U3A Newsletter

Movember 2026



It's Movember! Grow a Mo to help save lives!

Memoir Writing, Epsom U3A

November! The month when fireworks, exploded to commemorate the failed assassination of an English king 500 years ago, terrify horses, livestock, birds, cats, and dogs, none of which know anything about Kings, Queens, or religion. It's also **Movember**, when men are challenged to grow and moustache and collect a few bucks to help research into prostate and testicular cancers.

Group Vacancies

Tauranga:

- Inky Tales Memoir Writing
- The Five Hundred Group

Katikati

- Film Appreciation
- Poetry Plus
- French Conversation
- Walking
- Memoir Writing
- Book Club # 2 (Potentially starting February 2026)

Rotary'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,
Katikati: Stewart Cairns
Photographs: Margaret Marsh, Al Mathews.

Contents

3: The General Knowledge Quiz
5: From the President
6: Tauranga's Cyclists, and KK's Wordsters
7: EGM Notice
8: November's Speakers
9: Tauranga's October Report
11: Katikati's October Report
13: Memoir Writing
14: Walking With Robbie
15: Book Review.
16: November's Big Dates.
17: Tauranga's New Library
18: From U3A Epsom
19: Tiaki Takutai: Saving Our Beaches
20: Important Numbers & Emails

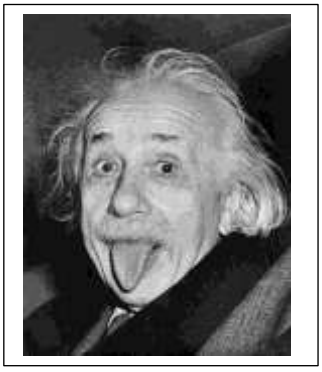
The Great Big
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

All photographs and illustrations sourced from Wikimedia

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE GENERALS?

1: Who was the General put in charge of a fake army in England during WW2?

2: 60% of which General was purchased by the USA government in 2009?



3: Who was the Russian General that Bonaparte beat at Austerliz in 1805.

4: Which General is Albert Einstein commonly associated with?

5: Who was the Carthaginian General and statesman who, during the Second Punic War, led an army over the European Alps to invade Italy?

6: Who was British (Lieutenant) General who led the British forces at the battle of Gate Pa?

7: Who commanded the Australian troops during the bitter New Guinea campaign in the Second World War?

8: Which General helped Kiwi housewives keep their food fresh, keep time, and listen to Doctor Paul, Portia Faces Life, and The Goon Show?

9: What General has thrilled (and disappointed) generations of New Zealanders once every three years since 1879?

10: How many military Generals have gone on to become New Zealand's Governor General?

Looking for a group to join? Check Page 2, or go to U3A Tauranga

AND HERE'S YOUR FOUR STAR ANSWERS



1: **General George "Blood n' Guts" Patton**.

2: **General Motors**

3: **General Kutuzov**.

4: **The General Theory of Relativity**.

5: **General Hannibal.** Despite rumours, he was not a cannibal. That was a different chap, Clarice. Mmm. Fava Beans!

6: **Lieutenant General Sir Duncan Alexander Cameron**.

7: **General Thomas Blamey**.

8: **General Electric,** which bought out a New Zealand radio manufacturer in New Zealand, rapidly expanding into electric clock-making, and domestic refrigeration.

9: **The General Election.**

10: **FOUR:**
General Sir Charles Fergusson, (1924–1930) – British Army
General Lieutenant-General Bernard Freyberg, 1st Baron Freyberg (1946–1952) – British/New Zealand Army Lieutenant-General
Lieutenant-General Charles Willoughby Moke Norrie, 1st Baron Norrie (1952–1957) – British Army Lieutenant-General
Lieutenant-General Sir Jerry Mateparae (2011–2016) – New Zealand Army Lieutenant-General

LOVE CARD GAMES? They say that 500 is a tricky game – but that's just a bad pun! U3A's FIVE HUNDRED Group is looking for new members, and even if you don't know your left bower from your right, you'll soon learn. 500's a quick, smart game that brings people together, and is enjoyed by about a gazillion people around the world. Check them out at by clicking on this link: Five Hundred – Card Game – U3A Tauranga

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I recently visited the Historic Village and was extremely impressed by the range of clocks on display. One of our members had clearly devoted considerable skill and care in designing and then creating these working pieces—each a work of art as well as a functional clock. Two weeks later, another member invited me to view the entries in the Annual New Zealand Wood Crafters' Awards, where the craftsmanship on display was equally outstanding. Unfortunately for me many of the masterpieces were not for sale; I for one would have been proud to own one—or two pieces—had the opportunity arisen to purchase specific pieces. I left both exhibitions feeling enthusiastic, inspired and extremely impressed with the talent often hidden or lying quietly within our organisation. I am now looking forward to rediscovering my painting easel and picking up a paint brush or even the old sewing or knitting needles yet again.

It has also left me with questioning why people like me often leave their talents or interests on a shelf as opposed to continuing to enjoy them – even if the outcomes are produced at a slower rate. But is also reinforces the value of U3A and the opportunities it can and in my case has opened up for so many of us.

It is also rewarding to hear from our newer members and appreciate the diverse skills, knowledge, abilities, and experience they are bringing to our organisation – their input is keeping it vibrate, appropriate and at the same time delivering meaningful content or concepts to our members.

While U3A offers ways to enjoy your talents or retain or advance such creativity it can also keep us up with the ever-changing world around us – be it local or international. And as we all know that in itself is a challenge as we are undoubtedly now living in a technological age where developments such as AI and Robots – once only fictional concepts, are now realties. Again, U3A has stepped up introducing topics and group activities that members now can have the opportunity to not only comprehend but use.

So, looking forward, the Executive is keen to attract one or two new members to the Executive Committee; individuals with innovative ideas, differing business skills and with keen interest to ensure U3A continues to deliver activities to its wide range of members. *Bev Edlin*

The Election General Meeting
10.00am, Friday 20th November
Tauranga Yacht and Boat Club, Sulphur Point

From Katikati: The Wordsters

Write something light-hearted: that was the task set for the October meeting of Katikati's group of scribblers, wordsmiths, idlers, layabouts, and ne'er-do-wells who are collectively known as the Wordsters Group.



The group meets at various members' homes once a month under the stern and unforgiving tutelage, leadership, and convenorship of the Long-Suffering Lynn, who never knows what to expect, because this gaggle of writers is made up of a herd of unpredictable individuals. This light-hearted month they had short stories and observations that took us a through a delightful and brilliant series of dawns on a beach, walking the dog and watching the waning of the moon; a lovely child's story about the life of Zespri, a bold and adventurous kiwifruit; a letter of lifetime lessons to a grand-daughter; a collection of hilarious wardrobe malfunctions; a blither about a bunch of kids messing about on bikes; and the usual Comprehensive Cairnsian Catalogue of Cunningly Contrived Conclusions – this time about Claude, the Helpful AI.

Fun, laughter, and sharing the pleasure of writing: this is what U3A is all about.

Wordsters

And Tauranga Cycling, with Bruce Kitchingman.



I would like to talk about Bruce Kitchingman, convenor of the Tauranga Cycle Group.

I joined this group approximately 18 months ago as my husband was unable to ride with me anymore. This resulted in the discovery of a wonderful group of people!

Bruce, as convenor does an incredible job every fortnight, almost without fail, taking us on rides all over Tauranga, the Mount, Omokoroa and beyond. He knows the trails so well and very rarely do we have to detour or double back. He is open to any suggestions team members might have and has taken groups out of town, for one or more nights, all organised by himself. He keeps us all together, makes us feel safe and has a very good knowledge of who serves the best coffee wherever we go! Ive met only lovely people in this group and hopefully will be part of it for a good time to come.

Thank you Bruce

Cycle Group

Looking for a group to join? Check Page 2, or go to U3A Tauranga

DON'T MISS THE 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

Coming Up At Our 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.

November: Short Speaker: As this is the Election General Meeting there will be no Short Speaker.

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

November 11th: Short Speaker: Nicky Austin, 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

Tauranga's October Meeting

George Stewart: One of the Village People!

George Stewart is an announcer/technician with our local Community Radio Station - Village Radio, operating out of the Historic Village, Tauranga.

We were delighted to have George tell us - chapter and verse - of his beginnings and the intricacies of our Village Radio Station. George was born on a farm in Oxford. Before he commenced his radio technical career (in Kumara) he completed an apprenticeship in carpentry and joinery. His interests were clearly in the radio presentation and technical field and he has been stationed in a variety of locations throughout New Zealand. He arrived in Tauranga in 1976 where he joined the 1ZD Tauranga station.

George was involved with Kiwi FM as a journalist reporter, the RadioWorks team as their News Editor, and Coastline FM before he joined the Village Radio Station unit in 2011.

As a Community Radio Station, Village Radio predominantly provide local news, storm warnings, road closures, Local Government news and interviews with prominent organisations within the Tauranga and Bay of Plenty District along with music. But with a major difference - no commercial advertising! Remember the days?



George set out the history of Village Radio, which dated back to 1960. They operated from the NZI building in Spring Street where 1ZD had their studio. They then moved to brand new premises in 1976 in the former Trustbank building at the bottom of Devonport Road. Another move took them to what was the old Town Board Room and library - where the volunteers played mainly 78 rpm records which were played through old horn loudspeakers.

Village Radio's initial broadcasts were weekends only until 1984, when the first real broadcast took place to coincide with the 21st commemoration of Tauranga reaching city status.

The equipment they had then versus the equipment that they updated to was extreme for the day, but nothing compared to what they operate from today. The earlier equipment was purchased from the USA by the NZ Government and some from Auckland's 1ZB Radio

Station. George describes these appliances as “beautifully engineered” and known as High Fidelity Broadcast transmitters. Thanks to a talented IT Engineer the Station now has equipment that enables connection to the internet and is “live streaming”. For those interested the link is villageradio.co.nz/live.

The Station currently has 25 volunteers (operating Monday through Friday). The programmes have a format of 15-minute brackets designed by former NZBC Director-General, James Harstonge, who had retired in Tauranga. Music from the 1930s through to early 2000s is broadcast – often digital recordings, although some of the volunteers prefer the sound and “feel” of vinyl.

The volunteers work rostered shifts which are daylight hours only. Village Radio’s frequency is taken over by another AM station in the evening.

Village Radio also have a sponsored Community Notice Board - which is free to charitable organisations. Each afternoon there is an hour of dedicated music; Monday: Classical, Tuesday: Country, Wednesday: Jazz and Blues, Thursday: Kiwi entertainers and Friday: rock and roll. They also welcome calls during their shifts if there is a song that brings back memories. Remember “Opo the Friendly Dolphin”? “Mr Tap Toe”? (Phone 07 5713 710).

Their record library holds literally tens of thousands of LP’s, 7 inch 45’s and 78 rpm shellac records which date back to the early days of radio. The Station’s museum tells part of the story of the history and culture of Tauranga.

How do they survive financially? The station pays rent to The Historic Village, which is owned and managed by the Tauranga City Council. Their other major expenses include a licence to broadcast and a fee paid to the Australasian Performing Rights Authority which takes a fee every time music is performed by a local artist. To sustain these expenses, they apply to the Lotteries Commission and have a number of very generous local businesses who sponsor them to keep them on air.



George’s Power Point presentation showed an array of photographs of the Station’s former premises, their equipment, LP covers, inside the studio, artefacts in the museum and their existing premises. For many of us it was a trip down memory lane. If you haven’t been to visit the Village recently (or have never been!), it’s well worth your time - 159 17th Avenue West, Tauranga South. historicvillage

Thanks, George, for your enlightening and entertaining talk All illustrations from the Village Radio website. The links in the illustrations will not work.

Got Admin Skills? Your U#A needs you! Our Skills Administrator’s position needs filling: If you can spare a few hours a month, call or email our President:

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

KATIKATI'S OCTOBER MEETING



SHORT SPEAKER Francis Young spent most of his adult life in the USA and has joint USA / New Zealand citizenship. His knowledge and understanding of American politics is grounded in the experiences of living through the results of many elections – and in just 15 all-too-short minutes he gave us the benefits of his experience and knowledge. He explained how the elections work (and yes, it's complicated!) and what the ramifications of the results might be. It was an illuminating and entertaining talk, which gave us all a better understanding of how that crazy experiment that stated in 1776 might pan out in 2026. (You might also notice that my CoPilot AI illustration is… odd. Arm wrestling is impossible between one left and one right arm).

Ian Howell Brings His Trains to Katikati!



U3A's Ian Howell, The City Rail Link. Ian Howell is now U3A Tauranga's Web Manager. Before retiring and moving back to Tauranga, Ian worked as Auckland Transport's CRL Project Director. The City Rail Link, which opened on 11 September, is the largest infrastructure project in New Zealand's history. So what really happened behind the orange cones and massive cranes?

Basically? A lot of hard, intricately detailed and planned work by an enormous number of seriously dedicated and smart people. Project Management on a job this big can be compared to be responsible for organising a team of a thousand people as they put together a ten-billion-piece jigsaw puzzle. And that would only be Monday.

The City Rail Link has already transformed our largest city, providing quick, efficient, and affordable transport around the Central, Eastern, and Southern suburbs, business, and industrial areas. To enable this, 3.5 kilometres of tunnelling had to be bored through the rock and sub-strata that supports Auckland CBD, along with a kilometre of cut and cover tunnelling. The tunnel-boring machine – named after Dame Whina Cooper - was capable of creating 30 metres of tunnel in just one day (under optimal conditions, was itself 130 metres long, and weighed in at 900 tonnes. Three new underground stations were built. But that was just the beginning. As with any large construction project, each solution raised many more questions, which Ian and his team had to

find rational, actionable, economic, and socially-responsible solutions for. Plans and designs were made, revised, and revisited.



Can a project of this size be built safely? (Answer? Yes!) Ian and his team ran a safe and positive project. Potential hazards were seen and nullified. Can it be built on budget, on time, and with a minimum pf disruption to businesses and traffic? Surprisingly, Ian Howell has come through this challenge relaxed and with a reasonably full head of hair, an easy grin, and his sanity intact. His talk was an inspiration, and a reflection of the astonishing things U3A members have already achieved in their lifetimes.



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.

Nana – Did You Ride A Dinosaur When You Were Little?



We all love stories. We live our own stories. We love hearing other people's stories. We may not have ridden dinosaurs when we were little, but we heard stories on the radio – Doctor Paul, Portia Faces Life, The Scarlet Pimpernel, and so on – and we watched stories on the TV: Cathy Come Home, Quatermass, Bonanza, Coronation Street, and so much more.
U3A Tauranga and Katikati have Memoir Writing Groups (see below for links) to help aspiring memoir writers.

By definition, not everyone's life is extraordinary – but every life has been lived from a unique perspective. The purpose of writing a memoir, therefore, is to share the writer's unique experiences, relationships, and the turning points that have moulded and crafted their personality, and to give form to memories that may otherwise remain unspoken and fade with time.
Writing your memoir is a reflection, not a recording. It gives the writer the opportunity to explore and interpret what their past choices have meant not only to them, but to the people who have been affected by them. A memoir helps share the joys, the sorrows, the difficulties, and euphoric triumphs of a unique life.
A memoir is deeply personal. Even if you never share it, it will help you to better understand your own life and the choices you've made as you've forged your own life-path.
Should you choose to share your memoir – perhaps with family members, your tamariki and mokopuna, they will discover more about themselves: how your life has impacted them, how your memories of shared events are different, enlightening.
If your jottings help a reader understand you more deeply, recognise something of their own experience, or begin a conversation that might otherwise never happen, then your memoir will have fulfilled its purpose.
LINKS: Inky Tales My Life Stories (Katikati)

Illustration Copilot AI.

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

Give 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

Katikati Walkers discover Kauri Point delights

*U3A Katikati Walking Group convenor **Robbie Selwyn** organised a walk around Kauri Point in mid- October. Here's some highlights:*



The extra-long Kauri Point jetty is worth walking to the end. This day three fisherfolk armed with 17 rods hoping to snare the catch-of-the-day at the far end. Local white fronted terns greeted us with their noisy come-join-us cries and acrobatics while others nestled on the wharf handrails waiting for possible offal entrails.

The pohutukawa clad coastline hid the coastal cliff-top walk-ways and designated picnic areas. Close examination revealed NZ native Earina autumnalis orchids splashed themselves over the pohutukawa boughs. A return trip in Jan-Feb when this species blooms would definitively be a goer.

Kauri Point Reserve, which stretches to the headlands, was the site of the Ōwarau Pā, one of New Zealand's most nationally significant archealogical Māori pā sites. Archealogical pits and midden remains suggest continuous Māori occupation dating back to about 1200 CE. The site is highly sacred (taonga) to local hapu, including Ngāi Tamawhariua, Ngāti te Wai, and Te Whanau A Tauwhao.

The Western Bay of Plenty District Council, with local hapu input, has developed a comprehensive plan outlining proposals for restoring ecosystems and installing defensive *pou* (carved pillars) and *waharoa* (gateways) with educational panels that will pass on stories of the defensive fortifications and the ancient swamp features of the site.

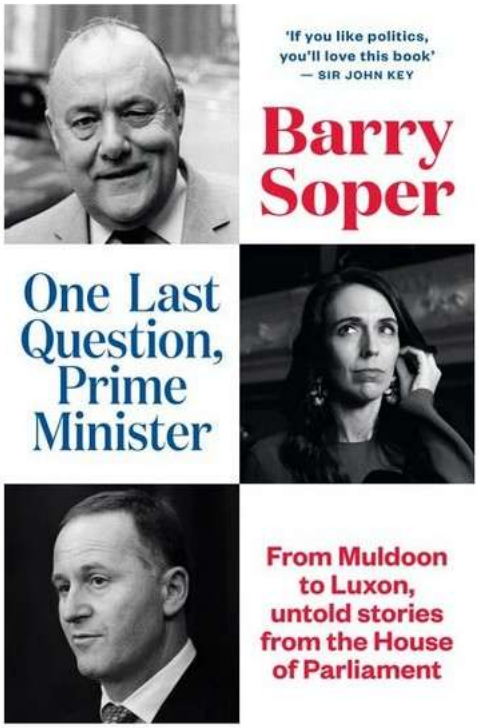


The Walking Group spent about 90 minutes walking-talking the site – then we set of for morning coffee in Katikati,

Illustrations: Wikimedia and WBOP Council proposed Kauri point reserve development

Deadline for material for January's Newsletter is January 1st, 2027
Newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz

Book Review: One Last Question, Prime Minister
Barry Soper, Author
HarperCollins, 2026, Publisher.



From Muldoon to Luxon – Barry Soper's known all twelve of them. This memoir covers Soper's early journalistic journey from cub reporter to an unprecedented three terms as chairman of the Parliamentary Press Gallery – and beyond.

This isn't a warts and all commentary on the 12 men and women who have led New Zealand since 1975: from Robert Muldoon to Christopher Luxon. It's a personal journal. Barry Soper has not only interviewed all of them – often saying "One last question, Prime Minister" at Press Conferences - in the past 50-odd years, he also has travelled with them, drunk with them, celebrated and sympathised with them, and, as any good journalist will do, listened hard taken copious notes and told a thousand stories about them.
This is not a political book. It is a book about politicians, and their relationship with the Fourth Estate. It is often funny, occasionally tragic, and always entertaining.

It is a very personal view: Soper makes no bones about which of these individuals he liked, admired, disliked, and those he found to be wanting. He also – gleefully - takes every opportunity to take the borax out of himself.

Well written, considered and considerate, this is a book that should hold a place on any and all Kiwi bookshelves. Available at all good bookshops, online, and at your local library.

Al Mathews







November's Notable Dates:

Remember, remember, the month of November
A month of fire, fear, and loss.

All illustrations are from Wikimedia

November 5, 1881: Government troops attack Parihaka, a Maori settlement devoted to peaceful resistance. Although there are wildly differing stories about the incident, it seems most like that no lives were lost in the attack, but many women were raped, and an unknown number of prisoners subsequently died due to the harsh conditions of their hard-labour sentences.



November 18, 1949: New Zealand's deadliest fire destroys Ballantyne's department store in Christchurch, claiming 47 lives.

November 19, 1979: Air New Zealand flight 709 crashes into Antarctica's Mount Erebus, with the loss of 257 people.

November 19, 2010: 29 men die when the West Coast's Pike River Mine explodes.

But it wasn't all tragedy. Timaru breeds champions!

November 4, 1930: Timaru bred Phar Lap wins the Melbourne Cup!
November 25, 1903: Timaru-born Bob Fitssimmon won his third world boxing championship, becoming the first individual to win (world titles in three weight divisions.



And on the Battlefield:



November 4, 1918: The New Zealand Division achieves a major victory by liberating the walled town of Le Quesnoy. 122 New Zealand troopers died, and 375 were wounded,. Over 2,000 Germans and 60 field guns were captured. Importantly, because there was no initial heavy artillery bombardment, no civilian lives were lost.

All photographs from Wikimedia

A New Home for the Tauranga Library – back on Willow Street

Tauranga's New Public Library - **Te Ao Mārama Tauranga Library & Community Hub** is a three-level facility located at 95 Willow Street is now open – and they're taking bookings for guided tours. Here's what you'll find at this fabulous new complex:

- **Three Levels of Collections:** Spanning a spacious multi-story layout with extensive book collections, reading areas, and quiet study zones.
- **Hāwiki Creation Station:** A hands-on maker and technology space featuring 3D printers, laser cutters, vinyl printers, sublimation equipment, and sewing machines.
- **Children's & Teens' Areas:** Dedicated interactive children's spaces (including an Imagination Station for class visits and holiday programs) and youth areas.
- **Sensory Space:** A dedicated room with specialized lighting and sound designed for individual sensory needs.
- **Archives and Research Centre:** A climate-controlled archive for local and family history collections, complete with microfilm and microfiche readers and custom display cases for *taonga*.
- **Community Hub & Meeting Rooms:** Bookable meeting spaces and gathering areas equipped with dual projectors, wireless microphones, and wireless presentation tools.
- **Cafe & Outdoor Terrace:** An onsite cafe and an outdoor deck/terrace overlooking the waterfront for study breaks.



If you would like to take a tour of the new library & Community Hub, please complete the 'Expression of Interest' form, and we will be in touch soon. **Expression of Interest Form**

DO YOU HAVE IDEA FOR A NEW GROUP? Starting and convening a new group is easy, and fun. If you have an interest that isn't yet catered to, just check out our website U3A Tauranga or look at this Newsletter's Important Names and Numbers list on the last page and contact one of the Group Co-ordinators.
Perhaps you play Pickleball, study mycology, are into 1950s fashion, or collect bone-china hedgehogs: you might just find other people who'd like nothing more than to meet with you once or twice a month.

From our colleagues at U3A Epsom

Auckland boasts 28 separate U3A groups, ranging from Warkworth down through the city to Pukekohe. U3A is active on Waiheke Island, Henderson, New Lynn, Maraetai, and Flat Bush. I recently contacted **Jeanette Grant, who edits the U3A Epsom Newsletter** – and every issue features "Jeanette's Jottings". Epsom U3A (u3aepsom.nz) has 200 members, and meets at Royal Oak Bowls, 146 Selwyn St, Onehunga 10am on the 2nd Thursday of most months. If you're ever in the neighbourhood, join them. Here's an article from their August Newsletter.

FINDING FIRE Just when our ancestors fanned their first flames is an ongoing question, with current evidence suggesting it had to be at least a million years ago. A discovery reported in the journal PLOS One pushes this timeline back even further, confirming hominins were probably playing with fire far earlier. By testing the luminescence of tiny bones in ancient owl pellets, an international team of researchers led by Dores Marin-Monfort, a palaeontologist from Spain's National Museum of Natural Sciences, has provided strong evidence that residents of South Africa's Wonderwerk Cave may have been warming their toes in front of a blazing fire some time between 1.07 and 1.78 million years ago. Wonderwerk Cave is already a renowned site among palaeontologists, thanks to its extensive use by ancestral humans. For decades, researchers have sifted through almost 20 feet (about six meters) of material containing everything from pollen to stone artifacts to burned bones. It's those charred remains – along with residual ash and heat-altered stone – that have previously set records for the world's oldest signs of a campfire halfway through the Pleistocene. Evidence of burned material isn't necessarily evidence that the burning is intentional. Translocation of charred sediments can also mess up timelines, making it even more difficult to nail down when humans mastered the art of a good roast. That makes the heat-affected remains of fire pits and cooked animals gold standards for confirming signs of a tamed flame. When it comes to the oldest examples of fire use, however, hearths are extremely hard to find, implying that the first fires were opportunistic rather than deliberate constructions. While it's possible to use a bone's colour to tell if it has been cooked, metal contaminants in the soil can cause similar changes in hue. A suite of spectrographic tests is commonly used. Yet these also have their limitations in capturing the extent of a bone's charring. Marin-Monfort and her team also applied a non-invasive method of measuring the luminescence of around 160 small mammalian bones found in owl pellets, which once littered the cave floor "like a carpet".



Their findings confirm that small fires were located deep within Wonderwork Cave hundreds of thousands of years before previously established records, in line with other contested studies that also suggest earlier dates. For cooking, warmth, or light, nobody can be sure. But the fires were unlikely to have been the result of a stray spark from a passing wildfire, the researchers write, leaving the strong possibility that these were deliberately placed by an ancestor such as *homo erectus.* It would take hundreds of thousands more years before fire would become a commonly used tool.

Jeanette Grant.

Tiaki Takutai - Coast Care

Coast Care is all about empowering local communities to be involved in caring for their beaches and dunes, and to have information about why the dunes and their native plants are important.
Coastcare is a community partnership programme between Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Opōtiki District Council, Whakatāne District Council and the Department of Conservation. The organisations support and coordinate a coastal restoration programme, in partnership with local communities, care groups and schools.
Find out more about Coast Care



Get involved
Coast Care relies on volunteers to help with beach clean-ups, planting native dune plants, managing the spread of weeds and pests, fencing and much more. More information about how to get involved.

Why do we need to look after our dunes?
The dunes are the backbone of our beaches, the buffer between the land and the sea. Native dune plants play a vital role in maintaining the dunes, binding light blowing sand onto the beach, and making stable sand dunes. Without these plants, the sand blows away and dunes disappear – leaving the land vulnerable to weather and wave surges.

The popularity of our beaches, changing climate, pests and development pressure are all affecting the health of our coast, particularly dunes. This makes the work Coast Care does even more important in making sure our beaches remain for many more years to come.
Dunes also play an important part of New Zealand's coastal biodiversity and we have a responsibility to make sure they are protected.

Get in touch Coast Care looks after our coastal dunes all across the Bay of Plenty – from Waihi Beach to Whangaparaoa. The Coast Care team can be contacted on coastcare@boprc.govt.nz or 0800 884 880.
Alternatively, you can contact Tauranga City Council's Natural Environment Specialist, who works with Coast Care on projects that stretch along Mount Maunganui Main Beach to Papamoa Beach on 07 577 7000.

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 Ebden 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: TBC 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: TBC skillsadmin@U3Atauranga.org.nz
WEB & DATA MANAGER: Ian Howell, 022 590 1234 webmaster@U3Atauranga.org.nz

THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT U3A

U3A Tauranga / Katikati 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 or Katikati, you can complete the online application at Application Form | U3A Tauranga (infoodle.com).

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newsletter@U3Atauranga.org.nz