

February 2026

Remuera, Auckland, New Zealand

Next Meeting: **Monday 9th February 2026 at 10am**

Venue: St Chads Church, 38 St Johns Road, Remuera

Principal Speaker: **Ross Blair**, “Nature and - or Nurture. The Dilemma.” The Nature vs Nurture debate is a classical psychological and philosophical argument concerning the relative contributions of heredity and environment in shaping our human behaviour and personality.

Mini Speakers: The **Convenors** of the 16 study groups will each present an outline of their study group’s programme for 2026. It’s a wonderful opportunity for members to hear about the range of learning and fun activities offered by u3a Remuera.

Next Month’s Speaker: **James Duncan**, “Always a Tram in Sight.” This is the 2nd of three talks, following on from the first talk last December, being the story behind the arrival of electric trams in Auckland – the trials, tribulations, tragedies, battles, and successes of bringing what was then “space-age” technology to NZ’s largest city.

Meeting Tasks: Greeters: Science Around Us
Morning Tea: Use It or Lose It

The wonderful progress in Genetics and the complete sequencing of the human genome has given us a better understanding of our development and the passage of many characteristics and conditions through the generations, for the benefit of us all. However, when researching human

behaviour, such as intelligence or psychopathy (the warrior gene), there has been considerable controversy, which has delayed and prevented progress.

Nature refers to the biological and genetic influences that shape who we are – the traits and tendencies that are pre-wired through inheritance and other psychological factors.

Nurture encompasses the environmental influences that shape development after conception, including life experiences, learning, as well as social and cultural exposure.

Ross Blair has been a member of the Remuera u3a since 2013 and has served as President, Convenor of the NZ History group and attends the General History group meetings. He is a retired

Thoracic and Vascular Surgeon, and has a long interest in Military Medicine and Medico-Legal matters.

“Keep smiling, because life is a beautiful thing and there’s so much to smile about.”
—Marilyn Monroe



President's Message

Greetings to all u3a members



The high days and holy days are over and the year is gathering pace. Most of us expected 2026 would be a clear improvement on last year. That lasted until the 3rd of January when Trump, not content to be regal, reached for imperial purple by intervening in Venezuela. This presents a serious challenge for all democracies including New Zealand. Time to have your say. Would you like to be a citizen in the 53rd state?

On a more pleasing note, U3A is just what the doctor ordered. By participating you do make new friends AND keep the mind active. At the February meeting you will have an opportunity to expand your activities. The leaders of the Interest Groups will tell you what each group is up to. You are very welcome to come to a couple of meetings of an Interest Group before you decide to become involved. The session on Interest Groups will be followed by a talk by Ross Blair, one of our long-time members. Please do come along to the monthly meetings. We have a fine range of speakers for your entertainment and mental stimulation.

Group Reports

Poetry Study Group

Our group meets on the third Tuesday of the month, 1-3pm at a member's house. We share a poem that we like, or maybe one that illustrates a discussion point, a poetic style, or something that speaks to us in some way. We choose our poems from a wide range of ideas, from any era, style or place. Usually someone will read their poem, followed by a discussion before we move to the next person/poem

Recently I purchased a collection of poetry selected from the NZPS 2025 International Competition. For some reason I was drawn to the junior haiku selection. It struck me, as it has before, how a very few words can say so much! I have chosen two, which I feel illustrate this very well. They are written by a high school student, Angelia Zhao, from Christchurch, and were highly recommended in the competition.

now that you are gone,
I speak to the vacant chair.
words fall into dust.

The second one is by the same author.

language slips away
I forget how we once spoke
home sounds out of tune.

I can only describe these two beautiful haiku as exquisitely painful. They bring tears to my eyes and evoke precious (and sad) memories.

Of course, not all the poems we share are sad. We present a very varied range of poems.

Lesley Gamlan – Convenor. email lgam5661@gmail.com

Famous and Infamous Study Group

One of the most lively and enjoyable groups. Everyone has a turn talking about a person, place or event and we then decide whether he, she or it is famous or infamous. We meet at 10 o'clock on the first Thursday of each month starting Thursday 5th March at flat 82 Remuera Gardens 57 Richard Farrell Avenue Remuera. Our morning teas are delicious as everyone brings a plate.

For more information phone Elaine or Piers Davies 524 6927



A celebration of thanks from outgoing President, Alison Ross, to study group convenors and committee members for their services during 2025.

Director of Studies

After a holiday break, study groups will be back in action in February. The first part of our meeting on Monday 9th there will be short presentations from each of the convenors on what their study group will be involved in during the coming year. Recruiting new members is the aim. Take this opportunity to add your name and contacts to the convenor's list of members interested in the stimulation of joining or visiting another group. There are plenty of interesting study groups to join and more people to meet and make friends.

Wallis Walker

Convenors: Please see the schedule of group tasks for the year in the appendix to this newsletter.

Looking Back

James Duncan, MOTAT's enthusiastic Tram Project Manager, entertained us with the first of three talks about the arrival and development of Auckland's electric trams. He described the tram system as the best public transport system Auckland has ever had. It served the city for 54 years from 1902 until 1956.



Auckland was founded as a city in 1871. At that time most city dwellers had to walk wherever they wanted to go and therefore had to live close to the city centre. During 1880's, horse drawn trams were introduced, however owing to the hilly topography they had limitations and, at times, required additional horse power provided by "Hill Boys."

Landowners influenced the introduction of electric trams to the growing city as this enabled development of suburban housing estates. In 1899 the Auckland Electric Tram Company was founded as electricity was rapidly being introduced to cities around the world. A steam driven

electricity generator was built at the bottom of Hobson Street in August 1901, and over the course of the next year 43 trams comprising three different designs were purchased.

On 24th November 1902, Sir John Logan Campbell launched the new service from the city centre to Ponsonby. Sunday tram services were introduced a while later following a close vote of councillors. Christmas Eve of 1903 was marked by a runaway tram following a brake failure in Kingsland. 3 people died in the accident.

By 1905 with the growth of the tram service, additional trams were required leading to a 1906 ultimatum from the Auckland City Council and subsequent manufacture of locally built trams. In 1918 the service transported 44 million passengers, but by 1919, profitability of the service was in decline and the tramway service was acquired by the Auckland City Council for 1.2 million.

FINAL REMINDER

Please Check whether you have paid your subscription for 2025 / 2026.

A few members who have each received a recent email have not yet paid their subscription for 2025/2026 which was due 1 October 2025. This notice serves as a final reminder to them to pay immediately as they will not receive newsletters after this nor will they be entitled to attend a study group.

If you are uncertain whether you have paid or not, please email our Treasurer Karin Hulme khulme@xtra.co.nz to check. Payment is \$55.00 payable to:

U3A Remuera Incorporated

The account number is 12 3030 0469700 00. Please put your surname with your initial as the reference.



Our December meeting concluded with the customary end of year morning tea provided by members of the Committee. It was a great occasion to socialise and celebrate another successful year for the organisation. Our thanks to all the Committee for their hospitality and for providing many excellent speakers to inform, and entertain us over the year. Our thanks too to the convenors of the 16 study groups who ensure the opportunities for learning continue into the "Third Age."

Notice Board

Future Speakers

9th March 2026 – James Duncan, "Always a Tram in Sight."

13th April 2026 - Dr Bruce Hayward, "Volcanos of Auckland."

11th May 2026 – Dr Bruce Arrol, "From Everest to Empowerment."
The Hillary Trust

Key Contacts

President	Laurence Melton	l.melton@auckland.ac.nz
Vice President	Karen Yates	karenay@xtra.co.nz
Director of Studies	TBC	
Almoner	Alison Ross	ea.ross@xtra.co.nz
Membership Secretary	Lynn Bartram	lynabartram3@gmail.com
Treasurer	Karin Hulme	khulme@xtra.co.nz

Email Address	u3aRemuera@gmail.com
Website	https://remuerau3a.org.nz/
Study Groups	https://remuerau3a.org.nz/study-groups/



u3a Remuera meets at St Chads Church, Meadowbank on 2nd Monday of the month at 10am. u3a provides a place for those in the 3rd stage of their life journey, to come together in their local community, a chance to socialise, a chance to participate in interest groups, to learn something new and keep the mind active.

Editor: Peter Buckland, contact peterbuckland@outlook.com 0274 764873

APPENDIX FOR THE INFORMATION OF GROUP CONVENORS AND CO-CONVENORS

Schedule of tasks for March to December 2026

Group Name	Month	Task
AAAA	April	Mini Talk
	June	Newsletter Report
	July	Morning Tea
	September	Door Greeters
Classic Movies	June	Door Greeters
	September	Morning Tea
	September	Newsletter Report
Current Affairs	March	Newsletter Report
	September	Newsletter Report
	October	Door Greeters
Famous and Infamous	July	Mini Talk
	August	Door Greeters
	November	Newsletter Report
	December	Morning Tea
Foodies	April	Newsletter Report
	June	Morning Tea
	October	Newsletter Report
	November	Door Greeters
Genealogy	June	Newsletter Report
	October	Morning Tea
	November	Mini Talk
Monday History	March	Mini talk
	April	Morning Tea
	August	Newsletter Report

Music Appreciation	March May May September	Morning Tea Door Greeters Newsletter Report Mini Talk
NZ History	April May June October December	Newsletter Report Morning Tea Mini Talk Newsletter Report Door Greeters
Philosophy	March July December	Door Greeters Newsletter Report Newsletter Report
Poetry	August August October December	Door Greeters Newsletter Report Mini Talk Morning Tea
Science Around Us	May August December	Newsletter Report Morning Tea Newsletter Report
Travel	March July November	Newsletter Report Door Greeters Morning Tea
Use it or Lose it	April May November	Door Greeters Mini Talk Newsletter Report
Walking	July July August November	Door Greeters Newsletter Report Mini Talk Morning Tea