

April 2026

Remuera, Auckland, New Zealand

Next Meeting:

Monday 13th April 2026 at 10am

Venue:

St Chads Church, 38 St Johns Road, Remuera

Principal Speaker:

Dr Bruce Hayward, "Volcanos of Auckland." Auckland is built over and out of a field of 53 young volcanoes, all of which have erupted just once within the last 200,000 years. A "hot topic" for all of us who live in Auckland.

Mini Speaker:

Mary Gray will speak about Ian Athfield, a famous New Zealand architect.

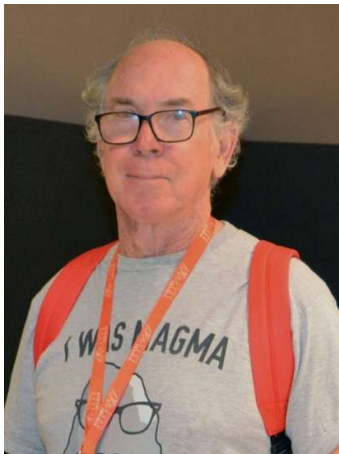
Next Month's Speaker:

Dr Bruce Arrol, "From Everest to Empowerment." The Hillary Trust.

Meeting Tasks:

Greeters: Use It or Lose IT
Morning Tea: Monday History

Dr Bruce Hayward is a semi-retired Remuera geologist and marine ecologist. He has authored/co-authored hundreds of research papers and 25 books on aspects of New Zealand's fossils, geology, marine ecology, archaeology and history. Among his books are a Field Guide to Auckland and two on the Volcanoes of Auckland. He is a past President of the Geological Society of New Zealand, a former member of the New Zealand Conservation Authority and a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. He was made a Companion of the NZ Order of Merit for services to Geology, especially Micropaleontology in the 2026 New Years Honours. He is married with three daughters and seven grandchildren.



Auckland is built over and out of a field of 53 young volcanoes, all of which have erupted just once within the last 200,000 years. They erupted in three different styles, producing three kinds of volcanic rock and creating three kinds of volcanic landform. Many cones have been quarried away and craters filled in, but the remains of the majority can still be seen throughout our City of Volcanoes. The field is considered to be dormant and the source of the magma is monitored full time for any signs of the next eruption that will trigger evacuation of maybe 40% of the city. The last eruption was 600 years ago and we have no way of predicting when the next will be.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

u3a Remuera welcomes Bronwyn Pratt and Sue Satchell as new members this month. We hope you will explore one or more of the study groups and find your experience fulfilling as well as an opportunity to meet new friends.

President's Message

Greetings to all u3a members



Still thinking of a midwinter holiday in Europe? Not for me, with the financial chaos and the possibility of the wars spreading to other countries. How Putin must be laughing. I prefer a good book. A bibliophile am I, which the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* defines as a lover of books, a book-collector. Not accurate; I have a friend who is an avid reader, everything from religious texts, Dickens, Faulkner, detective novels, Philip Larkin's poetry to *Winnie-the-Pooh*, but has few books. He relies on the excellent Auckland City Libraries. The Short Ox also lists bibliomaniac as a person with a passion for the collecting and the possessing of books, where passion means obsessive, barely controllable emotion. Not me of course, but I suspect wifey thinks otherwise. The Short Ox has entries for bookcase, book club, bookmark, bookseller, book-louse, bookworm, bookkeeping and bookie but not book-collector. I wonder why.

Currently I am reading Julian Barnes latest book, *Departure(s)*, published in January. He was battling a rare blood cancer while he was writing it. He is still alive but "on chemo for the rest of his life". If you have read any of his books (e.g. *Flaubert's Parrot*, *The Sense of an Ending* (Man Booker Prize), *The Noise of Time*, or his non-fiction such as the delightful *The Pedant in the Kitchen* or the alarming *Nothing to be Frighten Of*), you will be aware of his precision with words, elegant sentences, and his deep understanding of human nature.

In *Departure(s)* Julian Barnes is concerned with aging and how memory changes. With changes occurring over a lifetime, you cannot be sure if it is connected to reality or if it is based on a vivid



childhood dream or nightmare. One cannot know. He relates the case of a man who remembers every apple pie he has eaten and the order in which they are consumed. Barnes is sharp enough to note that how could anyone, including the pie eater know if one pie eating episode had been left out and if the order of sensory indulgences was correct. Memories matter. Memories constitute your identity.

As you have probably guessed Departures here can mean death. Barnes does not think of death as the destination at the end of life. For him death is travelling in an adjacent train, that may jump tracks at any time and smash into your smoothly running train ending all in a flash. Life is not fair.

Bad things happen to good people and good things sometimes happen to bad people.

Anyway, it's not all fire and brimstone. *Departure(s)* includes a love story about an older couple who have yearned for each other all their lives and overcome their qualms to marry. Supposedly, their last chance for happiness. A feisty Jack Russell, named Jimmy, makes cameo appearances throughout the book.

Julian Barnes is at his clever and witty best. "Why should life become more lucid and fathomable just because we grow older". Life is not fair-- "It's just the universe doing its thing". I like especially "It's harder making new friends as you get older—but also more gratifying when you do so an unfamiliar life with an undiscovered past and future yet to be explored..... what a lot there is to talk about". For me, this is what makes the u3a so worthwhile.

Laurence Melton

"There is no subject so old that something new cannot be said about it". Fyodor Dostoevsky.

This insight emphasizes that creativity and fresh perspectives can be applied to any topic, regardless of how often it has been discussed previously.

Director of Studies

As Mark Wotton our long serving and valued Convenor of New Zealand History Study Group has passed away, a new Convenor, Brent Leslie, has been appointed. Sue Johnstone continues as Deputy Convenor.

Wallis Walker. wallis.walker@xtra.co.nz

IN MEMORIUM

We were sad to hear that Mark Wotton, Convenor of New Zealand History and a member of several study groups, died mid-March after a short illness. Mark is fondly remembered by many u3a members.

Group Reports

New Zealand History

The NZ History group had another interesting year under the leadership of Mark Wotton, reflecting the fact that while few of us ever learned much of our country's unique history in our school days, we are continually re-discovering how intriguing it can be.

This was revealed in such presentations as the role of the dodgy New Zealand Company, which sent



thousands of early British settlers to this country, believing they had purchased land from the Maori who actually knew nothing about it until Edward Gibbon Wakefield's family gave them the bad news that they had to move. The early governor, George Grey, was another dubious character who left a shocking mess of duplicity and death behind him.

Coal mining was covered in a presentation on the Blackball mine strike of 1908 and in the design of the scarily steep mine railway, the Denniston Incline, on the West Coast. On the other hand, we learned how gold mining in the rocky North Island was a far more complex proposition for hopeful miners than it was in the shallow rivers and streams of the South.

The little-known story of Sir James Clendon (Tau Henare), the young Maori leader who refused his people's plea for him to stay home from the battles of World War Two; and Kate Shepherd, who led the way for women to gain the vote, were among other presentations that kept us absorbed.

(Above: Sir George Grey, Prime Minister of NZ 1877 – 1879)

Brent Leslie, Convenor. brentleslie1@gmail.com

Foodies Group

Our Foodies Group currently consists of twelve members and we meet on the third Thursday of the month. In February we put together a calendar and each month a member of the group is expected to arrange a food-orientated meeting.

We occasionally meet at a restaurant if the planned event can't be arranged, but our aim is to learn



more about cooking, nutrition, utensils etc. We often meet at a member's house; in the past we have had a "Test Kitchen" where we must bring a luncheon dish that we have never cooked before. We usually meet for a Christmas dinner. We have visited Simon Gault's kitchen, and the catering division at AUT.

Last year we arranged lunch at member's homes to celebrate Matariki and Bastille Day. So far this year, we have met only once to hear Annabelle White, chef and author. At future meetings, we will be entertained by Vivien Littlewood on the many uses of yeast, and will visit EFF to learn about air fryers. We have arranged a lunch to celebrate Italian cooking, and will visit a Jewish Cafe. In November we will have our annual trip to Alison Ross' place at Waiheke, where this year we will visit a vineyard. We are a relaxed, friendly group, but our membership is full, as we must be a small enough group to fit in our members dining rooms.

Gill Macklin, Convenor, gillmacklin@xtra.co.nz

Convenors and deputy convenors of our 16 study groups met for their annual meeting to share ideas



and receive updates of any new developments. A common theme expressed is the enthusiasm and engagement of members in the groups. A number of u3a members participate in several study groups. Most groups are still able to accommodate more members.

Participation in study groups is an essential element of the u3a philosophy. These are the forums for informal learning and getting to know each other. Some groups include field trips from time to time. All groups have a greater or lesser social component alongside the

presentations and discussions. It's well known that part of aging well is to keep our minds and bodies healthy and active. **Think about joining one new group this year.**

<https://remuerau3a.org.nz/study-groups/>

Mental stimulation through activities like crossword puzzles, learning new skills or engaging in complex conversations appears to help maintain cognitive function, though the evidence comes primarily from observational studies rather than randomized trials. (Stanford School of Medicine).



HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT – introducing a friend to u3a Remuera? Our organisation needs new members to continue thriving. Most new members are introduced by existing members, so encourage others you know to come to a general meeting or accompany you to one or more study groups to find out if u3a might be something for them. Study groups allow non-members to attend a maximum of two meetings before requiring them to join the society.

Looking Back



James Duncan presented another entertaining talk, entitled “Always a tram in sight.” The Auckland tram system was owned by the Auckland City Corporation (ACC) from 1919 to 1928. The term “Always a tram in sight” was the literal perception of passengers.

The service would run from Brittomart, up Queen Street and then branch left and right at Wellesley Street at the grand union junction with points controlled by a pointsman (an 8-hour, one-man position).

Competition arose from motor bus companies which had the advantage of not being restricted by tracks and overhead cables. Buses covered areas not serviced by the trams. To counter the competition, ACC introduced a by-law preventing buses from using Queen St. As buses were not regulated, some were trucks with benches for seats. Some bus operators were called “cowboys” and this led to the NZ Government introducing the Motorbus Omnibus Act in 1926, prohibiting buses from operating on tram routes.

In 1928 Auckland Transport Board took over the tramways and worked cooperatively with bus owners to create an integrated tram and bus service for the city. Over the next few years, the tram system served the new railway station in Beach Rd, providing a tram every 2 or 3 minutes. Farmers Trading Store in Hobson St introduced its own bus service up Wyndham St to its new Hobson St store.

The trackless tram, i.e. trolley buses, were introduced in 1930’s providing a more flexible service.

During the years of the second world war, manpower became scarce so women were employed in 1942 as conductors. Towards the end of the war and in the years following, maintenance declined and the service became run-down. It was agreed that petrol and diesel buses would be more practical which led to the demise of the tram system in 1956 and the end for trolley buses in 1968.

Barbara Smith, convenor of Monday History, provided a brief outline of the history of communication. Some of the earliest writing known as proto-cuneiform, emerged around 3300–3200 BC in the city-state of Uruk in Mesopotamia. The Egyptians introduced hieroglyphics with the modern western alphabet evolving from the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans. Many indigenous peoples used drumming or hand clapping to communicate. Fire and smoke were other forms used by ancient peoples.

In the 18th century visual semaphore towers were used until the first telegraph system in 1837. Samuel Morse (see photograph) introduced the first commercial single wire telegraph in 1844 and invented the Morse Code. The first message between Britain and the US was sent in 1858, linking continents and accelerating global information.



The Italian innovator Antonio Meucci is credited with inventing the first basic telephone in 1849, and Frenchman Charles Bourseul devised a telephone in 1854. However, Alexander Graham Bell won the first U.S. patent for the device in 1876, hence being acknowledged as the inventor of the telephone.

Marconi is credited as the inventor of wireless radio which is the same technology used today to send text messages on mobile phones.

During the 20th century, the first radio broadcast over distance was Christmas Eve, December 24, 1906, when, Canadian inventor, Reginald Fessenden achieved the first audio radio broadcast of voice and music from Brant Rock, Massachusetts. Television was developed in the 1920's with the first public broadcast in 1936. In the early 1990's WI-FI was developed. What's next ?

Notice Board

Future Speakers

11 th May 2026 -	Dr Bruce Arrol, "From Everest to Empowerment." The Hillary Trust
8 th June 2026 -	Olaf Diegel, "3d Printing."
12 th July 2026	Kate Russell, "Modern slavery and human trafficking here and abroad."

Meeting Tasks for May

Greeters	Music Appreciation
Morning Tea	NZ History
Newsletter Reports	Music Appreciation & Science Around Us
Mini Talk	Use it or Lose it

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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.

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