



May-June 2025



Winter's on its way, which means that thoughts of beaches, tropical islands, and getting right away from the chills and ills that always pounce at this time of year are front and centre of our minds. Alternatively? Dress up warmly and get out on any of the fabulous walkways and cycle paths that are freely available around our beautiful region.



IN THIS ISSUE

Tribute: Lati Moodie.



Lati, with Viv Mills accepting a Tauranga City award 2015, on behalf of U3A Tauranga, in recognition of community group work by U3A Tauranga.

It is with deep sadness we share the news that Lati passed away on Thursday April 24th after a long illness. Lati joined U3A Tauranga in 2011. She was a member of the Science Today, History A & B, and the International Affairs groups as well as initiating and convening the Shakespeare Group until 2020.

Lati was a highly valued member of each of her groups contributing sound and rational views to discussion. She gave thoroughly researched talks to the groups making very good use of visual material via Power Point presentations which we have all appreciated. Lati joined the executive in the role of Secretary in 2014 and 2015. She took on the role again in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Lati's contributions to Executive meetings were always positive, thoughtful and well-informed. In her role as Secretary and Group Convener Lati gave 110%.

Lati contributed to the updating and amendments of the Privacy Policy, the IT Policy, the Health and Safety Guidelines, the Travel Reimbursement Guidelines and the much needed Constitution review in 2021.

Never one to seek the limelight, Lati's behind the scenes contribution to U3A Tauranga was huge and her election to Life Membership in 2021 was richly deserved.

She will be greatly missed.

Gail Moore

President

U3A Tauranga Inc.

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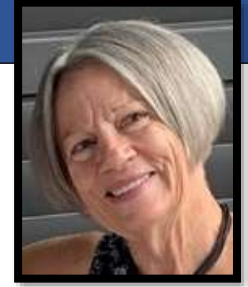
Katikati: Francis Young, Al Mathews, Stewart Cairns, Majorie Squires.

GM photographs: Colin Basire, Glenne Findon, Al Mathews.

Let's Get Quizzical!

- 1: What were the names of the Titanic's sister ships?
- 2: What is the name of Antarctica's highest mountain?
- 3: What was Judy Garland's real name?
- 4: What was a Bristol Type 170?
- 5: What was James Bond's naval rank?
- 6: What was Keith Holyoake's middle name?
- 7: What is Hamilton's Maori name?
- 8: Who designed jewelled Easter Eggs for Czar Nicholas II?
- 9: What was Louis Bleriot famous for?
- 10: What metal established Queenstown?

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings everyone,

Our gardens are happy and the children across The Bay of Plenty thoroughly enjoyed playing under the recent cyclone effects with rain, thunder, lightning. and ever so much wind. I do hope nevertheless all were able to enjoy any planned Easter celebrations with family, friends or at public events.

My vertical palms became horizontal for two days but, hey presto the sun arrived, the rain gone for now and the wind has dropped, result being the resurrection to vertical status of my palms to greet sun. All is good in the Bay.

March and April were busy times for U3A Tauranga with presentations to local retirement villages and a presence at two Expos. The first the Wellness held at Bayswater Village, then at the Senior & Travel Expo held at Baypark Arena. Both Expos provided an excellent opportunity to share, to a very large public attendance what U3A Tauranga has to offer retired and semi-retired people in Tauranga and Katikati.

The first of two annual Convener meetings was held in March when an opportunity was given to conveners to discuss in small groups aspects of their position and to share ideas with others. Some very good discussions took place and a number of ideas raised have been passed on to coordinators and the executive for consideration. A huge thank you in recognition of the tireless work and care given by two retiring conveners for the years they have given in their convener roles. Firstly, Betty Bishop, 30 years to the Music Appreciation group and to Jean Akers for 10 years to the Writers' Inc group. As conveners are the cogs that keep the wheels turning a thank you goes to all for the valued support of our interest groups.

A New Members meeting was held on March 28th. We extend a very warm welcome to U3A Tauranga. Great to see that most are well established in groups of choice. Introductions from each member revealed inspiring background experiences, responsibilities held and a keenness to share with other members skills and creativity.

Due to the Easter break the Monthly Meeting was brought forward to Thursday , as notified. The weather was a serious concern as well as recognising that many members may have gone on holiday. A low turnout was anticipated but oh my goodness more chairs were hurriedly produced by the Yacht Club staff as the numbers kept on coming. It was a super crowd and Steve Subritzky gave a very interesting and thought provoking talk based on his trip through India and Nepal.

Apologies to anyone who missed out on a mini Easter egg.

Nga mihi nui,

Warm regards.

Gail Moore

President

U3A Tauranga Inc.

Your U3A Needs You!

Every time you attend a Group Meeting or come along to one of our hugely informative monthly meetings you are enjoying the end result of someone else's efforts. This is as it should be: we are a sharing organisation, basing our entire raison d'être on the fact that we all have something to share, something to contribute. Our individual skills, knowledge, and experiences makes each one of us unique, and U3A gives us the opportunity to share that uniqueness. All organisations like ours depends on the input of people's time and skills. Occasionally, due to any one of a wide range of factors, a need you may be able to meet comes up. Chair stacking. Helping in the kitchen. Writing for the Newsletter. Assisting with your data-management skills, accounting, administrative, or creative abilities.

Even if there's no needs right now, your Committee would love to know if they can call on you some time in the future should a particular need arise: if a need arises, we want to be able to meet that need straight away, with having to advertise.

If you have skills that you know we can use in the future, please let us know that we can call on you. Sharing is what we do, and it's really fulfilling. Contact our Secretary or President and tell them that you want to help out.

As ours is an entirely voluntary society, we rely on willing members to step forward to take on executive roles. If you can help, please contact either our President, Gail Moore, at president@u3atauranga.kiwi.nz or Kay Ebden, Secretary, at secretary@u3atauranga.kiwi.nz



Quizzical Answers

- 1: Olympic and Britannic.
- 2: Mount Vinson, at 4,892 metres.
- 3: Frances Ethel Gumm.
- 4: The Bristol Freighter aircraft.
- 5: Commander.
- 6: Keith **Jacka** Holyoake.
- 7: Kirikiriroa (long stretch of river alluvial soils).
- 8: Peter Karl Gustavovich Faberge (award yourself extra points for the middle names!)
- 9: He was the first to fly across the English Channel. He also designed and manufactured the first practical automobile headlights.
- 10: Gold.

LIBRARY BOOK REVIEW

How Civil Wars Start. Barbara F Walter.
Available at your local Library.

There have been thousands of horror-themed books published since Beowulf hit the shelves back in the 9th century CE, but none, I contend, quite as scary as Barbara F Walters' "How Civil Wars Start". More than 250 civil wars have erupted since 1945, to the point that they are now so commonplace as to be an acceptable phenomenon.

Over the past 40 years Barbara Walters has advised organisations such as the UN and the CIA on the causes of civil conflict, and how – with the slow decline in international democracy – they are starting to become a grave threat to the major powers.

Civil Wars don't happen in settled democracies like New Zealand, or in autocracies like North Korea: they start in the nations that are in flux, that are moving from one extreme to the other. The last decade has seen a rise in authoritarianism in many settled democracies, including the USA.

This is a knowledgeable, clearly-written warning – one that offers solutions. Scary, but hopeful.

The World's Best Movies

Tauranga's Festival and Foreign Films Group has a new meeting date - the **4th Tuesday of the month at 11.30 am** at the Beach House Theatre, Pacific Coast Village, 210 Maranui Street, Papamoa. As the new convener for the group, I am sure that I can speak for everyone in thanking Rosemary Heath for her excellent convenorship and input over the past 10 years: it is very much appreciated. Rosemary has passed onto me the large collection of DVDs which the group own going back to 2009! We watched a very interesting movie on 22 April (my first meeting as convener), the French film entitled "Séraphine", a fascinating story about the French primitivist painter Séraphine "de Senlis" Louis, (1864-1942), her life and work. The film was the deserved winner at France's César Awards in 2009, sweeping up the 7 prizes for Best Film, Actress, Original Screenplay, Photography, Score, Costumes, and Production Design. If you would like to join us for a free afternoon at the movies, please contact the group convener, Margaret Marsh, 07-281-2408.



Park to Park: A remarkable and artistic walk along an historical shoreline.

Can you imagine walking from Kulim Park in Otumoetai to Ferguson Park in Matua and while strolling along you enjoy viewing a wide range of artistic sculptures and art works – all crafted to remind us of the rich historical associated each piece has with this shoreline.

On Friday (20th June) a Trustee of Park2Park Trust and the Chair of the Trust's Curatorial Panel will briefly outline for U3A members the conceptual plans and potential aspects that will, over the coming years, become a great asset to the Community – one that will be more than just an attraction – one that will take you on an educational journey while also reminding you of how unique this piece of foreshore is - not only in Tauranga but also as a piece of land that helped shape part of this country's history.

MEMOIR WRITING: Learning *how* to do it, then *doing* it.

Just as it is possible for an eight-year-old to write an orchestral symphony*, it is possible for you to write your memoirs well without learning the first basic steps you must make. It's possible, but unlikely.

Knowing how to do something always makes the doing easier. Ask any knitter, chef, saxophone player, geologist, or brain surgeon.

One of the things about being human is the undertaking of tasks we don't know how to do. Some of us find this challenging and exciting, and our journey will mean we'll have to re-invent the best ways of doing it. Others (like me!) will bash away, discourage ourselves, and throw our toys from the cot. That's why there are two different types of Memoir Writing courses / groups for you with U3A. One



will teach you the HOW, the other encourages you as you DO. The HOW course will teach about structure, goal-setting, character writing, looking at our grammatical and punctuation skills, clear and disciplined writing. The basic tools you'll need to get your fingers tapping coherently at the keyboard. The DO groups will listen, advise, and encourage you on your journey.

Writing is not easy. It will challenge you. But the challenge diminishes as you exercise your HOW TO tools. Story is not easy. Any good stand-up comedian knows this: their set-ups are as carefully crafted as that statue that Michelangelo wrenched out of

that block of marble. Story is demanding, contrary, and often baffling. But your story is the one you know best, and it's the one you can write about the best. It is also the most valuable legacy you can leave your tamariki and mokopuna.

If you should look at joining a Memoir group, make sure you know what sort of group it is. Is it a **HOW TO** group? Or is it a **WE'RE DOING IT** group? Al Mathews.

**Mozart did it. The symphony thing, I mean: Symphony No. 1 in E \flat major, K. 16 – and written when he was 8.*

**Knowledge is like money: To be of value it must circulate, and in circulating it can increase in quantity – and, hopefully, in value.
Louis L'Amour**

The Dainty Touch for May

MAY'S MONTHLY MEETING MAIN SPEAKER: GRAHAM DAINTY, ENTERTAINING US WITH ANECDOTES, HIGHLIGHTS, AND THE HUMOUROUS SIDE OF A LIFETIME SPENT IN AVIATION.

Graham Dainty was born in Wiltshire and has lived in many places within the United Kingdom and around the world. He was a pilot, 'A' category instructor and examiner in the Royal Air Force for 18 years and won the British Helicopter Championship in 1974. He joined Bristow Helicopters Ltd. in 1981, based in Aberdeen, Scotland, where he was a Training Captain and examiner.

In 1995 he became Head of Training for Bristow, responsible for the entire world-wide company training activities and flying standards. He was heavily involved with the introduction and implementation of Human Factors training in aviation, receiving the Royal Aeronautical Society CRM award in 2002.

On retirement he moved to France and continued in a training rôle with **Helisim**, the simulator division of Eurocopter in Marseilles. He has over 13,000 flying hours, is twice widowed and now lives near Tauranga, New Zealand. He is an adopted Scot and Runrig fan, loves dogs and tries to maintain the beautiful house and garden established by his greatest love - Julie.

Cooking Classes For Seniors

Fay Mayo addressed Tauranga's April monthly audience with a resumé of the Senior Chef programme that she has been facilitating for 4 years in Tauranga. She pointed out that as we age our diet can have a dramatic effect on our health, by not necessarily looking at the salt levels, sugar and fat that are in the products we buy and how important that is.

They can contribute to already existing conditions. Our bodies are ageing, so it's important to support those healthy living styles for as long as we can.

The eight-week programme is fully funded by the Waiapu Diocese, and participants take home a cookbook to help them on their culinary journey. She said that the courses book up very quickly and to enrol one must be over 65 and single. Each week the course lasts 3 hours, which includes 1 hour of instruction, 1 hour of preparation in pairs and then eating and clearing up.

Besides basic nutrition, the course also teaches seniors how to "shop smarter" and use a meal planner, encouraging the use of a wide range of fruit, vegetables and pulses. Additionally looking at healthier, cheaper meal options is encouraged. The course also looks at cooking the right amount of food for one person and the use of freezing meals.

Fay gave some examples of people who have benefitted from the Senior Chef programme, which runs at St George's Church in Gate Pā, St John's in Ōtūmoetai and at the Papamoa East Anglican Church.

Get Hooked On Opera

U3A's Opera Appreciation Group

Aspects of opera can seem strange. But give it a try and you'll soon find yourself absorbed in a truly magical experience. People often feel intimidated by opera, assuming it to be either socially exclusive, pretentious or intellectually complicated. But at the simplest level, operas are just about great stories set to music.

There was no opera in my life when I was growing up, but I did enjoy being taken to see musicals films such as 'The King and I', 'South Pacific', 'Show Boat', and 'West Side Story'. I started to think about what music adds to a work of theatre in terms of atmosphere and characterisation. I heard my first real opera, Georges Bizet's 'Carmen' on a school trip as a teenager. I was already keen on drama and this seemed like drama on steroids. Although I didn't understand everything it being sung in French, I could tell it was an exciting story, with passionate music sung by people whose lives seemed to depend on it. I was hooked!



Opera requires a bit more effort to come to grips with than a musical, but its additional layers of musical complexity and sophistication were, for me at least, ultimately more rewarding. Operas deal with all of life's big issues, from unrequited love to the death of a loved one. They address social issues too: political rivalries, power struggles, and violence.

Opera was invented in Italy around the year 1600 as a new way of telling stories through music, drama, dance and staging. Over the centuries, opera took off all over the western world. Some composers – Verdi, Wagner, Puccini – made opera their specialism. Others, such as Mozart, wrote operas alongside orchestral, instrumental and choral music.

If you are not sure if you like opera, or if you are an opera buff, then come along and join our group. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 1-4 pm.

Please contact our Co-Convener Kathleen Fraser (022-187-8588) if you wish to come along and try us out! [Opera page on our website.](#)

Unravelling AI: Dr Jessica Turner, University of Waikato

Dr Jessica Turner is a Lecturer and Programme Lead for Au Reikura - School of Computing & Mathematical Sciences based at the University of Waikato's Tauranga campus – and was in excellent form when she addressed the March Monthly Meeting of Katikati's U3A sub-branch.



Jessica told us about both the incredible advances in Robotics (robot sheepdogs, anyone?) and in the diverse ways AI will be making enormous changes in the way humanity will live, work, and play in the future.

A number of companies from around the world have, after years of research and development, created a wide variety of AI-powered semi-humanoid robots (now simply called “bots”), such as Abigail, which works at Residential Care Homes; Cruise bots, which are delivery robots for use in hospitals, warehouses, restaurants, large offices, and educational institutions – including the University of Waikato's Tauranga campus.

And then there's the robot nick-named “Norbert” that's been tested on England's green and pleasant pastures as well as New Zealand's toughest hill country (and our vineyards!). These robotic dogs, initially designed for the military, have been adapted to work as sheepdogs. It seems that the sheep responded well to the yellow and black Norberts, which act astonishingly like their black and white Border Collie progenitors.



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Jessica's spirited talk addressed the unease some of us may have still entertained: looking at the social, legal, and moral misuses AI can be put to. These problems are real and are being addressed by countless R & D private and public institutions and campuses internationally, and Jessica's students are part of that vital work. Our 60-strong audience was deeply involved with her presentation, and responded with a barrage of meaningful questions, which were answered with positive and warm insight by Jessica.

The Elms: Tauranga's History, Tauranga's Haven



Tauranga's Main Speaker, March 2025: Andrew Gregg, general manager of the Elms Foundation since 2015, with 20 years' experience in the culture sector, was introduced as the main speaker for our March monthly meeting. After some audio/visual teething problems Andrew acknowledged those volunteers in the room who assist with the running of The Elms under his respected managerial style. Te Papa The Elms was a finalist in the Western Bay community awards in 2025, with the tagline '*The heart of the community*'.

The last history of this special place in Tauranga was written some 40 years ago. A new book is imminent, entitled '*The spirit of a place*', the opening paragraph being read out by Andrew. This under-pinned his presentation about a site already visited by most of his audience - an oasis in modern urban life. A short drone footage film showed the site, which occupies 2.5 acres and receives 10-14,000 visitors annually.

The library (1839) still exists but the chapel (1847) has gone. The belfry and gates remain as well as many trees and the oldest oak in New Zealand (1829). All the occupants have been passionate gardeners, in the English style. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) were the original creators, in the persons of Alfred and Charlotte Brown, and it is one of the oldest New Zealand European gardens.

Andrew explained that The Foundation was established as a charitable trust in 1998, to bring the past to life and relevant to the future. He went on to describe refurbishment work carried out during the period 1980-2021 which included re-roofing, sub-floor repairs and seismic strengthening. The earlier photographs of work in progress expressly indicated the changes to working practices brought about by Health and Safety! The ongoing repairs are numerous and include a lot of painting.



Te Papa Heritage Garden, completed in 2020, was Highly Commended in the 2023 NZ Timber Design awards and conservation remains a key element. The 55-year-old Australian cedar was felled in 2024, due to fungus damage, but the timber has been processed and stored for future use. A series of time-lapsed photographs then showed the area of the site being cleared in preparation for a visitors centre. The project is currently paused with

the Tauranga museum and library work taking precedence and discussions on-going as to how to fit The Elms work in. The archaeologists had access during the clearance, discovering bones from a dog, middens and some Māori artefacts but no human remains. The empty space is currently a car park! The next phase is to design the visitors centre, with a clean slate to work from.



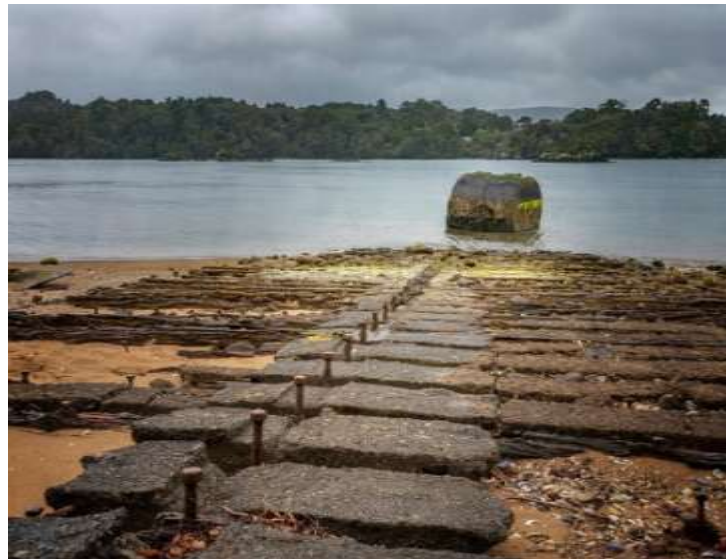
Andrew said that the new book is to be released on June 25 this year. The author is Sarah Ell who has written several works about NZ history, and a short video gave a tantalising introduction to a fascinating book. Andrew then once again acknowledged the work of the volunteers at The Elms, many of whom are U3A members. He invited any interested people to submit an application to join the team, by completing an appropriate form. The options to help include guided tours, history, archives, school visits and buildings so there are several aspects to suit different personal interests and skills. Andrew completed his presentation by reading the last 2 paragraphs of 'The spirit of a place', a perfect epilogue to his talk.

Graham Dainty

Our Sub-Antarctic Islands

Christmas Island – Cold, Beautiful, and Bountiful.

U3A member Brian Jones recounted his visits to, and knowledge of the Snares, Auckland and Campbell Islands in a very informative short talk. He explained that his father, a Post Office worker with knowledge of morse code, was dispatched for 12 months during World War II to Auckland Island, as a coast watcher looking out for enemy shipping. That has given Brian a personal



link to the region. He pointed out that no enemy shipping was ever spotted and that the only occasional communications his father's family received was '*your son is well*'. Additionally, the watchers were not covered by the Geneva Convention, in the event of capture!

Historically the few settlers to the islands in the 1800s found life extremely difficult. Whalers and sealers set up temporary bases but many seals were killed, with a modest revival in the mid-1820s. Very little top soil and constant cloud cover, restricting sunlight, make cultivation near impossible and the fish were

inedible due to worm infestation.

The Auckland Islands cover the size of Coromandel Peninsula and have a number of shipwrecks. In 1866 the *General Grant* foundered on the west coast.

She was apparently carrying gold bullion which so far has never been recovered, despite several salvage attempts. Ten survivors waited for 18 months before being rescued. 5 members of the *Grafton* crew, wrecked in 1864, managed to reach Stewart Island and then returned for their other 2 crew mates. All settlements were abandoned after 3 years, some of the inhabitants returning to their native Chatham Islands. Remnants of certain buildings and artifacts remain, including the coast watchers' huts and graves.



Brian has made two visits to South Auckland, which require a permit and shore access can only be achieved by using inshore inflatable rubber boats.

His numerous photographs gave the audience some vivid examples of the flora and fauna including close-ups of seals, sea lions and albatross.



With few visitors and hostile weather conditions the islands are home to many species not found anywhere else in the world.

Brian directed people to Heritage Expeditions for those wanting to visit, as well as indicating numerous books and publications for the curious among us. **Graham Dainty.**

Editor's Note: There has been (as yet) no tariff imposed on Christmas Island by any nation.



KATIKATI'S MOVIE OF THE MONTH

Katikati is well served with its little theatre/cinema. The local U3A movie group recently spent an excellent Sunday afternoon viewing "Touch", This is the story of elderly Icelandic widower, Kristofer, recalling his first love Miko, the daughter of a London-based Japanese restaurant owner. Kristofer had been a student at the prestigious London School of Economics when, disillusioned with study and the boorish behaviour of his fellow students, takes a dishwashing job at the local Japanese restaurant. Here Kristofer becomes immersed in Japanese language, food, customs, and the lovely Miko.



Icelandic film director, Baltasar Kormakur, takes the viewer on a gentle meander through a snowbound Iceland, to London, and – eventually - Japan. The film settings are considered and authentic especially the Japanese restaurant, Kristofer's cosy London bedsit, and his Icelandic home.

Without spoiling the storyline there were a number of things to ponder in this film, especially travelling during the time of Covid, the after-effects of the

atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the clashing social mores of the 1960s, Japanese family dynamics, and the psychology of one's first love.

My only grumble with watching foreign films is that too often the translation script is too difficult to read against the background of the film.

The story line, cinematography, and music all fuelled our after-movie discussion: all agreed that the film was beautiful not only visually, but also in its strong story of love found, lost, and redeemed.

Marjorie Squire, Katikati U3A movie convenor.



Just Another Quiet U3A Meeting....



Mining: A Clean and Responsible Corporate Citizen? Kit Comes To Katikati.

9th April – Guest Speaker Kit Wilson, Communications Officer from Oceania Gold, Waihi

This was a very informative, and at times confrontational, talk about the current situation regarding Oceania Gold operations in Waihi, and the proposed extension into the Coromandel Peninsula. Much of this area is a designated Forest Park with two species of very rare and unique invertebrates, the Hochstetter's and Archey's frogs. The Department of Conservation is involved in all the mining decisions to ensure the ongoing viability of not only the frogs but also, thankfully, the entire Forest Park.

Having previously been referred to as an 'oily and greasy apologist for a sunset industry' Kit went into great detail to explain much of the current philosophy, and legislation, regarding the modern mining methods and the restrictions and requirements of mining specifically in New Zealand. Currently there are huge 'bonds' required before any mining can take place, and very intensive requirements are imposed to ensure that previous 'orange rivers' caused by unstable tailings and outdated methodology do not happen and, where they have occurred, can be satisfactorily fixed. Having stated this, there are ongoing issues with some of the older mining sites in the Karangahake Gorge area and other local regions. These issues date back generations, and some are still significant liabilities.

There are now ecologically 'clever' methods of digging new mines – spiral mining is now one method whereby there is back-fill during the process which prevents any subsidence, such as occurred around the old Martha Mine excavations and the 'big hole' in Waihi township. This, and tailings impoundment requirements and total redesign and restrictions on what were previously 'tailings dams' is another method of ensuring more reliable and 'safe' mining in the present day and into the future. There are some 18000 hectares of gold bearing land in the Coromandel region, much of which could potentially be mined in the future. Royalties of 2% of profits from mining are paid to the government. From sometimes a very negative outlook, and media hype about mining in this area, Kit's talk did give some indication of a 'better way' of managing future mining and prospecting this unique region. He did stress the uncertainty of how the new Fast Track legislation and also the updated Resource Management Act could impact on all future mining decisions. This was a fascinating and thought-provoking address; one that was well presented and explained by Kit. I think he well negated the 'oily and greasy apologist' label with this talk, and his response to some of the questions following his address.



SMILE AWHILE



I think my guardian angel drinks.



Teen Warned Not To Accept Group Chat Invites From National Security Advisors She Doesn't Know



Peter Nixon: Rock Star Tauranga's Main Speaker, June 2025.

The Geological History of Tauranga

Almost every day we see and are familiar with the landforms of the Tauranga area where we live: Mt Maunganui, the Ocean Beaches, Tauranga Harbour, the Kaimai Range, Matakana Island, Papamoa Hills, and so on. These are the geological structures that make the Bay of Plenty what it



is today, shaping our climate and weather patterns, providing us with the rich soils and conditions that make our Kiwifruit and Avocado orchards so bounteous.

Peter Nixon is an enthusiastic amateur geologist who has lived in Tauranga for the last 25 years. He has an Earth Sciences Degree from London University, has taught Geology in local schools, and taken students and adults on geology field trips in the local area.

Even if you've never thought about how our great geographical and geological structures were formed and how long ago, or wondered about the types of rocks they're made of – and whether they're as permanent or ever-changing, you will find Peter's talk will answer these questions, and set out a geological history of the Tauranga area in the form of a timeframe. This help you to understand and appreciate how events in the past shaped the present-day landscape.



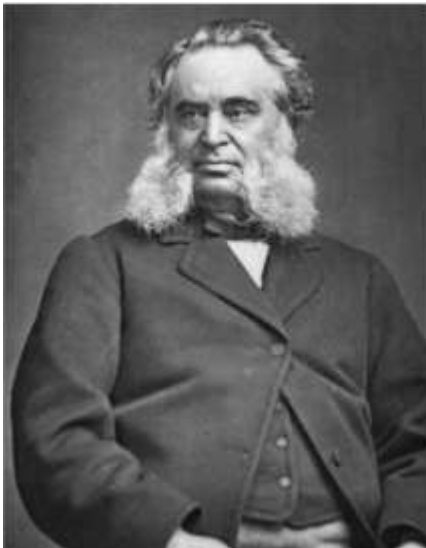
Charlie and the All Sorts Factory: A Quick History of Licorice*.

The joys and wonders of the *Glycyrrhizin Glabra* (trying saying *that* twice after a couple of G&Ts!) plant were discovered millennia ago – exactly how, why, and when is lost in the mists of time. Suffice to say that someone – probably a healing woman, fond of herbs and tree-barks – dried the roots of this small pea-related plant, then extracted and concentrated the juices. I had always assumed the name “liquorice” described this process: extracting the liquor, or juicy bits, from the plant. Not so: the correct word “Licorice” is a corruption of the Greek name Glycyrrhizin. Easy when you know. Cleopatra, a woman of great power, intelligence, and high cunning used the extract as a beauty aid, with so much success that she sparked a rebellion in Rome, a civil war, and a Shakespearean play where she knew all the lines.



Then, a few centuries later, apothecarian chemist George Dunhill (no relation to the – cough, cough – smoking Dunhill) added sugar to dissolved medicinal licorice pastilles. The result was a chewy, non-medicinal confectionery he called the Pontefract Cake, making the Yorkshire village of Pontefract an exotic destination for dozens of tourists. This was in the 1720s, when life was simple – so he complicated his customers’ lives by also calling the sweet a Yorkshire Penny. Dunhill also started a Glycyrrhizin plantation in Pontefract. His wealth grew, and so did the competition. It wasn’t long before other licorice factories sprouted in Pontefract, making Pomfret Cakes, Catherine Wheels, Pipes, Pencils,

Bootlaces, Straps, Staples, Straws: if they could have made a life-sized bust of King George II out of licorice, they would have. They couldn’t, and – thankfully – didn’t.



Then, after only 50 years or so, George Bassett, the proud owner of a prodigious set of mutton-chop whiskers, made his mark on the licorice community. In 1842 his Sheffield factory released licorice sweets and novelties that incorporated the licorice with a flavoured and coloured cream paste. Mmmm! This remarkable innovation was mentioned in many notable scientific articles, letters to the Editor of the Sheffield Cutler (a newspaper of no renown whatever), and neo-lithic style hill-carvings.

But the novelties were **not** a smash hit. Not even close. They simply didn't sell.

Enter Charlie Thompson, and hero to all who like a colourful licorice lolly! Frustrated by his lack of success as a Bassett Licorice Novelty salesman, Charlie accidentally tipped his entire sample case over in a prospective customer's sweet shop. The customer, looking at the rainbow jumble of licorice on his floor, said "Tell you what, Charlie: I'd buy them all mixed up like that."

And so the humble bag of Licorice All Sorts became a staple in every sweet shop, candy bar, dairy, supermarket, and gas station in the world. Except for North Korea, where they were invented by the Great Leader, and sold as The Great Leader's Atomic Licorice Jumble.



**PLEASE NOTE: Some of the historical facts in this article may not hold up to a close scrutiny. A tongue, stuck firmly in the cheek, is advised. It is, however, mostly accurate.*



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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 www.u3atauranga.kiwi.nz For information regarding the Katikati groups, contact Jenny or Allan Mathews at amjam09@gmail.com

If you wish to become a member of U3A Tauranga, you can complete the online application at [Application Form | U3A Tauranga \(infoodle.com\)](#). [Return to Page 2 index](#)

Newsletter

Next issue: July-August 2025 Deadline for material is 26 June.
We welcome your articles at newsletter@u3atauranga.kiwi.nz