



Newsletter

October 2026

Mickey,
Michael,
Peter, and
Jones!



Ian
Howell:
Trains and
Time

SPRING(S)! Clockwork springs, mechanical springs, spiral springs, compression springs, torsion and conical springs, Slinkies!, natural springs, magical and miraculous springs, and – of course – the season. Spring – a time of renewal, rebirth, rejoicing, and lower power bills. Spring lambs! Daffodils! The gentle bellow of a thousand Masports coughing into action... We're springing toward Summer, which will, inexorably, lead us to Autumn, which is, in turn, a pre-cursor to Winter. Then – another reason to celebrate. Enjoy Spring, everyone. It only comes around once a year.

Stay Up To Date at U3Atauranga.org.nz

Group Vacancies

Tauranga:

[Art Practical](#)

[Acoustic Music Group](#)

[Ballet Appreciation](#)

[Hikers 2](#)

[History B](#)

[International Affairs](#)

[Pilates](#)

Katikati

[Film Appreciation](#)

[Poetry Plus](#)

[French Conversation](#)

[Walking](#)

Memoir Writing

Rotary Club's Annual Book Sale March 6 & 7, 2027

SAVE YOUR BOOKS!

Tauranga Rotary Club will start collecting books for their annual Book Sale in January – so they want your old Romances, Fantasies, Thrillers, SciFi, History, Self-Help, Biographies, memoirs, Autobiographies, Murders, True Crime, Cookbooks, Classics, books about Trains, Planes, Cars, Triffids, Romans, and Jam-making. If it's on your bookshelf and you haven't opened it since the last time a politician was truly popular: Save it to donate to Rotary in January.

**OUR JANUARY NEWSLETTER WILL
TELL YOU WHERE TO DROP YOUR
BOOKS OFF FOR ROTARY.**

Newsletter Team

Editor: Al Mathews

Proof-reading: Liz Stewart

Correspondents:

Tauranga: Judi Casey, Graham Dainty

Katikati: Stewart Cairns

Photographs: Margaret Marsh, Al Mathews.

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Hey, Hey! We're The Monkees!

The World's First Boy Band Quiz!

All photographs and illustrations sourced from Wikimedia

We just want to Monkee around this month. Why? Because we can, and – Spring Fever. It makes people do some strange things. The Monkees were, possibly, the world's first boy-band, a pop-group brought together by a corporate body to make money – and they not only exceeded all commercial hopes but also developed into a musical and marketing force, selling 75 to 80 million records (yes, I bought several), and many millions of dollars' worth of merchandise.



1: Which member of the Monkees had previously been nominated for a Tony award for his starring role on a Broadway musical production?

A: Davy Jones B: Peter Tork C: George Harrison D: Mike Nesmith

2: The Monkees had three Number 1 hits in the USA. Two of them featured the same word in the song title. What is that word?

A: Station B: Hey, Hey C: Believer D: Bubblegum

3: What was the Monkees hit song "Last Train to Clarksville" about?

A: Eloping B: A drug overdose C: Anti-War (Vietnam) D: Apollo 13

4: How many episodes of The Monkees' TV show were broadcast?

A: 39 B: 58 C: 72 D: 26

5: What was The Monkees' first Number One album titled?

A: The Monkees B: With The Monkees C: Monster Monkees D: Please Please Yourself

6: Could any of the The Monkees actually play a musical instrument?

A: Yes. Peter Tork was an established multi-instrumentalist. Michael Nesmith was a skilled guitar player and lyricist. Mickey Dolenz had some guitar skills and learnt to drum for the show. Davy Jones was a highly-regarded singer and played a mean tambourine (although not necessarily a green one). B: No.



Looking for a group to join? Check Page 2, or go to [U3A Tauranga](#)

The Monkees, Continued!



7: **Whatever happened to the Monkee-mobile?**

A: Sold at auction for US\$360,000 in 2008 to a private collector in Michigan. B: Davy Jones crashed it. C: It was sold to a McDonald's franchise in Boise, Idaho for use in their children's play area. D: It was taken to Australia as part of the Monkees World Tour and was stolen.

8: **Which Oscar-winning actor** produced and co-wrote the Monkees' film "Head"?

A: Elizabeth Taylor. B: Jack Nicholson. C: Pee Wee Herman. D: Jane Fonda.

9: **Michael Nesmith auditioned for The Monkees** wearing a wool hat – why did he wear it?

A: His grandmother knitted it. B: Because it was, like, you know, cool, man. C: To stop his hair getting in his eyes when he rode his motorcycle. D: He'd heard David Bowie liked them.

10: **The Monkees' eleventh and final album was** recorded and released in 1996. What was the album named?

A: The Final Album. B: The Monkees' Harvest C: Corporal Addington's Happy Heartthrob Club D: Justus.



Hey, Hey, Here's The Answers!

1: A 2: C 3: C 4: B 5: A
6: A 7: A 8: B 9: C 10: D



A Few of Ian Howell's Timepieces

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

To date it has been a very busy nine months for the Executive team - so I am sure they, like me, are saying it is great to say goodbye to the colder Winter months and hello to a more mellow – yet very breezy! - Spring.

As I think back of the past nine months in this role I, come to understand and admire the hours that members of the Executive willingly donate providing the necessary energy to U3A, not just keep the organisation functioning but to ensure that it complies with all the appropriate legislative requirements of this country. It is their collective energies that keep U3A functioning that in turn enable all members to select then enjoy a variation of activities – from educational and social activities to hearing from brilliant guest speakers across a wide range of topics – both in Tauranga and in Katikati. In essence at the very heart of U3A Tauranga is the *Koha* of a few, those on the Executive and those who act as co-ordinators and convenors of groups - for the benefit of many.

As we review policies and procedures to ensure we comply with all this country's appropriate legalistic requires another of the key aspect that stands out - to keep up with constant external changes. For many of us we have had to open the door and comprehend a new world – one that is bringing once-unheard-of technological advances and in particular the electronic data management tools. It is clearly an era that many of us are not too familiar with but are having to learn fast.

So, it is great to welcome new members – not just for their skills and experience but their ideas and their energy to enable U3A to continue to run effectively and efficiently both today and in the near future.

In November this year, we will be holding U3A's EGM so to ensure 2027's Executive Team remains strong and focussed you may have heard that we are looking for a few new Executives. While we are sad to farewell two members retiring after many years of service, and another who is moving away from Tauranga, we warmly invite others to join the Executive Team. So, if you are interested in working with us all and together as us to steer and growth this organisation, the positions yet to be fulfilled are listed on [U3A's Website](#) and advertised in this Newsletter's pages.

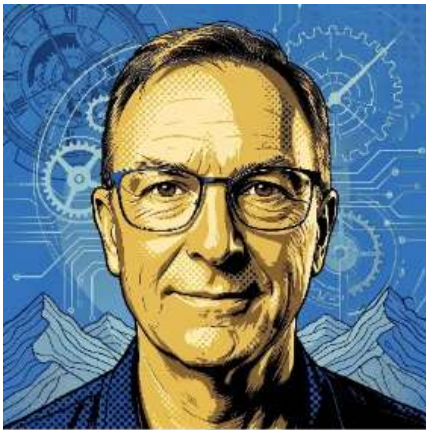
Look forward to seeing you at the EGM in November and again at the AGM in February 2027 if not before. *Ben Edlin*

The Election General Meeting

10.00am, Friday 20th November

Tauranga Yacht and Boat Club, Sulphur Point

Behind the Screen: Meet Ian Howell



When Ian Howell returned to Tauranga in 2024 with his wife Miranda after decades managing complex engineering projects across England, Wales, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Oman, his retirement plan was refreshingly simple: join U3A, keep the grey matter active, and attend a few interesting groups. Instead, through a blend of enthusiasm and succumbing to our President's deft arm-twisting, he found himself appointed Web Manager. While Ian quickly deflects praise to the rest of the Web Team for doing the real heavy lifting behind the scenes, Ian remains the coordinating glue—diplomatically guiding updates, troubleshooting digital quirks, and building a supportive volunteer team.

Beyond managing websites, Ian's interests span a remarkably eclectic mix of activities across U3A and home life:

- **Practical Languages:** Having convened the *Spanish for Beginners* group, Ian brings a trauma-free approach to learning, having aced science while spectacularly failing French at school.
- **Demystifying AI:** Embracing modern tech rather than running from it, Ian is helping launch the new AI Interest Group, focusing on hands-on exploration, practical everyday uses, and cutting through the media hype.
- **Workshop Tinkering & Kinetic Art:** In his workshop, Ian blends mechanical precision with microcontrollers and LEDs to design and build custom kinetic art pieces and intricate electronic clocks—a hobby merging engineering discipline with creative mechanics. Keep an eye out for his work at the upcoming exhibition at The Incubator (25 September – 17 October)!
- **Adventures on Foot:** When stepping away from screens and circuit boards, Ian is an avid long-distance walker whose idea of a break involves tackling high-altitude mountain routes, including recently conquering the rugged stone steps of Peru's Inka Trail.

Whether untangling code, decoding conversational Spanish, crafting kinetic clockwork, or climbing mountain passes, Ian brings trademark curiosity, dry wit, and a relaxed problem-solving mindset to everything he undertakes.



Looking for a group to join? Check Page 2, or go to [U3A Tauranga](#)

NOTICE OF ELECTION GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF THE ELECTION GENERAL MEETING OF U3A TAURANGA INC TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2026 AT THE TAURANGA YACHT AND POWER BOAT CLUB, SULPHUR POINT, TAURANGA AT 10.00 AM

In accordance with the 2025 Constitution, an Election General Meeting of U3A Tauranga Incorporated is to be held to elect the 2027 Executive and set the annual subscription for 2027.

The Executive elected at this meeting will take office at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting in February 2027.

As described in paragraph 10.5 of the 2025 constitution, the following positions are open for nomination:

Officers: **President**

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Newsletter Editor

Data Manager and Webmaster

Group Coordinator(s)

Membership Administrator

Speaker Organiser/General Meeting Organiser

Publicity Officer

Katikati Representative

Copy of the Executive Nomination form is attached. The nomination form is also available on the U3A website: [U3A Tauranga](https://www.u3atauranga.org.nz)

Completed nomination forms must be received by the Secretary or Acting Secretary by 10 November 2026 and may be:

- Given to the Secretary in person
- Scanned and emailed as an attachment to the Secretary at secretary@u3atauranga.org.nz
- Posted to:

The Secretary
10A Egret Ave,
Maungatapu
Tauranga 3112

Dreamstime



Coming Up At Our October and November Monthly Meetings

**Tauranga U3A Monthly Meetings are held at the Tauranga Yacht Club
on the third Friday of the month, 10.00 'til Noon.**

October 16th: Short Speaker: George Stewart: The Village Radio Story – that's the Historic Village's long-running radio station, run by volunteers, beloved by thousands of loyal listeners.

Long Speaker: Wymond Symes from LandSAR, with a thrilling talk about how Land Search and Rescue Serves our Community: some rescues they've made, the hard yakka that goes into even the easiest rescue job, the lives they've preserved.

November: Short Speaker: Not yet Confirmed

Long Speaker: Bob Tulloch: Tauranga Five Decades of Change. Bob Tulloch has been visually recording both Tauranga's cityscape and citizenry for five years. He's published four highly-popular books that show the changes in our beloved city since he arrived in 1974, and the population was only 38,000!

**Katikati U3A Monthly Meetings are held at the Katikati Community Hub
on the second Wednesday of the month, 10:00 'til Noon**

October 14th: Short Speaker: Francis Young will chat about the United States of America's Mid-Term Elections. What do the results mean for us in Aotearoa New Zealand? [World Affairs \(Katikati\) – U3A Tauranga](#)

Long Speaker: Ian Howell, U3A Tauranga's Web Manager, was – in a very recent previous life – project Manager for the recently-opened Auckland City Rail Link. This one of – if not the – civil engineering projects in New Zealand. And he'll be with us to talk about it.

November 11th: Short Speaker: Nicky Austen, Katikati Community Centre. Our Community Centre (on Park Road) is one of the busiest building in the area: what they do, how they do it, and who they do it for will all be revealed!

Long Speaker: Graham Wallis: The Importance and Modern Relevance of Genetics. Graham researches and lectures on Genetics at the University of Otago, and his talk will show us where we came from, where we're going - and demonstrate how vital the study of Genetics is to the future of New Zealand.

Are you a member of a Group that really inspires you?

Your Newsletter Editor is looking for stories about the Groups you're either a member of – or would like to join or start.

We have scores of groups spread all over Tauranga and Katikati: that means there is a veritable regiment of inspirational people in our midst whose stories should be told.

Send me your story today: newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz

Situations Vacant

WE ARE LOSING SOME VALUABLE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMITTEE – AND IT'S MORE THAN LIKELY YOU HAVE THE SKILLS AND ABILITIES TO FILL THESE VACANT POSITIONS.

Can You Be A Hero?

U3A COMMITTEE SECRETARY: Kay Ebdon, our amazing Secretary, is hanging up her shorthand pad and Imperial 66 typewriter to take up competitive Synchronised Swimming. (Only one of the two statements in the previous sentence is true, and we have our doubts as to the accuracy of the other.)

Kay wouldn't categorise the job as being a doddle, but she does acknowledge that it has been a rewarding few years for her. She's met people she wouldn't have otherwise met, rubbed shoulders with many, many fellow U3A members, and generally had a ball.

Check out the ad on the following page: having fun isn't there, but it's certainly a major part of the job. [Team Vacancies – U3A Tauranga](#)

GROUP CO-ORDINATOR: A Group Co-ordinator's job is one of keeping your finger on the pulse: finding out what your designated group leaders are doing, guiding them on procedure, helping with finding new members, attending their activities – generally just knowing what's going on, and helping solve any problems. Sound like you? Check out the ads of the following pages, and online at [Team Vacancies – U3A Tauranga](#)

SPEAKER AND MONTHLY MEETING ORGANISER. Our main meetings are a real highlight of our month: and Mary Stewart has been doing a fabulous job of finding our speakers (all inspirational, all entertaining) *and* making sure there's a chocolate biscuit available for you to enjoy during the break. Mary has enjoyed the full support of everyone at U3A and acknowledges that the job is made easier by the suggestions, help, and support she's received from everyone. Take a look at the Ads on the next page – they're all on our website, too. [Team Vacancies – U3A Tauranga](#)

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN JOINING U3A?

Send them this link to this to the U3A Website. Between them, U3A Tauranga and Katikati have a host of individual groups to participate in. There are social groups, groups to help you keep fit and active, groups that'll stretch your mind, groups that will help you stretch your tendons. From Acoustic Music to Yoga, there's a group that's perfect for you and your friends. The U3A Tauranga website is kept right up to date with all the information you need about our groups.

[Interest Groups – Tauranga – U3A Tauranga](#)

Could You Help Keep U3A Connected?

We're looking for a Membership & Groups Data Administrator.



If you're organised, comfortable with computers, enjoy accurate record keeping, and like helping others, we'd love to hear from you.



Organization



Technology



Help

Training provided – understudy opportunity available.



Contact Joni Burgess

021 0250 3032 • membership@u3atauranga.org.nz

Join the U3A Tauranga Executive Committee!

We're looking for a Secretary



As a **KEY POSITION**, the Secretary supports effective governance, ensures statutory and constitutional compliance, and facilitates official communication.



Official Records
& Minutes



Statutory
Compliance



Effective Communication
& Meeting Organization

This is a key leadership role.

Facilitates properly organised and documented meetings.



For details on the full position description, contact the current President. • president@u3atauranga.org.nz

Join the U3A Tauranga Executive Committee!

We're looking for a Group Coordinator



U3A groups are at the heart of what we do, and we are looking for someone to help our convenors and groups thrive. It's a varied, people-focused role that makes a real difference to members' enjoyment of U3A.



Convenor Support
& Mentoring



New Group
Establishment



Accurate Records
& Information

This is a key leadership role.

Helps existing groups, establishes new ones, brings people together.



For details on the full position description or to apply, contact Margaret Marsh: a2c.groups@u3atauranga.org.nz

Tauranga's September Meeting

When is a Nursery Rhyme much more than a Nursery Rhyme?



U3A member Murray Armstrong delivered an all-too-brief history of certain nursery rhymes, familiar to most of his audience, given their ages. With illiteracy rates being very high centuries ago, many words in common usage adopted meaningful and often unpleasant connotations. In Goosey, Goosey, Gander for example, goose referred to a prostitute, so “being bitten by...” could be interpreted as an STD. Religious references were never far away, ‘Old man’ being used to describe a priest and ‘left leg’ suggested a Roman Catholic. Hey Diddle Diddle presents numerous explanations including powerful families of the times:

Cat - Richard Catesby

Cow - Neville of Warwick

Moon - Percy of Northumberland

Dog - Lovell

Dish - Richard III

Spoon - Crown Jewels

Roses - Houses of York and Lancaster

This is an entire history lesson in one simple “nursery” rhyme, as are Little Boy Blue, Little Jack Horner, and Sing A Song of Sixpence. An online search online can reveal a multitude of facts and references about our childhood favourites, while also revealing how incorrect certain theories are, such as how Ring-a-ring-a Roses has erroneously been assumed to be about the Black Death. No record exists as to the rhymes’ origin – and the symptoms described in the words do not fit the disease. It is far more likely that the song was written in the mid-1800s as a party game. A return to this subject in the future will certainly be well received, Murray.



Both Hands: Saving The Planet's Diversity



Brenda Tahi, the main speaker at our September monthly meeting, delivered a comprehensive and informative insight into international biodiversity science.

Brenda was raised and resides in Ruatahuna, and works alongside her colleagues at [IPBES](#) the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. 150+ member governments support this initiative with the tasks of

assessing knowledge, guiding policy, building capacity and spotting key gaps, alongside the work of the International Climate Change (IPCC) organisation.

World input into Biodiversity began with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - a treaty by 196 countries under the UN in 1992-93 at the Rio Earth Summit. This was followed by a Conference of the

Parties, member governments meeting every 2 years. In 2022 a Global Framework was established to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, to live in harmony with nature by 2050 and for goals such as conserving 30% of land and oceans by 2030.



We aren't doing very well...

The first IPBES assessment (GA1) was a 3-year project yielding a 1,148 page report published in 2019. It involved 145 selected lead authors and 310 contributing authors from 50 countries. Other fast-track assessments subjects have included pollination, alien species, business and biodiversity and transformational change. Brenda showed the number of living species' extinctions since 1500, with the rates of increase showing significant and worrying trends since 1900. Nature is declining at unprecedented rates in human history, and of the 8 million species on Earth 1 million are threatened.

Consider these numbers:

- 75% of land-based environment is significantly altered, as is 66% of marine areas.
- Over 40% of amphibians, almost a third of corals and more than a third of mammals are threatened.
- At least 680 vertebrate species have already been driven to extinction. This isn't a distant problem, this is happening now.



Conventional approaches are inadequate and IPBES recognises that diverse knowledge systems are essential. Indigenous peoples and local communities have critical insights concerning conservation, adaptation, resilience and governance. GA1 was the first to engage with Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK), with a formal commitment in its rolling work programme up to 2030.

ILK makes a deliberate structured commitment

not a token gesture. It is not just consultation but knowledge-weaving or indigenous-led co-production of knowledge. It is equal to Western science, not subordinate, it brings different questions, answers and solutions and has proven value in resolving environmental and biodiversity issues. Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLC) has become a much-used mnemonic.

Indigenous peoples only account for about 5% of the global population but inhabit 32% of territories and land. They are the most effective stewards of the living world. A study by the University of British Columbia, totalling 111 research papers, showed that indigenous-managed lands match or outperform government protected areas concerning:

- Forest conservation
- Biodiversity protection
- Carbon Storage

Most of these lands remain under-recognised and under-resourced. So many ethnic nationalities have ancient yet profound sayings, which confirm the wisdom of paying due respect to nature. The title of Brenda's talk uses such a statement by Professor Kura Paul-Burke (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Whakahemo – “Wouldn't it make sense to use both hands to help solve contemporary environmental problems, rather than having one hand tied behind our back?”

It's not easy...

- Scientists are still learning how to work equitably and ethically with IPLCs.
- IPLCs are suspicious of research that is not under their control.
- ILK is filtered by academics.
- IPLCs face loss of culture, underfunding, loss of lands, criminalisation and persecution.
- Many member governments of IPBES do not practice what they preach IPBES Policy actions have been submitted to include:
 - Centre IPLCs in governance of, and policy for, conservation and environmental issues.
 - Resource indigenous-led conservation and environment management properly
 - Recognise indigenous knowledge as legitimate knowledge systems, not just an add-on.
 - Give land back - the hard one!



If we just carry on 1 million species are threatened by extinction and 75% of land has been altered by humans. By 2050 there will be a 38-46% decline in species populations, a wilderness the size of Europe will be lost, up to 90% of corals will be degraded and GDP losses totalling US\$9.87 trillion. By 2100 30-40% of all species could be lost, half of Africa's birds and mammals gone and 90% of Asia-Pacific corals in severe degradation.

Brenda concluded her presentation with some hope for the future. Transformative change is possible but requires fundamental shifts in how we govern, how we value nature and who we centre in decision-making. Indigenous and Local Knowledge is key and IPLCs are the best stewards we have on the planet. The questions is not 'Can we save biodiversity?' but 'Will we choose to do what works?'

It's time now for the Second Global Assessment (GA2) of biodiversity, to be delivered by IPBES, and Brenda is a lead author.

This was an honest, hopeful, and challenging presentation from someone who, at this stage in life, has pitched her efforts and expertise into an issue of planetary significance. Brenda shared what's behind this global assessment and how we need to use both hands to do the heavy lifting ahead.

Graham Dainty

KATIKATI'S SEPTEMBER MEETING

The History of New Zealand's First Pop Song



Francis Young gave an informative and entertaining talk about this classic Kiwi folk song from a previous era – Blue Smoke (*Kohu Auwahi*) – to U3A Katikati's September General Meeting.

Francis had researched the origins of the song, and also the interesting histories of the early performers. Blue Smoke was written and initially performed by Ruru Karaitiana and the marvellous Pixie Williams. The song and lyrics were very much based in and from rural New Zealand.

and left New Zealand on the troop ship Aquitania in 1940. The song was written by Ruru when he was on board the Aquitania crossing the Indian Ocean, going to war. Ruru had put the song together in his head and sung it at a ship's concert. It proved very popular on the ship and Ruru tried to sell it to Chappell's publishing on arrival in London - but it was rejected. The name of the song, and its sentimental meaning, probably came from the blue smoke blowing back from the stack of the Aquitania as she steamed north – 'Blue Smoke blowing back home'.

Pixie Williams



Ruru, who was born in 1909 was originally from Dannevirke in southern Hawke Bay where he was raised by his elderly grandparents. He spoke Maori as his first language, but was fluent in English. He had started piano lessons at the Convent School and began performing at the age of six, when he played at Saturday night dances. A decade later he was performing regularly with bands between Palmerston North and Wellington. When he was conscripted he served in the Middle East with the 28th New Zealand (Maori) Battalion. He led the battalion

The Troopship Aquitania



concert party and was a member of its 17-member choir. He returned to New Zealand in 1947, assembled a quintet, and in 1949 they recorded a version of Blue Smoke with singer Pixie Williams. It topped the New Zealand Radio hit parades for six weeks and sold more than 20,000 copies within a year. (Editor's Note: That would qualify as a Platinum seller on *today's* charts – and in 1949 New Zealand's population was only 1.8 million!) Blue Smoke was the first single to be locally recorded and manufactured in New Zealand and was the first release on the local TANZA label.

In 1949 Ruru had married Joan Chettleburgh who had previously shared accommodation at the YWCA on Wellington's Oriental Parade with Pixie Williams: Joan subsequently introduced Pixie to Ruru, who was then her boyfriend. Pixie Williams was from Mohaka, in Hawke's Bay. She was musically very talented from an early age and went to the big smoke of Wellington when she was seventeen, working in a factory. Apart from being a very gifted singer she was a very good hockey player.

Ruru continued to take seasonal jobs as a freezing worker and shearer. He was renowned for his love of exotic cars and for his good manners. He was small in stature and a very quiet and private man, but became transformed when on stage. His proudest moments were hearing Blue Smoke performed by the National Orchestra and a version sung in Maori on the radio. He died in 1970, and Pixie Williams in 2013.

TANZA was established to assist New Zealand artists, and the first discs were pressed on acetate then shellac. The TANZA recording studio was where introductions were made to Jim Carter who's steel guitar playing featured on recordings of Blue Smoke, and also to Stan Dallas who was an early recording whiz working on the pressings on shellac.

Ruru Karaitiana's Band



In later days Blue Smoke was covered by many other artists – Ann Ziegler and Webster Booth, Dean Martin, When The Cats Been Spayed, Lisa Tomlin and Kirsten Te Rito in both English and Maori in 2021.

The final part of Francis' talk was a video clip of troops boarding a troop ship on their way north to the war. It was superbly accompanied by Neil Finn and an aged Jim Carter playing his Hawaiian steel guitar. This was truly a very moving sequence and there were many damp cheeks in the audience at the end of the clip. The link below will take you to the You Tube recording.

[You Tube Pixie Williams Blue Smoke](#)

Have you been impressed by the work a Group Convenor is doing or has done over the time you've known them?

Email Al Mathews (your Newsletter editor) at

newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz and let me know. I really want to

spread the word that U3A Convenors are the heroes and backbone of everything we do.

Their stories deserve to be told.

Ian Howell (Again!) A Time Lord For Our Age?

Ian Howell (whom you met on Page Six) may not wear a long scarf, bow tie, checkered trousers, or a cricketing ensemble the way various Dr Who iterations may have – but he does tinker with time. His “Time in Motion – The Kinetic Art of Ian Howell” runs until October 17th, and while a visit to the Historic Village on 17th Avenue is always a great day out, Ian’s time in motion artworks certainly tick-tocks all the boxes.



Ian is both engineer and artist: his vision and skillsets come together in this stunningly ingenious and beautifully rendered collection of different visions of the fluidity of time and motion. Take the time to visit Ian’s organic mechanicals and appreciate that what we see as time... may not be what we experience as time.

Deadline for material for November’s Newsletter is November 1st.
Newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz

BOOK REVIEW

Regime Change

Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan



Love him or hate him: these are the visceral responses we all seem have to the current USA President. It seems that the only people who don't have an immediate response to hearing the name Donald Trump are those who exist on either Shortland and Coronation Streets.

Pulitzer Prize-winning Maggie Haberman had previously written a lengthy, in-depth, and even-handed biography of Trump. This time she – with New York Times investigative journalist Jonathon – has completed an exhaustive look at the first six months of Trump's second Presidential term.

It's difficult to be objective about Trump, but Haberman and Swan have achieved that in their writing. From their telling, it's obvious that Trump is highly intelligent, an astute politician, and a cunning wielder of power. They also demonstrate that Trump is impulsive, instinctive, often irrational, oblivious to opinions other than his own, power-hungry, and has a dubious set of moral standards.

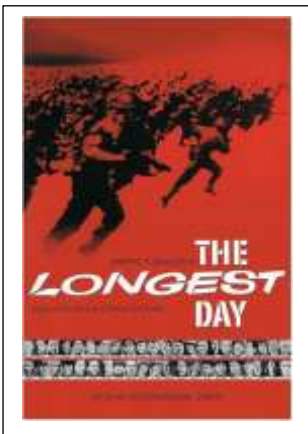
The book is easy to read, highly detailed, well-researched, and every statement of fact has been verified by at least three people. That it is factual cannot be argued: whether it is completely unbiased can be. It is the fairest characterisation of Donald Trump that I have read. It is readily available from the Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty Libraries, and any half-decent book retailer will have it on their shelves.

Al Mathews

MOVIE REVIEW

The Longest Day. 1962.

Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck



I recently rewatched The Longest Day. It's an impressive film, but I'm not at all sure the impressions it leaves behind are entirely my cup of Darjeeling. Made in 1962 and based on military historian Cornelius Ryan's 1959 book of the same name, the film is enormous in scope and ambition. The D-Day landings of June 6th 1944 were the largest amphibious invasion made. Thousands of ships, hundreds of thousands Allied soldiers, many hundreds of aircraft, and a courageous and dedicated enemy. The whole effort could have turned into a messy catastrophe, and the filmic depiction of it could also have been a disastrous affair: but both were highly successful endeavours.

The movie is carried by the stars: Robert Mitchum, Richard Burton, John Wayne, Rod Steiger, Henry Fonda, Kenneth More, Sean Connery (in quite possibly his only ever comedic role), Paul Anka (who also wrote the music), Cürd (Curt) Jurgens, Gert Fröbe, Madeleine Renaud, and many, many more. Three languages – English, German, and French – are used, with very good subtitling.

The scale of the movie is astonishing. Visually, the long shots would smack any gob. The action scenes – and there's an uncountable number – are convincing. The courage displayed by the average English squaddie, American grunt, French Maquis, and German Landser is fair-minded and awe-inspiring.

The movie takes us from the enormous military campgrounds in the British countryside to the famous weather briefing; from the French homes as the Invasion is announced, the German positions and HQ, shipboard scenes, and – of course – to the landings themselves, on the four beaches. It is an astonishing achievement, considering CGI was decades in the future.

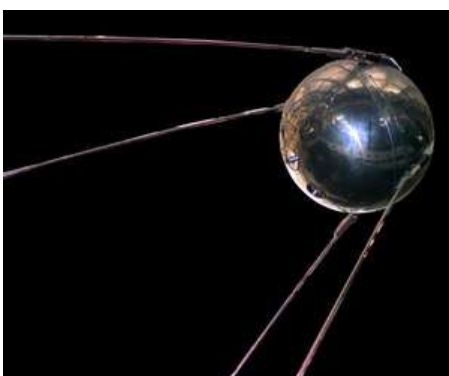
I felt, however, that the script is a little uneven: it's a bit too gung ho, God-Is-On-Our-Side for my taste, and the Germans are depicted as a little clownish. But hey – it was made in 1962, and feelings were still very raw.

The film deserved its plaudits. It was an enormous financial and critical success, winning the Cinematography and Special Effects Oscars, missing out on Best Picture to David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*.

I enjoyed watching it again: it took me more than sixty years to give it a second look. But I probably won't watch it again. *Al Mathews*

October Occurrences:

1st October, 1946: The Nuremburg Trials wrap up, having sentenced a total of 199 individuals, with 37 condemned to death.



4th October 1957: The USSR launched Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite. It went "beep-beep", much as Roadrunner did. The American's Army Ballistic Missile launched Explorer 1 in January 1958 and then established NASA. The Space Race was well and truly on.

8th October 1769: James Cook and his crew on the Endeavour first sight land and go ashore at Poverty Bay, some 500 years after peoples from Hawaiki commenced their settlement of Aotearoa.



28th October 1835: 34 Maori Chiefs come together to sign He Whakaputanga, the Declaration of Independence. It remains a central pillar in discussions regarding indigenous sovereignty and the interpretation of the Treaty.

Looking for a group to join? Check Page 2, or go to [U3A Tauranga](#)

24th October, 1945: In a fit of optimism, much of the world met in San Francisco to establish the United Nations. New Zealand, proudly, stands as one of the original signatories. The UN still exists, and is largely recognised as having been a thoroughly good idea while also being fatally flawed.

28th October, 1890: The very first Labour Day was celebrated – cementing the 8-hour working day into place. Many readers of this page will remember the good ol’ days of the 40-hour week, overtime, time and a half, and – if self-employed – the 120-hour working week. Only one of those things is still a reality.

28th October, 1886: The Statue of Liberty is dedicated. The statue was a gift from France and was erected on Bedloe’s Island. The island was renamed Liberty Island in 1956 and is a National Park, visited by 3.5 to 4 million people every year.



29th October, 1894: Tragedy strikes New Zealand when the steamship “Wairarapa” came to grief on the shores of Great Barrier Island. 121 lives are lost. This remains our worst maritime disaster.



29 October 1919: The Women’s Parliamentary Rights Act is passed, which allows women to run for election to the House of Representatives. Elizabeth McCombs (Labour) became the first woman elected to the House, representing the Lyttleton seat – a mere 14 years after the Act was passed. She succeeded her husband, who had died after the seat for 20 years. She won the by-election by 2600 votes, and died, aged 61, after two years’ service.

The U3A Tauranga Handbook

The amount of work that goes into editing, proofing, sorting, collating, checking, re-checking, and publishing the U3A Tauranga handbook every year is astonishing: all the more so when it is beyond even the slightest shadow of a doubt that it will be out-of-date withing a week of being printed.

The quote that’s on the cover of the handbook gives you the reason: “Those who teach shall also learn, and those who learn shall also teach”. This implies volatility, exchange, growth, and constant flux. This is also something that comes with age: events cascade, changes arrive daily. New groups are starting, some groups wind up. Membership fluctuates. People move, contact details change.

So, if you have a copy of the red 2026 Handbook at home, there will be details in there that may not still hold true. But Executive Committee Member and handbook Editor Margaret marsh had her finger constantly on the pulse – and she is constantly updating and maintaining the online version of the handbook.

You, as a member of U3A Tauranga / Katikati have the right to go to the U3A Tauranga website and check out what’s new, who’s who, and how to get in touch. And you have Margaret to thank for that. Just click on this link: [U3A Tauranga Handbook 2026](#)

From The Electoral Commission



Election day is Saturday 7 November, but an equally important date to remember comes earlier. You must enrol, or update your address if you've moved, by Sunday 25 October. Voting opens the following day, on Monday 26 October. This is a change from previous elections. You will not be able to enrol when you go to vote. If you are not enrolled by 25 October, you will not be able to vote in Election 2026.

Check your details now

Take a few minutes to check that your enrolment details are correct, including your postal address, email address and mobile number. You can enrol, check your details, or update your information at www.vote.nz. If you prefer, call **0800 36 76 56** to request an enrolment form, or text your name and address to 3676 and a form will be posted to you.

Look out for your EasyVote card

This year, the Electoral Commission will send election information (including your EasyVote card and information about electorate candidates) by email or post. If the Commission only has your postal address, or you are on the unpublished roll, you will receive your EasyVote card by post.

Information on voting locations and party lists will be available from www.vote.nz

You can still vote without an EasyVote card, which helps electoral staff find your details quickly, but you do not need the card to vote. As long as you have enrolled by the deadline, you can still vote without it.

Need help?

If you'd like help checking your enrolment details or finding election information, contact the Electoral Commission. Information is available in a range of accessible formats, including large print, audio, Braille and New Zealand Sign Language resources.

Visit www.vote.nz or call **0800 36 76 56**

Deadline for material for November's Newsletter is November 1st.

Newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz

Driver's Licence Cognitive Tests: A Victory For Grey Power

New guidelines on cognitive testing for older drivers

A shift away from routine mandatory cognitive testing in a GP fitness to drive assessment represents a major change to the testing process for many senior drivers throughout New Zealand. This was among several changes agreed on at a meeting in July between the New Zealand Transport Association (Waka Kotahi), the Ministry of Health, the Royal New Zealand College of GPs, and the Office for Seniors.

What guidance have GPs received on use of routine cognitive testing?

Health Pathways is an online clinical information service provided through Health NZ, that is used by health professionals at the point of care. The pathway called "Driver Medical Certificate" has been updated and made available to all GPs nationwide in mid August.

The relevant content is this pathway states the following:

Consider office-based cognitive assessment, eg Mini-ACE if there are concerns about cognitive function or the patient is not known to you and appears to have cognitive difficulty and there is no available past or collateral history to reassure you that there is no significant cognitive decline.

- Routine screening for cognitive impairment is not recommended or indicated for driver medical.
- There is no screening tool currently available to determine cognitive fitness to drive.

Going forward seniors due for assessment, are advised:

- That it is best to see a health professional from their usual practice, someone who knows them and their medical history well.
- If the GP or nurse practitioner providing the assessment doesn't know the person well, they may screen for cognitive impairment especially if they don't have enough information to be certain there is no impairment.
- If screening identifies cognitive impairment, then there will be further assessment to decide if driving is affected. This might be an on-road safety test (ORST) or an occupational therapy driving assessment. See more on the NZTA website

NZTA have advised that their medical team will not process a licence revocation if the only reason on the medical certificate is a cognitive screening score, in that case the team will follow-up with the GP **and will not automatically revoke the licence**.

As we are aware that some of our members have had their licence revoked due to a failed cognitive test, with no other medical issue identified, NZTA is prepared to review the case of drivers who meet these criteria and would like to have their licence considered for re-instatement. If the review finds that the licence should not have been revoked, there will still be a need for a new medical certificate confirming fitness to drive prior to re-instatement.

If you feel that you are in this category and want a review, please provide your contact details and the date that your licence was revoked, purely because of a failed cognitive test at the GP practice.

What health practitioners might discuss with older drivers

- Safe driving depends on many factors – memory, attention, vision, physical abilities, reaction time and overall health. All areas will be looked at together.
- Tests of thinking and memory can help spot concerns but medical history, vision, physical abilities, and feedback from family or support people are also considered.
- If there's uncertainty about safety on the road, based on the tests done at the clinic, an on-road safety test (ORST) is the best way to check current driving skills.
- The decision regarding fitness to drive is a clinical one, bound by statutory responsibilities. Input and preferences from senior drivers matter in order to make decisions which are fair and safe.

It is important to remember:

- As we age, changes in health, vision, and thinking can affect driving safety. A doctor's role is to keep seniors (and others) safe on the road while supporting their independence.
- A health condition may not necessitate loss of licence to drive. Many people with health conditions can still drive safely. Decisions are made based on overall health and driving ability, not just a diagnosis.
- If seniors are not fit to drive their health practitioner is legally required to inform NZTA of this in writing.

Grey Power Magazine, September, 2026. Reprinted by permission.

Quotes from people who know more than I do.

- 1: You cannot change that which you do not confront.
- 2: Sometimes good things fall apart so better things can come together.
- 3: Don't think of cost. Think of value.
- 4: Sometimes you need to distance yourself so you can see clearly.
- 5: Too many people buy things they don't need with money they don't have to impress people they don't know.
- 6: No matter how many mistakes you make or slowly you progress, you are still way ahead to somebody who isn't trying.
- 7: If a person wants to be part of your life, they will make an effort to do so. Think twice before making a space in your heart for people who do not make the effort to stay.
- 8: Saying someone is ugly doesn't make you any prettier or handsome.
- 9: The only normal people you know are the ones you don't know very well.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS

PRESIDENT: Bev Edlin 027 618 4787 president@U3Atauranga.org.nz

VICE PRESIDENT: Phil Hansen, 027 705 0408 vp@U3Atauranga.org.nz

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Gail Moore, 021 299 1009 ipp@U3Atauranga.org.nz

SECRETARY: Kay Ebdon 07 544 5079 secretary@U3Atauranga.org.nz

TREASURER: Carol Outen 027 542 3416 treasurer@U3Atauranga.org.nz

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR: TBA

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Al Mathews 022 1615 313 newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz

DATA MANAGER: See Membership above. data@U3Atauranga.org.nz

SPEAKERS/MONTHLY MEETING ORGANISER: Mary Stewart 027 334 9211

speakers@U3Atauranga.org.nz

KATIKATI SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON: Pam Mazoyer, 021 104 2925

katikati.chair@u3atauranga.org.nz

GROUP COORDINATORS:

A-C: Margaret Marsh 07 281 2408 a2c.groups@U3Atauranga.org.nz

D-H: Gloria Selkirk, 021 595 025 d2h.groups@U3Atauranga.org.nz

I-P: Linda Clifford 027 552 2819 i2p.groups@U3Atauranga.org.nz

R-Z: Jan Bradley, 027 271 4272 r2z.groups@U3Atauranga.org.nz

KATIKATI: John Le Gallais, 021 139 8878 katikati.groups@u3atauranga.org.nz

NON-EXECUTIVE ROLES:

ASSET REGISTER: Richard Thompson 021 827 471 assets@U3Atauranga.org.nz

GROUP EQUIPMENT: Peter Simmons 07 576 0952 equipment@U3Atauranga.org.nz

HANDBOOK EDITOR: Margaret Marsh 07 281 2408

HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER: Liz Stewart, 021 022 10609

LIBRARIAN: Anne Withy, 021 165 0298

MEET & GREET ORGANISER: Jenny Pryor 07 219 7840

MONTHLY MEETING IT SUPPORT: Phil Hansen 027 705 0408

MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER SUPPORT: Phil Sinclair 07 576 3823

PHOTOGRAPHERS: TBC

PUBLICITY OFFICER: Gail Moore 021 299 1009 publicity@U3Atauranga.org.nz

SKILLS ADMINISTRATOR: Carol Reid, 027 636 1973

skillsadmin@U3Atauranga.org.nz

WEB MANAGER: Ian Howell, 022 590 1234 webmaster@U3Atauranga.org.nz

THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT U3A

U3A Tauranga offers a wide range of interest groups, some of which are based in Katikati. Members are welcome to apply to join any of our groups, full details of which are regularly updated in the online Handbook. For more information, just click on the link on our website U3Atauranga.org.nz

If you wish to become a member of U3A Tauranga, you can complete the online application at [Application Form | U3A Tauranga \(infooodle.com\)](http://Application Form | U3A Tauranga (infooodle.com)).

NEXT ISSUE: 12 November, 2026. Deadline 01 November.

newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz