HAMILTON NEW ZEALAND

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Newsletter August 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 19 August** 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:

19 August	Plantaholic
16 September	Shakespeare for Everyone

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 either at judyb4573@live.com or in person, at a monthly meeting.

Membership

Our membership at the end of July was 288, comprising 223 paid-up members and 65 pending payment of subscriptions.

Chrissie Williams

Speaker Roger Cox – the Fairfield Project.

Roger taught science and biology at Fairfield College for over 40 years and loved working in the diverse community that recognised individuals for themselves and what they could contribute. Having no uniform allowed students a greater level of freedom to express themselves. Roger developed a horticulture course in the 1980s. After he retired nearly 10 years ago Roger became very involved in the Fairfield Project that is the subject of this talk. The Project utilises surplus College land for environmental education and gully restoration purposes. It makes a strong connection to Ngaati Wairere, as mana whenua, and aims to restore the perimeter of the gully back to the way it was. The gully and gardens developed on site provide the context for educational activities, including the planting of native trees. The green space being developed is a hidden oasis within suburban Hamilton.

President's Report

Out of the mists of the day, we were taken through some of the quirks and advantages of artificial intelligence (AI) by our speaker, Michael Gurnsey who spoke about working with AI as a research tool from a family history perspective. In this instance the major player was CoPilot but the message applies to all AI platforms and that is to remember the importance of verification. While the information being presented appears authoritative, it may not be correct and, therefore, should be challenged. You need to retain the control of your information. However, feedback to Michael's talk has been positive, and there are several of you who have said that they are going to venture into using this as a tool, even if it is only to identify new sources of information to begin with.

Have fun! With the approach of Spring our thoughts start to turn to outdoor activities. It is with this in mind our speaker for 19 August will be Roger Cox who will speak about the Fairfield Project.

Catherine Gurnsey

Committee Notes

We currently have six people on our committee and would dearly like at least one more. Specifically, we would like someone to be the groups coordinator. This is not a difficult task and entails keeping up with the status of membership in each group – i.e. whether they are full or are accepting new members. The coordinator would also help with the start-up of new interest groups. If this sounds like you, please reply either to our President, *Catherine Gurnsey*, or me, *Bob Wilcock*.

The next two newsletters will be compiled by Beverley Bell, who is kindly stepping in for me while I am away. Would contributors to the September and October newsletters please reply to Beverley's email address, not mine.

Bob

The Night Sky

A lot of man-made satellites are visible to the naked eye. You can see up to a hundred a night if you have a keen eye and good viewing conditions. To find a satellite in the sky, go to an area with little to no light pollution on a clear night. Scan the sky until you find what looks like a star moving across the sky slowly and steadily. Satellites don't blink like planes, so the light from them will be constant. They may disappear if they go behind the shadow of the earth. The easiest to spot is the International Space Station (ISS) because it is both large and bright, sometimes even appearing as bright as Venus (Tūhura Otago Museum).

Bob

Interest Groups

You may wish to join one of our special interest groups but not know how. On our web page we have a list of the groups and details of how they can be contacted, viz. https://u3ahamilton.org.nz/new-interest-groups/
Click on 'more information' to get contact names and details.

Walking Group
After three wet Tuesdays in a row the walking group was really pleased to enjoy a perfect sunny morning for a walk through the Gardens and the old Hamilton Cemetery, led by Diane Bushell.

Noeline Alcorn

Second Music Group – Seeking Goose-bump Tracks
Does your taste in music tend towards contemporary acoustic/vocal/singer-songwriter/country-folk-rock? If so I'm keen to host a small group with broadly similar tastes, to seek out the goose-bump tracks. I've got a superb system that I'd like to share – it's CD/SACD based with a warm, detailed, spacious sound. Is this you? Let's talk, phone

Warren on 027 223 2298

Environment Group
It was a grey, slightly misty morning when our group set out for a walk at the Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve on the Tauhei Road. What a delightful spot, 40 hectares of bush with over 300 native trees and plant species. The land had been donated by David Johnstone and is now run by a trust. Although we are an intrepid lot we were not intrepid enough to tackle the summit track which evidently provides wonderful views from the top. A number of the group would've been perfectly capable of the climb, (but not me.) We were content to stick to the lower path, mostly sturdy boardwalk or metal surface. Apart from a young woman out for a run, we didn't meet another soul until we had almost completed our walk. Here we came across a number of pre-schoolers with their carers. One little girl took one look at us, 'old ladies,' she said and burst into giggles much to our amusement (I didn't hear what she said when she came across the men further back). And so, after a refreshing walk we returned to a cafe in Rototuna for coffee and a chat – a just reward for our not-so-intrepid trek.

Bev Wood

Mah Jongg Club
The last games of Mah Jongg on the 22 July went well. There were two tables of four and three tables of three. I introduced small notebooks to be used by each table for the players to keep their individual scores and at the end to learn who scored the most. Some days we are able to play as many as ten games in the two hours, some days the games are very slow. The aim is to get faster and thus (if in Hong Kong) win more money!

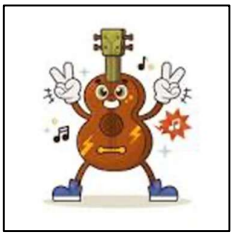
Freya Shaw, Convener freya.shaw@hotmail.com

Coffee Companions Group

Our August outing on Friday 14 August at 10.30 am will be at Café Inc 12/11 Thomas Road, Rototuna. Next month, on Friday 11 September we'll be visiting Modita by Mavis & Co, Te Awa, at the Base. 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



The highlight for Uke3A this month was an outing to Awatere. Village. A group of us played and sang, for the third time over the past 18 months, to a large group of residents who enjoy the music and join in as we play and sing our mostly old-time music. We meet on the second and fourth Tuesday each month at Hukanui Reformed Church 159 Rototuna Road 1.00 pm – 2.45 pm. Koha - $2 at each session for the use of the hall.

Singalong

If you don't want, or are not able, to strum a ukulele, but just like to sing, you are welcome to come along to sing with us, or just come to listen. There is no limit to the membership of this group, we welcome all singers and players, and can provide tuition for those who want to learn to play ukulele. Following each session, many of us choose to have a coffee and a chat together at the cafe at Palmers Garden Centre. Our next sessions will be on Tuesdays 11 and 25 August, then 8 and 22 September.

Judith Hickman 027 664 6712
Janet Pope 021 086 77241

Plantaholics

This month Sandra arranged a behind the scenes look at Mitre 10 Ruakura. We were given an insight to the problems of getting the right plants in at the right time, how many and all those other little things that can build mountains out of mole hills in retail. We also had the experience of dealing with suppliers and the advantages of size explained, together with its complications. Then, a tour of the garden yard, pots and plants and concluded with a coffee.

Neil Curgenven

History Group
Constitutions, Legislatures, Elections and Power were the topic for our July meeting. With Israel, New Zealand and the USA holding elections this year and the aftermath of the 2024 UK general election much in the news it provided examples of: written and unwritten constitutions; unicameral and bicameral legislatures; first past the post and differing proportional representation electoral systems; one powerful and three largely ceremonial Heads of State; and the power of the Judiciary to check governments. Discussion was led by Janet (USA); Ruth (Israel); Barbara (UK) and NZ (Paul).

August 12 meeting will feature Janet – Silicon Valley, and Brent – Protest Songs of the 1960s.

Paul Etheredge

Play Reading Group
In July the play reading group read 'All Along the Line' by Nigel Stannard, and no, as far as I know he's no relative of mine. It was an entertaining, lively and light-hearted experience, although dealing with a subject that would have been very topical when written in the early 1960s, the closing of small railway lines by the government. This subtext was hidden, however, apart from one or two speeches that gave the game away. It was a one act play, as two of our members were away, and would not have been up with the action next time if we had a second act to read then.

Pat Stannard 0272110391

Hiking Group
The Hiking Group's July walk was around Lake Ngaroto between Ohaupo and Te Awamutu. A group of seven adults and four boisterous boys (it was school holidays) enjoyed the walk and on the way learned a little more of the history of the area. Some even learned how to make windmills out of raupo leaves. We finished off with a well-earned coffee at The Top Deck Café in Ohaupo before heading back to Hamilton.

As we head into spring and summer, we will return to taking on some more challenging walks. Anyone interested in joining our group please contact me.

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

Recreational Mathematics

Our fun-centred group grew by two new members in July but there is still room for a few more. Why should you be one of them? I have no way of knowing the answer to that. Did you ever enjoy the times-table? Highly unlikely. Did you get a kick out of long division? Probably not. What about the joy of ratios and proportions? Those tedious 'solve for x' equations? Again, a remote chance of agreement. Good! There is little recreation found there. Without realising it you estimate and calculate many times every day. No-one escapes the need for numbers. Numbers cannot escape very easily from our group. If you would like to catch them and control them in a friendly manner we meet on the Fridays when the day of the month is a Prime Number. You can count on it.

Contact the Convenor Murray at 07 850 8279 or 027 229 7883 or email mandej@slingshot.co.nz

Murray Belchamber

Shakespeare for Everyone

For our August meeting the group travelled by Te Huia to Auckland Theatre Company's production of Macbeth. This play was written in 1606, with Shakespeare pondering what it might take to contemplate, plan and then enact the murder of a leader - and then how might that impact the fabric of the mind? Part of a trend for artists is to make these classics anew. This hard-hitting version set 'the Scottish play' in a sewer, (complete with dripping water and suggestions of sludge), and drew on references from wars, past and present. The plot reflects the ever-present pursuit of power and supremacy of some over others at any cost - sound familiar? We saw the title character move from ambition, through guilt, to unbridled determination to remove all encumbrances, while Lady Macbeth moved from ambition to madness. Three children played the witches, but the graphic portrayals made this far from a play for children. Particularly impactful were the murder scenes, and the excellent presentation of the ghosts of Banquo and Duncan. Fast moving, and with acting from experienced professionals, this was a consummate, if rather brutal, performance that certainly succeeded in bringing Shakespeare's work to life.

At our next meeting we might start looking at Henry 6th.

Chrissie Williams

Wine Appreciation Group
U3A Wine Appreciation for July 2026: French Wines.

As July 14th is celebrated as La Fete Nationale of France or Bastille Day, it was fitting we tasted French wines this month. We tasted two whites and two reds from different regions of France.

Barton & Guestier Vouvray, Les Petites Parcelles Chenin Blanc 2023. From The Loire Region in the Tours district of France. Lovely delicate floral aromas. Pear and preserved peach that makes you pucker your lips and ask for more! Long delicious honey finish. Had a crisp minerality about it. We have had a few Vouvray wines, and they are all of top quality and delicious.

Combe Rocher Chardonnay 2023. Pays DOC. South of France. Fragrance of Apricot, Nougat. Creamy and lightly oaked with citrus and stone fruit flavours. We discussed this at length and were not too sure of the actual Chardonnay taste. We are used to the tastes and aromas of New Zealand Chardonnays. Still a refreshing Chardonnay and would be a lovely summer white we decided.

Château La Bastide Tradition Rouge Corbieres Languedoc Region 2021. Grenache/Syrah/MSM. The wine has a lovely dark colour and flavours of dark fruits, boysenberry, plum, earthiness and savoury spice. Smooth tannins, smoky spice and a gritty saline quality. Loved this wine. Full bodied. Great for the winter and roast meats on a cold evening. Probably our favourite of the evening.

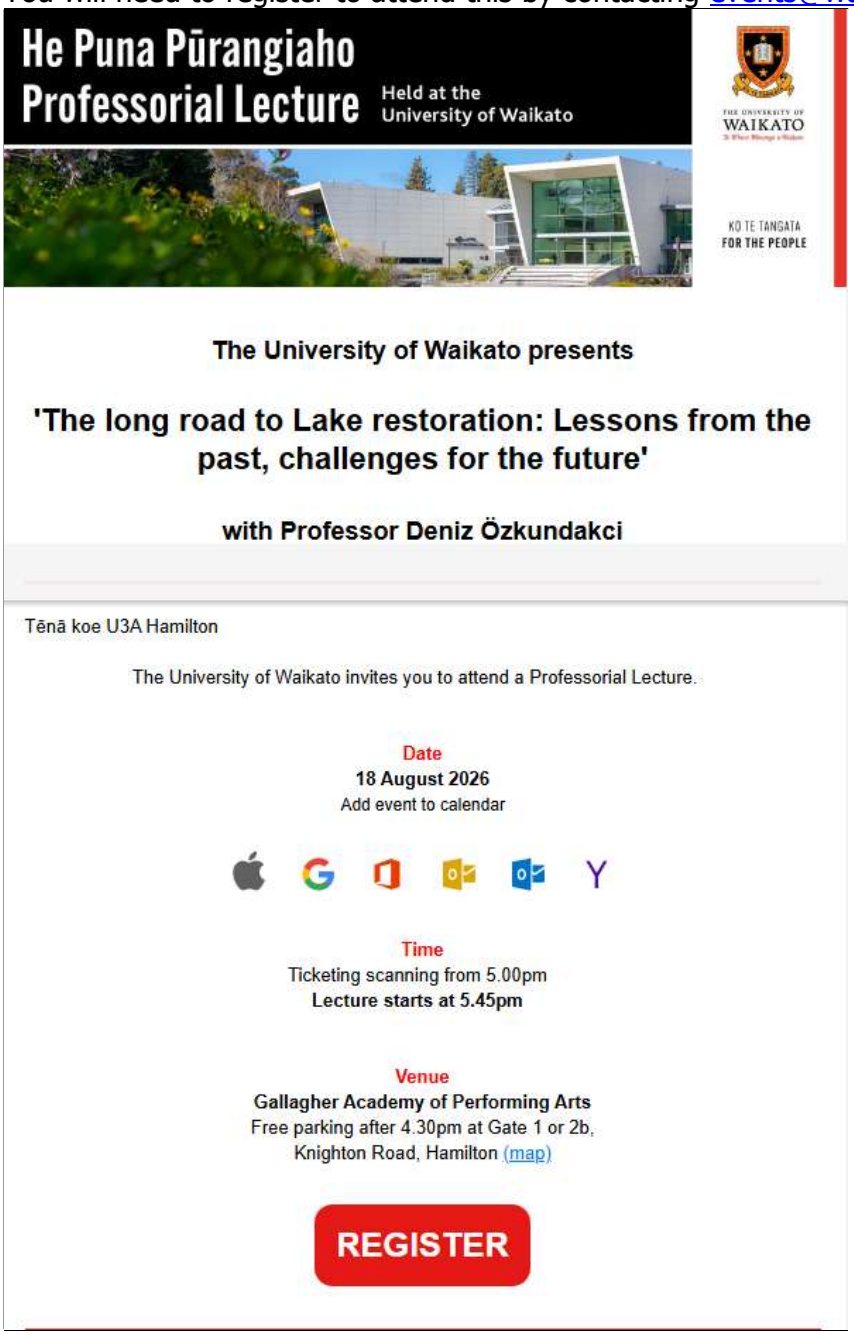
Château Le Vieux Fort, 2020. Medoc Region Cru Bourgeoise, Bordeaux blend Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot. Deep ruby colour. Palate soft structured. Plum, earthy, savoury touches, toasted oats. Very drinkable and ideal with dark red meats and tomato-based dishes.

All wines were enjoyed with French cheese and biscuits and lots of discussion on the French v Australian reds v New Zealand whites and reds.

Gay Main.

Extras

You will need to register to attend this by contacting events@waikato.ac.nz



About this lecture:

For much of the last decades, freshwater science has focused on understanding why lakes became degraded. Nutrient pollution from agriculture, urban development, and other human activities has transformed many lakes, leading to algal blooms, declining water quality, and the loss of ecological and cultural values. This understanding has driven major advances in lake restoration, with scientists, communities, iwi, and environmental managers working together to improve the health of our lakes.

But restoring lakes is becoming increasingly challenging.

Climate change is altering the way lakes function, bringing warmer waters, changing rainfall patterns, more frequent extreme weather events, and increasing ecological uncertainty. Even when nutrient inputs are reduced, many lakes do not simply return to the condition they were once in. Instead, they are recovering under a new and changing set of environmental conditions.

In this lecture, Professor Deniz Özkundakci reflects on more than two decades of studying lakes, tracing the evolution of freshwater science from understanding the causes of degradation to tackling one of today's biggest challenges: defining what successful recovery looks like in a changing world. Drawing on research from New Zealand and overseas, he will explore how new technologies, ecological forecasting, and ecosystem modelling are helping scientists and communities make better decisions about the future of our freshwater ecosystems.

Kia ora

We are a team of researchers from the University of Otago Christchurch and the University of Auckland involved in research on health and well-being of older persons in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are preparing for a clinical trial where we test an intervention for people living with dementia. To conduct this trial in the Hamilton region, we seek to engage research assistants and hope you may be able to assist in identifying suitable candidates.

This government funded research project will test the delivery of Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) in a virtual / online modality (vCST) across multiple centers across New Zealand. The project's aim is to make this intervention accessible for people who do presently not have access to this intervention.

We are currently recruiting Research Assistants in your region and we seek to engage:

Research Assistant (clinical) – who will support consenting and the administration of measurements via questionnaires.

Research Assitant (technical) – who will deliver and support people in the use of the computer.

These roles would suit someone with a nursing or social care background interested in part-time work of about 5 h/w. The trial will commence in the next few weeks and run for about 12-18 months. These roles require people to visit study participants in their home and therefore requires a car and driver's license.

We hope that you can assist us by communicating this opportunity to your group of volunteers. A recruitment flyer is available for download and distribution.
Interested people may contact me in case they have questions.

Kind regards / Nga mihi nui

Mr Ulrich Bergler

Dipl-Ing (FH); MSc APSY
Senior Research Fellow

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