew, what problems to look out for, and failures. This was followed by a walk around the gardens of this unit to see that the member didn't just talk! Happily, their work was a great inspiration to us all. We look forward to our next outing

Neil Curgenven

Mah Jongg Club
Our Mah Jongg club continues to grow, with lively games, plenty of laughs and some impressive winning streaks. Whether you're a seasoned player or just curious to learn, our fortnightly sessions are friendly relaxed and always welcoming to newcomers. It's a wonderful way to sharpen your mind and enjoy good company. We would love to see you on the 11th of March at the Contract Bridge Club in Brookfield St at 1pm.

Freya Shaw

Hiking Group
In February a group of seven walked from Hamilton Gardens through Hammond Park and along the Te Awa trail to Riverglade Drive and return, with a welcome cup of coffee at the Gardens Café afterwards. This was an easy walk to start the year. Our March outing will take in the Pukemokemoke Reserve off the Whitikahu Road. Before winter I hope to get in another climb of Kakepuku and take in some of the Karamu South Walkway off Old Mountain Road. Anyone interested in joining our group please contact me.

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

Play Reading Group
In February we laughed and enjoyed the first act of Ray Cooney's 'Caught in the Net'. It was a first for us as it was a sequel to his earlier play, 'Run For your Wife', which we read late last year. It built on the already established characters, centring on a bigamist London taxi driver and his wives. It certainly didn't disappoint, with all the repartee and farce we were expecting. We're waiting with bated breath for next month to enjoy act two.

Pat Stannard, 027 211 0391

Recreational Mathematics
This lunar eclipse was predicted by mathematics. The settings to photograph it were calculated by simple formulae.

We meet on occasional Friday mornings. Phone 07 850 8279 or 027 2297883 to play with fun numbers.

Write down any number (e.g. your phone number) (8508279), scramble the digits into a new number (7880295). Measure the difference between the two of them (8508279 -7880295 = 627984)
add its digits and repeat until a single digit is produced. That digit will be 9!

Murray Belchamber

Wine Appreciation

The U3A Wine Tasting group met in January at the beautiful Hamilton Gardens for our annual picnic and tasting. We shared some delicious food and wines, in a stunning spot in the Camelia area at the Gardens, as well as our Christmas adventures (and misadventures). It was a super evening. So, a great start to the year. We are now back into the swing and here are the notes from our latest tasting.

February 2026 tasting: Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio
Great Tasting of three New Zealand Pinot Gris and one Pinot Grigio from Italy.

Kumeu River PINOT GRIS 2025. West Auckland. Aromas of Peach with stone fruit notes. Lychee. Light and on the palate the wine was rich and complex with a lively texture. Beautifully full and a Gold Medal wine in our opinion. Delicious. Grapes grown in West Auckland with a wild yeast fermentation over an extended period which has produced this wine of layered complexity and lusciousness.

Boatshed Bay, Marlborough, Fruit from Wairau and Awatere Valley. 2025. Aromas of ripe peach and nectarine. Slight acidity. Slightly green apple. Typical of Marlborough wines. Classic off-dry style.

Big Sky, Martinborough, Wairarapa, 2023. A classic Wairarapa Pinot Gris, fruity, dry with floral notes and stonefruit flavours. On the palate, warm spice with luscious mouthfeel with fruit acidity. Delicious and enjoyable.

JK14 Nonno Sylvana Pinot Grigio. Treviso, DOC Veneto Region, Italy. 2023. A balanced well-structured wine with fragrant and intense bouquet and notes of Jasmine and magnolia. Fresh, zesty and soooooo harmonious on the palate. This was a true Pinot Grigio and was absolutely delicious. As it should be and how I would expect a Pinot Grigio to be. A Gold Medal wine and what I would expect an Italian wine to be.

Food to accompany Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio could be seafood including shellfish, salads, pork belly and light Italian pasta, or just drink and enjoy.

Gay Main

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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